



**APPALACHIAN
FUTURES AT WVU:** **CLASS
PROJECTS**

Classrooms across campus are connecting the Appalachian past to our possible futures, in subjects across the curriculum. These are just a few such projects where WVU student researchers helping to chart a distinctly Appalachian path forward.

APPALACHIAN CLASS FUTURES AT WVU: PROJECTS

African American Education in the Mountain State

Jennifer Thornton
Teaching Assistant Professor
History



UNIDENTIFIED STUDENT IN CAP AND GOWN, STORER COLLEGE

Media: Black and white digitized historical photograph
Source: West Virginia & Regional History Center #025307
Description: Founded in 1865 as a freedmen's school, Storer College in Harper's Ferry developed into a prominent normal school and four-year university. In 1906, the College famously hosted the second conference of the Niagara Movement. After *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), Storer College lost its state funding and was closed. The National Park Service acquired the campus in 1962, and it is now part of Harpers Ferry National Historic Park.



GROUP PORTRAIT OF FREEDMEN'S BUREAU STUDENTS

Media: Black and white digitized historical photograph
Source: West Virginia & Regional History Center #037207
Description: In the aftermath of the Civil War, the Freedmen's Bureau helped support the development of African American schools in West Virginia. Early black schools in West Virginia were established in spite of sometimes-intense opposition from local whites and the poverty of newly emancipated black communities. These first schools laid the foundation of black education in the Mountain State.



STUDENTS AT OSAGE, CIRCA 1940-1950

Media: Black and white digitized historical photograph
Source: West Virginia & Regional History Center #003896
Description: Until the mid-1950s, African Americans across the state of West Virginia attended segregated schools. Sadly, as a result of the school consolidation process during integration, many black educators, principals, and administrators lost their jobs.

The history of African American education in West Virginia speaks to the resilience of Appalachian communities. After Emancipation, Booker T. Washington wrote of the struggle to establish a school for freedmen in Malden, West Virginia: "Few people who were not right in the midst of the scenes can form any exact idea of the intense desire which the people of my race showed for an education.... [I]t was a whole race trying to go to school." [1] To pay for the school, each family agreed to contribute a monthly fee and to allow the teacher free room and board on a rotating basis. These sacrifices speak to the importance African Americans placed on securing an education for themselves and their children. Put simply, African American communities understood education as foundational to their future in the region.

These efforts coincided with two key developments in West Virginia: the creation of the public school system and the implementation of Jim Crow laws. African American children could attend school, but only in racially segregated facilities. Despite this injustice, African American populations across West Virginia turned their schoolhouses into community centers that fostered a sense of pride, purpose, and identity. After the landmark case of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* (1954), West Virginia's schools were integrated and many of the state's African American schools were closed.

Today, students in my historic preservation class at WVU are researching these buildings in an effort to map the history of African American education in West Virginia, and produce National Register nominations, redevelopment plans, and public history projects. With students as the primary researchers, we are currently expanding this work to include an oral histories.

I am including here four examples of the types of historical images that are available to accompany the student research on African American schools in West Virginia.

[1] Booker T. Washington, *Up From Slavery: An Autobiography* (New York: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1907), 29-30.



PLEASANT GREEN SCHOOL IN POCAHONTAS COUNTY, 1921

Media: Black and white digitized historical photograph
Source: Library of Congress, National Child Labor Committee Collection, Lot 7482
Description: Famed photographer Lewis Hine photographed these children playing in front of their one-room schoolhouse in 1921. West Virginia law required that a "colored" school be established when there was a minimum of at least ten school-age African American children in the district. In his travels, Hine encountered families whose children were unable to attend school because they were the only African Americans in the area.

APPALACHIAN CLASS FUTURES AT WVU: PROJECTS

Collective Conversations: Women in Appalachia Art as Narrative: A Class Project in Response to the 10th Annual Women in Appalachia Fine Art Exhibit

Kristina (Nina) Riivald
Teaching Instructor
Women's & Gender Studies

This project is the result of an interaction with the 10th Annual *Women of Appalachia Project: Fine Art Exhibition*, fall 2018. The class, Women of Appalachia had a private viewing at the Monongalia Arts Center and spent time reflecting on the complexities of Appalachian Identities and representations when viewed through a gendered lens. The class wanted to create their own individual representations telling the visual story of their Appalachia. The goal was to create a piece of art that reflects the complexities of Appalachia, Appalachian identities, and experiences, accompanied with a one-page self-reflective analysis.



TOP LEFT: CHARCOAL ON 8X20 CANVAS

Based on The Green Man, this Appalachia Mountain exhales coal dust. It is a statement on the exploitation of Appalachian resources and its devastating effects to health, beauty, and land.

