The Work of Her Hands: 
Women, Craft, and Revival in Southern Appalachia

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Honors Thesis and Senior Capstone Project

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Abstract

I have long had a personal interest in craft-work. As well, the Appalachian Mountains have won my heart over again and again during visits. The following study resulted from my initial attempt to combine those two interests. As I began research, it became apparent that southern Appalachia has a rich and interesting history in relation to craftwork. Moving beyond my personal pastimes, I wanted to explore a part of that history. People often consider southern Appalachia to be a stagnant region and overlook its role as a region in America; I believe this norm should be reconsidered in light of information uncovered.

At the turn of the last century, a craft revival took place in Southern Appalachia. This may sound trivial, but in truth, by exploring the factors that initiated the craft revival, one uncovers some very interesting issues, not only about Southern Appalachia but also about the American mindset. One of the most interesting matters that influenced not only the craft revival but also culture as a whole in southern Appalachia was the role of women. Women from the northeast and Bluegrass Kentucky arrived in Appalachia as missionaries, teachers, and reform workers. They are intricately tied to the craft revival, for without their work, there would not have spread a renewed interest in traditional crafts, nor would there have been such impetus to make the products to satisfy these interests. Before discussing specific personalities and the work they did, however, I first detail several issues that are of chief importance when trying to understand the craft revival. These were not randomly chosen, rather through researching, various themes surfaced that were present in all work done in southern Appalachia. I propose it is the convergence of these themes that made it possible for the Craft Revival to take place in Southern Appalachia.
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Map Section
Introduction: Defining Appalachia

In 1894, William Goodell Frost, then president of Berea College, working with C.W. Hayes, a former student who was employed by the U.S. Geological Survey, defined "Appalachian America" as a 194-county area composed of "the backyards of eight states."¹ In truth, however, "Appalachia" is much harder to define. There are many who have some vague notion of Appalachia as the mountainous region in the east. For the occasional tourist, the "Appalachians" and the "Smokey Mountains" or the "Blue Ridge" are often one and the same. To some, Appalachia is the mountains of a few select states:
Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and North Carolina. It is the South; it is where hillbillies live; it is that other mountain range -- the one that is not as tall as the Rockies.

At the turn of the last century, Appalachia also had many meanings. At a time when many were envisioning America as being on the road to homogenization -- one unified country with one unified population -- the region referred to as Southern Appalachia presented itself as an anomaly. Defined as it was by William Goodell Frost in his essay, "Our Contemporary Ancestors in the Southern Mountains," this region of the country that had previously, for the most part, gone unnoticed was now pushed to the forefront of public consciousness. Middle- and upper-class Americans found in this "Appalachia America" a place for their energies, interests, and agendas.

At the end of the nineteenth century, information about Southern Appalachia came from two main sources: writers and missionaries. After the Civil War, the literary market became flooded by travel narratives and popular fiction concerning the Southern Mountains. These works forced the region, heretofore known mostly through a few fragmentary accounts, into public consciousness. Since the 1870s, local-color writers had been presenting middle-class America with the image of mountaineers as a strange and backward people who, because they had been geographically isolated from the outside world, still lived in the style of their pioneer ancestors. Southern Appalachia presented itself as an extensive, unknown territory only miles from established cities such as Cincinnati or Lexington and easily reached by railway from other cities such as Boston or Indianapolis. It became an ideal location for a new generation of writers interested in writing travel accounts and short stories of exotic locales.
The “discovery” by writers of Southern Appalachia as a strange place inhabited by strange people coincided with and often bolstered missionary activity in the region. The presence of missionaries below the Mason-Dixon was not new; workers from the North East flocked to the South after the Civil War in order to teach freed slaves in schools established under the American Missionary Association and the Freedman’s Bureau. They tried to instill the value of the Protestant, Republican northeast but met difficulties. Mission and philanthropic organizations then looked for a field with more potential, and their attention turned to the Southern Mountains.\textsuperscript{5}

From the 1880s into the new century, missionary work grew at an increased pace in Southern Appalachia. Several Protestant denominations founded mission stations and schools; the Presbyterians alone instituted sixty-five schools in the southern mountain region between 1885 and 1905.\textsuperscript{6} They justified their presence by deeming Appalachia “unchurched,” and therefore “needy.” Writers classified Southern Appalachia in terms of “otherness” and missionaries classified Southern Appalachia as a region in need of aid from the outside.\textsuperscript{7} To further bolster the reasons for their work as well as garner support from church boards and societies, mission workers only had to point to the descriptions by local-color writers of “a strange land and peculiar people.”\textsuperscript{8}

The accounts of writers and missionaries influenced how the rest of America viewed Appalachia. W.G. Frost had worked to lay out a geographic region; his Appalachia was a spatial entity with definite boundaries. In mainstream consciousness though, “Appalachia” was becoming a social construct. It was defined, not by physiographic features or even natural boundaries, but by how those outside the area thought of it. This process would have deep implications for “Appalachia.” Now, it was
no more a self-contained region, but a place subject to the interpretations and opinions of those around it – middle- and upper-class Northern America.

The following study is not a geography lesson, but a glimpse at how, at the turn of the last century, the agendas and interpretations of mainstream American manifested themselves in the form of a craft revival in the region commonly referred to as Southern Appalachia. It began as an interest merely in craftwork but expanded to include people, institutions, and ideas. These factors were so interwoven with craftwork and the craft revival that it would be remiss not to examine them. Therefore, this is a study in two parts. The first part is actually comprised of several small sections, each a specific theme chosen because of its predominance to the craft revival. These themes do not stand alone, rather they are best seen interacting with and influencing one another in the contexts of the organizations established in the mountains. Therefore, the second part contains three case studies of separate institutions that were on the forefront of the craft revival at the turn of the last century. Taken individually, each segment is a self-contained discussion of one organization. However, put side by side, these segments fuse together to create a much fuller view of the beginnings of the craft revival in southern Appalachia and also to give insight into the workings of the mainstream American mind.
Part One

- Themes -
Craft: A Cure-all for several IIs

Any discussion of Southern Appalachia at the turn of the twentieth-century would invariable include at least mention of a craft revival. There are important issues surrounding the being of the craft-revival, such as what caused it to happen and what exactly the term “craft revival” means. First, however, one must look at the term: craft revival. Why not an art revival? Why not a culinary revival? Or literature revival? Why, in this geographic area where reform workers – both church-related and otherwise – relocated and opened up schools and settlements, was there a craft revival? The presence of a revival is not being called into question here; rather, the being of craft.

The American Heritage dictionary defines craft as skill in doing or making something; an occupation or trade requiring manual dexterity or skilled artistry; in verb form, to make by hand; to make or construct in a manner suggesting great care or ingenuity. The “benevolent workers” who moved to Appalachia in the latter part of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century also had a definition for craft: the cure for the social cold. At a time when reformers feared the corrupting influence of an industrialized society, and saw southern Appalachia as a yet untouched cultural sphere, craftwork presented itself as a wholesome activity that would instill positive values and ward off the negative effects of an industrialized society.

There were several factors that influenced workers’ choice of craft as the main cultural endeavor. First, there was a widespread belief that manual training and handwork had the power to reform mind, body, and spirit. This belief is exemplified in attitudes surrounding the process of weaving. In her book, Mountain Homespun, Frances Louisa
Goodrich revealed that she could see "the growth of character" in women who were learning to and continuing to weave and explained that "A slack-twisted person cannot make a success as a weaver of coverlets." Furthermore, Goodrich reported being told by another lady who "had to do with hundreds of mountain girls in their teens" that she never found "one to be of weak and flabby character whose mother was a weaver."

