

KCHEA ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS

Lester Pross

11/16/07

8/13/08

Lester Pross is a recognized Appalachian landscape painter, who was the chair of the Berea College Art Department for many years. He was the first president of the Kentucky Guild of Artists and Craftsmen (KGAC) and in that capacity coordinated the Kentucky Guild Train. The Louisville and Nashville Railroad donated two cars and hauled them to many communities around the state. One car held a potter who demonstrated making ceramics and the other an exhibition of crafts from throughout the country.

Lester talked in great detail about people who came together from academia, state government, and the crafts community to support the train and the process of the Guild managing, staffing, and programming activities.

Marie Hochstrasser

11/16/07

Marie Hochstrasser is a weaver and former owner of a yarn and weaving supply business. She attended Smith College and California College of Arts And Crafts prior to receiving her bachelor's degree in Applied Arts from the University of California, Los Angeles and acquired her Master's Degree in Art Education/ Textile Research from the University of Oregon. Marie has taught art education and weaving through workshops and at Transylvania University, Asbury College, and the University of Kentucky. She is past president of the Lexington Fiber Guild and KGAC and instrumental in founding of the Lexington Arts Council. She has received the Rude Osolnik Award and has been designated Kentucky Crafted Emeritus.

Marie talked about her development as an artist, her teaching, and her role in developing the crafts through various organizations in the state.

Arturo Alonzo Sandoval

11/16/07

Arturo Sandoval first took a weaving course in 1965 at California State College-Los Angeles and in 1971 completed a Master of Fine Arts in Fiber at Cranbrook Academy. He taught at Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville and in 1974 joined the University of Kentucky Department of Art faculty. Among his many honors he has received a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship, Al Smith Fellowships, and the Rude Osolnik Award. He has served on the Board of the American Craft Council and advisory boards of the KGAC and Kentucky Art and Craft Foundation.

Arturo talked about his development as an artist, his teaching, and his work with craft organizations both on the state and national levels. He discussed having a vibrant crafts community in Kentucky for his students to join on graduating.

Dan Neil Barnes

11/16/07

Dan Barnes was born into a family of builders and craftsmen and showed an early interest in art and making things. He earned his Bachelor of Arts in Human Environmental Design from the University of Kentucky and opened his own business in Lexington in 1986. Originally he worked in wood, doing mostly upholstered furniture, but has now expanded with fine art pieces combining lighted stained glass and wood. He is an active member of the KGAC and other institutions supporting crafts in the state.

Dan talked about the importance of KGAC and other resources in Kentucky in the development of his career.

Emily Wolfson (2 tapes)

8/21/07

Emily (Wilson) Wolfson is a weaver, watercolorist, educator, and longtime crafts advocate. She studied design at the Newcomb School of Art, Tulane University, spent a year in Paris studying under Fernand Leger, earned a master's degree in art from Louisiana State University. Wolfson taught at Murray State College, was the director of the Evansville Art Museum, and taught at Evansville College, before joining the faculty at Indiana University for ten years

and finally returning to again teach at Murray State. She is a charter member and was president of the KGAC during the first Guild Fair. She has received the Governor's Community Arts Award and the Rude Osolnik Award.

Emily talked about her development as an artist and her life as an educator. She related how the KGAC was a unique organization because it welcomed both artists and craftspeople and how the Guild sought to be inclusive in membership from college educated to mountain people who had learned skills from family members.

Fred Shepherd (2 tapes)

8/21/07

Fred Shepherd spent most of his career teaching ceramics at Murray State University. In retirement from teaching he continues to run a ceramic studio outside of Murray. He is a past KGAC president.

Fred talked about his teaching and involvement with KGAC. He recalled the rugged nature of camping out and 'making do' at the early KGAC Fairs.

Neil Di Teresa

9/8/07

Neil Di Teresa is a painter and has been on the Berea College faculty since the early 1960s. He did his undergraduate work at Pratt Institute and received a master's degree from the University of New Mexico. He has been the director of the Summer Puppetry Caravan for Appalachia since 1970 where students conduct puppet making workshops and perform puppet shows as part of their college work-study.

Neil talked about living in Berea and participating in Guild fairs as a painter.

Dave Caudill

10/4/07

Dave Caudill attended the University of Kentucky and the Louisville School of Art. Caudill produces stainless steel sculpture. He is a participant in the activities of Kentucky Craft Marketing and of KGAC and has been a Board member of the Kentucky Museum of Art and Craft.

