



SUMMER/FALL 2015 VOLUME 7, ISSUE 2

**RAMSEY CENTER
ADVISORY COUNCIL**

- John Ager
- Rob Amberg
- Pauline Cheek
- Jo Ann Croom
- Gwendolyn and Charles Davis
- Ed Herron
- Roger Howell
- C. Robert Jones
- Stuart and Patricia MacLean
- Chris Morton
- Kathryn Newfont
- Tom Plaut
- Betty Smith
- Melinda Young Stuart

**RAMSEY CENTER
STEERING COMMITTEE**

- Ryan Bell
- Becky Cody
- Brandon Johnson
- Pauline Johnson
- Matthew Milnes
- Marc Mullinax, *Faculty Chair*
- Mark Norwood
- Scott Pearson
- Laurie Pedersen
- Joanna Pierce
- Kimberly Reigle
- Beverly Robertson
- Alan Theisen

RAMSEY CENTER STAFF

- Karen Paar
Director and Archivist
- Hannah Furguele
Program Coordinator
- Patrick Cash
Archives Associate

**RAMSEY CENTER EXPLORES
SOUTHERN APPALACHIAN FORESTS**

Mars Hill University is nestled in the Blue Ridge Mountains on the southeastern side of Madison County—a county that boasts over 50,000 acres of protected forest lands that contribute to the overall acreage of Pisgah National Forest. With almost one quarter of the county being wooded, forests have played an integral role in the lives of people and animals who reside in Madison County, and they shape the region in many ways.

For the 2015-2016 academic year, the Ramsey Center will structure its programs and events around the theme, “Exploring Southern Appalachian Forests.” The fall semester will kick off with a hike on the recently expanded trail at Bailey Mountain, a local landmark visible from multiple locations on campus. An escape for students and community members, Bailey Mountain is home to diverse wildlife and native plants.

As the semester unfolds, the Ramsey Center will host multiple events that invite students and community members to join together in a dialogue about Southern Appalachian Forests. Please see page 4 for a calendar of these events. We hope you will join us!

Header Image: Mars Hill University students who attended and presented at the 2015 Appalachian Studies Association Conference at East Tennessee State University last March.

**MESSAGE FROM NEW RAMSEY
CENTER FACULTY CHAIR**

All politics is local—Tip O’Neill

Summer of 1973, I come first to Mars Hill as a student. Pauline Cheek was my first professor! Through her patient teaching I learned how any self-understanding was hard-won through getting in touch with personal stories. She asked, *How does whatever you consider your “self” fit into the larger mosaic of the stories of where you originate and live? Get that personal connection first, and the rest follows.*



Faculty Chair, Marc Mullinax

At Mars Hill, I came to understand how “place” is power. “Place” metabolizes into vocabulary, accents, lifeways, spirituality, music, politics, and self-concepts. In other words, to understand “place” is to unpack how a region first conceptualizes itself, plus how it has come to fit—jigsaw-wise—into the larger mosaics of culture.

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ROGER HOWELL DOCUMENTARY TO PREMIER AT LUNSFORD FESTIVAL

After a whirlwind year of gathering stories and footage of master fiddler Roger Howell, we are excited to announce that the Roger Howell Documentary Project will be premiering at the 48th Annual Bascom Lamar Lunsford “Minstrel of Appalachia” Festival on October 3, 2015. As always, the festival will honor Bascom Lamar Lunsford and celebrate the rich music and dance traditions of Madison County. The daytime stage will run from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., followed by the traditional evening concert. The doors for the evening show will open at 6 p.m., and we will kick off with the documentary screening in Moore Auditorium at 6:30 p.m.

Lunsford Festival Director Hannah Furgieue and Videographer Rebecca Jones have followed Roger Howell through the woods and gem mines of Mitchell County; down the mountain to Union Grove, N.C. where Roger won “Fiddler of the Festival” at the Fiddler’s Grove Festival; into his repair shop on Banjo

Hannah Furgieue, Rebecca Jones, and Roger Howell explore Mitchell County



Branch Road; and to many festivals and jams in Madison and Buncombe counties. Interviews with Roger, his family, friends, and fellow musicians are woven together to share his story. Mr. Howell, most widely known for his skill as a fiddler and his incredible memory collection of over five hundred fiddle tunes, has a much deeper story to share. Rebecca Jones says, “We’ve spent countless hours with Roger and dozens of interviewees since March, learning about his story. He has been so gracious and welcoming, showing us around his old stomping grounds and playing tunes for the camera. We’ve captured some great Roger moments that are sure to develop into a meaningful film that celebrates Roger’s spirit and accomplishments.” This film project was made possible by a grant from the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area Partnership, and the showing on October 3 is just the beginning of our plan to share it widely with the community.



