Relocalizing
The Appalachian Foodshed
My Berry Long Tale

100 Year old Farm off of Beaver Dam Road
Turkey Trail
Up Into The Hills
Recently Hatched
Wine Berries
Nick & Townes
Berries & Wild Mint
Tasty Treat
What is Local?

- What is Appalachian Cuisine?
- What is our Landscape?
- What are the ingredients?
- What is its culture & history?
A diverse population of Native Americans has lived in the mountain South for around three thousand years. The Iroquois, who were the dominant group in the region, came from the west around 1300 BCE and split into the northern Iroquois and the southern Cherokees. The Cherokees were farmers and hunters who lived in small independent villages.

Although Indians in the Appalachians had sporadic contacts with Europeans as early as 1540, it was not until the period 1700 to 1761 that contact between the two cultures accelerated. The Europeans looked to the back-country for room to expand their settlements and for sources of skins for trading. The Indians opposed them in an ultimately futile attempt to save their homes and hunting grounds. The final defeat of the Cherokees by the British occurred in 1761, and after this date the number of whites in the Appalachian frontier grew rapidly. The conquest of the Indian lands encouraged settlement, and land speculation in the Appalachian frontier ran rampant.

TEK: Traditional Ethnic Knowledge
Branch Lettuce

Branch Lettuce ~ (Saxifraga micranthidifolia)

A spring delicacy, branch lettuce is found at the higher elevations, growing in damp spots or at the edge of the cold mountain streams (locally called ‘branches.’) It can be eaten raw in salad but is traditionally served as “killed lettuce,” wilted by the addition of some hot bacon grease. A little chopped onion and a touch of vinegar completes the dish.
Ramps

Ramps ~ (Allium tricoccum)
This wild onion grows in colonies in rich, damp woodland soils. It has a strong garlic aroma which, many say, will come out of the pores of any who eat it raw. Best gathered in the early spring, the bulbs can be fried in bacon grease (or other fat) with potatoes. Or beaten eggs can be added to the cooking ramps for a dish of scrambled eggs and ramps.
Creasy Greens

Creasies are also called upland watercress, field cress or wild watercress. They are a small leafy green that is a member of the mustard family. The flavor is similar to the pungent spice of watercress and when cooked, it can have the texture of spinach. Although creasy greens show a lot of similarities to watercress, they do not grow in water as their cousin watercress does.
Greasy Beans

Greasy beans have been grown in the Southern Appalachians for many generations and are especially prevalent in parts of Southeastern Kentucky and Western North Carolina. They do not have the tight knit fuzz like that on the hulls of other beans and appear to be shiny instead. They look “greasy”. People who know them usually think they are the best of all beans and they routinely sell for several times as much as commercial beans at markets. They are so prevalent in some communities that the term “greasy” isn’t used since almost all beans grown in those areas are greasy beans.
The Drover’s Road
Drover’s Road

• Brief History
• The Buncombe Turnpike today
• Broader implications for the future of our WNC foodscape.
History

- Known to have been used starting around 1796-1800 timeframe. Formal state systems started around 1827 (Post Revolutionary War 1775-1783 but Pre Civil War 1861-65)

- Formed along established Native American Trails through the woods that shadowed the river systems.

- Expanded to fit Wagon’s and large herds of pigs, cattle, turkeys and sheep.

- Main Route started from Kentucky & Eastern Tennessee where animals were grown on more expansive pasture lands herded through WNC to large Markets and commons in South Carolina & Georgia. Buncombe, Henderson and Madison County had one thing going for them; the shortest and most travelable route between North Eastern Tennessee and Kentucky to South Carolina and Georgia passed through their counties.
Madison County Route
History

- Animals Along the Trail
  - Pigs (most common)
  - Cows
  - Turkeys (seasonally in November and more local 50 miles)
  - Sheep
History

- On average 150,000 hogs alone were driven on foot 8 miles a day annually.
- Driving season September-December.
- 24 bushels of corn a day to feed 1,000 hogs.
- Between Hot Springs and Asheville alone there were 8-10 stockades or wayside inns with stockyards every 2-4 miles. There is about 30 miles between Asheville and Hot Springs.
- Resembled Noah’s Arc of Animals.
- This created an corn centric economy but little cash was exchanged. Corn was used as credit for people to purchase goods at the general store.
The Buncombe Turnpike

Today

- You might know it as U.S. 25, Hendersonville Road or Howard Gap Road around the Hendersonville to Tryon area.