Goodrich, in following with mainstream thought, wrote that the exercise of patience and perseverance, as two chief qualities needed in weaving, strengthened "the fibers of the soul." ¹⁰

Goodrich was not the only worker to believe in the positive effects of weaving. William Goodell Frost, president of Berea College at the end of the nineteenth century, wrote that spinning (which went hand in hand with weaving) has "helped form the character of our race" and compared to urban America where handicrafts had died out, spinning in Appalachia "is still contributing to the health and grace and skill of womanhood." ¹¹ Eleanor Park Vance and Charlotte Louise Yale, founders of the Biltmore Estate Industries, revealed how deeply they believed that craftwork brought spiritual uplift and social reform through their attitudes towards the weaving and woodworking programs at Biltmore. They would criticize the workers' products, convinced that their criticism would result not only in improved quality of the product, but also in improved character of the worker. ¹² Vance and Yale believed that encouraging a worker to go to the root of a problem gave that worker new impetus that "was worth more than the substantial returns for her work, if we hold that the life is more than meat." ¹³

The character-building aspect of crafts lays the groundwork for a second reason for choosing craft: economy. Whether or not reformers truly believed in the power of
crafts to transform mind, body, and spirit, they could believe in its economic viability. Reformers could tout the reforming-powers of craftwork as a means of garnering support from outsiders, whose closest contact with the actual workers of Southern Appalachia would be through the products purchase. The image promulgated – of the saving power of crafts – only increased their marketability to people outside the region who believed that through purchasing a handmade craft, they were supporting an endeavor that uplifted and reformed a people that had fallen behind mainstream society.\textsuperscript{14}

Aside from the incentive of saving a soul through buying handiwork, there existed a trend in mainstream society, especially among northern city dwellers, toward the naïf. Inspired by America’s centennial celebration in 1876, upper- and middle-class people from the north sought after traditional, domestic handicrafts, rather than those mass-produced or imported from Europe.\textsuperscript{15} The “mountaineers” of Southern Appalachia emerged as a population who had the skills to fulfill Northern wishes and who would also benefit financially from a new available market.\textsuperscript{16} Thus, handicrafts presented themselves as very saleable items to reform workers. Through craft work, missionaries and teachers and other benevolent workers believed that they were not only uplifting the Southern Highlander spiritually, but also in a much-needed material manner.

Another positive aspect of craft as an endeavor over other activities is that it did not shift the established patterns of society. The impetus towards crafts was above all a movement by women for women. Handicrafts were not considered a suitable source of income for the male provider of a family. However, if a woman could work it around familial and household duties, then craftwork became an acceptable source of supplementary income.\textsuperscript{17} By the early twentieth century, craftwork was already
established as a way of providing local women with income and local children with manual training, which would instill in them a valuable aesthetic sense.\textsuperscript{18} Craft training worked because it did not remove women from their traditional role in the home nor did it “train children away from the farm.”\textsuperscript{16} As well, the income received from goods sold acted as an incentive to mountaineers to stay in rural surroundings rather than relocate to somewhere that would offer industrial jobs.\textsuperscript{20}

The idealization of the rural life also played an important role in promoting craftwork. In the face of creeping industrialization, and the supposed dangers and corruption that accompanied an industrialized society, rural Southern Appalachia presented itself as a throwback to an earlier time. To visiting outsiders and transplanted reform workers, Southern Appalachia was the last vestige of traditional, primitive Anglo-Saxon heritage. Reformers were interested in preserving this perceived culture as well as elevating the status of the backwards mountaineers and so turned to craftwork. Craftwork satisfied upper- and middle-class America’s penchant for tradition, acting as tangible evidence for the existence of a pure, Elizabethan culture that had been destroyed elsewhere in the country. Likewise, reform workers could comfort themselves that they were instilling positive values such as community and aesthetic, while also promoting the survival of traditional cultural practices or, if a certain practice had died out, reviving the skills needed for traditional crafts, and thus reinforcing the pioneer character of mountain life.\textsuperscript{21}
Anglo-Saxons and Insecurities

Influenced by writers' and missionary accounts, middle- and upper- America in the latter decades of the nineteenth century became increasingly fascinated with inhabitants of Southern Appalachia. Writers promulgated them not only as a peculiar people, but furthered their intrigue by linking them to historic causes such as the American Revolution and the Union victory in the Civil War. The people of Southern Appalachia were believed to be the direct descendents of the early colonists. Frost himself declared them to be the "‘Sons’ and ‘Daughters’ of the Revolution." In "The Anglo-Saxons of the Kentucky Mountains: A Study in Anthropogeography," written in 1901, Ellen Churchill Semple reported that:

In these isolated communities, therefore, we find the purest Anglo-Saxon stock in all the United States. They are the direct descendants of the early Virginia and North Carolina immigrants, and bear about them in their speech and ideas the marks of their ancestry as plainly as if they had disembarked from their 18th-century vessel but yesterday.

This excerpt expressed the ever-growing perception that southern mountaineers were purely Anglo-Saxon. Part of this belief, though, was tied to the need to explain Appalachian "otherness," also seen in Semple's statement. First, they were isolated from overall society. Second, this isolation caused them to somehow stop in time and remain as their forebears. These explanations helped to shift views of southern mountaineers as being more than backwards and strange, but also being unsung patriots worthy of attention.

For some, interest in the southern mountaineers went beyond proving them as needy or as an isolated people or as only America's folk. Interest in the Anglo-Saxonness of the mountaineers often took interesting turns. In 1917, Cecil Sharp, an English ballad
collector, told teachers at Hindman Settlement School, "Judging from their faces, voices, and manners, these children of yours might belong to the very best of English families."24 A year prior to this, he described singers he had encountered in North Carolina as being "English peasant folk [who] do not seem to me to have taken on any distinctive American traits. They talk English, sing English, behave English!"25 Over the years, then, mountaineers were not considered any less unique by outsiders, but were slightly redefined. Interest shifted from simply defining them as "strange" and even only Anglo-Saxon, to defining the root of their heritage. Even as late as the 1930s, ideas concerning the southern mountaineers still drifted in the direction that they were, as local color writer Charles Wilson defined them "Old English folk..."26

What was really motivating such an interest in the lifestyle, culture, and heritage of southern mountaineers? First, beginning in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, mainstream America reawakened to "folk." Middle- and upper-class America recognized the aesthetic value of primitive, naïf work, and Southern Appalachia presented itself as a vestige for a much sought-after folk culture.27 Furthermore, scholarship had already established the concept that folkways survived in "homogeneous groups of agrarian peoples living in isolated communities untouched by modern civilization."28 To many outsiders, this was an exact definition of the lives of the southern mountaineers. The more one could prove that the people of Southern Appalachia were isolated and that this isolation caused them to persist in antiquated Anglo-Saxon lifestyles, the more attractive they became to mainstream America as examples of folk.

The fascination with folk culture, and thus southern Appalachia, betrayed the presence of deeper issues in American society. Coming out of the nineteenth century,
there arose a dichotomy between the ideas of tradition and modernity. Modernity seemed unsure and unstable, but tradition presented itself as the “guarantor of order” of civilization. Therefore, mainstream America’s quest for tradition betrayed unease with its modernization. The fascination of the mainstream with a seemingly pre-modern Appalachia was symptomatic of its fascination with the primitive in general, and the latter interest betrayed insecurity with extensive industrialization and mechanization of society.

Securing Appalachia as an outpost of traditional Anglo-Saxon culture, then, was motivated by an overreaching need for self-definition by mainstream society. Flocking to a purported distinct culture of white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestants in the southern mountains provided white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestants of the mainstream with a way to reassert themselves and the superiority of their way of life. As mentioned above, many Americans were unsure of how their society had developed industrially and commercially, but were also apprehensive in the face of immigrants who did not appear willing to assimilate with a WASP way-of-life. Interest in southern Appalachia then took on layers of racial and ethnic connotations as well as issues stemming from industrialization and progress. To middle- and upper-class Northerners southern Appalachia and its inhabitants was a great mythical, mysterious land that not only needed outside help but also provided the opportunity needed by the outside to define itself and to implement its ideas about culture and society.
The "Fotched-On" Woman

One could argue that there are two dates in the past two centuries every woman should know. The first is 1848 and the second is 1920. 1848 marked the year of the Seneca Falls convention, an event that pushed the struggle for women's rights to the forefront. 1920 saw the passing of the Nineteenth Amendment, which gave women the right to vote. However, it is the currents of society in between those two dates that had a direct effect on Southern Appalachia.