TOP RIGHT: QUILTED MATERIAL ON CANVAS

"Mlima Mama" means Mountain Mama in Swahili. The differing patchworks of fabrics woven together connect to the diversity and African ethnicities in Appalachia. Mlima Mama represents the mother identity of both the culture and land.



BOTTOM LEFT: MIXED MEDIA PIECE

My grandmother's buttons and ribbons passed to me encased in zippers. Gendered Appalachian craft culture combined with charcoal/ coal dust to show the intersections of gendered activities, ritual, and stereotype. Yet in the hands of a new generation., the reclamation of past traditions is used as art to show mixing old and new traditions into the future representations of one my Appalachia: rugged and beautiful



BOTTOM RIGHT: SILENCED WOMAN ON A CLOTHES LINE

Using mixed media, using the symbols of sewing, washing, and domestic labor to show the exploitation of domestic workers in Appalachia. She may be silenced but she will not be invisible.



APPALACHIAN CLASS FUTURES AT WVU: PROJECTS

Vandalia County & Alivanda County Storytelling Festivals

Beth Jane Toren
Interdisciplinary, Cultural and Film Studies Librarian
WVU Libraries

The Vandalia and Alivanda County Storytelling Festivals are a multimodal slipstream experience where attendees explore West Virginia counties created by WVU Honors students enrolled in HONR206A: Storytelling with Archives.

The Vandalia students, most from West Virginia and nearly all from Appalachia, collaborated to create a fictional county in West Virginia in the fall 2018 semester. Small groups each created a community, a culture, and digital stories using archives from the West Virginia and Regional History Center (WVRHC) Collection. The stories are collected in a publication supported on the platforms of the Alliance for Networking Visual Culture (Scalar), the Critical Commons, and YouTube. Music was provided by the Emmy-Award nominated bluegrass/hip-hop fusion group Gangstagrass.

The Storytelling Festivals are mobile friendly. Visitors can scan a QR code to visit communities, and view/hear stories on their phones. This exploration of multiple voices and stories aims to create conversations across geographical and disciplinary boundaries about new ways to imagine Appalachia and specifically West Virginia. It adds to the WVU collection of stories, emphasizes the

WVRHC archives a resource for all students, researchers and teachers. Like the Appalachian Futures exhibit, the Festival is a “collaborative, multidisciplinary” work that “address(es) the dominant contemporary narratives about Appalachia in a new way.”

In the spring 2019 semester, another class of Honors students created the project, Alivanda. Small groups practiced world building as the first class did. Four groups collaboratively produced one video using a cloud-based video editor preloaded with selected materials from the WVRHC to remix. Materials include historical photographs, oral history interviews, and videos from the State Archives. Students practiced listening skills and historical empathy, and were guided among choices of topics and approaches to use these materials to create ways to tell and blend stories.

A central focus in storytelling is the hero's journey, often reflecting self-realization. Focusing on their journey enables students to better control the narrative of their own life.



