

Appalachian Working-Class Fiction

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(With thanks to Edwina Pendarvis, Laura Bently, Ann Pancake, Richard Hague, Phyllis Wilson Moore and others for content and suggestions.)

To see criterion or characteristics of how books were included.

<http://smithdocs.net/AppalachianFiction.html>

1860's

Rebecca Harding Davis. *Life in the Iron Mills or The Korl Woman* (1861; rpt. 1972) [Harsh working life in industrial Wheeling, WV, shows clash of classes]; ***Margaret Howth: A Story of To-Day*** (1862) [A young girl abandoned by her fiancé is forced to work in an Indiana wool mill.]

1920's & 1930's

Edith Summers Kelley. *Weeds* (1923; rpt. 1972, 1982). [Tale of tobacco farming in Southern Appalachia.]

Alberta Pierson Hannum. *Thursday April* (1931) [Treats rural family life in Appalachian mountains.]

Tom Kromer. *Waiting for Nothing*. (1935; reissued 1968; 1989) [Autobiographical novel focused on the lack of work during the Great Depression and the accompanying hardships in Appalachia.]

Hubert Skidmore. *I Will Lift up My Eyes* (1936) and ***Heaven Came So Near*** (1938) [Both books feature good hill people crushed by economic forces.]; ***River Rising*** (1939) [Travails of the "hill people" confronting environmental and economic pressures of isolation, ignorance and poverty which contribute to deaths by pneumonia as the main character vows to become a doctor to help the farm families of the remote hollows of Appalachia.]

1940's & 1950's

Jesse Stuart. *Trees of Heaven* (1940) [Rural Kentucky setting for this the novel of Anse Bushman, who loves working the land and wants more land.];

Men of the Mountains (Stories 1941) [Daily routines of Appalachian hill farmers.]; ***Taps for Private Tussie*** (1943) [Soldier's death brings \$10,000 to poor white family who enjoy and struggle with it, comic best seller.]; ***Tales from the Plum Grove Hills*** (Stories 1946).

James Still. *River of Earth* (1940) [Young boy sees family struggle between poverty of farm life and promise of work in the mines.]

Hubert Skidmore. *Hill Doctor* (1940); ***Hawks Nest*** (1941) [Rural West Virginians lured from their farms by the large construction project at Gauley Bridge, building the tunnel and hydroelectric plant are crushed by company's disregard for health and safety.]

Harriette Arnow. *Hunter's Horn* (1949) [An account of Kentucky hill people, Southern Appalachian farmers, foxhunters, foxhounds, women, and children.]; ***The Dollmaker*** (1954) [Strength of woman forced to leave Kentucky home for life in Detroit shows women's ingenuity at getting by.]

James Agee. *A Death in the Family* (1957). [Classic story of family and death set in Tennessee.]

1960's & 1970's

Wendell Berry. *Nathan Coulter* (1960) [In the time between the death of his mother and his grandfather, a backwoods Kentucky boy grows in manhood.]

A Place on Earth (1967, much revised 1983) [Port William, Kentucky farmer and community come to terms with the loss of farmer's only son and other costs of World War II.]; ***The Memory of Old Jack*** (1974) [Story recounts the last days in the life of 92-year-old farmer Jack Beechum in the fall of 1952, as the self-sufficient man of the soil contemplates both his heartaches and triumphs.]

Jesse Stuart. *The Land Beyond the River* (1973) [Poor Kentucky family moves to dream of prosperity in Ohio yet encounters troubles.]

Gurney Norman. *Kinfolks* (1977). [Young man's depiction of family life in rural Kentucky]

John Knowles. *A Vein of Riches* (1978) [Tale of wealthy coal and oil barons facing strike by miners in 1919.]

Jayne Anne Philips. *Black Tickets* (Stories 1979) [Gallery of characters deal with loss and alienation in mass culture.]

Meredith Sue Willis. *A Space Apart* (1979) [Treats a preacher's family in small town West Virginia in 1950's.]

1980's

Meredith Sue Willis. Blair Morgan Trilogy: *Higher Ground* (1981), *Only Great Changes* (1985), *Trespassers* (1997) [Treats heroine Blair Morgan from her life in West Virginia to work as VISTA worker in Virginia, finally to life in New York City]

Jayne Anne Philips. *Machine Dreams* (1984). [The story of a struggling, smalltown West Virginia family, the Hampsons.]

