

Liston B. Ramsey Center for Regional Studies

Fall 2010 Volume 2, Issue 2

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Ramsey Center Begins Year of Focus on Bascom Lamar Lunsford



Bascom Lamar Lunsford sharing his scrapbook with his daughter and grandchildren. Bascom Lamar Lunsford Collection, Southern Appalachian Archives, Mars Hill College. Photograph by Walt Damtoft, Asheville Citizen.

For the 2010 to 2011 academic year, the Liston B. Ramsey Center for Regional Studies at Mars Hill College will turn its focus for preservation and programming activities to the Bascom Lamar Lunsford Collection in the Southern Appalachian Archives. Lunsford was a major collector and promoter of Appalachian song and dance for much of the twentieth century. His long and rich career is well documented in the collection he deposited at Mars Hill College.

Born on the Mars Hill College campus in 1882 on the site where Cornwell Hall now stands, Bascom Lunsford had long-standing family ties to the school. He maintained these ties throughout his life, including allowing the festival begun in Mars Hill by pharmacist Ed Howard to carry his name. The Bascom Lamar Lunsford “Minstrel of Appalachia” Festival, currently in its 43rd year, will take place this year on October 2nd on the Mars Hill College campus.

The Bascom Lamar Lunsford Collection is known internationally to researchers who have visited the archives to learn about this man who not only collected over two thousand handwritten copies of folk songs and ballads, but who also began the folk festival as we know it today. The star of the Lunsford Collection in the Southern Appalachian Archives at Mars Hill College is a 31 x 26” scrapbook with some 400 pages that follows the course of his life and career, beginning with his early school and family documents and continuing on to reflect the many musicians and dancers Mr. Lunsford knew and the folk festivals he founded. The scrapbook contains letters and clippings from his performances before Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt, as well as King George VI and Queen Elizabeth of England, all with his annotations written in his own hand.

Continued on page 7

See It! Hear It!
Smithsonian Institution
exhibition at Mars Hill College!



September 25 - November 6, 2010
Weizenblatt Gallery, Moore Auditorium

Tuesday-Friday: 11am–5pm
Wednesday until 7pm
Saturday and Sunday: 12pm–4pm

www.mhc.edu/newharmonies

More information on page 3, and calendar of events (to share or post) on pages 4 and 5.

National Endowment for the Humanities Challenge Grant Update

Mars Hill College is beginning the last year of its National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Challenge Grant to create an endowment that will fund the Southern Appalachian Archives, part of the Liston B. Ramsey Center for Regional Studies. In recognition of the strength of these archival collections and their importance for studying and preserving the history and culture of this region, the NEH granted the college the maximum allowable match for one of its prestigious Challenge Grants. Before July 31, 2011, Mars Hill College must raise \$1.5 million in order to draw down \$500,000 in matching funds from the NEH. As of September 1, 2010, we are pleased to announce we have raised \$903,109, but we have \$596,891 left to go!

We want to thank all our donors (please see below) for their generosity in helping us come this far. We would particularly like to recognize members of the Class of 1960, who gave their 50th anniversary gift to the Challenge Grant by creating the Hart-Melvin Archival Research Fellowship (please see page 6). We were touched when the Class of 2010 also designated a portion of its class gift to the NEH Challenge Grant, showing that Mars Hill College graduates fifty years apart value our archives. Finally, we want to thank the Vetust Study Club, whose members have chosen the Mars Hill College NEH Challenge Grant as a beneficiary for the 2011 and 2012 Asheville Antiques Fairs.

Mars Hill College and the Ramsey Center for Regional Studies gratefully recognize the generosity of the following donors who have made matching gifts or pledges toward our NEH Challenge Grant:

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The countdown to hosting *New Harmonies: Celebrating American Roots Music*, a Smithsonian Institution Museum on

Main Street traveling exhibition has begun! *New Harmonies* will be in Weizenblatt Gallery, located in Moore Auditorium, from September 25 – November 6, 2010. *The Roots Music of Madison County*, an exhibition developed by Leslie Burrell Smith, and *Sodom Song*, a collection of Rob Amberg’s photographs of Sodom Laurel in the 1970s, will complement *New Harmonies: Celebrating American Roots Music*.

