



Southern & Eastern Kentucky Tourism Development Association

The Center for Rural Development
2292 South Highway 27
Somerset, Kentucky 42501
Telephone: 606-677-6000
Facsimile: 606-677-6059
www.tourseky.com

For More Media Information, Contact:

George Percy

Geiger & Associates Public Relations

1846 Junwin Court

Tallahassee, FL 32308

850/942-6685 (ph)

850/942-1057 (fx)

E-mail: gpgeigerpr@aol.com

REGION RICH IN CULTURAL HERITAGE

When the first pioneers came through the Cumberland Gap into Kentucky in the 1700s, they carried few possessions. Bare necessities were about all the early settlers could bring. But tucked inside their wagons or pack bags would sometimes be simple musical instruments. Carried inside their hearts were the traditional songs of their childhood, along with new tunes waiting to be created in this wondrous land they would now call home.

Their love of beauty and the talents to create something lovely from almost nothing also came with them. All these skills would be put to use as the early Kentuckians carved homes and settlements out of the wilderness. The quilts, rag rugs, baskets, pottery, wood furniture and woven chair seats they created were both utilitarian and beautiful. Many of these old arts and crafts have been passed down from generation to generation and can still be found in Kentucky.

Today, you can enjoy the cultural legacy of these early forbears throughout the Highlands and Waterways Region of Kentucky. The music that helped sustain the settlers through the sadness of life and helped them celebrate the joys is spread over the region like a comforting heartbeat. You can hear distinctive bluegrass with its high lonesome sound, folk tunes recounting legends of the past, and country songs with foot-stomping merriment and heart-breaking sorrow. Mandolins, fiddles, guitars, hand-made dulcimers, banjos and harmonicas are kept close at hand for impromptu musical moments.

When celebrations were called for, early Kentuckians could always round up some local music makers and join in for a dance. Clogging, contra dancing and square dancing are still favorites throughout the region. Hardly a modern day festival or entertainment center doesn't have its dancers showing off their twirls and fancy footwork.

After a long day's work in those old times, the storyteller in the family or the community would regale others with tales from Scottish and Irish ancestors. Sitting on the porch of a mountain cabin on summer evenings or gathering around a roaring

fireplace on winter nights, the teller of tales would spin magic for spellbound listeners. It might be an animal allegory, a love story, a Bible recounting or the telling of a ghost or "haint" that walked the land. Much storytelling fell by the wayside when radio and television came along. But the stories are still there, as vibrant and diverse as ever to give listeners a sense of continuity and history. You can hear them at festivals and fairs, at special workshops and, sometimes, even in mountain homes where they are welcomed as old friends.

With few store-bought luxuries or even the places to buy them, early settlers learned to create the things that made a house a home. Today, Kentucky crafts are appreciated the world over for their heritage, originality and beauty. Quilt patterns passed down through families, baskets handcrafted with rare museum quality, pottery both useful and unusually beautiful, rag rugs braided by skillful hands, whimsical critters constructed of scrap materials, watercolors so vibrant they seem to spring to life, corn shuck dolls and rag dolls fashioned with loving care ... the vast array of artists and their creations is infinite.

The Kentucky Folk Art Center, housed in a renovated 1900s grocery warehouse in downtown Morehead, has a large display of traditional or "unschooled" Kentucky folk arts. The first floor presents some of the best works from the Center's permanent collection, while the second floor features changing exhibits that explore themes among Kentucky's folk artists. The gift shop offers original artworks by contemporary artists, many of whom are included in the museum's collections.

At Cumberland Gap National Historic Park the visitor center includes the newest outlet store of the Southern Highland Handicraft Guild. Some of the best crafts from the mountains of eastern Kentucky as well as adjacent parts of Tennessee, North Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia can be found here.

At Kentucky events, visitors often get a chance to meet the makers and watch their talents turn such everyday materials as wood into fine furniture, unusual boxes and even delicate flowers; yarn into beautiful sweaters, unique hats and other wearable art; clay into functional stoneware or festive coffee mugs; gourds into birdfeeders and roly-poly Santas; reeds into sturdy baskets and fancy chair seats; tree bark into birdhouses and straight-back chairs. Kentucky craftspeople learned a long time ago to work with what was at hand to fashion outstanding heirlooms.

The reform movements beginning at the end of the 19th century also stimulated traditional rural folk arts and handicrafts. Reformers discovered a market for traditional handicrafts in cities in the Northeast. Settlement schools and missions encouraged the revival of handicrafts and the production of folk items in exchange for some of the education and relief services and as a way of encouraging a source of family income. The handicraft revival throughout Southern Appalachia is closely tied to the history of good works by early reformers.