Michael Henson. *Ransack* (1982) [Set in Cincinnati's Over-the Rhine district, novel shows the struggles of community over the wrecking ball.] ; ***A Small Room with Trouble on My Mind*** (Stories 1983) [Guitar playing rebel struggles to get by in poverty torn Appalachia.]

Ellesa Clay High. *Past Titan Rock: Journey Into an Appalachian Valley* (1984).

Bobbie Ann Mason. *Shiloh and Other Stories* (Stories 1982) [Kentucky farmer and truck driver struggles with urban life, and other stories.]

Spence and Lila (1988) [Contemporary families in Kentucky struggle with high tech medical treatment]; ***In Country*** (1989) [Young Kentucky girl travels to Washington D.C. with Vietnam veteran to try to reclaim her lost father].

Wendell Berry. *The Wild Birds: Six Stories of the Port William Membership* (1986) [Interrelated stories set between 1930's and 1970's back country Kentucky.]; ***Remembering*** (1988) [Though set in pre-dawn San Francisco, story is of a rural journalist reflecting on relationship and environmental losses back home in Kentucky.]; ***A World Lost*** (1996) [Young boy in 1944 living near Port William, Kentucky encounters loss in murder of his uncle.]

Lee Maynard. *Crum* (1988; rev. ed. 2001). [Portrait of rowdy life of youth in Appalachia.]

Breece D'J Pancake. *The Stories of Breece D'J Pancake* (Stories. 1983; rpt. 2002). [This showcase of the writer's only stories, who took his life in 1979, feature strong Appalachian characters who struggle with their ambivalence of place.]

Annabel Thomas *The Phototropic Woman* (Stories. 1981) [Award winning collection of stories, many set in Southern Ohio.]

Denise Giardina. *Storming Heaven* (1987) [Historical tale of miners struggles for unions in 1920's West Virginia].

Pinckney Benedict. *Town Smokes: Stories* (Stories, 1987) [Slice of life stories on contemporary West Virginia].

Dorothy Allison. *Trash: Stories* (Stories, 1988) [Tough gritty stories about Southern poor].

Barbara Kingsolver. *The Bean Trees* (1988) [Young narrator Taylor leaves home in Kentucky to travel west to Arizona picking up a family on the way.]; ***Pigs in Heaven*** (1994) [Continuation of Taylor and her adopted daughter Turtle set in Southwest with connections to mother back home in Kentucky].

Richard Currey. *Fatal Light* (1988) [Young man emerges from West Virginia hometown to go to battlefields of Vietnam.]

1990's

John Ehle. *The Road* (1991) [Covers the building of a railroad across Appalachia, post Civil War]; ***Journey of August King*** (1995).

Denise Giardina. *The Unquiet Earth* (1992) [Reprises story of descendents from her *Storming Heaven* as they continue struggles for safe and fair work in the mines of West Virginia].

Pinckney Benedict. *The Wrecking Yard* (Stories, 1992) [A "gallery of broken lives" set in West Virginia]; ***Dogs of God*** (1993) [His debut novel studies contemporary struggles for West Virginia folks.]

Fred Chappel. *Farewell, I'm Bound to Leave You* (Stories, 1995) [A series on interlinked stories set in the 1940s North Carolina].

Dorothy Allison. *Bastard Out of Carolina* (1992). [Searing tale about child abuse set in South Carolina].

Chris Offutt. *Kentucky Straight* (Stories 1992) [Set in small Kentucky village, young boy grows to manhood searching for self]; ***The Good Brother*** (1998) [Novel of youth who leaves Kentucky to become part of a militia in Montana]; ***Out of the Woods: Stories*** (1999) [Deals with struggles of staying at home and leaving Kentucky].

Jim Wayne Miller. *His First Best Country* (1995) [Lyric prose from this poet treating social struggles at the turn of the century.]

Annabel Thomas. *Knucklebones* (1996) [Another award winning collection of 27 stories, many set in family living in Southern Ohio.]

