

# The Ohio Field School: A Collaborative Model for University- Community Research

by Katherine Borland,  
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In 2016, the Center for Folklore Studies (CFS) at The Ohio State University (OSU) developed the Ohio Field School (OFS), a service-learning ethnographic methods course that provides opportunities for hands-on research while documenting and archiving placemaking practices in Appalachian Ohio.<sup>1</sup> Through work in Scioto and Perry counties, the course has provided structures for reflexive, equitable exchange between students, faculty, staff, and community partners who respond to ongoing environmental, economic, and social inequities stemming from a legacy of extractive industry and compounded by emerging economic and health crises. The COVID-19 pandemic, for instance, has set back already struggling community organizations when they were only beginning to find their feet after the 2008 economic crisis. As John Winnenberg, a community partner in Perry County, told us, “[our organizations] are the first to bleed and the last to heal.” “Parachute” academic work and journalism at times of crisis often aggravate persistent inequities, making community organizers wary of partnerships that can cost more than they contribute. In response to these concerns, we employ frameworks of collaborative ethnography, which stress long-term intentional, participatory, and transparent relationship building between researchers and community partners (Campbell and Lassiter 2015). The course documents and supports the work of diverse grassroots community organizations and works to provide platforms to amplify their work despite national discourses that downplay or completely ignore the contributions of progressive organizations in Appalachia.

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About the photo: Maureen Cadogan narrates her personal archive with OFS student cataloguer and digitizer Emma Cobb in Portsmouth, Ohio, in March 2019.

Photo by Jenny Morrison.

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## Reciprocity

We acknowledge OSU's historic and present practices of economic and intellectual exploitation of experts situated outside the university, many of whom have not been properly compensated for their contributions to university-community partnerships. We also acknowledge and actively work to disrupt the power that institutions of higher education can wield in collaborative relationships, sometimes through financial means. Indeed, the initial impetus for the OFS was to counter the ways in which university funding for short-term service projects was reinforcing systemic inequalities by producing tourist-like economies in host communities (see Borland 2013). Therefore, we take a holistic approach to reciprocity that attends to our university's complicity in systemic inequality while also resisting the reduction of our interactions to capitalistic exchange. Our goal is to respond to the values of the communities with whom we work, which sometimes operate through informal modes of support and exchange as well as financial compensation for expertise.

Our experiential pedagogical model is anchored in the Folklore Archives of the CFS and focuses particularly on vibrant social and environmental justice efforts in a region often characterized by pessimistic narratives of exploitation, acquiescence, and abandonment. This article describes and reflects upon the OFS model as a method of developing university-community partnerships that support locally driven efforts to address longstanding inequities in the Appalachian region, including those arising from university-implemented programs. Despite our successes to date, our entanglement in university structures and expectations for research on the one hand, and local contexts to which we are still relative newcomers on the other, create ongoing challenges to ethically responsible university-community partnerships.

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2017 OFS students Sarah Craycraft and Destiny West conduct a walking audit of the downtown Boneyfiddle neighborhood of Portsmouth, OH.

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## The Pedagogical Model

The OFS emerged as a way to introduce a team-based approach to folklore fieldwork that better reflects current practice in engaged public arts and humanities research than the tradition of the lone ethnographer or collector. Simultaneously, we wanted to recuperate a tradition at OSU of fostering and maintaining community partnerships across the state. During the relatively flush era of the 1970s and 1980s, when federal funding supported folk arts surveys, festivals, and documentation projects, folklorists conducted substantial fieldwork statewide.<sup>2</sup> By 2014, however, that robust, publicly engaged, statewide effort was significantly reduced. In the absence of a state folklorist or folklife program, the CFS Folklore Archives aspire to be the primary repository for Ohio's expressive culture. However, our occasional team-based fieldwork projects directed by individual professors have been practically restricted to the Columbus metropolitan area and don't reflect the diverse cultural settings of the state as a whole.<sup>3</sup> As we worked to develop a more engaged research profile, we were supported by an anonymous donor who recognized the importance of our mission. Thus, OFS was born as a two-year proposal for research and teaching, focused on the placemaking activities of small communities in Appalachian Ohio. We were able to stretch an initial gift of \$100,000 to cover three years of research and teaching in Scioto County. Our fourth and fifth years, as well as offshoot collaborations, have been funded through an additional \$187,035 in grants and by continuing our relationship with our donor.<sup>4</sup> These grants have allowed us to hire undergraduate and graduate students over the summer, contract independent folklorists, and host a postdoctoral scholar both to broaden and refine our work. Our enhanced research team has contributed expertise in fields such as social work, education, ethnomusicology, public folklore, cultural anthropology, and Appalachian Studies.<sup>5</sup> Although the positions we have been able to offer are ultimately temporary, they often serve as important training and professional development opportunities for students or recent graduates. Due in part to changing funding opportunities, in 2019 we shifted the physical location of our field school from Scioto County to Perry County and simultaneously broadened our collaborative network to engage our partners with each other across counties.