Marc Mullinax, continued from page 1

Where does one begin? With the local, personal stories. The personal connection is first; the rest follows.

Twenty-four years later, the power of this place lured me back to Mars Hill. These Southern Appalachian accents, politics, religions, weather, and economies are my primary knowledge bases, the backgrounds against which I place all other locales or regions. The local is my conduit to whatever is of value in the world. Now, I get to work this locale into my teaching of religion courses at Mars Hill. Now, I get to pack this locale in my Korea-bound suitcase every summer.

But it’s all local first. Otherwise, as Professor Cheek might still say, *Let me hear your personal connection.*

As the new “Faculty Chair of the Liston B. Ramsey Center for Regional Studies,” I seek to implement Professor Cheek’s comment in our programming, public meetings, and planning. All—politics, music, religion, or what-have-you—is first local. Get that, and the rest follows. I look forward to sharing the local—and all the rest—with you! *Marc Mullinax*

SOUTHERN APPALACHIAN ARCHIVES UPDATE

The Ramsey Center and the Southern Appalachian Archives will remain closed during fall 2015. When we reopen in January 2016, watch for some big changes as a result of the work that will take place during this closure. These changes include:

Better storage—and more storage—for archival materials. Thanks to the endowment funds raised through the National Endowment for the Humanities Challenge Grant completed in 2011, the Southern Appalachian Archives has been able to purchase high-density mobile shelving for the archives. This purchase will allow us to more than double the amount of archival material we can store in the Renfro Library space.

Better and more secure conditions for researchers using archival materials, as the reading room for the archives moves upstairs into the Ramsey Center.

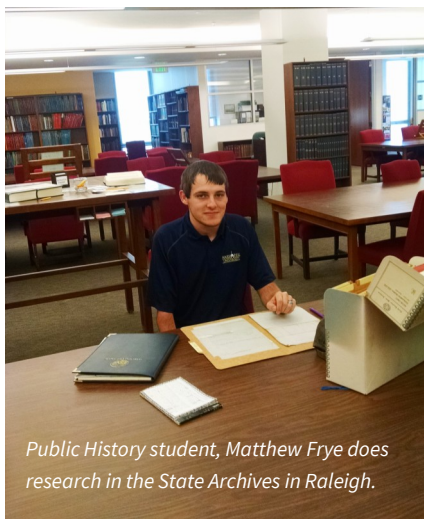
Renovated space and more engaging displays in the Ramsey Center itself.

Watch for a grand reopening celebration in early 2016 to share these changes with the campus and the wider community!

MARS HILL UNIVERSITY PUBLIC HISTORY CONCENTRATION

During the 2014-2015 academic year, Mars Hill University's Public History students completed projects that contributed to increasing historical data available to the broader public while allowing them to explore career paths within the field. Beginning in the fall of 2014, the

"Introduction to Public History" class, in conjunction with Buncombe County Register of Deeds Drew Reisinger, undertook a project to find and digitize the slave records of Madison County. Students Matthew Frye, Daniel Nelson, and Ragan Ramsey spent the semester researching the Deeds of Sale



Public History student, Matthew Frye does research in the State Archives in Raleigh.

books in the Madison County record in order to find and transcribe records pertaining to enslaved African Americans. This project was followed up by a joint presentation at the 2015 Appalachian Studies Association Conference where Drew Reisinger, Matthew Frye, former Mars Hill Professor Dr. Kathy Newfont, and Public History Program Coordinator Patrick Cash spoke about the "Forever Free" slave deeds project and the long-term hopes of a national slave deeds online database.

2015 also saw several Public History students step outside the classroom and into internships at both the Ramsey Center's Southern Appalachian Archives and the western branch of the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources. During the fall of 2015, the Public History Concentration will shift the students' focus to digital technology and history as they begin to work on adding local material to the Marshall University website/smart phone application, "The Clio." (For more information on the "Forever Free" project, visit: http://buncombecounty.org/Governing/Depts/RegisterDeeds/Genealogy_SlaveDeeds.aspx. For more information about "The Clio," visit: <http://www.theclio.com/web/>.)