After 1848, more women's colleges opened up, providing a wider range of educational opportunities for women. However, there was not a wide range of businesses and professions yet opened up to women. This created a gap in the lives of women who were educated and competent, but had no outlet for their energies. To fill this gap, they turned to professionally challenging and socially beneficial work such as overseas missions, founding the Women's Christian Temperance Union with other socially concerned (but not necessarily college educated) women in 1874, and incorporating the work of local women's club into the General Federation of Women's Clubs in 1890. Still, many others found an outlet in the developing social settlement movement.31

Kentucky Educational Television, which in 1995 aired a documentary entitled Settlement Schools of Appalachia, stated that "To tell the story of settlement schools in Appalachia is to tell the story of the young women who journeyed...to establish the schools and to teach the children."32 These settlement school women, and the female leaders of the reform and craft revival movement as a whole, shared several similar qualities. Mainly, they were middle-class, educated, and from the North—meaning, New England or the Bluegrass Region of Kentucky. In the settlement and craft revival
movements, these women found a way to blend their professional goals with a patriarchal culture. The "fetched-on" women, so-called because they had been "fetched" from outside the local area in order to come in and help teach, found in settlement and reform work a way to create a sphere of influence and fill the gap in their lives, while still working within the prescribed domain of "female domesticity, morality, and nurturing care." 33

The turn of the century "fetched-on" woman came to Appalachia with a seemingly different goal than the missionary woman of earlier generations, even though similar rhetoric and mindsets were present. These women did not present themselves as missionaries, but rather as friendly visitors who came to be helpful: they did not arrive as the "possessors of salvation," bent on spreading the message of the Gospel in order to increase their own piety. They seemingly arrived not with the goal of gaining converts, but rather to gain friends and make a difference in community life. 34 These energetic, motivated women saw Appalachia as a place in need – a place without community or social institutions – and so they left their homes and families in the North to try and transform life in the South.
Settlement School and Work

The term "Settlement School" may not sound familiar to very many people. In fact, most will have no idea what that phrase means. Furthermore, related terms such as "settlement work" and "social settlement", are just as alien. However, the name "Hull House" does ring a bell for people. Even if they do not know what exactly it does, most of the general public remembers at least hearing the name: Hull House. They might not know all the details or history, but most will know that it is in Chicago and assume that good work is done there.

The Hull House, founded in 1889, is probably the best-known example of a settlement school in the United States. Settlement schools originated in England in the 1880s and then quickly spread to America. The first American settlement school was the Neighborhood Guild founded in New York's Lower East Side in 1887. By 1891 there were six settlement schools in the United States; by 1897 there were sixty-four settlement schools. The number of social settlements had grown to over four-hundred by 1910.\textsuperscript{35} Social settlements began as urban entities, but as will be seen later in the case of Hindman Settlement School, they began to extend to rural areas by 1899.

Returning to the initial topic, though, what is a settlement school? What does this idea of "settlement" imply? Allen Davis defined the social settlement as "the culmination of a diverse reform movement, closely allied with Romanticism, that sought to preserve humanistic and spiritual values in a world dominated by materialism and urban industrialism."\textsuperscript{36} Settlement schools, then, were educational institutions that also felt a social and cultural responsibility. In cities, they were concerned with uplifting the parts of the population that had suffered the consequences of industrialism as well as immigrants
who, in workers' eyes, needed to share in the superior way of American life. The purpose laid down by the Neighborhood Guild in New York, the first American social settlement, can be used to express the overriding objective shared by all settlement schools as "the cultivation of friendly relations between the educated and the uneducated, and the gradual uplifting of the latter by the better influences thus brought to bear upon them."\(^37\)

What did social settlement mean for southern Appalachia? At the turn of the last century, workers came to work in southern Appalachia and established the first rural settlement schools. In general, these settlement schools offered education for students and acted as centers of social interaction for communities that were geographically isolated. The schools, ran almost entirely by "fotched-on" women, were often made up of extensive campuses with housing for boarding students, grew a large part of their own food, and made almost all of their own furniture. After being open only a few decades, settlement schools were involved in a variety of endeavors including running cooperatives, producing and selling local art and craftwork, growing crops, founding health clinics, and collecting lore and ballads. Examples of settlement schools included Hindman Settlement School, Pine Mountain Settlement School, Caney Creek School and Lotts Creek Community School, all in eastern Kentucky.\(^38\)

The social settlements in southern Appalachia shared the same vision as their urban predecessors. Jane Addams, the founder of Hull House, said the goal of settlement work was "to preserve and keep whatever of value [the immigrants' lives] contained," and at the same time to "bring them into contact with a better type of Americans."\(^39\) In their work in the mountains, fotched-on women exhibited the same agenda. They wanted to preserve cultural traditions while simultaneously "uplift" the mountaineer into a
mainstream American way of life. Indeed, the Kentucky Women's Christian Temperance Union in 1901 expressed this agenda by proposing to send workers to "live among people in a model home, to show them by example the advantages of cleanliness, neatness and order, and to inspire them to use pure language and to lead pure, Christian lives will be our effort, hoping thereby to elevate and uplift them." This statement revealed perhaps the true motivation behind mountain settlement work – more than a mere educational opportunity, social settlements should be places that embodied the "right" way of living and made this way attractive enough to be embraced by the impoverished mountaineer.
Part Two
- Case Studies -
Allanstand Cottage Industries

The story of how Miss Frances Louisa Goodrich came to Brittain’s Cove and started Allanstand Cottage Industries reached mythic proportions over the years. It is the defining tale of the craft revival and follows the common pattern of mission work in southern Appalachia metamorphosing into a viable industry. The dramatic version does not begin until 1895. Goodrich has been sent to Brittain’s Cove and is helping to teach. While she was considering how best to bring “healthful excitement into the lives of her neighbor women,” one of them brought her a forty-year old “Double Bowknot” coverlet “out of pure good will and affection.” This coverlet, to Goodrich, was evidence of a “fine craft, dying out and desirable to revive.”

The reality is much less romantic, but just as integral to the history of the craft revival in Southern Appalachia. Goodrich worked on the Women’s Board of Home Missions of the northern Presbyterian Church. In 1890 she was assigned to the mission station at Brittain’s Cove in Buncombe County, North Carolina. It is true that in 1895 she received a coverlet, which acted as the impetus for a “revival” of coverlet weaving. However, she was most likely not originally interested in starting a “revival.” At the outset, Goodrich introduced crafts to the women she worked with in the mountains as a way to attract them to the mission station.

Weaving became the opportune craft that would give local women a reason to come to the mission at Brittain’s Cove and keep their interest once they had arrived. At a time before myriad varieties of social clubs existed, an activity such as weaving provided an occasion for workers in rural missions or settlement houses to work together with their
rural neighbors on a project of mutual benefit and interest. In this way as well, workers were succeeding in helping their “clients” help themselves. For Goodrich, who had roots in northern reform movements, weaving also had the advantage of being an activity around which women’s clubs were organized in city settlement schools.

In 1895, the year in which Goodrich’s own account begins, she moved forward in the typical settlement house approach. Women were already meeting “one afternoon a week at the cottage for sewing and chatting and for a short religious service,” so why not add weaving as another project? She proposed that their group start with making a “curtain of silk pieces after the manner of a rag rug.” This is further evidence of Goodrich’s familiarity with the typical settlement-style progression: silk wall hangings and rag rugs had long been staples of settlement-house craft production.

In her description of the work ahead, Goodrich states that the women faced two questions before embarking on a quest to revive “the old crafts.” The first question asks whether they could produce the coverlets at a moderate cost; the second question asks if they could find or create a market for their products. Pertaining to the existence of markets, she states, “At that time there was in this country no general interest in such handicraft and little demand for handwoven fabrics.” However, Goodrich found the potential for a market when she sent North the original coverlet she had received. The interest it aroused convinced Goodrich that if the women of Brittain’s Cove could produce a similar product then a market would be found.

Goodrich began seriously working toward a “revival” of weaving, and more specifically, coverlet weaving, during the winter between 1895 and 1896. She “put out” work to the Angel Family, who lived on the Paint Fork of Ivy, sixteen miles from
Brittain’s Cove. Three weeks later, they delivered three hand loomed coverlets to the mission station, thus putting Goodrich in business. The coverlets were “easily sold,” and the women began to weave various lengths for table-runners, pillow tops, trunk covers, and similar pieces. She writes that the women made this decision because they realized the market for larger pieces such as coverlets would be limited. This shows a concern and understanding of commercial business concepts; even at this early stage, the women were weaving for more than the pleasure of meeting together once a week.