2020 OFS students Jacob and Lydia Smith interview Brent Bailey at the Rendville Cemetery.

Photo by Jasper Waugh-Quasebarth. Some rights reserved: CC BY-NC-ND.

From the beginning, we wanted to create an opportunity for students to learn fieldwork skills (participant observation, field notes, photographic documentation, interviews, digitization, and archival accessioning and research) as members of a team-based project anchored by the CFS Folklore Archives. Our class therefore emphasized the importance of labeling and accessioning materials so that students' work would become available both to future researchers and interested community members. These skills are not usually taught in university-based, ethnographic methods classes. Moreover, recognizing that the trope of the lone fieldworker relies on a largely unacknowledged freedom of movement based on gender and skin-color privilege, we had our students work in pairs. This approach alleviated the stress many students feel when moving into unfamiliar terrain. It also made interviewing more manageable, as one student took the interviewer role while the other handled tech and took notes that could later be turned into tape logs.

Anchoring the project in the Folklore Archives ensured that collected materials would be appropriately housed and the relationships students and faculty cultivated with community participants were maintained even as individual researchers moved on to other classes and projects. We hoped to avoid the inevitable weaknesses of class-based service-learning models in which successful projects often balloon beyond the limits of a semester and can be abandoned as priorities of a new semester take hold.<sup>6</sup> In our model, the project lives at the Folklore Archives; each year's fieldwork class contributes their part without being responsible for bringing all the research to completion.

Moreover, our model allows us to refocus the work continually according to the goals and priorities of our community partners, moving in the direction of Participatory Action Research (McIntyre 2007). As Columbus- and university-based researchers interested in working with communities outside our metropolitan area, we first needed to develop contacts with people living and working in those areas. In the first year we conducted monthly fieldwork trips to learn what we could. We began by casting a relatively wide net, visiting with an initial set of contacts in Washington, Perry, and Scioto counties. Each county struggles with the unemployment, environmental degradation, and outmigration characteristic of both the deindustrialized Midwest and Appalachia. Our initial focus on sense of place in a changing environment allowed us to enter into collaboration (and satisfy the Institutional Review Board, which does not commonly recognize the importance of exploratory research) so that we might discover how best to support our community partners through documentation. The emerging collaborative model aligned community partner goals with the particular set of skills we had to offer and possibilities for connecting partners with other external resources for projects outside of our professional purview (Lassiter 2005).

We were interested in collecting a diverse set of place-based experiences and expressions—across race and ethnicity, age, and patterns of residence. As we narrowed our focus to develop the necessary infrastructure (e.g., lodging, places of interest, community experts) to bring students into the field, we settled on Scioto County, which offered the small city of Portsmouth as well as Ohio's largest state park and forest within easy driving distance. We invited our initial contacts to serve on a Community Partner Advisory Committee (CPAC). Initially, our advisors provided local contacts for our students to interview, but as we deepened our collaborations, the Advisory Committee provided substantial feedback and suggested new directions and possibilities for the work.<sup>7</sup> They were joined in Year 2 by a volunteer-based OSU Advisory Committee made up

primarily of students and independent folklorists who choose to remain involved after completing their initial involvement in the field school.<sup>8</sup>