- Aside from these main thoroughfares there are many semi marked old Native American paths and logging roads that still exist in the form of preserved game land, farms and land conservancies.

- Many of the railroads were built alongside of the original Drover’s road.
Old Chimney from Abandoned Homestead

Old Chimney in the Green River Gamelands near the Saluda Gap
Homestead Relics
Logging Road Green River Gamelands
Broken Rails between Saluda & Tryon
Hendersonville to Saluda by Rail
Relics from the past
Pulliam Creek Trail

The Green River near the Narrows
White Oak Mountain

View of South Carolina below…parallel to the Saluda Grade and NC 26
Future of the Drover’s Road

• Uncertain how new interest and rapid growth in the greater WNC will affect the Old Buncombe Turnpike and existing foot and bike paths.

• Some organizations getting involved
  • Rails to Trails [http://www.ncrailtrails.org/](http://www.ncrailtrails.org/)
  • Green River Gamelands [http://www.nature.org/ourinitiatives/regions/northamerica/unitedstates/northcarolina/placesweprotect/green-river-headwaters.xml](http://www.nature.org/ourinitiatives/regions/northamerica/unitedstates/northcarolina/placesweprotect/green-river-headwaters.xml)
Shining Rock Wilderness: A Legacy from the Aniyunwia (the Cherokee People)
Ecological Context

• Bioregion-Appropriate Crops and Production Strategies
• Whole Systems Design and Regional Food Webs
• Food and Fossil Fuels
• Water Resources
• Pollination, CCD, Native Pollinators
• Soil Health, Ecosystem Health, Biological Diversity
• Resilience, Ecosystem Services, Human Dependency on Environment
Bioregion-Appropriate Production

• **Bioregionalism** is a political, cultural, and ecological system or set of views based on naturally defined areas called bioregions, similar to ecoregions. Bioregions are defined through physical and environmental features, including watershed boundaries and soil and terrain characteristics.

Katuah Bioregion – NC, SC, GA, TN, VA
Bioregion-Appropriate Production
Systems Thinking: Regional “Food Webs”
Water Resources
Pollination and Food Resilience
Soil Health, Ecosystem Health, and Biological Diversity

- Macroscopic and microscopic organisms
  - Food
  - Water
  - Habitat
  - Powered by sunlight

- Management activities can improve or destroy soil health
  - Tillage
  - Fertilizer
  - Livestock
  - Pesticides
Resilience, Ecosystem Services, and Human Dependency
Socio-Economic Context

- Resilience
- Appropriate Import/Export Commodities
- Industrial Food System (working within, working without)
- Nutrition and Accessibility
- Quality and Accountability
- Right Livelihood, Farmer’s Rights, Worker’s Rights
• “Bounce Back”
  • Adaptable
  • Elastic
• Rebounds to previous state
• Redundancy of systems
• Functional complexity
• Survival after “soft failure”
• =restoration? =Resistance?

**Websters:** (1) the capability of a strained body to recover its size and shape after deformation caused especially by compressive stress. (2) An ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change.

**Ecological resilience** is the capacity of an ecosystem to respond to a perturbation or disturbance by resisting damage and (1) recovering quickly or (2) not changing states.

**Community resilience** is the capability to anticipate risk, limit impact, and bounce back rapidly through survival, adaptability, evolution, and growth in the face of turbulent change.
Appropriate Import/Exports (Commodities and Quantities)
Appropriate Import/Exports
(Commodities and Quantities)
Industrial Food System
(working within, working without)
Nutrition and Accessibility
Quality and Accountability
Right Livelihood, Farmer’s Rights and Worker’s Rights
The Fateful Triangle

Landscape, Food & Economy
Landscape, Food & Economy

• Local foods provide live nutritional food but also respect the local environment by growing native plants & animals more suited for the landscape.