1897 marks the beginning of a lasting business for Goodrich. In this year, she was transferred to Allanstand, in Madison County, North Carolina. Here, she noticed, that “hand-weaving was going on as in old times.” It was here that Goodrich and the other women realized “we had a real business on our hands.” In keeping with the center of the work done, they named the industry Allanstand. At Allanstand, Goodrich developed an extensive handweaving industry with an intricate division of labor and a growing range of patterns. Although handwoven coverlets were the main product, Goodrich also introduced the practice of other crafts as a way to increase variety. She taught fabric design and techniques for the making of embroidered bedspreads, knotted fringe, wall hangings made of silk scraps, rag rugs, women’s cornhusk hats, and oak-splint baskets. She again revealed an understanding of commercial industry by endeavoring to adapt the business’s products more closely to market demands.

Moving into the next century, Allanstand Industries continued to grow. Although the exact starting date is disputed, it is known that Francis Louisa Goodrich created the Cottage Industries Guild of Allanstand between 1899 and 1902. This guild acted as a primitive crafts cooperative. It served two purposes: as the official body for purchasing
and distribution of local handicrafts and as a social club.52 The guild presented a broader range of locally produced crafts. Goodrich worked to further expand the customer base by advertising in missionary magazines, the *Pratt Institute Monthly*, and northern newspapers.53

In 1908, Goodrich moved the base of operations to Asheville, North Carolina. She opened up workshops and a sales room. The name Allanstand was kept, but rural mountain women now had to travel into town in order to sell their products and acquire the social exposures previously provided by the local mission station.54 Allanstand Cottage Industries incorporated in 1917, with Goodrich as president. The by-laws stated that “no dividends should be paid to the stockholders of over 6% per annum, but that all surplus above that should be turned into the business, or used for the benefit of the craftspeople of the mountains.”55 This condition ensured that although Allanstand was an official enterprise, it still retained a semblance of being philanthropic and people, not profit, oriented.

In her years leading the craft industry development, one can see Goodrich’s implementation of the mainstream ideas of “uplift” and community building. Incorporated into these ideas is the notion of the healthfulness of craftwork. She believed crafts provided “fresh interest to the women” in addition to the “habits of industry and thrift,” and attributed the seeming lag between mountaineers and mainstream America to the “loss of these qualities.”56 Indeed, she reports seeing the “growth in character” in women learning to weave and believes few other subjects besides weaving would arouse “so much enthusiasm and interest in a circle of mountain women.”57
Francis Louisa Goodrich is exemplary of a missionary turned businesswoman. She arrived in the southern mountains with notions of social “uplift” and the need for community. Her mission work reflects these convictions: holding weekly meetings that brought women together for religious and social purposes. Bringing craftwork into the picture is not that far a cry. However, an incorporated weaving industry is very removed from a once-a-week meeting at the mission station.

Despite this leap from mission station to incorporated industry, Goodrich affirms that there were three purposes from the very start:

to save the old arts from extinction; to give paying work to women who were too far from the market to find it for themselves; and, more important than all, to bring interest into their lives, the joy of making useful and beautiful things.

She feels the enterprise fulfilled these goals and then some: for her and other involved, friendships were formed “of enduring stuff.”

These goals and their outcomes are exemplary of reform workers of Goodrich’s ilk. They came into a “foreign” land and took what they saw (i.e. “the old arts”) as evidence for a separate culture. Goodrich is a prime example of working to preserve an apparent separate culture, while at the same time using modern means to integrate it into the mainstream.
Biltmore Estate Industries

At first glance, the Biltmore Estate Industries do not fit the handicraft revival/reform school mode. In the first place, the Biltmore story starts with a man, not a woman. Secondly, Biltmore did not begin as a philanthropic effort or missionary station. Third, Biltmore Estate Industries did not produce indigenous crafts, as other businesses of the craft revival at least claimed to do. However, by studying the history and development of the Biltmore Estate, one will ascertain how one man's "country home" became an essential component of the early craft revival movement in Southern Appalachia.

George Vanderbilt visited Asheville, North Carolina in 1888. While there, he was impressed by the mountain scenery and decided it would be a good site for a country house. The same year he contacted Richard Morris Hunt, who designed the house, and Frederick Law Olmsted, who designed the landscaping. Construction on the 250-room French chateau lasted from 1889 until 1895. The house was filled with expensive furnishings and artworks, fitted with every available modern convenience, and surrounded by 125,000 acres of forested land.\textsuperscript{59}

Originally, George Vanderbilt probably did not envision Biltmore Estate as a philanthropic act. This is evidenced by his initial treatment of mountaineers: when he first selected the site for his new house, he told Olmsted that he did not think his neighbors were pleasant and so bought them out, eventually acquiring around 2,000 acres. However, his intentions altered as work on the estate progressed. In the end, Vanderbilt and his designers created a property that would serve as an archetype of estate management, agriculture, and forestry.\textsuperscript{60}
George Vanderbilt's conception of Biltmore began changing before construction was even finished. He used the greater part of the property for a scientific forestry program, and there were other various enterprises such as produce farms, a nursery, and a state-of-the-art dairy. The Biltmore Estate proved different from the other extravagant Vanderbilt estates in that it had a more serious purpose. George Vanderbilt wanted it to be "a Mecca for all those who are seriously interested in the study of forestry, scientific farming, and horticulture."  

While these enterprises all show the metamorphoses of Mr. Vanderbilt's purposes, the enterprise that most pertains to this study and best shows his philanthropic affinities is the creation of the Biltmore Village. Vanderbilt chose the site of the village in 1889. He erased all evidence of the former village of Best and put Olmsted and Hunt to work planning a model village that would be a refreshing scene to estate visitors arriving at the rail depot. By 1896, the village included All Souls' Church, a parish house, a rectory, an estate office, a new railroad station, a school, and a post office. Cottages were continually added until 1910. They were built in the English vernacular style and contained modern amenities such as plumbing, ranges, and electricity. Employees of the estate and any tenant who was deemed "a respectable member of society and able to pay his rent" were able to rent a cottage.  

Biltmore Village was meant to do more than house estate workers, though. The construction of a completely new town with an aura of surrealism shared the same purpose as the rest of Biltmore Estate: it was to display a new standard of order and style, which others should emulate. All Souls' Church was built in the "old English" Gothic architectural style. This, along with the English-style village cottages and the fan-shape
street plan, revealed something deeper than the need for aesthetically pleasing buildings. It evidenced the late-nineteenth century enchantment with a rural, preindustrial past. The new standard of order was made physically clear: the rustic appearance of the village’s buildings established them without a doubt in a humble position to the Biltmore’s high-style French Renaissance country house.64

The center of the village was All Souls’ Episcopal Church. Not only did all of the fan-shape roads of the village lead to the church, but it was also the figurative axis by serving “as the center and source of moral and spiritual life for the community.” In other words, this early Gothic church with a massive central tower was meant to act as the core of the village’s community life.65 George Vanderbilt’s philanthropy, as well as his deep commitment to religion, is exemplified, if in nothing else, in his purposes regarding this church. First, he built All Souls’ because he wanted to “benefit those who were in physical and mental need.” Second, he paid for the whole cost of the church building, all maintenance expenses, and the salary of the rector. This was so that “the sittings might be free and the offerings made at its services devoted solely to missionary and charitable purposes.” Now, the church could focus on endeavors centered on education and mission work. These undertakings included kindergartens, settlement work, neighborhood clubs, Sunday school, and two educational programs for the African American population of Asheville.66

These projects and Mr. Vanderbilt’s contributions that made them possible signal the presence of the current mainstream patterns of thought. Plainly, the church, its workers, and its benefactor were concerned with the state of people in the village and in the nearby area. Prior to the arrival of a missionary from the North, the ideas of
progressive education and bringing people together for events to form a community were employed. Biltmore Village reflected the prevailing social trends of the day. The willingness and the ability to organize educational programs, clubs, and community work revealed that Biltmore Village was fertile ground for social ideas to become realities, as seen in the creation of Biltmore Estate Industries.

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Biltmore Estate Industries must be understood in context. That is why it is important to know the history leading up to the founding of this business. Without understanding the full story of Biltmore Estate and Village, or the motives of the man behind Biltmore, one does not understand the situation that made it possible for a business to develop in the village. Likewise, one must also realize that there is more than George Vanderbilt to the idea of Biltmore. Mr. Vanderbilt may have provided the ways and means, but the impetus lies with three women.