Using the fieldwork textbook *Doing Ethnography Today: Theories, Methods, Exercises* (Campbell and Lassiter 2015) as the foundation for our class-based pedagogy, we prepare each cohort of students to interact with community partners in an open-ended, self-reflexive way. We ask students to hold their fieldwork objectives lightly during their admittedly short, one-week immersive experience, remaining flexible and adaptable to their emergent circumstances and to the evolving goals of their hosts. Practically, one student researcher team might conduct multiple interviews with people they had not previously met while another might spend the week side by side with one individual before conducting any interviews at all. We stress the importance of daily fieldnotes to capture the conversations and activities that students and partners share, opportunities and limitations of partners' community work, and students' evolving sense of themselves as ethnographers. We try as much as possible to rid students of the idea of fieldwork as a recipe with a right way and a wrong way to do participant observation and interviewing. Instead, we model and emphasize the importance of trying out different styles, always being thoughtful about what a certain approach might accomplish and what it might obscure. When discussing how they felt about listening to and analyzing an interview they had conducted, for example, students from our 2020 field school recognized that they had missed opportunities and made assumptions that may have prevented their interlocutor from fully developing a thought or idea. Through reflexive review, they learned that listening in such a way to allow the next question to emerge out of the conversational nexus requires practice and attention.

By the end of the semester, each student team produces three products: an archival collection of photographs, interviews, and scans with each item properly labelled and described; a public facing project, which usually takes the form of a digital gallery for the CFS website ([go.osu.edu/ofs](http://go.osu.edu/ofs)); and a final report, loosely modelled on the kind of document an independent folklorist would produce for a grant agency, with a summary of the work accomplished, a contact list, and recommendations for future research. Through these assignments, students transform their groups' ethnographic and interpersonal experience into a collection that community partners and future students can access and build upon.



2017 OFS students work on accessioning their materials and creating public facing projects after their week in Scioto County.

Photo by Cassie Patterson.  
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## **Establishing Community Partners in Appalachian Ohio**

Establishing long-term community partners with research relationships that last over a period of years has been a hallmark of the OFS. Working in Appalachian Ohio, we are strongly influenced by collaborative and social justice models from Appalachian Studies and Folklore. Both contexts stress that knowledge and social action “come from the people” and ground work in the practice of “deep listening,” which seeks to understand the meanings that people make within their own lives according to their worldviews (Hinsdale et al. 1995; Portelli 1991, 1997, 2011; Lindahl 2012). Extending these frameworks, we resist extractive approaches by working alongside people and organizations who remake place in socially and environmentally just ways (Fisher and Smith 2012, Hufford 2002). We view our relationships with community partners as collaborations, in which we can provide skills and attention to projects that partners value but often lack the time or technical capability to do, such as the digitization of organizational records. These collaborative frameworks assume an asset-based stance, listening to community partner needs and requests, valuing community partner knowledge, and recognizing the limited scope of our work in relationship to a communities’ larger struggles (Billings and Kingsolver 2017, Campbell and Lassiter 2015, Keefe 2009, White et al. 2012).

Our community partners are deeply and extensively connected in their work to effect meaningful change. They are also, we have found, worn out by promises from would-be allies who can offer little meaningful follow-through on projects. With this history in mind, we find that delivering on small, discreet projects is important to building trust over time. Rather than creating our own projects, we tap into existing meshworks—interwoven localized, self-organized, and nonhierarchical interrelationships—to build projects together (Harcourt and Escobar 2002). Recognizing that our community partner organizations manage a host of external partnerships, such as those with AmeriCorps VISTA, Rural Action, and OSU Extension,<sup>9</sup> we follow a model of learning and listening similar to that of embedded allies, while bringing new skills and perspectives to the work. We also take advantage of university networks. We have partnered extensively with Andrew Feight, Professor of American and Digital History at Shawnee State University in Portsmouth for our Scioto County work. In Perry County, Rachel Terman, a sociologist at Ohio University in nearby Athens, has shared insights from her recent focus groups with local (inter)generational leaders. In these ways the OSU team strives to position our work humbly in relation to multifaceted contexts, challenges, and advocacy strategies.