EXPLORE ALIVANDA COUNTY



EXPLORE VANDALIA COUNTY

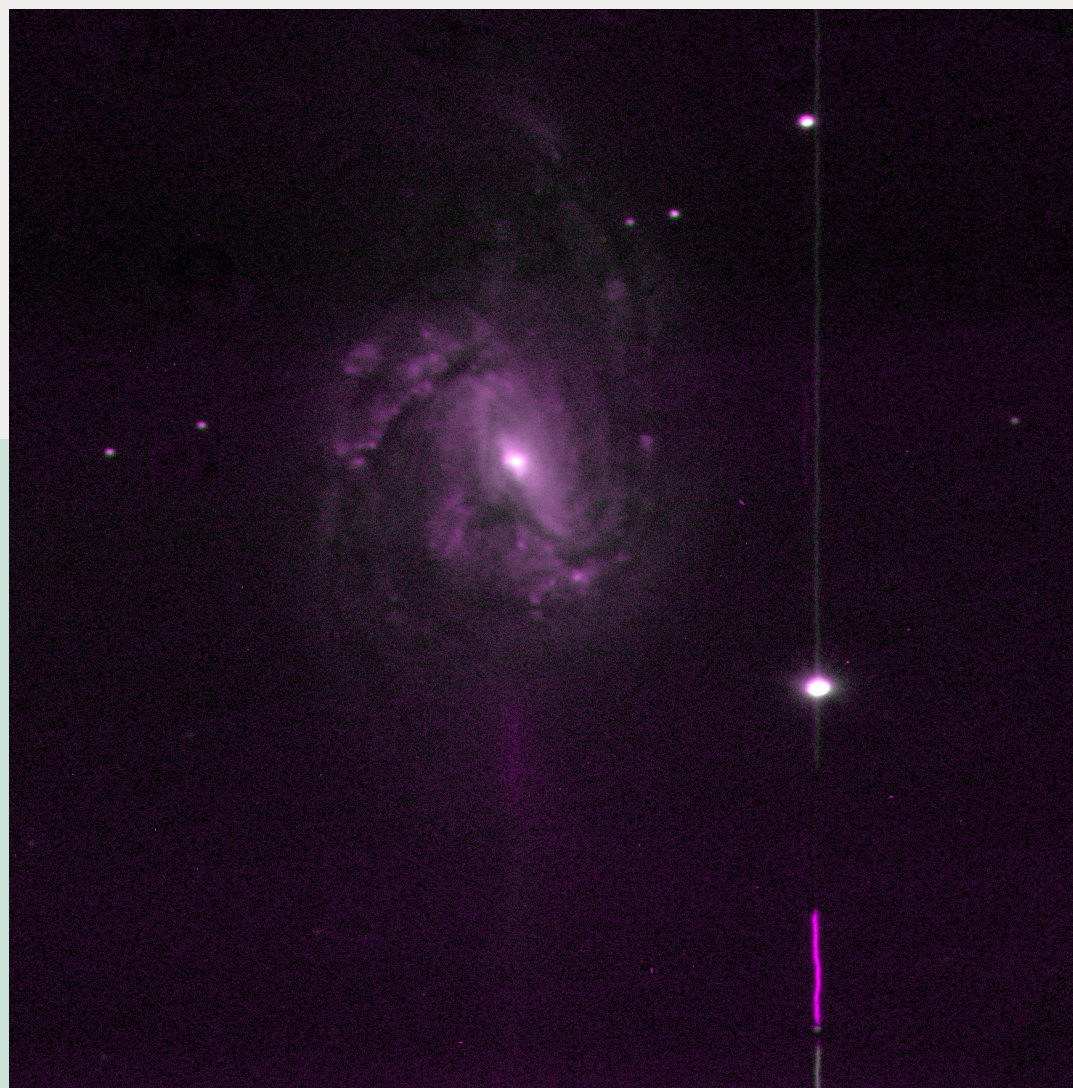
APPALACHIAN CLASS FUTURES AT WVU: PROJECTS

Appalachian Astrophysics

Kathryn Williamson
Teaching Assistant Professor
Physics & Astronomy Department

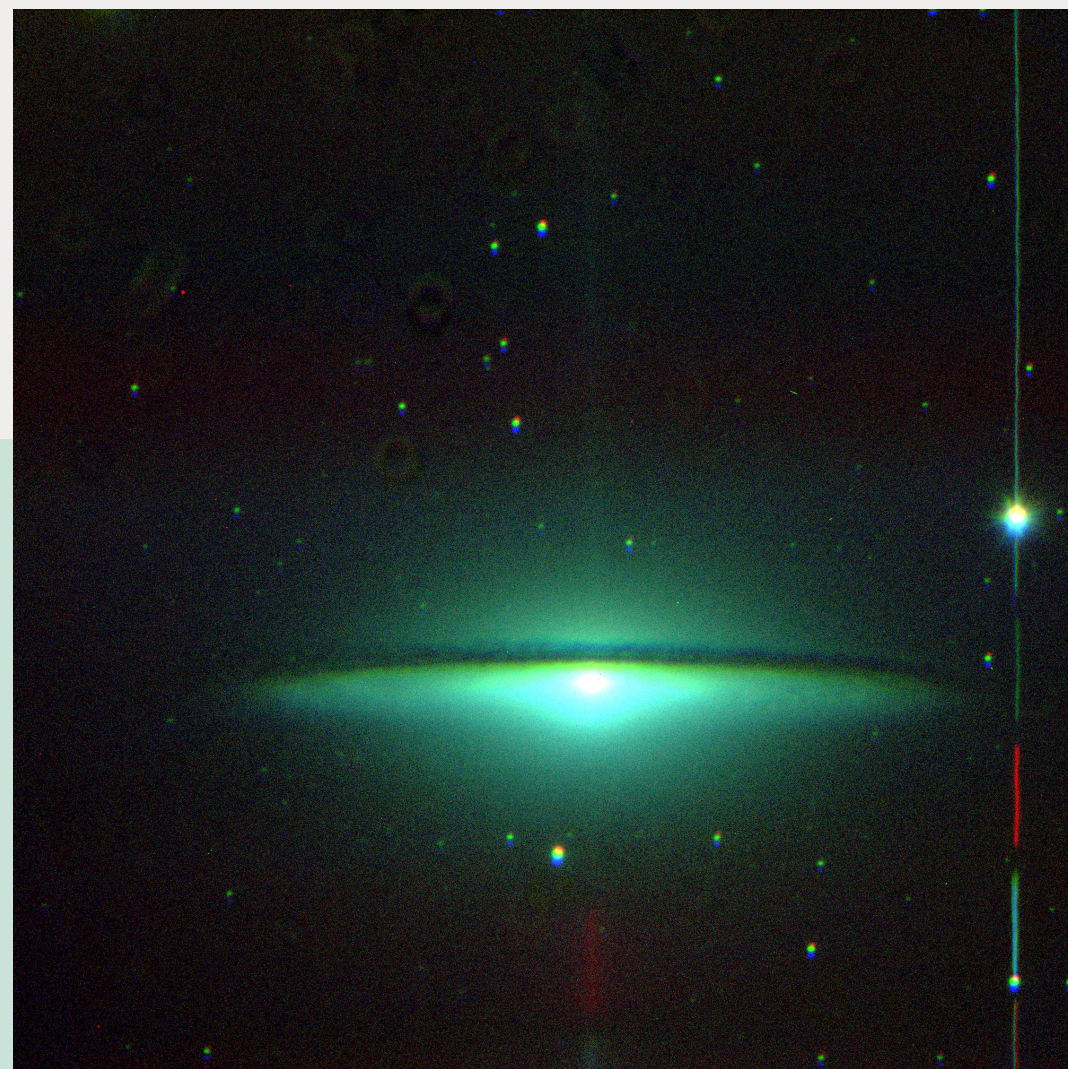
“Appalachian Astrophysics” is a series of astronomical images collected by WVU students via the Skynet Robotic Telescope Network, that speak to the leadership of West Virginia in the astronomical sciences. The Skynet Robotic Telescope Network is a global network of fully automated telescopes serving professional astronomers and students over the internet. The Green Bank Observatory in Pocahontas County hosts premiere radio telescopes that are used by astronomers world-wide, and WVU’s Center for Gravitational Waves and Cosmology regularly contributes to ground-breaking discoveries that test Einstein’s theories and push