Founded in 1902 at the Forks of Troublesome Creek in Knott County, the Hindman Settlement School is a legacy of that reform movement. Nearby in a renovated early 1900s cabin is the Marie Stewart Crafts Shop. Dedicated to preserving the rich, traditional crafts of the area, the co-op features only juried items to ensure the highest quality. The Kentucky Appalachian Artisans Center in Hindman has built on the Hindman Settlement reputation. The center is a regional marketing and support center for artists, as well as featuring art exhibits, craft demonstrations and items for sale.

Shoppers today come from miles around for such arts and crafts events as Williamsburg's Old-Fashioned Trading Days, the Appalachian Celebration in Morehead, the Poor Folk Art and Crafts spring and fall festivals in Benham, the Kingdom Come Swappin' Meetin' at Cumberland's Southeast Community College, and the Kentucky Hills Weekend at Cumberland Falls State Resort Park.

The Hindman Settlement School also has an outstanding literary heritage. For more than a quarter of a century, it has offered an Appalachian Writers Workshop each summer to focus on writers from and writing about the Appalachian region. The weeklong conference offers seminars, one-on-one conferences and readings.

Kentucky can lay claim as the birthplace, inspiration or location of some notable literary history. Kingdom Come State Park, at the crest of Pine Mountain in eastern Kentucky, was named for the 1903 book, *The Little Shepherd of Kingdom Come*. Kentuckian John Fox Jr. wrote the popular Civil War-themed novel, believed to be the first literary work in the U.S. to sell a million copies.

Barbara Kingsolver says she grew up "in the middle of an alfalfa field" in Eastern Kentucky. She made Kentucky the setting for several of her best-selling books, including *The Bean Trees*.

Harriette Simpson Arnow was born in south central Kentucky. For more insights into the lives detailed in Simpson's popular novel, *The Dollmaker*, travel to the Coal Mining Museum in Benham.

Built in 1812, the oldest building on the Columbia public square is a hotel where Theodore O'Hara wrote *The Bivouac of the Dead* in 1847. A verse from it is inscribed at the entrances of the cemeteries in Frankfort and Arlington, Va.

The Knifley log home of the late Henry and Janice Holt Giles is now a museum celebrating the life of Mrs. Giles and the 20 books she wrote with characters immortalizing Kentucky history.

The Hindman Settlement School's literary tradition started with the early workers who wrote about the school. Ann Cobb arrived in 1905 and remained to write sketches and dialect poems, many of which were collected for her book *Kinfolk: Kentucky Mountain Rhymes*.

Lucy Furman, an accomplished writer before coming to Hindman, published five novels about her years as housemother to the small Settlement boys and her association with the school and the surrounding area. Her novels were *Mothering on Perilous*, *Sight to the Blind*, *The Quare Women*, *The Glass Window*, and *The Lonesome Road*.

James Still, novelist and short story writer associated with Hindman for nearly 70 years, published 13 books, including his classic *River of Earth*, *Sport Creek*, *From the Mountain*, and *From the Valley, New and Selected Poems by James Still*.

Albert Stewart, poet and founding editor of *Appalachian Heritage* magazine, grew up on the Settlement campus. He is the founder of the Appalachian Writers Workshop.

The fine arts are well represented in the region in such places as the Valley of the Winds Gallery in Eolia, which is also the studio of artists Jeff and Sharman Chapman-Crane. Jeff is a fine social realist painter, who creates moving images of the people of eastern Kentucky. Sharman creates three-dimensional sculptures of endangered animals, using found objects. The Artists Attic in Harlan and Arnold's Upstairs Gallery in Columbia also feature painting and other fine arts by Kentucky artists. The Appalachian Culture and Fine Arts Center at Southeast Community College in Cumberland and the

Mountain Arts Center in Prestonsburg present changing exhibits of painting, photography and other fine arts by Kentucky artists.

The Claypool-Young Art Gallery on the campus of Morehead State University is the largest gallery space in eastern Kentucky. It presents changing exhibits of contemporary art featuring work by national and international artists, as well as faculty and students at MSU. David Lucas, a retired coal miner, is a talented folk painter, who lives in the small town of Cromona and paints scenes of eastern Kentucky life. His work can be seen at the Cozy Corner in Whitesburg.

Performing arts venues include the Jenny Wiley Summer Music Theatre at Jenny Wiley State Resort Park, the Black Box Theatre at Southeast Community College in Cumberland, and the Center for Rural Development in Somerset.

Long before bluegrass music was the "in thing," it was enjoyed in Kentucky, the land of its birth. With the popularity of the soundtrack from the movie *Oh Brother, Where Art Thou*, bluegrass music is hotter than ever. Hear the real thing at Meadowgreen Park Music Hall in Clay City. The music hall is the only building in Kentucky built exclusively for the preservation and performance of bluegrass music. Its mission is to educate and create awareness of the cultural significance of Appalachian Mountain bluegrass music. Live performances feature top bluegrass performers complemented with the appearances of local groups. That's an important part of Kentucky culture – it is to be shared and nurtured, not locked away or owned by a select few. People with talents and skills are expected to share them, to create the next generation to carry on this important culture.