Our collaborations have taken shape in response to differences in local meshworks and environmental terrains. Our work in Scioto County (population 75,314)<sup>10</sup> aligns with county boundary designations, which allows us to make connections across categories of demographic diversity, such as race, ethnicity, class, population density, gender, and sexual orientation. We have focused especially on the city of Portsmouth (population 20,240), including the previously segregated and historically African American neighborhood of the North End and the small communities in and around Shawnee State Forest to the west. Our work in Scioto County has centered around gathering groups across lines of difference, providing time and space for relationships to grow or be renewed.

In contrast, our first year of work in the microregion of the Little Cities of Black Diamonds (LCBD) in Perry County follows the geographic contours of a series of small coal mining towns nestled within the Wayne National Forest, spanning portions of Perry, Monroe, and Athens

counties.<sup>11</sup> Here, fieldwork and project development have focused on several interrelated organizational initiatives operating in downtown Shawnee, Ohio, and the nearby towns of New Straitsville and Rendville,<sup>12</sup> a historically integrated coal mining town with a history of African American culture and leadership. Since our community partners typically work on continuous and overlapping grant-funded projects, our role has been to document the rich histories of organizational cooperation and to support succession planning. John Winnenberg of Sunday Creek Associates has been a key ally in connecting us with our partners in the region. Public folklorist Jasper Waugh-Quasebarth of CFS is leading [Sharing Visions: Intergenerational Work in Appalachian Ohio](#), a 2019–2021 initiative to foster community-to-community networking and sharing between partners in Scioto County and the LCBD microregion.



Sue Eleuterio and Cassie Rosita Patterson consult with community partners Drew Carter, Jenny Richards, and Charlie Haskins in Charlie's shop, Haskins House, in downtown Portsmouth to plan a community meeting in February 2018. These partners knew about each other but appreciated the opportunity to meet. Photo by Katherine Borland. Some rights reserved: CC BY-NC-ND.

Principles that guide the OFS include navigating communication hurdles in ways that hold space for stakeholder input. Community organizations prioritize projects that keep the lights on and everyday communication that ensures the thriving of their organization. With this in mind, we draft statements of collaboration that outline our expectations for ourselves and community partners early in the process.<sup>13</sup> We also commit to finding locally legible ways of communicating, making a toolkit of SMS messaging, messaging apps, email, phone calls, and knocking on doors essential. Our spring break field experiences from 2017 to 2020 formed the pedagogical backbone of our project, but these visits were knit together by smaller, less formal visits when individual faculty, staff, and former field school students assisted our partners in their ongoing community work. This can be challenging, as we are not embedded in these communities, but as our university cohort grows, we can draw on a larger and larger pool of volunteers to assist in deepening

connections with our partners. For instance, faculty and students helped partner Maxine Malone document the summer North End Super Reunion, a festival of the predominantly African American North End neighborhood of Portsmouth. Others assisted Barbara and Kevin Bradbury, owners of Hurricane Run Farm, with maple sap tapping and syrup making in midwinter, and another answered Jody Newton-McAllister's call to join the Friends of Scioto-Brush Creek watershed group's stream clean-up the following spring.



Father and daughter from Rarden, Ohio, pull tires out of Scioto-Brush Creek during the Friends of Scioto-Brush Creek Creeksweep in May 2018.

Photo by Katherine Borland. Some rights reserved: CC BY-NC-ND.

Asking community partners to trust us, we also trust community partners, former field schoolers, and short-term project collaborators to advise on the future of the field school as CPAC and OSU Advisory Committee members. Moreover, we maintain these relationships through other CFS initiatives. For instance, the [Placemaking in Scioto County, Ohio](#) traveling exhibit is designed to cultivate county-wide discussion of regional placemaking practices, and the Sharing Visions project discussed earlier, works to facilitate connections among activists working in different counties by providing spaces for cross-county conversation and committing resources to documenting and publishing the emerging themes of those conversations as resources for groups across Appalachian Ohio.





OFS OSU Advisory Committee member Caroline Toy facilitates a World Café roundtable to gather input from community members Jeanette Langford and Cora Johnson for the Placemaking in Scioto County, Ohio traveling exhibit in February 2018. Photo by Breanne Lejeune. Some rights reserved: CC BY-NC-ND.

As we seek to become contributing members of the communities with whom we partner, we bring our skills and networks to bear situationally by serving on committees for local efforts where partners have asked for an outside perspective. For example, Waugh-Quasebarth has recently been invited to provide an outsider's perspective to conversations among multiply entangled local individuals and organizations who make up the Shawnee Trail Town Group.