the limits of our understanding of physics. A variety of educational efforts have emerged from this scientific research, including the Pulsar Search Collaboratory, which engages high school teachers and students in the search to discover exotic lighthouses in space called pulsars; and the West Virginia Science Public Outreach Team (SPOT), which trains college ambassadors to travel to schools and scout groups across the state to enhance awareness of local science and inspire the next generation.



STUDENT: JERRY DOOLEY
Object name: Messier 66
Telescope used: CTIO-1.0m
Filters used: B, V, rprime
Exposure time used: 120 seconds

I never really thought about what was in our solar system, let alone our universe until this class. Here in West Virginia, we do not get many clear nights to look at the stars. Being able to use skynet and actually be able to see what is out there is really amazing.



STUDENT: PAIGE HRABOVSKY
Object Name: Sombrero Galaxy
Telescope used: CTIO-1.0m
Filter used: rprime, V, B
Exposure time: 100.0 s

I have always enjoyed discovering new galaxies or stars in the sky and Skynet helped me achieve the next step to discovering what’s out there for me. Learning and discovering new material is beyond amazing to me, especially from my computer. I picked this messier object because I thought it would be fascinating to turn it into color! I am beyond ecstatic to have this image knowing that I discovered something new! I am glad I took astronomy to expand my knowledge of space.



STUDENT: MICHELE SCHMITZ
Object name: M83
Telescope used: CTIO 1.0 m
Filters used: rPrime, B, V
Exposure time used: 60 sec.

The vastness of space is quite magnificent. Some find it daunting how we are a speck of dust floating in the cosmos, yet, I find it comforting to see the age of the universe around us in the night skies of Appalachia. For me, I find it exhilarating to look up and see things people before us saw and what my children will one day see. I hope we as a species can still appreciate the feeling of looking up at the stars on a dark night in the mountains.

APPALACHIAN CLASS FUTURES AT WVU: PROJECTS

Graphic Appalachia: Appalachian Identity Transformed: Recovery the Classics Appalachian Style

Stewart Plein

Curator, Rare Books & Printed Resources
Managing Director, West Virginia National
Digital Newspaper Project
West Virginia University Libraries
West Virginia and Regional History Center