• This usually doesn’t meet “market demand”

• Food Fetishes often drive the “Health Food” marketplace and often displace people of lesser economic means and farmers unable to meet supermarket regulations.

• Common not very local fetishes: Kale, goat cheese, quinoa, coconut everything, acia berries, chocolate, coffee ect…
Case Studies

What is happening at the local level?
Slow Food

- Origins: Started as a protest movement 1980s when the first McDonald’s was being built in Rome.
- Slow Food Asheville: Appalachian Food Story Bank & Heritage Food Project.
- Mission Statement: Good, Clean and Fair food for all.
Slow Food Projects

Appalachian Food Story Bank
Heritage Food Project:
  Nancy Hall Sweet Potato 2015
  Heritage Bean Project 2016
The Seed Saver (AFSB)
Heritage Food Project 2015

Nancy Hall Sweet Potato
From the field to the Market
In 2015 Slow Food Asheville focused on one heritage food with a long history here WNC, the Nancy Hall Sweet Potato. This regionally adapted, hard to find, delicious variety drove us to partner with local farmers, home gardeners and Sow True Seeds to conduct a variety trial.
In late May of last year, we bought 500 Nancy Hall sweet potato slips from a sweet local couple of homesteaders and sweet potato aficionados, Thomas and Hanah. We then distributed all the slips to a number of home gardeners as well as farms and educational institutions. Participating farms include TK Family Farm, Flying Cloud Farm, The Lord’s Acre, Epling Farm, Barefoot Farm, and Rayburn Farm. Educational institutions include Mill Spring Ag Center, Evergreen Charter School, Vance Elementary, and Francine Delaney New School for Children.

Over the season, our participating farmers and home growers had a range of experiences and yields due to differences in soil types, microclimates, deer and herbivore pressure, weather, curing processes, and other factors. We will be sharing more of this feedback as it is compiled!
Nancy Hall Project
Nancy Hall in the Field
Celebration for Nancy

Fall

Harvest
Nancy Hall Celebration
Heritage Food Project

Our Next Heritage Food Project

We would love for you to be involved!

From March 6, 2016 – March 19, 2016, Variety Voting is taking place right here on the internet! Slow Food will feature a heritage bean variety to trial in the community, but we need your help selecting which bean to feature.

Read more about the candidates and vote for the bean that you would like to see for our 2016 Heritage Food Project.

Sign up to participate with us in growing the winning variety, offering your opinions and feedback, and celebrating with us at the end of the season!

Check out this post with all the details: 2016 Heritage Food Project
Cherokee Trail of Tears Bean

The Cherokee Trail of Tears bean memorializes the forced relocation of the Cherokee Indians in the mid-nineteenth century. They carried this bean throughout this infamous walk, which became the death march for thousands of Cherokees; hence the Trail of Tears.

In the face of its poignantly dismal history, the shiny, jet-black seeds are used with pride in many traditional American Indian dishes. The seeds are encased in six-inch, greenish-purple pods.

These small attractive beans are dried before consumed, and have a delicious rich flavor.
Long White Greasy Pole Bean

They are called greasy (greazy) because they are hairless (no fuzz) and look shiny.

An historic bean. Greasy beans have been eaten in the southern Appalachians since Europeans first came to the mountains.

Pods are 4-6 inches long. You can eat the pods. They do have strings so need to be “unzipped” before eating. Locals like to dry them into “leather britches”. Leather britches are made by threading a thin string through the pods with many pods on one string. Then hanging the string to dry the beans.
Lazy Housewife Pole Bean

The Lazy Housewife Pole Bean is completely stringless.

First listed in W. Atlee Burpee’s 1888 catalog, “We presume it derives its name, which seems discourteous, from its immense productiveness making it easy to gather…” Brought to America by German immigrants, these beans were so named because they were the first beans to not require destringing!