### **The Role of the Archives in University-Community Relationship Building and Collaborative Archiving**

Housed within CFS, the [Folklore Archives](#) contain several collections of original Ohio-based fieldwork dating back to its founding by Francis Lee Utley in the early 1960s (Mullen and Shuman, forthcoming). For example, the *Student Ethnographic Papers Collection* features over 11,000 undergraduate student collection projects, the *Ohio Arts Council Collection* contains cultural documentation from 1977–1982, and the *Slang Journals, University District Project, Columbus-Copapayo Sister Cities Collection, Oral Narratives of Latin@s in Ohio*, among others, explore specific forms of Ohio expressive culture. The OFS Collection builds on this foundation while also shifting toward community-based collaborative ethnography and public programming.

As an integrated archival collection, community engagement initiative, and service-learning course, the OFS is rooted in the Folklore Archives, providing critical continuity for our work. Although faculty members Katherine Borland and Cassie Rosita Patterson have been a consistent presence throughout, nearly 50 individuals have conducted fieldwork for the project since 2016, making communication and synthesis crucial for maintaining continuity within and across

partnerships in Scioto County and the Little Cities of Black Diamonds microregion. Both a mode and space of engagement, the Archives bring a sense of longevity to our interactions with community partners: We are co-creating a body of work that will persist beyond our individual contributions and positionalities. Because we know that we are constructing a public repository through our interactions, we can genuinely ask who else we should interview to understand the story of a particular place better. Working intentionally, we search for materials that complicate dominant historical or local narratives. Practically, the Folklore Archives does this work, but, unfortunately, always with an understanding of our own precarity given shifting university priorities.<sup>14</sup>

Pedagogically, the interviews, photographs, digitized materials, and final reports of previous years provide context for current students prior to their field experience and before meeting their community partner(s). Whether collected by OFS lead researchers or by previous students, primary sources within the Folklore Archives allow students to engage in the first step of ethnographic fieldwork: conducting preliminary research. Listening to existing interviews grounds and demystifies interview and archival accessioning processes by providing direct examples of our work. Further, students can access immediately relevant archival materials, to which they will contribute by the end of the semester for the next group of researchers.



Cheryl Blosser provides the story behind a photo to OFS student team Paola Enríquez-Duque and Isabelle Lambert at the Little Cities of Black Diamonds archive in Shawnee, Ohio, in March 2020.

Photo by Cassie Patterson. Some rights reserved: CC BY-NC-ND.

Since 2018, digitizing small personal or local organizational collections has been a core service-learning project for the OFS. Digitizing alongside community partners—scanning one piece at a time in high-resolution, reviewing it, describing it in detail, and engaging in dialogue about the items—is an act that combines curiosity, attention, deep listening, and critical thinking, hallmarks of folkloristic methodology. Paying attention to the personal and organizational documents that community partners have assembled and preserved provides an opportunity to pay shared attention to the past as well as consider the future.<sup>15</sup>

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Because community archives and personal collections tend to be as fascinating as they are underserved, digitization projects provide opportunities to build long-term working relationships. Successive student teams may delve deeper into a research question or expand to understand a wider context. Our work with Kevin and Barb Bradbury of Hurricane Run Farm in Scioto County, for example, continued across two student cohorts and extended into an Archival Internship for undergraduates Benjamin Beachy and Lily Goettler. Knowing the value of return, we wrote a two-year commitment into our proposals for work in Perry County to digitize the organizational records of grassroots environmental and cultural organizations. Students from the 2020 OFS initiated scanning for Sunday Creek Associates, Monday Creek Watershed Restoration, Little Cities of Black Diamonds, and Buckeye Trail Association, work that will continue in 2021.<sup>16</sup>

Our CFS graduate assistants have also contributed to digitizing efforts. For instance, in 2018 CFS Graduate Archivist Sarah Craycraft digitized several years of *The Community Life News*, a Perry County publication written by partner John Winnenberg. Not only did this work enhance the archival collection and offer a resource for future students, it also helped build our relationship with Sunday Creek Associates, the organization that had produced these portraits of local life and subsequently became an OFS partner.