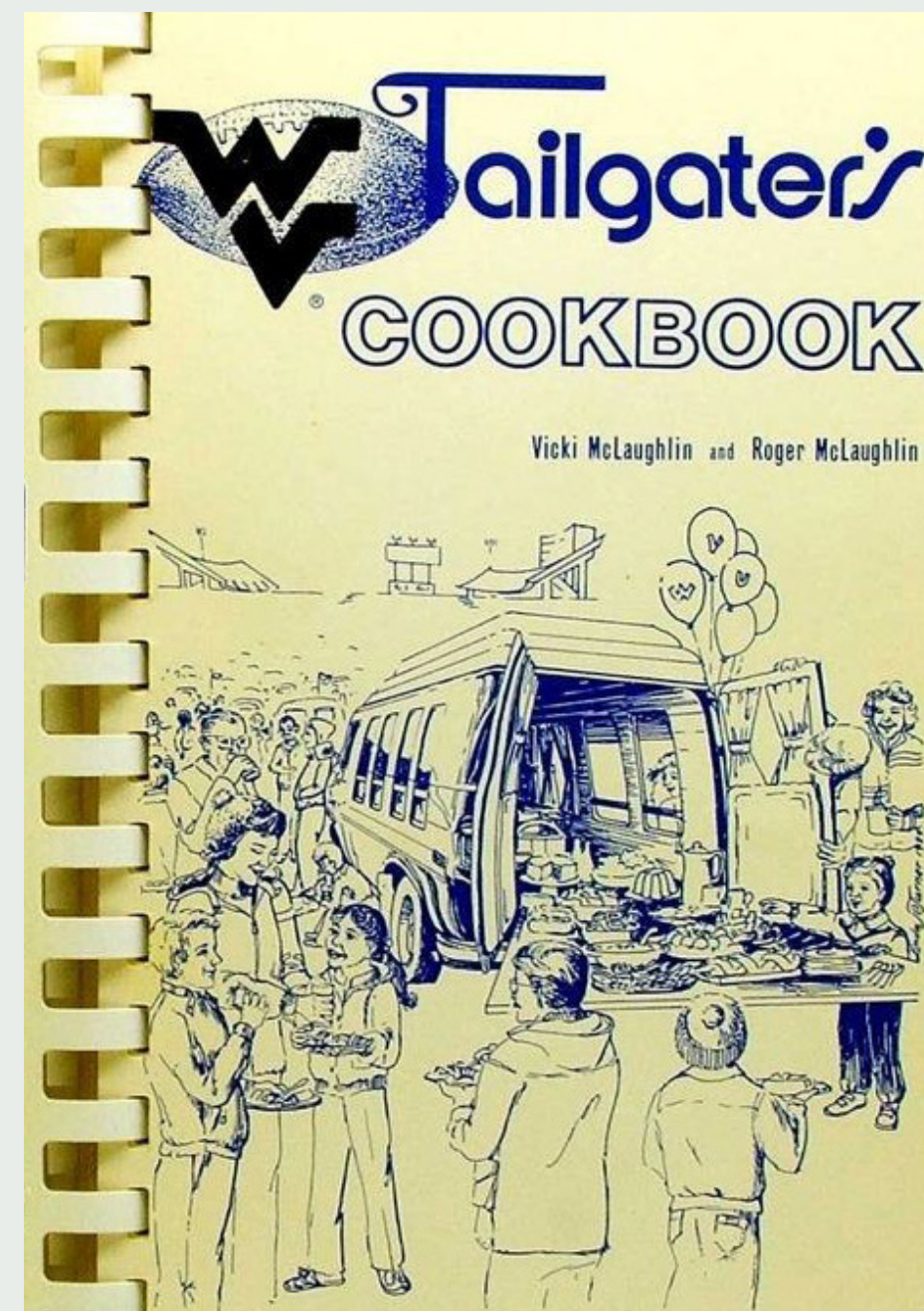
Joe Galbreath

Assistant Professor
College of Creative Arts

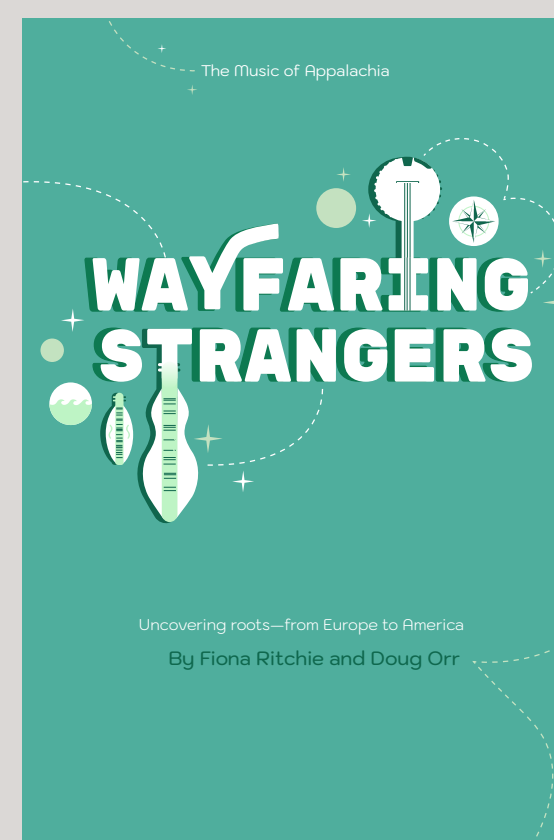
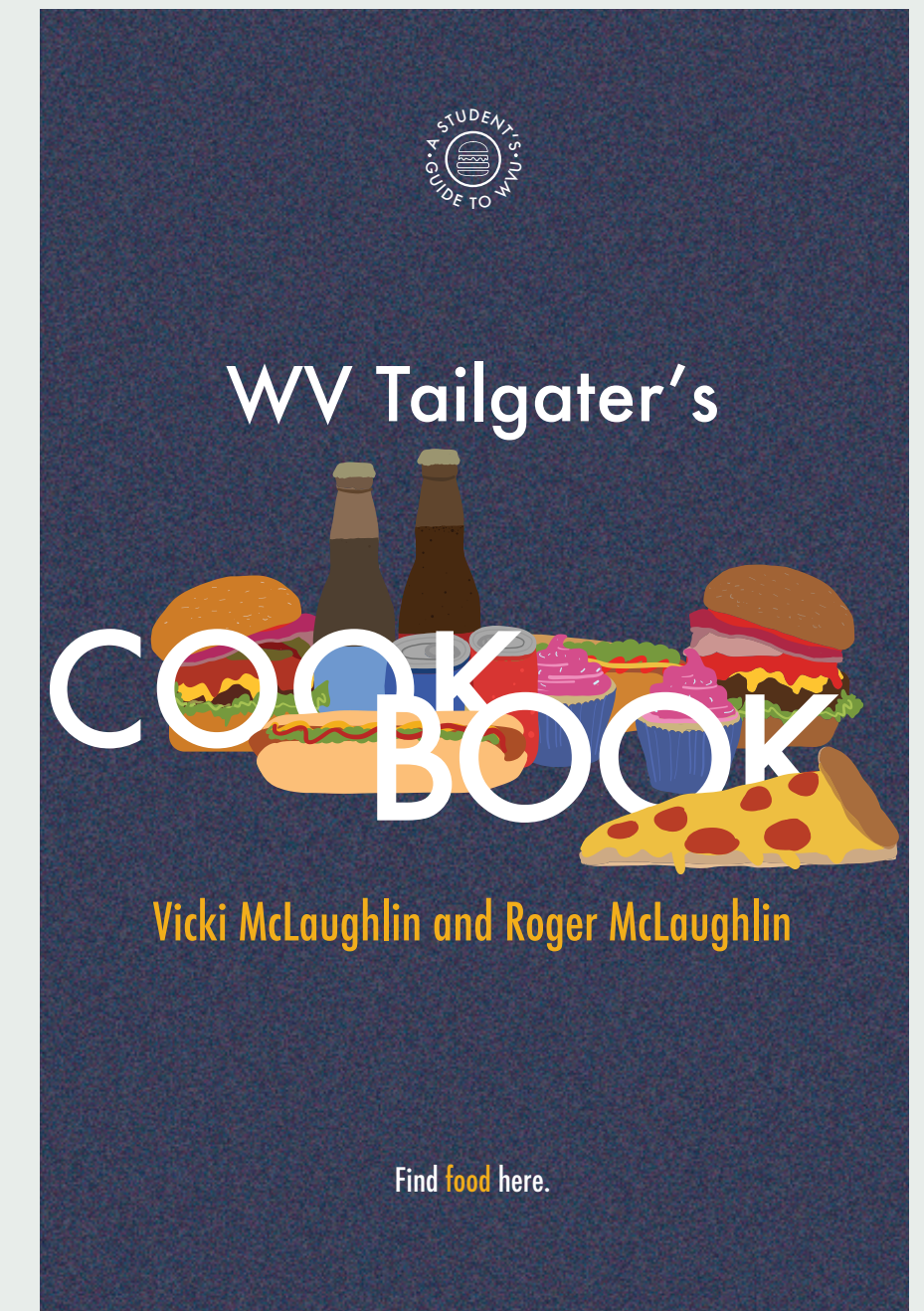
Graphic art helps to carry narrative by stitching the seams of art and authorship, reaching across those borders to transform the written word into a visual manifestation of Appalachia and identity. The images portrayed on the cover of books about Appalachia were constructed, imagined, and interpret Appalachia and Appalachians in the past and to the present. More evocative than words, the power of graphics today and the literature of yesterday is part of the Appalachian narrative moving into the future.

This project addresses the long history of art and image used to create representations of "Graphic Appalachia," and its importance to the literature of Appalachia today, based on book cover art created by Professor Joe Galbreath's Advanced Typography class, fall 2018. Each student chose a classic Appalachian title and as their assignment, reimagined the design to reinterpret the image of Appalachia and bring it into the future.

