

LISTON B. RAMSEY CENTER FOR REGIONAL STUDIES

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Photograph by Teresa Buckner

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MADISON COUNTY FIDDLER COMPLETES MEMORY COLLECTION

One of the highlights of 2013 in the Ramsey Center and the Southern Appalachian Archives was Roger Howell's donation of an additional 177 recordings to bring his Memory Collection to a grand total of 532 fiddle tunes. Howell made his first donation of 355 tunes in 2007, and he thought that he had recorded all he knew. In the years since then, he kept thinking of additional pieces to add to his collection. He began recording again in March 2013 with the Tommy Hunter tune, "A Rose for Polly." Mr. Howell completed his collection in August, closing with "Rock of Ages."

The Ramsey Center honored Roger Howell for this contribution at the October 2013 Bascom Lamar Lunsford "Minstrel of Appalachia" festival. Mr. Lunsford's grandson, Ed Herron, helped to award the certificate of acknowledgment, and in his remarks he placed Mr. Howell's achievement in its historical context. Roger Howell was originally inspired by Bascom Lamar Lunsford's own Memory Collections, created when he recorded 315 songs, stories, and fiddle tunes for Columbia University in 1935, then again when he made 317 recordings for the Library of Congress in 1949, for a total of 350 unique pieces. Like Mr. Lunsford's recordings, Roger Howell tells the story of each fiddle tune, giving details such as who taught him the piece, alternate titles, and stories associ-

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Roger Howell playing at the Thursday night bluegrass jam at Zuma Coffee in Marshall. Photograph by Hannah Furguele.

CHEROKEE CRAFT TRIP

In September, Mars Hill University students, faculty, and staff spent the day learning about Cherokee culture and crafts on a trip sponsored by the Ramsey Center as part of the "Craft in Southern Appalachia" program series. The group visited the Museum of the Cherokee Indian and Qualla Arts and Crafts Mutual, en-

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Freeman Owle talks to Mars Hill group about stone carving at Qualla Arts and Crafts Mutual in Cherokee. Photo by Kevin Reza.

2013-2014 HART-MELVIN RESEARCH FELLOWS



Becky Cody and Hillary Gambrell

Hart-Melvin Archival Research Fellows Becky Cody, Professor of Apparel and Interior Merchandising, and student Hillary Gambrell are continuing the research begun by Pauline Cheek in the 1970s into the hooked rug industry in Madison County. This industry provided vital income to hundreds of area residents during the lean depression years of the 1930s.

One of the most visible components of the industry, the Madison Rug Shop, was located on property that is now part of the Mars Hill University campus. The Hart-Melvin Fellows' research will include investigation of resources and artifacts in the Southern Appalachian Archives collections to document local residents' participation in the industry and the far-reaching implications of this industry for the area.

"Memory Collection," continued from page 1

ated with it. This detail offers a window onto the world of fiddle music in Madison County and beyond, preserving the memory of highly accomplished musicians who might otherwise be forgotten.

Archivist Karen Paar has prepared a finding aid for the Roger Howell Memory Collection, and it can be found at http://libguides.mhu.edu/roger_howell. Other plans are in the works to share some of the 532 tunes online. For more information, please contact Karen Paar at kpaar@mhu.edu or (828) 689-1262.

"Cherokee," continued from page 1

joying the traditions and the history. Lectures by Davy Arch and Freeman Owle were the highlights of the trip. The Ramsey Center seeks to create hands-on experiences that take students off campus and into the surrounding region. The Center's student worker Kevin Reza said, "The Cherokee trip was an eye-opening experience, and I was able to absorb the rich history of Native Americans. In reading about things you have a limited idea of what something may be, but immersing yourself in it opens up a world and helps you become more informed."

REFLECTIONS FROM OUR STUDENTS

Students have the opportunity to enhance their academic program by choosing to minor in Regional Studies, an interdisciplinary program that is closely tied to the Ramsey Center. The three seniors featured here, all minors in Regional Studies, have dedicated themselves to Ramsey Center programs and resources for the majority of their Mars Hill journey. They will be representing Mars Hill University for the third consecutive year at the Appalachian Studies Association Conference this March at Marshall University in Huntington, West Virginia.

Ericka Hincke got involved with the Ramsey Center through the traveling Smithsonian Institution exhibition, "New Harmonies," during her freshman year. As a Biology major, she found that the Center's programs supported her academic studies, provided her a place to meet other students, and allowed her to tap into her own love and knowledge of the region. She shared two favorite Ramsey Center memories, saying, "We went on a hike along part of the parkway, and I remember having such a good time getting to know other students and some professors that I wouldn't have otherwise met. I also got to learn about some of the many different plants that are found in the region. The second activity was just last semester, when we went to Cherokee. It was raining the whole time, but we still went to the Museum of the Cherokee Indian and Qualla Arts Center. I absolutely love Native American culture, and it was a great time to bond with another student that had the same love for the culture." Ericka holds the James H. Montgomery Regional Studies scholarship.