One of the best places to enjoy that musical heritage is Renfro Valley. The basic formula begun by John Lair hasn't changed much since Renfro Valley started more than 60 years ago. It's the tried and true – down home, clean entertainment in a country setting. Known as "Kentucky's Country Music Capital," Renfro Valley presents music shows each week and transmits them to more than 200 radio stations in North America. The new Kentucky Music Hall of Fame and Museum on the grounds of Renfro Valley celebrates Kentucky's music history from small notes to major movements.

Another excellent place to hear Kentucky's musical legacy is at the Mountain Arts Center, a state-of-the-art facility located in the small community of Prestonsburg. The \$7 million complex houses a 1,050-seat auditorium, classrooms, rehearsal space, gift shop and fully equipped digital recording studio. Opened in October of 1996, the center is the permanent home for the Kentucky Opry and the Kentucky Opry Junior Pros (a younger training ground for the Opry with 52 performers from 17 schools in seven different counties), and their shows are frequently sold out.

A great place to hear bluegrass and other forms of traditional music is in Morehead. The Poppy Mountain Bluegrass Festival, held the third weekend in September, is the largest traditional bluegrass festival in the U.S. The Kentucky Center for Traditional Music (KCTM) presents programs of traditional music on the Morehead State University campus throughout the year.

Whitesburg is home to the creative media center Appalshop, highlighting the history, culture and social issues of Appalachia. It features a full season of cultural performances, June Appal Recordings, Roadside Theater, Headwaters Television, WMMT-FM, and Appalshop Films. For three decades, Appalshop has gained a reputation for making powerful documentaries about folk-culture figures and about social activism in

Appalachia. Visitors can watch any of the videos and tour the facility. Many videos, as well as audio recordings of mountain country music, are available for purchase.

Folks also can tune their radios to WMMT from its home base at Appalshop. WMMT is not like other radio stations. Since it's not a commercial radio station, WMMT has no high-paid coordinator telling people what songs to play. Instead, you'll be hearing someone who truly loves the music they play. WMMT music programmers pick their own music and usually play records from their collections. You might hear jazz or electronic or bluegrass. When you listen to the Coal Report or Mountain Talk, you are hearing the true voices of the region. These are friends and neighbors sharing universal concerns. And they are doing it for love, not for money.

Folks in the Highlands and Waterways Region of Kentucky share a cultural wealth with many common bonds. Strong traditions, family ties, storytelling, Appalachian literature, music, dance, arts and crafts draw them together. They stand firm in their ancestors' ability to make do, then do better. Most of all, the tie that binds is an abiding sense of place, a knowledge of where they came from and what brought them to where they are today.

Cultural tourism options include:

~ Dedicated to preserving the history and culture of the Appalachian Region of Kentucky, The Appalachian Center at Southeast Community College in Cumberland houses an extensive collection of photographs, art works and oral histories depicting the history of the region. The center also features a black box theater with a full schedule of performances and special events, an art gallery, arts and crafts production area, and other facilities designed to stimulate artistic expression and serve as a resource for the region's cultural traditions.

~ The Jenny Wiley Summer Music Theatre performs a musical version of the legendary Jenny Wiley story, as well as Broadway musicals. The outdoor performances are at the Jenny Wiley State Resort Park in an amphitheater open from late June through mid-August.

Jenny Wiley was a pioneer woman who was captured by Indians here in 1789. She survived 11 months of captivity and saw her brother and children slain by her captors. Wiley miraculously escaped and was eventually reunited with her husband. She died at 71 and is buried in a cemetery five miles south of Paintsville on Highway 23 near the site of Harmon Station, the first white settlement in eastern Kentucky.

~ Shindig in the Mountains in May features music, clogging and square dancing at Natural Bridge State Resort Park. In June, the Appalachian Mountain Square Dancing and Clogging Festival at the park has music, clogging and square dancing.

~ The Kentucky Appalachian Artisan Center in Hindman is a regional marketing and support center for artists. It includes art exhibits and craft demonstrations.