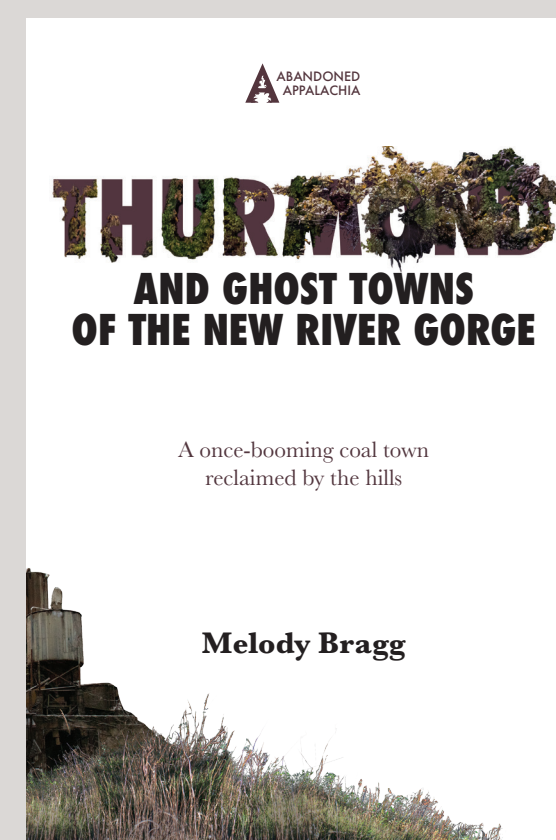
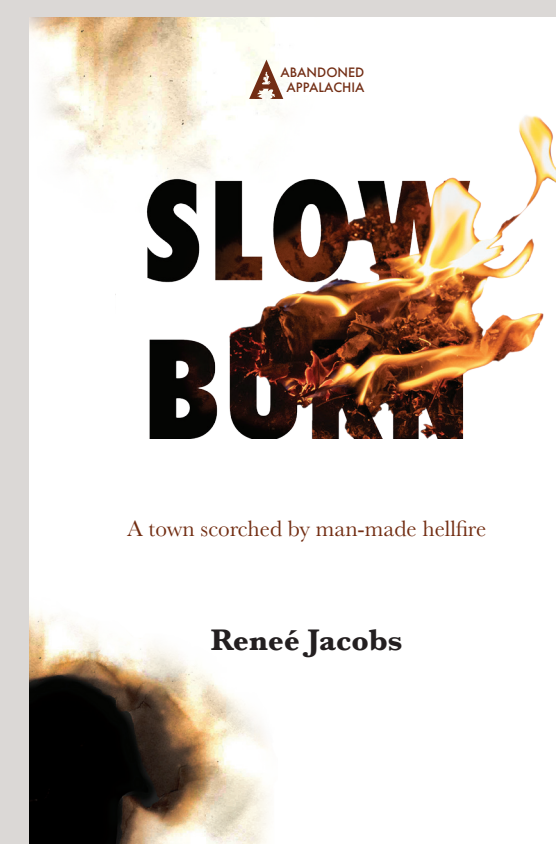
ORIGINAL BOOK COVER