Can be used as a shell bean as well, and has a superb flavor. Plants bear continuously until frost.

One of the oldest documented beans. Very old and very productive. 75-80 days to snap stage.

(Snap, Shelly and Dry Bean)
Case Studies
Grow Food Where People Live (and Work, Learn, and Play)

- Polk County, NC
- 50% of children on free/reduced lunch
- Pilot Project: Ashley Meadows Apts.
- County-Scale, scale-able
- Engage youth, low-income, disabled individuals
• Began with “Listening Project”
• Open-Source and Inclusive
• DG Model
Urban Examples

• Maximize space
• Utilize (and mitigate) waste streams
• Focus on *freshness, diversity, nutrition*, and *access*
  (fresh herbs, greens, honey, eggs, small fruits)
• Serve niche markets – food deserts, “foodies”, restaurants
• Provide meaningful jobs and right livelihood
• Serve, support, train, and employ marginalized members of society
• Use municipal funds wisely, multiply return on investment
Growing Power, Milwaukee (and Beyond)
Detroit, Michigan
“The Plant”, Chicago
Danny’s Dumpster
Suburban Agriculture

• Aesthetics - good/bad/ugly
• Diverse crops
• Neighborhood sharing and distribution networks
• Engage youth
• Nutritious & staple foods:
  • Corn/beans/squash/potatoes
  • Small-medium fruits and nuts (cane fruits, shrubs, small trees)
  • Small animal protein (chicken/duck eggs, rabbits)
Suburbia

• The new “breadbasket” of the post-industrial & developed world?
Geneva, Switzerland
“Agriburbs”, Switzerland
“Agriburbs”
Beacon Food Forest, Seattle
Rural, Broad-Acre, and Forested Land

• Maximize ecological production => Maximize calorie production
• Rebuild topsoil
• Restore forests
• Steward watersheds
• Sequester carbon
• Diversity => Multiple sustainable harvests
• Create jobs
Broad-acre Production

- More suitable for goats, sheep, pigs, cows, bison
- Orchards, large fruit and nut trees
- Forest products (ramps, mushrooms, ginseng, deer, turkey, timber)
- Grains???
Nine Layers of the Edible Forest Garden

1. Canopy/Tall Tree Layer
2. Sub-Canopy/Large Shrub Layer
3. Shrub Layer
4. Herbaceous Layer
5. Groundcover/Creeper Layer

6. Underground Layer
7. Vertical/Climber Layer
8. Aquatic/Wetland Layer
9. Mycellial/Fungal Layer
Southern Appalachian (Mostly Native) Forest Garden

• Canopy: Northern Pecan, Chestnut, Black Walnut, Hickory, Basswood
• Understory: Persimmon, Paw Paw, (Chinese) Chestnut, Serviceberry
• Shrub Layer: Hazelnut, Elderberry, Mulberry, Black Locust, Blueberry
• Herbaceous Understory: Ramps, So’chan, Ginseng
• Groundcover: Wild Strawberry, Groundnut
• Underground: Ginseng, Potatoes, Groundnut
• Vertical/Vine Layer: Muscadine Grape, Passionflower, (Hardy Kiwi)
• Also Fungi/Mushrooms, Aquatic Plants, Fish, (Poultry), and (Bees)
A Web of Collective Support
Resources

- Shona Jason-Miller: sbjm1@yahoo.com
- Dylan Ryals-Hamilton livingvision@yahoo.com Food First Eric Holt Gimenez: http://foodfirst.org/
- Slow Food USA https://www.slowfoodusa.org/
- Slow Food Asheville: http://slowfoodasheville.com/
- Books: Elizabeth Engelhardt A Mess of Greens
- Books: Rob Hopkins Transition Handbook & Transition Companion
- Toby Hemenway Gaia’s Garden
- Mark Shephard Restoration Agriculture
- Dave Jacke & Eric Toensmeier Edible Forest Gardens