Dr. Barb Bradbury sits with her home archive at Hurricane Run Farm.

Photo by Ashley Clark and Emily Hardick. Some rights reserved: CC BY-NC-ND.

OFS provides copies of community materials either to collaborating organizations (as with Perry County) or to diverse local stakeholders who can provide access to the collection (as with Scioto County). Rather than centering knowledge, power, and access at the university, we return materials to those who collaborated to produce them so that they can easily access, share, and research them. This process, of course, creates some challenges and requires thoughtful labeling, easily transferrable content,<sup>17</sup> interviewees' consent,<sup>18</sup> and attention to local social dynamics. Overall, we aim to use our institutional resources to support local archives, collections, and community members, the Folklore Archives serving primarily as a backup to their collections.<sup>19</sup>

### **Conclusion: Opportunities and Challenges**

We recognize that our unique context presents challenges to reproducing the structures of our integrated pedagogical, engagement, and archival project in other places. Yet it provides valuable insight to those who might want to develop collaborative projects of their own. Because the OFS was initially funded by an open, flexible donation, we could build the project and its component parts in response to our community partners. Although we had sketched broad categories of funding in our initial proposal, we knew that we had our donor's trust and support to shift as needed. The funding followed the direction of the project, and a relatively small group of initial collaborators enabled a tradition of responsive decision making. Internally funded OSU grants, however, proved more cumbersome and constraining, as meticulous planning was frontloaded in the process, and metrics were articulated in detailed timelines. The Sharing Visions grant, for instance, required five rounds of proposals and presentations, brought together multiple collaborators across several organizations, and secured funding from four units across the University, offering opportunities for broader collaborative input but introducing layers of requirements and restrictions as well. While we recognize that engaged scholars navigate this terrain regularly, we think it is worth emphasizing the mutually constitutive relationship of responsive funding and participatory community engagement. Thankfully, our early experiences enabled us to anticipate and build into our later funding proposals participatory structures, community partner compensation, and the time necessary for fieldwork and relationship building.

Our advisory committee structures—both the CPAC and OSU Advisory Committee—have allowed project stakeholders to speak from their own positionalities, expertise, and experience at brainstorming and decision-making meetings. They enrich our experiences as coordinators of this work, helping us to understand issues, notice opportunities, and respond to challenges in new, interesting ways. We strongly recommend that those interested in developing prolonged

### ***Placemaking 2.0***

Responding to CPAC interest in repurposing the *Placemaking in Scioto County, Ohio* traveling exhibit for K–12 education, in Summer 2020 we contracted independent folklorist Sue Eleuterio to assist with assembling a local Educator Committee and hosting a professional development workshop in which five educators from varying contexts across the county each created a place-based education lesson plan to implement in Fall 2020 (adapted, of course, to the emerging conditions of the pandemic). The Educator Committee consists of Amy Barnhart (Portsmouth STEM Academy), Bridgette Compton (Northwest Middle School), Kinsey Hall (Shawnee State University Children's Learning Center), Marcia Harris (Time Out for Me), and Robin Hileman (Portsmouth West Middle School). For more information, visit [go.osu.edu/sciotoplacemaking](http://go.osu.edu/sciotoplacemaking) and click on *Placemaking 2.0*. Educator Committee members received an honorarium and Continuing Education Credits from OSU.

university-community engagements consider developing an advisory structure to guide the work and incorporate reciprocity through compensation or other meaningful ways.

One enduring challenge is having the time to follow through on the ideals and methodological commitments of collaborative ethnography. Sustaining, let alone expanding, long-term working relationships is challenging when we (engaged university partners) experience financial and institutional instability and must meet performance metrics that do not account for a slow-research model. University publication, teaching, and administrative demands are notoriously asynchronous with the physical, emotional, and logistical realities of deeply engaged and responsive collaboration with external partners. Our community partners are often also overburdened, overscheduled, financially strained, and organizationally fragile. In short, we find that our university has adopted the language of inclusion, engagement, and collaboration without investing in the frameworks that enable equitable interactions among partners. This means we must construct those frameworks ourselves and wedge them into our grant applications.