- ~ The Kentucky Folk Art Center in Morehead is a statewide museum of the best of Kentucky folk arts. The gift shop sells original works by contemporary artists.
- ~ The Claypool-Young Art Gallery at Morehead State University is the largest gallery space in eastern Kentucky, featuring changing exhibits of contemporary art.
- ~ The Pine Mountain-Letcher County Crafts Co-Op in Whitesburg features a variety of works and demonstrations by local craftspeople.
- ~ Buckhorn Lake State Resort Park hosts the Mountain Showcase in March where Appalachian traditions are highlighted throughout the month.
- ~ Appalachian Family Folk Weekend in June at Hindman Settlement School helps visitors discover the fascinating cultural Appalachia through traditional music, dance, crafts and storytelling.
- ~ The Cave Run Storytelling Festival, held the fourth weekend in September at the scenic Twin Lakes Campground on Cave Run Lake, is one of the premier storytelling events in the country, featuring a variety of storytellers for young and old alike.
- ~ Our Appalachia Day, held on the second Saturday in October, originally started as the Alice Lloyd College Homecoming. The day of celebration at the college is now open to the public with Appalachian crafts, music, book signings and much more.
- ~ The Kentucky Hills Weekend in March at Cumberland Falls State Resort Park is a tribute to Appalachian heritage with music, dance, crafts and hikes.
- ~ The Appalachian Celebration in Morehead the third week of June highlights the heritage of eastern Kentucky. It features traditional music and a juried arts and crafts market with over 100 artists.
- ~ The Old Joe Clark Bluegrass Festival in July at Renfro Valley features bluegrass music, arts and crafts.
- ~ Harlan's Heritage Days in September celebrates mountain heritage with craft demonstrations, music, storytelling and food.
- ~ The Mountain Folks Festival in September at Levi Jackson State Park is a weekend of traditional country and contra dancing.
- ~ The Poppy Mountain Bluegrass Festival, the third weekend in September, is the largest traditional bluegrass festival in the U.S.
- ~ During July, the Master Musician Festival in Somerset draws crowds from all over the country. You can see famous masters of all ages and cultures perform alongside the state's best and brightest musicians. The three-day event offers classical, blues, rock,

country, bluegrass, folk and gospel music, along with arts and crafts by Sheltoewe Artisans.

~ Seedtime on the Cumberland in Whitesburg is a four-day festival and celebration every June which showcases traditional Appalachian music, storytellers and artists.

~ The Rowan County Harvest Festival celebrates harvest time, the third weekend in September, with a carnival, local musicians, traditional foods, and arts and crafts.

~ Christmas Appalachian Arts & Crafts Market in Morehead, the first Saturday in December, celebrates the Christmas season along with other events in eastern Kentucky, including the annual Christmas show at the Mountain Arts center in Prestonsburg and the Christmas celebration, including a shivaree, at the Mountain Home Place near Paintsville.

~ The Center for Rural Development in Somerset has a 760-seat performing arts theatre that has a full stage, an orchestra pit with lift, and a fully equipped fly loft. Other features include professional sound and lighting systems, scenery and costume shops, dressing rooms and prop storage.

~ The Red Bird Mission in Beverly specializes in hickory bark furniture, very high quality willow and honeysuckle baskets, carved coal figurines, handmade candles, birdhouses and hand-woven rugs.

~ The Henderson Settlement & Log House Craft Shop in Frakes has traditional mountain country crafts by local craftspeople.

~ At Barbourville, the Kentucky Community Crafts on US 25E has handmade mountain crafts by local folks.

~ The Southern Highlands Handicraft Guild shop at Cumberland Gap National Historic Park features the work of some of the best traditional crafters throughout the Appalachian region, including Kentucky.

~ The Marie Stewart Craft Shop in Hindman carries only juried items to ensure the highest quality.

~ David Appalachian Crafts in David is a co-op with nice braided rugs and quilted throws, wall hangings and bed covers, along with split oak baskets, handmade stick furniture and more.

~ Cozy Corner in Whitesburg is the place to come for very high quality quilts, baskets and other regional folk crafts.

~ Appalachian Fireside Crafts in Vincent specializes in mountain arts and crafts.

~ Morris Fork Crafts, a little way beyond Booneville, has an interesting collection of Appalachian arts and crafts.

~ Kentucky Hills Crafts Co-Op in Pine Knot has a wide selection of mountain crafts.

~ Poor Fork Arts and Crafts in Cumberland has a wide variety of items handmade by local mountain craftspeople, including woodwork, quilts, pottery and paintings.

~ History, drama and music are yours to enjoy under the summer night sky at outdoor performances in Nicholasville.

CONSUMER INQUIRIES:

Southern and Eastern Kentucky Tourism Development Association

2292 South Highway 27

Somerset, KY 42501

Phone: 606/677-6098

Fax: 606/677-6059

Contact: Sheila Kuczko, Executive Director

Vicki Kidd, Marketing Director

Email: skuczko@centertech.com

This U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) Grant No. SBAHQ-01-1-0036 is funded by the SBA. SBA's funding is not an endorsement of any products, opinions, or services. All SBA funded programs are extended to the public on a nondiscriminatory basis.