The music traditions presented in *New Harmonies* vary widely, reflecting the diversity and complexity of the American people’s heritage. The traditions highlighted range from sacred to secular, from indigenous to imported. Visitors to *New Harmonies* will hear Native American, blues, jazz, country, bluegrass, zydeco, tejano, and polka music.

We hope you will join us by exploring the exhibitions and taking advantage of the special events (Mars Hill College events are listed in a shareable poster located on pages 4 and 5 of this newsletter, and a community calendar of events can be found at www.mhc.edu/newharmonies). Please encourage your friends and family to take advantage of this opportunity!

DON'T MISS A BEAT! Follow our website for up-to-date information and a roots music community calendar: www.mhc.edu/newharmonies

New Harmonies **GRAND OPENING!** “Our Harmonies: A Community Celebration of American Roots Music”

September 25, 2010
3 p.m., Moore Auditorium

Performances by:

Bayou Diesel, an Asheville-based Zydeco Group
Bo Taylor, Cherokee Nation

Madison High School’s Appalachian Harmonies
Mars Hill College’s Percussion Ensemble, ShowStoppers,
and Gospel Singer Zakia Allah

New Harmonies: Celebrating American Roots Music is part of Museum on Main Street, a collaboration between the Smithsonian Institution and the North Carolina Humanities Council, a statewide nonprofit and affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Support for Museum on Main Street has been provided by the United States Congress.



A special thanks to our *New Harmonies* Partners:
Dry Ridge Historical Museum
Madison County Arts Council
Thomas Wolfe Memorial
State Historic Site
Wolf Laurel Historical Society
Zebulon B. Vance Birthplace
State Historic Site

Additional thanks to our *New Harmonies* Sponsors:

Blue Mountain Pizza, Weaverville, NC
Zuma Coffee, Marshall, NC

The 43rd Annual LUNSFORD FESTIVAL

OCTOBER 2, 2010
Mars Hill College

10am—4pm Daytime Stage Upper Quad FREE	7:00pm Evening Concert Moore Auditorium
Ballad and Story Swap at 1:30pm	\$10 for Adults \$5 under 12

BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY 1933-2010

Designed by: www.dreamfilmsandcreation.com

Betty Smith - Bailey Mountain Cloggers - Paul Crouch - Roger Howell - Phil and Gaye Johnson - Stoney Creek Boys - David Shelton Family Band - Joe Penland - Cole Mountain Cloggers - The Pegtwisters - Don Pedi - and many more!

NEW HARMONIES

CELEBRATING AMERICAN ROOTS MUSIC

A Smithsonian Institution Museum on Main Street
traveling exhibition

September 25 - November 6, 2010

Weizenblatt Gallery, Moore Auditorium
Mars Hill College

Free and Open to the Public

Tuesday—Friday, 11am—5pm

Wednesday until 7pm

Saturday and Sunday, 12pm—4pm

Monday, September 13, 2010

“‘Oh Brother’ What Next? Understanding the Folk Fad”

Dr. Benjamin Filene, Road Scholar Presentation
6:30pm, Belk Auditorium

September 25, 2010

“Our Harmonies: A Community Celebration of Roots Music”
Grand Opening Celebration
3pm, Moore Auditorium

October 2, 2010

43rd Annual Bascom Lamar Lunsford Festival
10am - 4pm, Upper Quad and 7pm, Moore Auditorium



October 10, 2010

"SodomSong"

Gallery Talk by Photographer Rob Amberg
1pm, Moore Auditorium

October 23, 2010

Kids' Day at *New Harmonies*
12pm - 4pm, Moore Auditorium

October 28, 2010

"Jane Hicks Gentry" with Dr. Betty Smith, Road Scholar Presentation
6:30pm, Owen Theatre

November 5, 2010

Grand Masters Fiddler Tribute

Laura Boosinger hosts Paul Crouch, Arvil Freeman, Bobby Hicks, and Roger Howell,
accompanied by Jerry Sutton
7:30pm, Owen Theatre

**For more information and additional community music events:
www.mhc.edu/newharmonies, (828) 689-1571**

Liston B. Ramsey Center for Regional Studies

at Mars Hill College in partnership with

Dry Ridge Historical Museum

Madison County Arts Council

Thomas Wolfe Memorial State Historic Site

Wolf Laurel Historical Society

Zebulon B. Vance Birthplace State Historic Site

New Harmonies: Celebrating American Roots Music is part of Museum on Main Street, a collaboration between the Smithsonian Institution and the North Carolina Humanities Council, a statewide nonprofit and affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities.