In our particular case, our initial vision of a stable, ongoing project rooted in the Folklore Archives with rotating leadership as well as rotating student participation has been undercut by the decades-long attrition of folklorists and folklore positions at Ohio State University.<sup>20</sup> With only one tenured faculty member realistically able and willing to lead this work and with College leadership that persistently challenges the CFS to justify both our program and our Folklore Archives, the infrastructure upon which our model depends remains insecure. When our sense of our own future is tenuous, we cannot assure our community partners that the work will continue.

Because these precarities are pervasive within and beyond the academy, we navigate them in the best way we can to continue our engaged work. Still, we can advise those who wish to embark on this journey to write realistic grant proposals that factor in trust building, mutual assistance, and regular consultation and make room for the unexpected opportunity. The OSU advisory committee structure keeps students informed about the challenges we face and the adjustments we must make to our model and (for those who are in paid positions at CFS) often involves them in grant writing. Further, it exposes students to conversations that require talking transparently with our community partners about our mutual precarities as well as our small victories in the long-term struggle for equity and inclusion. We think this kind of exposure is crucial to developing the next generation of engaged scholars. At OFS we all learn how to assess the resources at hand creatively and identify as many sustainable options as possible. When the future is fragile and unknown, we can at least face it together by doing our best in this moment.

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**Cassie Rosita Patterson** is Assistant Director of the Center for Folklore Studies and Director of the Folklore Archives at The Ohio State University. She holds a PhD in English and a Graduate Interdisciplinary Specialization in Folklore from The Ohio State University. As a folklorist, her research interests include fieldwork methodologies and collaborative ethnography, archiving with communities, moral geographies, home and place, and commemoration and public display.

**Jasper Waugh-Quasebarth** is a Public Folklorist and Postdoctoral Scholar at the Center for Folklore Studies at The Ohio State University. He holds a PhD in Anthropology from the University of Kentucky, where he researched musical instruments, craft livelihoods, and forest environments in Appalachia and Transylvania. He continues to explore his interests at the connections between expressive livelihoods, global mountain forest regions, and place-based, experiential methodologies.

## Endnotes

- 1 Appalachian Ohio consists of 32 counties as recognized by the federal Appalachian Regional Commission in the North Central and Northern Subregions, extending across southern Ohio from Cincinnati to the border with West Virginia and along the Pennsylvania border to Lake Erie. However, Appalachian Studies scholars have defined Appalachia as not simply a socioeconomic administrative region but also an internal colony (Lewis et al. 1978), a social imaginary (Batteau 1990), a site of social activism and contestation (Fisher and Smith 2012), and an interconnected global mountain region (Kingsolver and Balasundaram 2018). With a history of extractive industry in timber and mining, large mountain forests, diffuse populations, and high rates of poverty, Southeastern Ohio is often seen as archetypically Appalachian in Ohio (often to the exclusion and marginalization of people living there). Yet the region is often also left out of national narratives that identify the coalfields of Southern West Virginia and Eastern Kentucky as the core of Appalachia. Like many across Appalachia, our community partners embrace, contest, and negotiate the terms “Appalachia” and “Appalachian.”
- 2 Including Pat Mullen, then a professor at OSU, and Tim Lloyd, who headed up the Traditional Arts Program at the Ohio Arts Council at the time.
- 3 Our student ethnographic projects, however, reflect content collected from across the state. See [cfs.osu.edu/archives/collections/summary](https://cfs.osu.edu/archives/collections/summary) for more details.
- 4 \$136,000 was awarded by the Ohio State University Global Arts + Humanities Discovery Themes to support a postdoctoral researcher 2019–2021, two years of fieldwork and the on-site portion of the service-learning course, as well as two community-led projects in Portsmouth. An anonymous donor provided \$25,000 through the Columbus Foundation to support Placemaking 2.0, an Archival Internship, and fees for CPAC members Andrew Carter and Andrew Feight to attend the 2019 annual meeting of the American Folklore Society. The OSU Office of Outreach and Engagement gave \$26,035 to support Sharing Visions: Intergenerational Work in Appalachian Ohio ([go.osu.edu/sharingvisions](https://go.osu.edu/sharingvisions)).
- 5 We follow the American Folklore Society’s Position Statement on Compensation for Self-Employed Folklorists when hiring contractors; undergraduate, GAA and postdoctoral scholar pay rates are set by the university in alignment with relevant state and federal guidelines.
- 6 For more on the difficulties of course-based service-learning, see Borland 2017. For a discussion of challenges of maintaining a social justice focus in international service-learning contexts, see Borland and Adams 2013.
- 7 Scioto County CPAC members were not financially compensated through an honorarium. Instead, we have written grants and used project funds to support CPAC travel and presentations at conferences, and spin-off projects that directly contribute to their personal and professional goals. We also engage in informal exchange of