Edith Stuyvesant Dresser Vanderbilt married George Vanderbilt in 1898. She was her husband’s active partner in philanthropic work. She continually cared for the welfare of mountain families as well as estate employees living on and off the estate. Oral accounts remember Edith as a friendly figure who visited employees’ homes, invited estate workers’ children to her own daughter’s birthday parties, and even held casual conversations with estate employees while sitting on their doorsteps. She reached out to estate workers’ families throughout the year: buying each family Christmas gifts, giving new mothers maternity baskets filled with supplies, holding educational meetings for mothers, organizing an estate fair and a system of 4-H clubs in order to promote agriculture, and planning out transportation to the Biltmore Village School for children.
whose families lived in distant areas of the estate. The personality behind these actions not only “made her a friend of all who were fortunate enough to know her,” but led her to take an active interest in the work of two newly arrived tenants.67

Eleanor Park Vance and Charlotte Louis Yale came to Biltmore Village in 1901. They were educated, middle-class Northerners. Like other women of similar backgrounds, they came to Appalachia with training in the arts and crafts movement, missionary work, and settlement ideals. Little biographical data is known about either Vance or Yale. Yale was from Connecticut, and Vance was from Mansfield, Ohio.68 Facts are disputed about Yale’s artistic training, although one source cites that she studied at the New York School of Clayworking and Ceramics in Alfred, New York.69 Vance had been part of the Cincinnati art movement and studied carving for nine years with William Fry, a noted carver in Cincinnati.70 Vance and Yale met in Chicago in the 1890s; both women were studying to become missionaries because they had both “grown up with the same idea of wanting to do something for boys and girls.”71 Thus, by the time the two moved into Biltmore Village, they both had backgrounds well established in handcrafts and art as well as an interest in missionary work.

What would evolve in Biltmore Estate industries had humble beginnings. Eleanor Vance was carving wood at her kitchen table, and soon a few boys became interested in watching her work. She then organized a Boys’ Club, only a few months after moving into Biltmore village, and taught neighborhood boys wood carving out of her kitchen.72 The organization of a boys’ class in wood-carving was to have a deeper impact than even the beginning of a business. As Yale writes about their meager start, Vance, in reaching
out to neighborhood boys, was “little realizing that she was making history, for she was the first to bring wood-carving to the section.”  

The ideas behind the existence of the Boys’ Club went beyond learning woodcarving skills in three ways. First, the implementation and rules of the club betray an interest in spreading Christian morality. In the second official meeting of the Boys’ Club, in the fall of 1901, the boys and “Miss Vance” approved a constitution. The constitution stated that the “object of this club shall be the bringing of boys together for mutual help and development,” and that members should be elected on the basis of “good moral character” and must observe behaviors fitting to the “company of Christian boys.”

While Vance and Yale did not arrive in Biltmore Village specifically as missionaries, they did come with a background in mission work and were part of a generation of women who set out to make changes, working within the context of religion. The Boy’s Club that would be Biltmore Estate Industries may not have grown out of a mission station, such as Brittain’s Cove, but it did have beginnings grounded in Christian thought and a mission-like agenda.

The Boys’ Club went further beyond the work of wood-carving in its belief in the value of manual training. Writing about the club in 1901, Vance reflected key ideas about the worth of manual training:

Wood carving has a disciplinary value which has been very noticeable with the boys, for it requires not only development and training of the muscles of hand and arm but mental effort as well since every touch of the chisel must be guided by thought and intelligence.

This notion of the benefits of manual labor was not only a widespread belief at the time, but it was also an inherent motivation behind craft revival movements in Southern
Appalachia. The “growth in character” that Goodrich saw in women as a result of weaving Vance and Yale apparently also saw in boys who learned wood-carving.

The third trait revealed by the Boys’ Club is the idea of mutual self-help. Self-help could have been a figurative cause, but in this case it also had a real, tangible meaning: economic uplift. Perhaps it was not directly stated, but Vance and Yale apparently hoped the Boys’ Club would result in some sort of financial self-help. After one year, they reported that “some very creditable work has been done and several orders received,” enough so that the boys were hoping to have a self-supporting club in time.76 The goal of economic aid was not unique to Biltmore, but is seen in Allanstand Cottage Industries and other similar enterprises. In the beginning, Christian morality and self-discipline may have been the primary aims, but economic concerns were never far behind.

The Boys’ Club continued in much the same way until 1904. By this time, Mrs. Edith Vanderbilt had donated a new room to the club, providing a workshop and meeting place in the center of town. Membership had grown to forty-one boys, the oldest being sixteen.77 However, the Girls Club, which had previously worked mostly on millinery and needlework, now asked to also take up wood carving as the boys “had more orders than they could fill.” After the girls proved successful, the two clubs amalgamated into a Boys and Girls Club.78

Other interesting changes can be seen in 1904. Economic concerns, which had been in the background, now appear to have moved forward. Christian morality was still a goal, but now took place behind the ideas of social reform and financial self-support. Craft skills, which had been the herald of self-development, now devolved into “a means
to an end – the real aim being to build up strong and helpful characters." The club had become a "small industry," and while not self-supporting it is worth noting that the "club" now paid its carvers. In fact, some advanced carvers were able to use their proceeds to pay for school and buy clothing. Tourists readily bought the hand carved items that included picture frames, folding book racks, and boxes. Looking at the business done, the items produced, and annual reports, there was a clear shift from worrying about the quality of a boy or girl's character to worrying about the quality of a boy or girl's carving and how much it was worth to tourists.  

In 1905, leaders from the Boys and Girls Club decided the program needed to be more business like, and so reorganized into the Biltmore Estate Industries (BEI). The metamorphosis follows the pattern set by Allanstand Cottage Industries and other similar institutions. What started out as a neighborhood club to instill Christian values and build strong character now shifted into a business that emphasized product standardization, division of labor, and other techniques in order to improve efficiency and cater to the commercial market. The values of corporate capitalism, such as "rationality, efficiency, and hierarchical bureaucracies," replaced the values such as self-discipline and mental development, the by-products of manual training.  

Biltmore Estate Industries also follows the pattern set by other schools in another way. Charlotte Yale was from Connecticut. Eleanor Vance was from Ohio. Like other settlement workers, they fitted the pattern of being outsiders to the region where they were working. As outsiders, they had their own concepts of what was or was not good quality. Therefore, although BEI was not technically a settlement or school, it experienced reformers coming in and replacing "primitive" local practices with capitalist
business methods. In the context of the craft revival as a whole, reformers interested in efficiency instigated a deeper trend in the perceptions of craft. What once was "process" was now "product." BEI under the direction of its reformers, and craft workshops in the same position, now concentrated on producing goods that adhered to set designs or standards, instead of glorifying process or craftsmanship.81

Although Biltmore Estate Industries was founded on woodworking, its weaving department exemplified the shift, not only in BEI but also in craft movements overall, from process to product. The quality of the product and its market success were the main concerns, even though self-improvement rhetoric was still employed. As well, the weaving program, like woodworking, faced conflict in attempting to remain a traditional handcraft in character yet desiring to utilize modern techniques to create the optimum product.

Weaving was introduced into Biltmore Estate Industries in 1906 as the brainchild of Edith Vanderbilt. Her interest in the wood-working business transformed into direct participation in the area of weaving. She and a friend, Mrs. Wheeler, rode horseback on "exploring trips into the mountains" in order to examine weaving methods closely and decide how to "place a financial evaluation on the process." She apparently thought the best financial option would not come through weaving coverlets, which were considered the traditional woven article. Instead, Mrs. Vanderbilt wanted BEI weavers to produce an all-wool fabric to be used for dresses and suitings.82

The weaving program proved to be a significant undertaking. Vance and Yale traveled over the extensive Biltmore Estate in order to meet with women who already knew how to spin, card, or weave; the two discussed with and learned techniques from
these women. Mrs. Vanderbilt also sent the two wood-carving-turned-weaving teachers on several trips to England, Scotland, and Ireland to learn weaving methods for the new all-wool fabric, as the traditional fabric in the Estate’s region was made of linen and wool.  