Ramsey Center Archives Associate Patrick Cash also serves as the Public History Program Coordinator for Mars Hill University.

RAMSEY CENTER STAFF UPDATE

Peggy Harmon will retire on September 2, 2015 after serving thirty-three years as a Mars Hill University employee. Mrs. Harmon began her career here working in the campus museum and later moved to the Appalachian Room, then in Nash Library. Most recently, she has worked in the Southern Appalachian Archives in Renfro Library. Throughout all this time she has contributed her rich knowledge of the region and its people and her careful work and attention to detail.



Peggy Harmon will continue to work as a consultant to the archives after she retires.



In fall 2015 Kathy Newfont begins the next stage in her career at the University of Kentucky as an Associate Professor of History in the school's Appalachian Studies program. As at Mars Hill, she will also teach environmental history and oral history, and she will work closely with the Appalachian Center at UK and with the Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History. Kathy Newfont also will begin her next book project, a monograph on the "Monongahela case," a successful Appalachian challenge to United States Forest Service timber-harvest policy in the 1970s. This case had national repercussions, and the landmark National Forest Management Act was passed in 1976 in response to it. Dr. Newfont will continue to work with the Ramsey Center by serving on its Advisory Council.

WINTER'S TUNE
 Music to Warm
 An
 Appalachian
 Night

DECEMBER 4, 2015 at 7 p.m.
 See www.lunsfordfestival.com for details.



Liston B. Ramsey Center for Regional Studies
P.O. Box 6706, Mars Hill University
Mars Hill, NC 28754



UPCOMING RAMSEY CENTER EVENTS

Labor Day Hike and Forest Walk on Bailey Mountain on September 7, 2015 at 3 p.m. Join us for a guided hike with ethnobotanist Marc Williams and Ryan Bell. Space is limited. Contact Hannah Furgiuele for details or to sign up.

“Root Diggers and Herb Gatherers: How Wild Plants Shaped Post-Civil War Appalachian Society.” September 15, 2015 at 7 p.m., Peterson Conference Center, First Floor Blackwell Hall, Mars Hill University. A talk by Luke Manget, Ph.D. candidate at the University of Georgia at Athens.

Rural Academy Theater. September 28, 2015 at 7 p.m., Upper Quad of Mars Hill University Campus. The Rural Academy is a collaboration of individuals, two-legged and four, creating theater for primarily rural audiences in response to the growing urbanization of our culture, economy, food, education, media, and art.

48th Bascom Lamar Lunsford “Minstrel of Appalachia” Festival. October 3, 2015. All Day, Mars Hill University Campus. The daytime stage on the Upper Quad will run from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and have music and dance perform-

ances. The doors of Moore Auditorium open at 6 p.m. for the evening concert and will begin with the Roger Howell Documentary screening: www.lunsfordfestival.com.

“Symbol and Stereotype: The Civil War and the Image of the Southern Mountains and Mountaineers.” October 6, 2015 at 7 p.m., Broyhill Chapel, Mars Hill University. MHU Presidential Lecture Series with Dr. Gordon McKinney.

A Panel about Southern Appalachian Forests, featuring Mary Kelly, Matthew McCombs, Will Harlan, and Josh Kelly. October 29, 2015 at 7 p.m., Peterson Conference Center, First Floor Blackwell Hall, Mars Hill University. These experts in the field and passionate supporters of Southern Appalachian Forests will discuss the history and future of our forests.

Winter’s Tune: Music to Warm An Appalachian Night. December 4, 2015 at 7 p.m., Broyhill Chapel, Mars Hill University. Join us for the second annual winter concert, this year featuring a showcase of our region’s talented old-time and bluegrass female fiddlers! Line-up TBA. For ticket information, see www.lunsfordfestival.com.

FOR INFORMATION ON EVENTS, PLEASE CONTACT HANNAH FURGIUELE AT HFURGIUELE@MHU.EDU OR (828) 689-1571.

TO RECEIVE OUR NEWSLETTER VIA EMAIL, PLEASE CONTACT KAREN PAAR AT KPAAR@MHU.EDU.