- services in keeping with a local mutual aid ethos. The Perry County CPAC requested compensation for their participation in the OFS (in Perry, all CPAC members were also project collaborators), rightfully citing the time and expertise involved for already thinly stretched non-profits to supervise students. Each collaborating organization received a \$2,000 contribution.
- 8 Continued participation in the OSU Advisory Committee is voluntary and emerged as former field schoolers wanted to stay involved in a low-commitment capacity. Additionally, involvement on the Committee allowed members to cite the position professionally on their curriculum vitae.
  - 9 OSU extension officers Treva Williams (Scioto County) and Theodore Wiseman (Perry County) connect the OFS with ongoing research collaborators and provided invaluable advice on creating and maintaining programs in local contexts.
  - 10 All populations given are based on estimates from the 2010 US Census.
  - 11 The Little Cities of Black Diamonds include Buchtel (pop. 558), Carbondale (pop. 2,562), Carbon Hill (pop. 233), Corning (pop. 583), Glouster (pop. 1,791), Hemlock (pop. 155), Murray City (pop. 449), Nelsonville (pop. 5,392), New Straitsville (pop. 722), Shawnee (pop. 724), and Trimble (pop. 390).
  - 12 Rendville is Ohio's smallest incorporated town, with a population of 34 ([rendvillehistory.org](http://rendvillehistory.org)).
  - 13 OFS faculty and staff draft the statement of collaboration, which has two major functions: to outline expectations for the partnership and provide university documentation of the collaboration for financial purposes. The statement concretizes obligations of the project to focus research on community desires, return collected documentary materials, provide stipends for community partner time and efforts, and for community partners to engage with the project through the field school period.
  - 14 Over the years we have sustained several mandated assessments of our Archives that leave us perpetually unsure about the future of our governance and safety of our collections.
  - 15 Ideally, time spent with service-learning collaborators is intensive throughout the service-learning week. However, since community partners often juggle personal and professional commitments, we remain flexible and available, understanding that sympathetically negotiating schedules is an important fieldworking skill.
  - 16 Another 2020 field school team worked with Janice and Harry Ivory of the Rendville Historic Preservation Society to document those buried in the Rendville Cemetery and created a digital version of the cemetery where current and former community members might post their memories about former residents of the town. The last team worked with Destination Shawnee to interview townspeople about what kinds of things they wanted to see on a restored Main Street.
  - 17 We use a simple Excel file that can be easily searched and integrated into various metadata and content management systems.
  - 18 We use a double consent process, in which interviewees are given a month to review or edit their interview before it is made public.
  - 19 An exciting outcome of our archiving work in Scioto County is the inclusion of the OFS archive in the Digital Commons@Shawnee, a fully accessible item-level digital archive that our advisory board member Andrew Feight created at Shawnee State University ([digitalcommons.shawnee.edu](http://digitalcommons.shawnee.edu)).
  - 20 Currently, we are exploring ways to recruit OSU faculty from outside folklore whose work and interests ally with our own to collaborate with OFS and strengthen our instructional core.

#### URLs

[cfs.osu.edu/archives/collections/summary](http://cfs.osu.edu/archives/collections/summary)

[go.osu.edu/sharingvisions](http://go.osu.edu/sharingvisions)

[go.osu.edu/ofc](http://go.osu.edu/ofc)

[rendvillehistory.org](http://rendvillehistory.org)

[go.osu.edu/sciotoplacemaking](http://go.osu.edu/sciotoplacemaking)

[cfs.osu.edu/archives](http://cfs.osu.edu/archives)

[digitalcommons.shawnee.edu](http://digitalcommons.shawnee.edu)

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