Weaving an all-wool fabric necessitated significant changes in the weaving process and brought new problems to light. Most noticeable is the change in the loom itself. The traditional loom in this part of Appalachia was the hand-shuttle: the hand is responsible for the shuttle passing through the shed of the warp. In other words, the passing of the horizontal threads from one side to the other was controlled entirely by the hands. The leaders at Biltmore introduced the fly-shuttle loom, which minimized a weaver’s control over the design, but increased the amount of cloth that could be produced in a given amount of time. This use of a fly-shuttle loom was copied directly from the type of weaving performed in England and Scotland. Mrs. Vanderbilt even had a one-hundred year old loom brought over from Scotland in order to be a model for the type of looms the boys in woodworking class should make.  

Problems arose in several areas pertaining to weaving methods. At first, a division of labor was tried: leaders thought by breaking up the process, more amounts of cloth would be produced and the highest number of women would be employed. This also kept an air of traditionalism as women were working out of their homes. Each process was carried out separately: different women were in charge of washing, dyeing, carding, spinning, and finally, weaving the wool. Eventually, because of “endless delays and much carrying back and forth,” work was more and more centralized at the BEI workshop in Biltmore Village. Another difficulty that arose also resulted in centralization
this time in the transfer of work from hands to machines. The basic problem lied in the fact that there were more weavers than yarn available because of the strenuousness of carding and spinning. Flowing into the process of centralization, BEI leaders purchased carding equipment and set it up in George Vanderbilt's car shed where it was equipped to work off of electricity, not "aching shoulders."  

The other problem was found in the end product, not in the weaving process, perse. Even after switching to machine carding, the fabric still did not meet the standards of Mrs. Biltmore, Vance, and Yale. In keeping with the traditional notion of using "native supplies," BEI weavers were using wool from sheep raised on the Estate. However, the fabric produced from this wool was rough; it was not up to par with "the homespun of Ireland and the Scottish Islands." After traveling to the British Isles, Vance and Yale realized there was a snag, literally, in their system. BEI sheep were allowed to run through the woods freely, exposing their wool to briars and thorns. If sheep were enclosed, then their wool would be free of these impurities.  Eventually, BEI ended the practice of using "native" wool and bought it from large wool producers.

By now, these details might seem daunting and superfluous. Why is the fact that wool was hand-carded or machine-carded important? Why does it matter whether the warp was wool or linen? (And, for most people, what is a warp?) Who, in the twenty-first century, really knows what a hand-loom or fly-shuttle loom is?

The ins-and-outs of Biltmore Estate Industries may appear unimportant, but they reveal a significant shift in the attitude toward "traditional" mountain craft. The addition of weaving into BEI at all launched it into a new sphere of existence. No more was it teaching the new trade of cabinet-making and decorative wood—carving, but BEI was
now reviving the old trade of weaving. It took its place among Allanstand, Berea, Hindman, and countless other movements in the “craft revival” at the beginning of the Twentieth Century.

To begin, the introduction of the fly-shuttle loom to the mountain women is worthy of attention in and of itself. Its arrival could be taken as progress, as weaving leaders trying to update “crude” weaving methods. It is faster; it makes more cloth; it depends less on the weaver. However, the loom that Mrs. Vanderbilt imported from Scotland was already one hundred years old in the beginning of the twentieth century. Moreover, Charlotte Yale reported that the “older people on the Estate,” some of them in their nineties, recollected that the looms they had brought over from the “old country” had fly-shuttles. From this report then, BEI actually revived the original method; however, Goodrich noted that in her opinion at least, the fly-shuttle “was the exception rather than the rule among the colonists.”

Furthermore, the weaving program as a whole represented a struggle between the old and the new. BEI leaders chose to bring in weaving, which was a “traditional” craft. However, the business produced an all-wool fabric, which was a new process to the area. In order to accomplish this, “traditional” methods had to be abandoned. Leaders traveled to other places – other countries – to learn different techniques. They then brought this “outside” knowledge in and taught that to mountain women. As stated above, they even brought in a different type of loom to the weavers at Biltmore.

The dichotomy of old and new, indigenous and foreign is even more interesting when taken into consideration with mainstream ideas about the Appalachian region. Missionaries, authors, and many leaders in the craft revival adhered to the idea that the
mountaineers were as close as one could get to America's original colonists. They were mainstream America's lost Anglo-Saxon cousins, who carried on in the traditions of the "old world." The Vanderbilts, Vance, and Yale were probably not foreigners to this current of thinking. In this way, weaving was not only a way to make economic progress, but also a way to remember and take part in the traditions of the past.

Vance and Yale traveled to the British Isles – where it was believed the mountaineers came from – and brought those weaving methods back to the mountains. If the mainstream was true, then they were not introducing new methods to the mountain women, they were reviving long-forgotten ways. In addition, they were, knowingly or unknowingly, bolstering the idea of the Anglo-Saxon heritage of mountaineers. Vance and Yale's work at Biltmore, then, embodied the difficulty in trying to separate tradition and modernity. In their work and rhetoric, they attempted to be "traditional," yet shifted towards modernity when deemed necessary. It is of interest, though, as in the case of the antique fly-shuttle loom, that the ways they "modernized" actually caused them to return to the very original method.
Hindman Settlement School

The plight of the educated, yet disestablished, woman is exemplified in the founding of Hindman Settlement School. It is a textbook case of young, motivated women taking on leadership positions and shows the growing interests in mountain social settlements. Their motivation came from a variety of sources. The women who founded Hindman Settlement School in Knott County, Kentucky, were intelligent and possessed personal drive. They were influenced by the evangelical and social concerns of the Presbyterian Church, reappearing themes in the popular fiction of the day, the progressive interests in social matters of the Women’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) and the Federation of Women’s Clubs, forward-looking social work taken on by their peers, and by the example of settlement work done in urban areas.

The protagonists of the Hindman story are Katherine Pettit and May Stone. There is little information available on Pettit’s early life; she successfully guarded details about her private life. She was born in 1868 into an old Lexington, Kentucky family. She attended the Sayre Female Institute for two years and left without graduating. Before starting work in eastern Kentucky, Pettit was involved in Presbyterian missionary work, the Federation of Women’s Clubs, and the WCTU. Pettit’s partner in settlement work was May Stone, the daughter of a prominent lawyer who served in the Kentucky legislature in Louisville. She attended Wellesley College, which played an influential role in the settlement movement and actively participated in the College Settlement Association at the close of the nineteenth century.

There is a mythic element to the beginning of Hindman Settlement School, which will be discussed later in this section. As with Biltmore Estate Industries and even
Allanstand Cottage Industries, however, there is a very realistic and relative history to this particular undertaking. Its founding and development sheds light on the process of adapting an urban institution to a rural setting. Moreover, the history of the Hindman Settlement School is integral to understanding the relationship between native culture and the effects of social change in Appalachia.93

In 1898 the Kentucky Federation of Women’s Clubs began a traveling library service in the area of Hindman at Knott County in Eastern Kentucky. By the next year it was obvious that a more permanent settlement was needed, and one of the librarians sent out the call for “gentlewomen” to come and work with mountain families.94 The call was answered by Katherine Pettit, May Stone, and a few other women. In 1899 and again in 1900, this small group pitched tents and set up what they called Camp Cedar Grove.95 They held song meetings, taught kindergarten subjects, instructed sewing and cooking classes, and even visited mountain homes in remote areas in Knott, Letcher, and Perry Counties.96

The Kentucky Federation of Women’s Clubs decided to direct a third “social settlement in the mountains” in 1901. Within three weeks of this decision, Katherine Pettit, May Stone and two of their co-workers were back at Hindman. However, this summer camp was actually at Sassafras at Carr’s Fork Valley, close to the junction of Knott, Letcher, and Perry Counties. The program was similar to past years, but more intensive. The women traveled more extensively in the area and visited more homes and neighborhoods. They conducted classes at the three closest schoolhouses and set up a kindergarten, day nursery, and three Sunday schools. These women also helped to send several girls to school at Harlan and several boys to school at Berea. The 1901 camp
lasted longer than previous ones (1 July – 1 October), and resulted in the recommendation that a woman should be sent to live there an entire year, with the idea that a permanent Social Settlement would be founded.⁹⁷

Already in the summer tent settlements, which were only a precursor to the actual settlement school, mainstream currents in thought greatly influenced the women in organizing their work. Urban settlement schools of the time at least had a semblance of missionary character or religious spirit, but the summer settlements at Hindman were essentially secular, even if Sunday school classes were conducted. This may have been a result of a shift in thinking. Whereas previous workers surmised that a mountaineer’s need was religious instruction and only later realized that there was also a need for instruction in cooking or personal hygiene, the Hindman women presented themselves as exemplary cases of “living the life of the home beautiful, and of having a nice time in the process.”⁹⁸ They set up their tents outside of town, hung up Japanese lanterns, put bookcases and cupboards for dishes in place, decorated tent walls with magazine pictures, and spread red carpets to cover up wooden tent platforms.⁹⁹ This camp-site beautification may seem trivial, but it is a physical manifestation of the women’s desire to be models to the local people; to indeed act as carriers, not of salvation, but of mainstream culture.

