

subsistence farming, house styles, foods such as pork and potatoes, a knowledge of distilling, and a repertoire of stories, fiddle tunes, and ballads. Africans came to the region initially as an enslaved population, bringing with them the memory of what became the banjo and a taste for foods such as okra and many types of greens. Even on the frontier, Appalachia had a diverse culture in which various groups borrowed traditional knowledge from one another to carve out a shared life in the mountain wilderness.

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, industrialization came to the mountains in the form of railroads, coal mining, steel mills, textile plants, and large-scale timbering operations. Each industry developed a work lore of techniques, customs, beliefs, food, stories, and songs that added to the cultural mix. The labor force needed for these industries brought newly arrived immigrants from Italy, Poland, Hungary, and elsewhere in Europe and African Americans from the deep South to mix with white mountaineers, all of them living and working in the same communities and learning from one another's cultures. Advances in mass communication such as phonograph records, radio, photography, and film exposed mountain folk to new cultural influences and brought mountain culture to the attention of a national audience.

Contemporary Appalachian life has been enlivened by an influx of refugees such as the Hmong of Southeast Asia, doctors and other professionals from India, and Hispanic agricultural and manufacturing workers from Mexico

RELIGION IN APPALACHIA

TROY GOWEN

Religion has been one of the strongest cultural forces in the lives of Appalachians. Diverse and pervasive, it influences much of what is considered Appalachian both inside and outside of the region. Cultural traits highly valued by many Appalachians are intimately tied to religious beliefs shaped by the challenges of frontier life—humility, well-defined family structure, self-sufficiency and resourcefulness, and hospitality are all encouraged by the Scriptures, and all were essential for survival in the remote valleys and mountain hollows.

Distrustful of established church hierarchies, the first European settlers of the region were mostly Protestant Christians arriving during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Small, isolated Appalachian communities most often formed self-reliant churches that provided for their particular spiritual and material needs. Spirituality was an integral part of life for many in the mountains. Dependent on the whims of nature for survival, people often believed in real forces of good and evil constantly at work in the world, and many worship practices and forms of service in Appalachian churches arose from this view. As people looked to their own beliefs and experiences for guidance, Protestantism in the mountains became a highly splintered religion in which individual churches often held their own counsel on particular issues of faith, even within a single denomination. In Appalachia there are at least forty major divisions of the Baptist denomination alone.

Music is another defining force in

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Appalachian culture, and there, too, religion has been influential. Archaic forms of religious music, such as shape-note and lined singing, still linger in the region. Gospel and spiritual themes are a major component in recorded country and bluegrass music. Nearly all country and bluegrass performers feature gospel and spiritual numbers in their repertoires, and some have a reputation solely as bluegrass gospel acts.

Up on the mountain
When the Lord spoke
Out of His mouth
Came fire and smoke

Every time, time, time,
I feel the spirit (feel the spirit)
Moving in my heart I pray.
—from "Every Time I Feel the Spirit"
as recorded by Charlie Monroe

Upon this foundation of frontier Protestant Christianity, successive waves of immigrants have added to the cultural and religious diversity of Appalachia. Baptists, Methodists, and Pentecostals in the region are now joined by Catholics, Jews, Muslims, Mormons, Episcopalians, Mennonites, Quakers, Unitarians, and people of other faiths. Many early religious practices such as foot washing, living water baptisms, speaking in tongues, and even serpent and fire handling have been preserved relatively intact in the mountains. However, large urban churches are the predominant places of worship in the region today, and religious practice there is nearly identical to that found elsewhere in America.

Farther along we'll know all about it
Farther along we'll understand why
Cheer up my brother and live in the
sunshine
We'll understand it all by and by.
—from the gospel standard
"Farther Along" ■