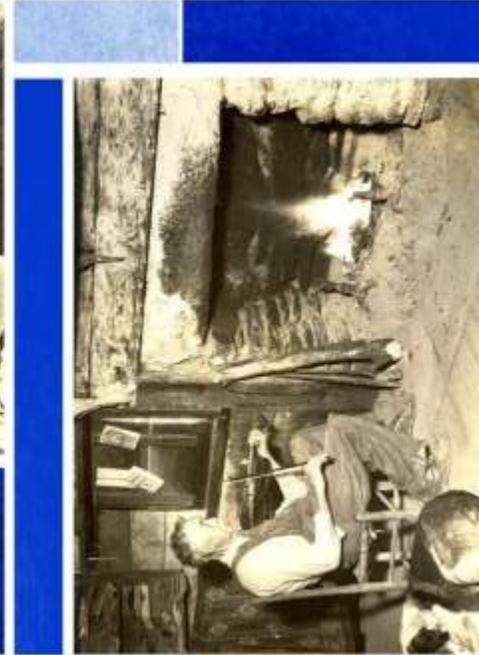
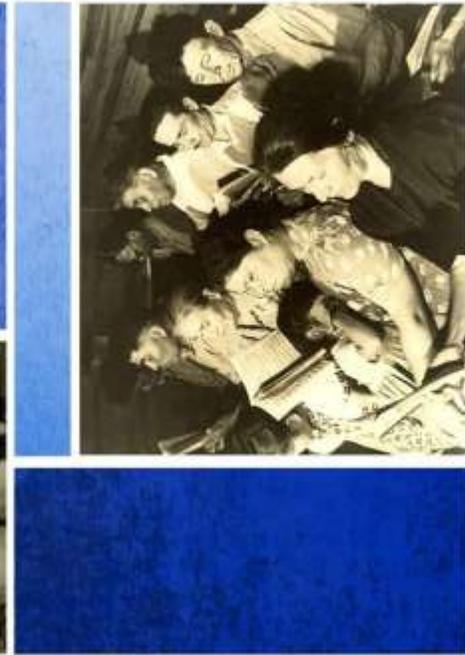
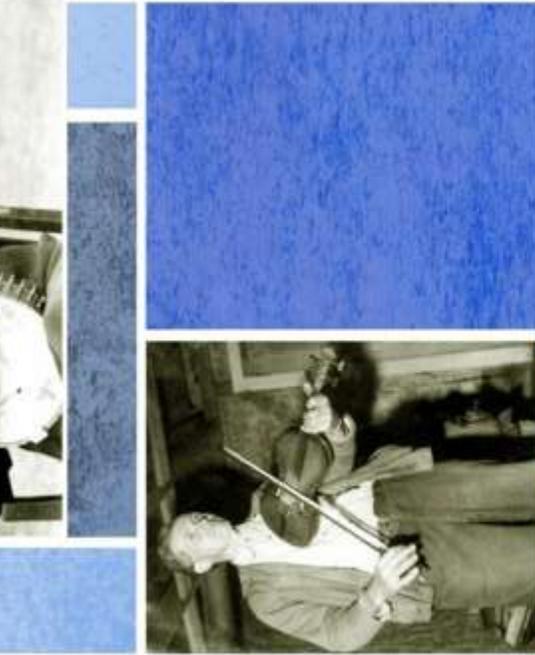
Smithsonian
Institution



NORTH CAROLINA
HUMANITIES
COUNCIL
MANY STORIES. ONE PEOPLE.

Photographs from the Southern Appalachian Archives, Liston B. Ramsey Center for Regional Studies, Mars Hill College.

Top three photographs from the Bascom Lamar Lunsford Scrapbook: Bascom Lamar Lunsford, Samantha Bumgarner, and Manco Sneed. Bottom two photographs from the James G. K. McClure Collection of Farmers Federation photographs.



Ramsey Center Concludes Year of Focus on Farmers Federation Collection

“Unveiling Our Treasures” Event Celebrates Faculty-Student Collaboration

The Spring semester of 2010 brought a continuation of the Ramsey Center’s exploration of the James G.K. McClure Collection of Farmers Federation photographs, manuscripts, and publications through research and programs. The Farmers Federation was an organization that served western North Carolina from 1920 to 1960. The McClure Collection documents the work of the Federation and provides a valuable window onto rural life during that period.