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Allen H. Eaton summed up the origins of Hindman Settlement School, mythic elements and all, in one sentence:

During the summer Uncle Solomon Everidge, then eighty years of age, walked 20 miles to ask the settlement women to give his children and grandchildren an opportunity to partake of the knowledge of the world.¹⁰⁰
“Uncle Sol” is one of the key figures in the story of Hindman Settlement School. Eaton’s version is decidedly cropped, but still gives the basic elements: an old man who travels twenty miles to visit women who, he is sure, will be able to better educate his children and grandchildren. An article in *Scribner’s Magazine* in 1918 gives a more complete picture:

“When I was jest a chunk of a boy....,” he said, “and hoein’ corn on the steep mountainside, I’d look up Troublesome and down Troublesome, and wonder if anybody’d ever come in and larn us anything. But nobody ever come in, and nobody ever went out, and we jest growed up and never knowed nothin’. I never had a chanst to larn anything myself, but I got chillern and grandchillern jest as bright as other folkse’s, and I want ‘em to have a chanst.”...

“Times is a-gittin’ wuss and wuss,” he continued, “When I was a boy I was purty bad. The next generation was wusser.” Then, pointing to a baby whose mother...was fanning it with a white turkey wing, he asked, “What will this generation be unless you women come to Hindman and help us?”[101]

This version, promulgated by William Aspenwall Bradley, turned Uncle Sol into a mountain prophet who, even since childhood, had been waiting for someone to come and educate the people. Katherine Pettit and the other settlement workers arrived in Hindman and, in this mythic context, not only started a school but answered a calling that had been put forth many years earlier.

Although Uncle Sol was a real person, and perhaps a genuine influence on the founding of Hindman Settlement School, his role was more important in the outward image projected by the school than in the actual establishment of the institution. After the three successive summers of tent-settlements, the Women’s Christian Temperance Union officially opened Hindman Settlement School in 1902.[102] The school was established on Troublesome Creek in Knott County, Kentucky and led by Katherine Pettit and May Stone.[103] Fires between 1905 and 1910 destroyed practically all early records of the school, making information about the actual founding of the institution scarce. However,
it can be deciphered that by early 1902, the Pettit and Stone had raised $2600, bought one building, rented another, and received three acres of land purchased by local citizens. In the fall of the same year, the “Log Cabin Social Settlement” opened with 190 students.\textsuperscript{104}

Hindman Settlement School is significant in early twentieth century Appalachia in two ways. First, it stands out in its very incorporation as a settlement school. Hindman was the first \textit{rural} social settlement school in the United States.\textsuperscript{105} Prior to Hindman, settlement schools were located mainly in the major Midwestern and northeastern cities. Hindman was an early endeavor to transfer the pattern of social and educational urban settlements into the Appalachian Mountains. The second aspect of Hindman that proved to be very important in Southern Appalachia was its cultural endeavors. Hindman, as with Allanstand and Biltmore, had a major impact on the relationship between Southern Appalachia and its supposed “traditional” handicrafts.

Before delving into Hindman and its cultural undertakings, it is important to get a view of what the culture in Knott County was at the time the Hindman women appeared. One source that provides a glimpse is Katherine Petit’s diary. While visiting Uncle Rob Cornett’s home, Pettit and the other settlement women saw handwoven coverlets lying on the bed. They heard Cornett play “meeting house songs” on a hand-made forty year old dulcimer. At Mrs. Enoch Comb’s home on Red Oak Branch, they saw a variety of homemade objects: baskets, blankets, coverlets, linsey, and jeans. In visiting other residents of Knott County, they saw solid yellow, green and red calico sewn together in quilting patterns such as \textit{Waves of Ocean, Sun Flower, Catch Me If You Can}, and \textit{Democratic Banner}. The women also witnessed local people participate in a medley of events: raising log houses, going to funeral meetings, working at a hand-crafted turning
lathe, boiling sorghum, and dyeing cloth with native dyes. They listened to old ballads sung by different people, a recent ballad that had been written about the local post office being robbed by Granville Stacy, and to the Baptists “line out” hymns in “the old way.” The women appear to have integrated themselves into the local population as they “sat on porches and sang ballads, play-party songs, and hymns out of The Sweet Songster.”

What appeared to be cultural stability to Pettit and company was actually a false perception. Lined-out hymns, ballads performed without accompaniment, and hand-made dulcimers were a surface soon to be erupted by banjos and mail-order instruments. However the Hindman women chose to see it, the culture in Knott County moved in similar ways to any other culture: through waves of stability and change, blending indigenous elements with outside influences. This transition was seen in old quilt patterns cut from store-bought cloth, old songs accompanied by mail-order instruments, modern entities such as coal mines and post offices mentioned in ballad-style songs.

The fetched-on women entered into this environment, seemingly not prepared to deal with the shifting cultural situation. They arrived to Knott County with a concept of what the traditional culture should be and could not fathom the situation going another way. However, they themselves acted as strong agents for cultural change. On one hand, the settlement women expressed the desire to preserve the traditional and deter the effects of creeping industrialization. On the other hand, they did not see a conflict in introducing the genteel mainstream culture of the early twentieth century. Even as early as the summer camps, the women introduced mass culture through simple acts such as instructing children specific, non-native foods to cook and how to prepare them, teaching temperance songs, giving lessons in ironing and sewing, holding refined “socials” in
place of rowdy "gatherins," and trying to get as many as possible to sign the temperance pledge.\textsuperscript{109}

This subtle cultural molding was carried on in the formal institution of Hindman Settlement School. The school, in its early years, had two major cultural concentrations: ballads and crafts. For the purposes of this study, only the case of handicrafts will be considered, although similar mindsets were surely present in dealing with the role of ballads.

Katherine Pettit established a Department of Fireside Industries at Hindman in order "to encourage the native arts of basketry, home spinning and weaving, and to find a market for these products."\textsuperscript{116} This mission statement, as it were, reflects the same goals touted by other institutions of the time. Hindman, as with its contemporaries Allanstand and Biltmore, was at the forefront of what would be termed the "craft revival." Although these institutions had different origins, all three reflected an interest in encouraging some form of "native arts" and finding a way for these products to be economically viable.

Hindman, then, began its craftwork at a critical time. In 1901, during the summer settlement, Pettit reported that a local lady was instructing one of her coworkers how to make willow baskets. This led to a basket-weaving class and to more settlement women learning from local women how to weave baskets. By 1904, the school had started a woodworking program. Within six years, the school's own newspaper related information about girls' classes in basketry and weaving, in addition to the usual offering of cooking and sewing, and boys' classes in furniture making, blacksmithing, and carpentry.

Hindman, however, was open to more than its own products. It had an informal relationship with local craftspeople, notably Aunt Cord Ritchie of Hindman and Bird
Owsley of Vest, Kentucky.\textsuperscript{111} Through this informal relationship, the school promoted local men and women to bring their handmade items such as baskets, quilts, coverlets, and chairs to the school to be vended by its official production and marketing enterprise, the Fireside Industries.\textsuperscript{112}

The impetus behind the Fireside Industries, then, was multi-faceted. The handicrafts program revered local traditions for what they might confer to the individual, family, society, and culture through ideas such as identity and continuity.\textsuperscript{113} Providing a skill set to the local population or even encouraging those who already had knowledge in a handcraft, went beyond bestowing ideals. It offered the local population customs that would be beneficial in a personal manner as well as in a financial sense, and provided the school itself with a source of income.