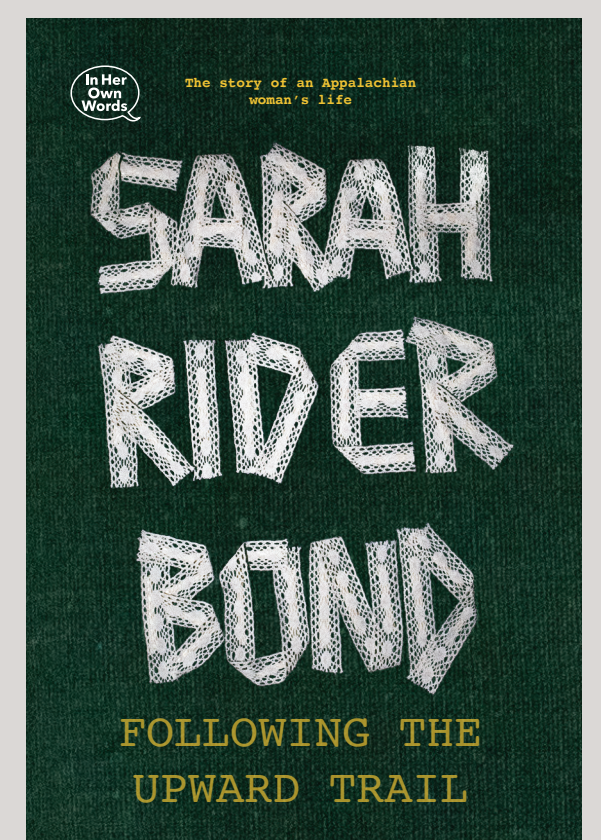
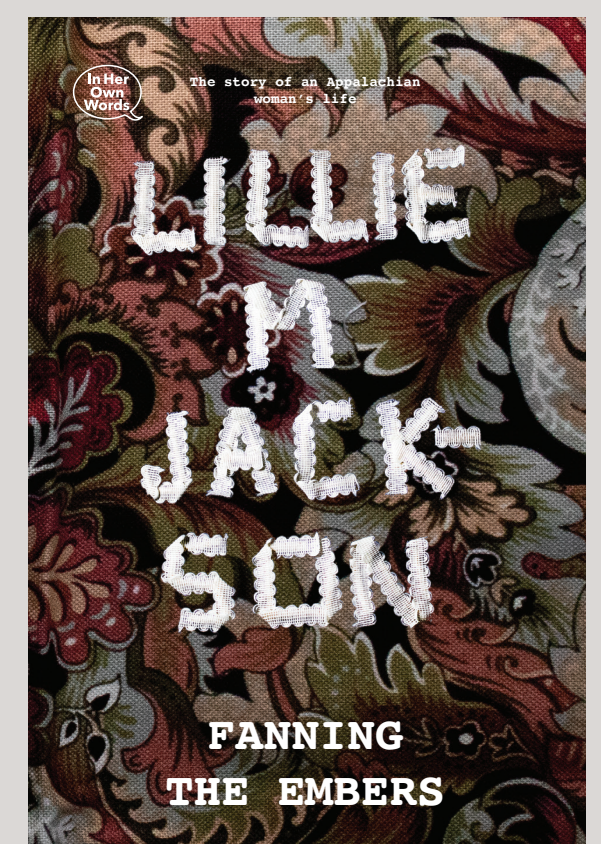
NEW DESIGN BY ALI SOMMER



REBECCA RUTLEDGE



ZANE HUGGINS



ALEXIS DELONG

APPALACHIAN CLASS FUTURES AT WVU: PROJECTS



How New Media Develops Future of Appalachian Identity: West Virginia University and George Washington University Collaborative Reporting Project

Emily Corio
Teaching Associate Professor
Reed College of Media

The WVU-GWU Collaborative Reporting Project brings together student journalists to take a deep dive into a newsworthy topic in Appalachia. The student journalists represent different geographic and cultural perspectives, coming from two very different universities. WVU is a public university in rural Appalachia and GWU is a private university in Washington, D.C. The project purposefully brings these student journalists together to create content that reflects multiple viewpoints and transcends biases.

In the 2019 spring semester, students researched the opioid epidemic generally and its impact in West Virginia specifically. The team took an investigative approach to covering the topic and coordinated research across campuses. After four months of research, eight students, four from WVU and four from GWU, and journalism professors from both universities conducted interviews and additional research in West Virginia. The team met in Washington, D.C., to do story planning and to interview national experts and other sources. Each student's story will be published in August 2019 on a website created by the WVU Media College. The Collaborative Reporting Project aims to produce journalism content that informs and enlightens, while at the same time teaching students—through experiential learning—how to do journalism that holds the powerful accountable and strengthens democracy.

This project promotes an Appalachian Future that includes explanatory and investigative journalism in Appalachia. Collaboration in journalism, whether that's between academic journalism programs or between local and national media, presents opportunities to expand news coverage in Appalachia, benefitting those who live here and providing a more accurate picture of Appalachia for those who don't.

TOP LEFT: WVU student Madison Weaver interviews Janie Fuller-Phelps in Huntington, West Virginia, about research that will be collected at this new child development center, River Valley CARES, on children who had NAS (neonatal abstinence syndrome) due to drug exposure while in the womb.
Photo by Mary Kay McFarland

TOP RIGHT: WVU journalism student Douglas Soule interviews attorney Hunter Mullens in Philippi, West Virginia, about the opioid epidemic in that community. Mullens represents several West Virginia counties and towns in a lawsuit against drug companies that manufacture or distribute opioids; this lawsuit is one of hundreds that have been filed by local municipalities against drug companies over the opioid epidemic.
Photo by Emily Corio

BOTTOM LEFT: WVU student Patrick Orsagos and GWU student Halle Kendall interview someone at The Sentencing Project, a non-profit based in Washington, D.C., that advocates for prison reform. Patrick produced a video story and wrote a text story about the intersection of the opioid epidemic and higher incarceration rates in the state.
Photo by Mary Kay McFarland

BOTTOM RIGHT: Story development included several trips to the Boone County Courthouse to read through thousands of pages of court records.
Photo by Mary Kay McFarland