Ashley Spears has been the student worker in the Ramsey Center since she got involved as a freshman, also through the "New Harmonies" exhibition. As a History major, she has enjoyed the study of region. Listing the Lunsford Festival high on her list of favorite regional activities, she says, "The festival gathers some of the best things from across the region: music, dancing, art, food, and an overall friendly environment filled with love, passion, and dedication to the community." She adds, "I would recommend for my fellow classmates to participate in regional studies. I would encourage them to find that one thing that would open their eyes to everything else that the region has to offer. To me, Regional Studies is learning about the vast knowledge, culture, and traditions that a lot of people overlook or even look down upon. Regional Studies feels like studying a place that will always be with me, no matter how far I venture from it."

Alex Van Dusen got involved with the Ramsey Center through her "Introduction to Regional Studies" class. As a Regional Studies minor, she feels that the programs of the Ramsey Center have supported her academic studies. She says, "My favorite over all is the Lunsford Festival. It's so much fun and you are able to get so much culture and history about the area in just one day. I would recommend other students getting involved, because the Ramsey Center is a great resource if you are interesting in studying the mountains or wanting to learn about a different culture."



From left to right: Ashley Spears, Ericka Hincke, and Alex Van Dusen.

2013 FALL SEMESTER HIGHLIGHTS



Clockwise from upper left: Freeman Owle demonstrates stone carving to Mars Hill students during fall trip to Cherokee; students and staff show off their handmade quilted pillows from Ramsey Center open house and craft night; Bailey Mountain Cloggers teach "seated hoe-down" to visiting school group hosted by the Ramsey Center in November; Lunsford Festival on the Upper Quad; the Trantham Family performs at the Lunsford Festival evening concert.



RAMSEY CENTER PARTNERS WITH FIRST YEAR SEMINAR CLASSES AND MADISON COUNTY ARTS COUNCIL BARN QUILT PROJECT



This fall the Ramsey Center was involved in organizing a service-learning partnership between Mars Hill University First Year Seminar students and the Madison County Arts Council Barn Quilt Project. Offering a unique learning opportunity, students gained experience conducting interviews with local community members, discussing the economic value of the Barn Quilt Project, and painting their very own barn quilts. One student says about their experience, "By completing this service project, I learned a lot about Mars Hill University and Madison County. I learned

some interesting historical stories about Madison County when talking to the owners of a barn quilt. For example, I learned that the sliver of land that their farm sits on has been in three different counties at one time or another. I feel a great sense of pride volunteering in this area because there are so many wonderful things in Madison County to explore."

Caroline Twiggs, the FYS instructor and Field Coordinator for the LifeWorks Civic Engagement and Service Learning Center said, "As a liberal arts university, we are tasked to teach our students the value of becoming civically involved in the community. We are delighted that this partnership gives us the venue to do so!" Join this class in the Ramsey Center on Thursday, March 20th at 3 p.m. for a presentation about their barn quilt project (see page 4).





THE LISTON B. RAMSEY
CENTER FOR
REGIONAL STUDIES

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UPCOMING RAMSEY CENTER EVENTS

For more information about these programs, see www.mhu.edu/ramsey-center/upcoming-events or contact Ramsey Center Program Coordinator and Lunsford Festival Director Hannah Furguele at (828) 689-1571 or hfurguele@mhu.edu.

Plant Walk and "Craft Plants of Appalachia" Program with Ethnobotanist Marc Williams

February 27, 2014, 3 p.m. Plant Walk and 7 p.m. Lecture
Ramsey Center, Renfro Library, Mars Hill University

We are excited to welcome ethnobotanist Marc Williams back to host a plant walk on campus. Following the walk, Marc will present a talk about the use of plants in Appalachian crafts, including natural dyes, fibers, baskets, fire starters, weaponry and more.

Appalachian Studies Association Conference **Marshall University, Huntington, West Virginia** **March 28-30, 2014**

Mars Hill University students, faculty, and staff will travel to Marshall University to participate in the Appalachian Studies Association conference. More information can be found at: appalachianstudies.org/annualconference/.

Barn Quilt Project Reception, March 20, 2014, 3 p.m. **Ramsey Center, Renfro Library, Mars Hill University**

Join us as we recognize the partnership between the Ramsey Center, the Madison County Arts Council's Barn Quilt project, and our Mars Hill University First Year Seminar Students who completed their semester focus on place by volunteering with this program.

Fiddlin' 5K "Run for the Music" Road Race **April 12, 2014, 9 a.m. on the Upper Quad, Mars Hill University**

For the second year, we will host this musical run through the mountainous roads surrounding Mars Hill University. This race will benefit both the Bascom Lamar Lunsford "Minstrel of Appalachia" Festival and the Junior Appalachian Musicians Program of the Madison County Arts Council. See lunsfordfestival.com for registration and other information.

"Giving Voice to Our Stories: An Oral History Journey" with Kelly Navies, April 15, 2014, 7 p.m.

Ramsey Center, Renfro Library, Mars Hill University

Using oral history and other primary source materials, Kelly Navies explores the history of African-American communities in Madison County and other parts of western North Carolina.

TO RECEIVE OUR NEWSLETTER VIA EMAIL, PLEASE CONTACT KAREN PAAR AT [KPAAR@MHU.EDU](mailto:kpaar@mhu.edu)