The real impact of the handicrafts industry at Hindman is disputed, but it can be deciphered that the Fireside Industries was going beyond the simple preservation and revitalization of native handicraft practices. In one way, this is seen through the fact that many of the handicraft instructors came from outside the region, thus having no earlier contact with indigenous cultural patterns. Records of the time are inadequate, but what are available shows that many of the instructors came from outside the area and their concept of handicrafts was based mainly on urban revival centers: universities, settlement houses, arts and crafts societies, and manual training schools.\textsuperscript{114}

The act of bringing in “outside help” may seem like a choice of practicality, but it reveals a deeper thought process at work. It is in one way a manifestation of the cultural molding that had started during the summer camps: instituting the mass-culture way as a school norm. The Hindman workers reportedly venerated the local culture, yet they
brought in educators who had little to no idea what the local culture was. The women, who could not comprehend a fluctuating culture of mail-order instruments and store-bought goods, created their own atmosphere of change by bringing in outside help, who did not teach or reinforce indigenous traditions, but surely exposed students to "foreign" methods.

The school also faced dilemmas in what was produced. Handicrafts at Hindman ran the gamut from traditional items such as baskets and split-bottomed chairs, to non-local items such as furniture based on Roycroft-William Morris design, which came from Elbert Hubbard's Roycroft Shops in East Aurora, New York, and therefore had little to do with indigenous design or tradition. Moreover, as the Hindman's handicrafts program became an economic entity, Fireside Industries, and thus connected to the handicraft revival, craftspeople now had to learn to cater to the market, which at this time meant largely middle- and upper-class people from outside the area. In some areas, such as basketry, design change was insignificant. In others, design change was substantial enough to constitute whole new style. Weaving is the prime example. Weavers amalgamated traditional colors, methods, and designs with foreign motifs and materials to create products that could scarcely be called traditional: cloth napkins, place mats, and table runners. The pattern here is reminiscent of the weaving program at Biltmore: using a "traditional" craft to produce new and non-traditional items that would be financially successful.
Conclusion: Craft Revival and Continuance

Craft Revival. It has been a term used, danced around, and alluded to in the previous pages. It was a pivotal concept and yet did not even receive its own segment. This study never even directly defined it, at least not in the conventional sense. How can one write a paper about the Craft Revival in southern Appalachia and yet never mention it in plain terms?

One must simply be aware that, around the turn of the last century, a craft revival took place in southern Appalachia. In most basic terms, about a hundred years ago, there was a renewed interest in handmade objects, especially those made by mountaineers. Some sources call the revival a phenomenon and rightly so. The craft revival was not the product of any one person or event, but emerged from the juncture of a number of societal trends, events, and people. How does one explain the Craft Revival? Explain the societal trends, events, and people that made it possible and then show those same features in action.

The Craft Revival in Southern Appalachia arose from a renewed interest in handicraft work. This interest did not come from one long line of events, but rather was the result of the interaction of several issues. America “discovered” Appalachia through literature and missionary efforts. Missionaries identified mountaineers as needing aid, and started a trend of religious and secular workers coming to the mountains. A generation of women was well-educated, motivated, and inspired by ideas of social reform. Well-versed in settlement rhetoric, they arrived in southern Appalachia. They, along with other reform workers and missionaries, chose craftwork because it was widely accepted that craft training built sturdy character. As well, the inhabitants of southern
Appalachia exhibited a traditional craft culture, or at least signs of one. It so happened, as well, that mainstream America was growing insecure in matters of industrialization and immigration. Society grew nostalgic for the “olden” days and wanted to buy products that reflected simpler times. They turned to southern Appalachia as a trove of pre-industrial, traditional Anglo-Saxon ways.

The list of issues that converged to create the environment that made the craft revival possible could continue indefinitely. There are always hidden motivations and influences at work. This study only handled the most prominent issues. These issues were acted upon most readily through institutions such as Allanstand, Biltmore, and Hindman. All three of these enterprises were ran by women, based on ideas of reform and “uplift,” and used craft as a cultural form to achieve their goals and agendas.

The work at these and other institutions was truly integral to the existence of a craft revival. As well, they spurred on the development and continuance of craftwork in southern Appalachia. This is a fact widely recognized. The Women’s Bureau prepared a report on Southern Mountaineer Handicraft in the 1930s and opened by saying, “Thirty years of effort on the part of educators and missionaries to preserve colonial handicrafts in the Southern Appalachians has developed a high degree of hand skill among thousands of mountain women and men.” Indeed, the Women’s Bureau recognized the impact made over time by the consistent and active presence of workers in the mountains.

Handicrafts and the revival were intertwined in the lives of women and social issues from the beginning. For the women of southern Appalachia, craftwork provided a way to supplement their family’s income. It was an activity that they could pursue on their own free time and still fulfill their duties as wives and mothers. To the women who
came to southern Appalachia, craftwork was a way to connect. Sharing and receiving knowledge about handicrafts provided a common ground between the workers and the people they were trying to help. As well, in a time of insecurity about modernization, activities viewed as "traditional" provided women, who perhaps had missed the chance in the face of progress, the opportunity to connect with the past. To some, the idea of craftwork or a revival centered on crafts sounds boring and antiquated, but in truth, the Craft Revival in southern Appalachia is a common thread that bound women from different backgrounds and regions together, revealed the true feelings of a society, and helped a nation find a way to define itself.
Notes

6 Becker, *Selling Tradition*, 56.
7 Shapiro, *Appalachia on Our Mind*, xiii.
11 L'Ecuyer, "Uplifting the Southern Highlander," 125.
16 Whisnant, *All That is Native and Fine*, 66.
18 Shapiro, *Appalachia on Our Mind*, 227.
20 L'Ecuyer, "Uplifting the Southern Highlander," 125.
24 Qtd. in Shapiro, *Appalachia on Our Mind*, 80.
28 Shapiro, *Appalachia on Our Mind*, 219.
32 Whisnant, *All That is Native and Fine*, 33.
34 L'Ecuyer, "Uplifting the Southern Highlander," 125.
35 Shapiro, *Appalachia on Our Mind*, 144.
40 Whisnant, *All That is Native and Fine*, 45.
Shapiro, *Appalachia on Our Mind*, 222.
Shapiro, *Appalachia on Our Mind*, 223.
Shapiro, *Appalachia on Our Mind*, 224.
Ibid., 24
Becker, *Selling Tradition*, 64.
Shapiro, *Appalachia on Our Mind*, 224.
Ibid.
Ibid.
Ibid., *Selling Tradition*, 65.
Ibid., 25.
Ibid., 126-127.
Ibid., *Selling Tradition*, 65.
Ibid., *Appalachia on Our Mind*, 128.
Ibid., 129.
Ibid.
Ibid., 130.
Ibid., 128.
Ibid., 131.
Ibid., 130.
Ibid., 130.
Ibid., 130.
Ibid., 130.
Ibid., 131.
Ibid., *Selling Tradition*, 65.
Ibid., *Appalachia on Our Mind*, 132.
Ibid.
Ibid.
Ibid., 133.
Ibid.
Ibid., 134.
Ibid.
Ibid., 142.
Ibid., *Selling Tradition*, 65.
Eaton, *Handicrafts of the Southern Highlands*, 70.
Whisnant, *All That is Native and Fine*, 41.
96 Eaton, *Handicrafts of the Southern Highlands*, 70.
98 Shapiro, *Appalochia on Our Mind*, 147.
100 Eaton, *Handicrafts of the Southern Highlands*, 71.
102 qtd. in Whisnant, *All That is Native and Fine*, 82.
103 Becker, *Selling Tradition*, 56.
107 Whisnant, *All That is Native and Fine*, 47.
108 Whisnant, *All That is Native and Fine*, 47.
109 Ibid., 48.
113 Whisnant, *All That is Native and Fine*, 61.
114 Ibid., 58.
115 Ibid., 61.
116 Ibid., 63.
117 Ibid. 67.
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Maps

The Southern Highlands

Kentucky

North Carolina
Southern Appalachia
as defined by John C. Campbell
Kentucky

Cities and Rivers
Eastern Kentucky

Counties
North Carolina

Cities and Rivers
North Carolina

Counties
Map Sources


“Kentucky,” map in Merriam Webster’s Atlas

“North Carolina” map in Merriam Webster’s Atlas