On February 23rd, Archival Research Fellows Dr. John Gripentrog, Assistant Professor of History, and Amanda McMahan, 2009 History graduate, presented the results of a fall semester spent exploring the photographs and publications in the McClure Collection for use in the “U.S. History Since 1865” course.



Professor John Gripentrog and History major Amanda McMahan present their research.

her research on the Federation’s Lord’s Acre Program, in which members supported their churches by growing crops or raising animals. Filmmaker Ken Abbott shared footage he shot at the Ramsey Center’s “Back to the Beginnings” celebration at Hickory Nut Gap Farm in September 2009. Besides footage of Mars Hill College students, faculty, and staff dancing, the high point of the clip was Mrs. Hazel Rhymer singing a ballad, just as she had decades ago at Farmers Federation gatherings. Archivist

Advertisement from the Farmers Federation News.



Local historian Pauline Cheek also spoke about her research on the Federation’s Lord’s Acre Program, in which members supported their churches by growing crops or raising animals. Filmmaker Ken Abbott shared footage he shot at the Ramsey Center’s “Back to the Beginnings” celebration at Hickory Nut Gap Farm in September 2009. Besides footage of Mars Hill College students, faculty, and staff dancing, the high point of the clip was Mrs. Hazel Rhymer singing a ballad, just as she had decades ago at Farmers Federation gatherings. Archivist Karen Paar provided an overview of the contents of the McClure Collection and its preservation needs. She outlined work for the collection going forward to care for and provide broader access to this rich resource.

At a reception following the presentations, the Class of 1960 announced its gift to Mars Hill College in honor of the 50th anniversary of their graduation. For this gift, the Class of 1960 named the Faculty-Student Archival Research Fellowship, created as

part of the National Endowment for the Humanities Challenge Grant after its class sponsors, Dr. Virginia Hart and Dr. Bob Melvin.



Dr. Hart, Dr. Melvin, and Gwendolyn Davis of the Class of 1960 at “Unveiling Our Treasures,” 2010. Photograph by Teresa Buckner.

The Ramsey Center thanks Dr. Hart and Dr. Melvin for allowing this fellowship to bear their names. We also thank the Class of 1960 for so generously supporting our efforts to meet the NEH Challenge Grant by funding this important faculty-student research component of our programming.

Stories and Snapshots from the Field: Conversations with Dr. Charles Thompson

In a day-long visit to the Mars Hill College campus, Dr. Charles Thompson—scholar, filmmaker, and Director of the Undergraduate Program at the Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University—spoke about the more than 3,000 black and white photographs in the James G.K. McClure Collection as a documentary project in its own right. Charlie Thompson brought particular insight to this topic, not only because of his work to document the lives and work of farmers and farm workers, but also because of his own experience as a farmer.



Dr. Charles Thompson. Photo by Rob Amberg.

Thompson began the day with a talk that placed the McClure Collection in the context of other efforts to document the lives of people who work the land. During the noon hour, he addressed the process and ethics of documentary work more specifically. Charlie Thompson discussed the importance of spending time with a community and asking what stories people from that community want to have told to the wider world. He stressed that the role of the filmmaker is to amplify their voices.

Dr. Norman Wirzba of the Duke Divinity School joined Thompson at the evening presentation for a conversation on “Farming, Food, and Faith.” This conversation ranged from the importance of local knowledge and of homecoming—particularly with regard to agriculture—to the global implications of these issues. Clips from Thompson’s film, *The Guestworker*, illustrated the local to global connections.

Day of Service Honors Lord's Acre Initiative

On Saturday, April 17, 2010, a group of Mars Hill College students, staff, and faculty served at Fields of Hope, a local organization that grows fresh produce for our western North Carolina neighbors with food insecurity. This day, a collaboration between Life-Works and the Ramsey Center, allowed participants not only to serve, but also to gain an important historical and cultural context for this work.



The group cleared brush, picked up rocks from the field, and cut up potatoes and planted them. Students, faculty, staff, and even Mars Hill College President Dan Lunsford worked side-by-side and experienced Madison County's thriving farm culture.

After this service, the team caught a glimpse of the region's rich agricultural history by listening to Pauline Cheek talk about the Farmers Federation Lord's Acre program and looking at photographs from that program that are part of the James G.K. McClure Collection. Susie and A.C. Honeycutt, who run Fields of Hope, helped students place their morning's work on the farm in its broader social justice context.