Lee Smith. *Fair and Tender Ladies* (1995) [Mountain woman meets all obstacles]; ***Saving Grace*** (1995) [Story of daughter of traveling evangelist].

Larry Smith. *Beyond Rust* (Stories 1996) [Novella set in working-class Ohio and stories set in steel mill towns of Upper Ohio River Valley.]

William Demby. *Beetlecreek* (1998) [A novel of race relations in a remote West Virginia.]

Charles Frazier. *Cold Mountain* (1997) [Wounded Civil War deserter walks home to North Carolina and his mountain love].

Sharyn McCrumb. *She Walks These Hills* (1994) [Treats migration from Britain to American Appalachia]; ***The Rosewood Casket*** (1996) [Treats issues of the vanishing wilderness in Appalachia]; ***The Ballad of Frankie Silver*** (1998) [Mystery surrounding the two murders on the Appalachian Trail and subsequent hanging].

Meredith Sue Willis. *In the Mountains of America* (Stories 1994) [Appalachian characters relate to homeplace, landscape, and family in West Virginia].

Richard Currey. *Lost Highway* (1998) [WWII Veteran seeks his way through music in Appalachia].

2000's

Barbara Kingsolver. *Prodigal Summer* (2000) [Multi-layered novel of characters living in contemporary Kentucky].

Sharyn McCrumb. *The Songcatcher* (2001) [Love story of genealogy of songs in Appalachia and their recording.]; ***Ghost Riders*** (2003) [Civil War in North Carolina].

Annabel Thomas. *Stone Man Mountain* (2002) [A multigenerational saga set in South-eastern Ohio explores struggles between city and country, modernization and tradition.].

Meredith Sue Willis. *Oradell at Sea* (2003) [Rich widow recalls on her poverty days in Appalachia].

Wendell Berry *Hannah Coulter* (2004) [As old woman Hannah recalls her life at Port Williams community including the Great Depression, the post-war industrialization of agriculture, flight of young to urban employment, and her remoteness from grandchildren.]

Gretchen Moran Laskas. *The Midwife's Tale* (2003) [Mother and daughter work as midwives in 1930's Kettle Valley, West Virginia]; ***The Miner's Daughter*** (2007) [Perhaps primarily a young reader's novel, it is a haunting story of loving family in a poverty stricken mining town in West Virginia's Depression Era.]

Belinda Anderson. *The Well Ain't Dry Yet* (Stories 2001).

Jeanne Bryner. *Eclipse* (Stories 2003) [Stories set in West Virginia and Ohio dealing with family and the migration north for jobs.]

Silas House. *Clay's Quilt* (2002) [Contemporary story of young man struggling to connect with his family and dead mother set in Kentucky mining area.]; ***A Parchment of Leaves*** (2003); ***The Coal Tattoo*** (2005) [Continues the story of Kentucky mining family by looking back on the two sisters of *Clay's Quilt*.]

Ann Pancake. *Given Ground* (2001) [Stories set in West Virginia's southern region treating issue of poverty and urbanization]; ***Strange as this Weather Has Been*** (2007) [Set in near contemporary West Virginia, folks in flood torn community struggle with coal companies and mountain-top removal.]

Ed Davis. *I Was So Much Older Then* (2001.) [A coming of age novel focused on a mother and son living on the edge of poverty.]

Ron Rash. *The World Made Straight* (2006) [Young man deals with things in post Civil War period.]

Jim Tomlinson. *Things Kept, Things Left Behind* (Stories 2006) [Stories of family, marriage, and struggle set in rural Kentucky.]; ***Nothing Like an Ocean*** (Stories 2009).

M. Glenn Taylor. *The Ballad of Trenchmouth Taggart* (2008); [West Virginia centenarian recalls rugged life growing up, moonshining and mining strikes at Matewan].

Donald Ray Pollock. *Knockemstiff* (stories 2008) [Contemporary tales of rowdy folks in a small Southern Ohio town.]

Larry Smith. *The Long River Home* (2009). [Covers four generations of the hard working McCall family in rural Southern Ohio, then migration north to industrial Ohio River Valley.]

Jayne Anne Philips. *Lark and Termite* (2009). [1950's Korean war veteran brings woman home to family in Winfield, West Virginia].

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