



The Survey of Appalachian Studies and Photography Dual Credit Class took a trip to the Museum of Appalachia for an exciting fun-filled day learning more about their Appalachian culture as well as taking advantage of the beautiful setting to apply the photographic techniques they have learned in class.

Students went on to the East Tennessee Museum of History to top the day off viewing and the photography exhibit, ***Vanishing Appalachia***

This class is part of the dual credit curriculum offered to students to not only earn high school credit but also college credit in partnership with Southeast Kentucky Community/Technical College. Robert Gipe and Carlton Hughes are the SKCTC collaborating instructors who visit the class on a weekly basis to team teach with Robinson.

Robinson says that one of the reasons she desired to see an Appalachian Studies is that we are so negatively stereotyped and our children feel this. "A professor from UK once told me that she noticed that many times students from Harlan would change the way they talked because they did not want anyone to know where they came from. It wasn't until I took sociology of Appalachia class at Union College that I started to really appreciate who we are including the way we talk. She feels that if one can understand their linguistic heritage then they will begin to be proud of who they are.

Appalachian speech is non-standard. It is not "wrong" but a unique part of our linguistic heritage. Before and after the Civil War you could find Celts all over the South. During the 18th century when the Scotch-Irish came in great numbers to the American Colonies their dialect overlapped with the folk speech found in other parts of the British Isles. The Scotch-Irish who moved into the mountains brought with them an old-fashioned Northern Dialect-Kentucky is heavily seasoned with this dialect.

Isolated in the rugged mountains of Appalachia their decedents continued until recent times to speak the dialect of their remote Low-Land Scots and Northern English ancestors.

The 16th century dialect of Appalachia people is the oldest living form of English dialect, older than the speech of Shakespeare, closer to the speech of Chaucer. The term “hillbilly” came from those settling in the mountains (hills) of Tennessee and Kentucky who were from England under King William’s (billy) rule, hence: hillbillies. I had an opportunity to work with a gentleman from Scotland, Richard Tufnell, who was teaching the traditional way of building a dry stone wall at Pine Mountain Settlement School. He commented that the, “way people speak here (Harlan) is the way people from Scotland originally spoke; which changed during the reign of Queen Elisabeth when she corrected the Scottish on the “ ‘proper way to talk’.”

I have a deep love for our mountain heritage and I want to preserve the swiftly fading memories of our people and their way of life. I know that times were difficult, but somehow simpler; I long for a time when morals and integrity were a part of our strong beliefs and our children were still innocent untarnished by the moral erosion of today. I am reminded of my own past running and laughing in the mountains of my childhood home. I don’t want our children to grow up in a generic culture. I am so thankful for those who are working to preserve our culture and pass it on to our youth. My desire is that my students will understand and treasure their rich Appalachian heritage and be proud of it.