Photos by Teresa Buckner



Our work with the Farmers Federation continues...

The Ramsey Center is still seeking information and stories from those who remember the Farmers Federation or participated in its programs. Please

"Bessie and the Bees," Farmers Federation News, April 1945. James G.K. McClure Collection, Southern Appalachian Archives.

contact Karen Paar, (828) 689-1262 or kpaar@mhc.edu. This photograph from the James G.K. McClure Collection was recently identified by Bessie (Van Hook) Bowers. Bessie was on the cover of the *Farmers Federation News* for April 1945.

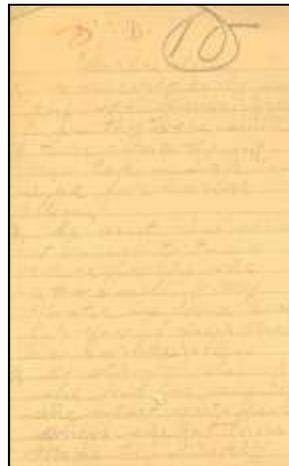


Continued from page 1

The Lunsford Collection at Mars Hill College also contains the handwritten folk songs and ballads that Lunsford gathered as he traveled around the Southern Appalachian region. These texts are a valuable source of information on the variations



Lunsford with Marcus Martin, Samantha Bumgarner, and Bill McElreath, Bascom Lamar Lunsford Collection, Southern Appalachian Archives, Mars Hill College.



that exist for many of these songs. Bascom Lamar Lunsford preserved these songs, and he also filled his folk festivals with musicians and dancers he met in his travels.

Besides the scrapbook and songs, the Lunsford Collection includes photographs, manuscripts, and several of Mr. Lunsford's instruments. It is housed in the Ramsey Center for Regional Studies and the Southern Appalachian Archives. To further explore the collection, please contact Karen Paar at kpaar@mhc.edu, (828) 689-1262, or Peggy Harmon at pharmon@mhc.edu, (828) 689-1394.

Stay Connected!

Visit our new website:
www.mhc.edu/ramsey-center

Connect with Ramsey Center on Facebook! Learn more about upcoming programs and events and see photographs from past events by joining the "Ramsey Center for Regional Studies at Mars Hill College" Fan Page.

Updated Hours for Fall 2010

Liston B. Ramsey Center for Regional Studies,
First Floor of Renfro Library
Hours: Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. and by appointment, while school is in session.

Southern Appalachian Archives,
Ground Floor of Renfro Library
Hours: Monday – Friday, 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. and by appointment, while school is in session.

Contact Karen Paar (kpaar@mhc.edu or (828) 689-1262) or Amy Carraux Price (acarraux@mhc.edu or (828) 689-1571) to schedule an appointment.

JOIN US WITH A COMMITMENT TO OUR ARCHIVES, OUR HERITAGE, OUR HOME



FILL THE FIDDLE

“Fill the Fiddle” is a campaign within the Mars Hill College NEH Challenge Grant, in association with *New Harmonies: Celebrating American Roots Music* to support the Bascom Lamar Lunsford Collection of the Southern Appalachian Archives. Filling the fiddle ensures that Mr. Lunsford’s scrapbook, instruments, and handwritten ballads will be preserved and shared with researchers, enthusiasts, students, and friends for years to come. Thank you for your commitment. We could not do this without you.

Bascom Lamar Lunsford’s “dehorned fiddle” crafted by J. Wesley Roberts in Asheville, North Carolina. Bascom Lamar Lunsford Collection, Southern Appalachian Archives, Mars Hill College.

How can you help Mars Hill College meet the National Endowment for the Humanities challenge for stewardship of the Southern Appalachian Archives?

- Tell your friends, and participate in Ramsey Center and *New Harmonies: Celebrating American Roots Music* programs.
- Send a check to the address below, payable to Mars Hill College, with “**Ramsey Center NEH Challenge Grant**” in the memo line.
- Send in the form below to receive our newsletter and invitations to events.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email (if applicable): _____

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*Send your contribution today:
Mars Hill College Office of Advancement,
P.O. Box 370, Mars Hill, NC 28754*

Liston B. Ramsey Center for Regional Studies

Mars Hill College, Box 6706

Mars Hill, NC 28754