Dave talked about how the many different organizations devoted to crafts have helped in the development of his career. He also talked about his participation in setting the agendas for these groups.

Fran Redmon

10/16/07

9/23/08

Fran Redmon earned a bachelor's degree in Commercial Art from Western Kentucky University. From 1986 through 2007 she served as director of Kentucky Craft Marketing, a program of the Kentucky Arts Council. She was the recipient of the Craft Organization Development Association's national award for "Outstanding Service, Creative Thinking, and Leadership." Fran has held craft leadership positions in Kentucky and nationally, serving on several boards, advisory councils and various state government committees.

Fran talked about the many institutions working for crafts in Kentucky and how they provided services and cooperated in their efforts.

David Glenn

10/17/07

David Glenn is a woodworker and furniture maker who learned his craft at home and still uses many of the tools of his father and his grandfather. He is the oldest continually displaying artist at the St. James Art Fair, having displayed there every year since 1971. He is a past KGAC president. He is Kentucky Crafted Emeritus award recipient in the Craft Marketing Program and the marketing program named their volunteer award -- The David and Donna Glenn Award for their outstanding contributions.

David talked about his own work and the importance of organizations to independent craftspeople. He discussed his demonstrating and other support he has provided to several different craft organizations in Kentucky.

Richard Bellando (2 Tapes)

2/5/08

Richard Bellando was co-owner and vice president in charge of sales and operations of Churchill Weavers. Before that, he served as the director of the Berea College Student Crafts Industries. He graduated from Berea College and did

postgraduate work at Vanderbilt University. He was the first executive director of the Kentucky Guild of Artists and Craftsmen from 1967-1970. He currently serves on the boards of numerous arts, business, and civic organizations.

Richard talked about the early Guild fairs and the craftspeople who participated in them. He also discussed running a major crafts business.

Jerry Workman

2/5/08

Jerry Workman attended Berea College and took a job traveling and demonstrating on the Kentucky Art Train. He is a past president of the Kentucky Guild of Artists and Craftsmen. He spent most of his career working for Save the Children in Berea where he trained new craftsmen and gave technical assistance to producers in selection of materials, design, and color combinations. He set the direction for Appalachian Fireside Crafts that sells the work of these craftspeople.

Jerry talked about his long involvement with crafts and craftspeople and the need for supporting agencies to help people derive income from crafts.

Philis Alvic (2 tapes)

2/5/08

Philis Alvic is an artist, weaver, and writer, who graduated from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. She received the Certificate of Excellence from the Handweavers Guild of America, an AI Smith Fellowship, and several grants from the Kentucky Foundation for Women. She has written many magazine articles and presented academic papers on crafts and crafts history. Two of her books have been published—one on early 20th century Appalachian weaving centers and the other on crafts of Armenia. She has been a craft development consultant in thirteen different countries.

Philis talked about living and working in Kentucky since 1976. She put the growth of the Kentucky craft organizations in the historical context of using crafts as an economic development tool in Appalachia.

Paul Hadley (2 tapes)

6/8/08

Paul Hadley married one of the daughters of the founders of Churchill Weavers and eventually took over running the business. Paul represented the Department of Economic Development (later the Department of Commerce) that financed The Kentucky Art Train when it was set up.

Paul talked about managing Churchill Weavers, one of Kentucky's largest craft industries, and about his responsibilities with the Department of Economic Development.

Walter Cornelison

8/12/08

Walter Cornelison has spent over 60 years at Bybee Pottery in Waco. Webster Cornelison started the business in the early 1800s on land granted to Conrad Cornelison Jr. for service during the Revolutionary War and it has been family operated since.

Walter talked about running a family business in a small Kentucky community. He discussed production management and marketing and participating in early KGAC fairs.

Joyce Cooper

8/12/08

Joyce Cooper has worked in both candlemaking and in textiles. She and her woodworker husband ran The Cooper Shop in Old Town, Berea for 14 years. Joyce joined the KGAC in 1967 and is a longtime member of the Southern Highland Craft Guild.

Joyce contrasted exhibiting at the Southern Highlands fair and the KGAC fair. She discussed working in several craft areas and running a retail crafts business.

Jim & Nancy Wright

8/12/08

Nancy and Jim Wright met in a pottery class at the University of Illinois. After getting married in 1961, they taught at a number of different universities and eventually started a pottery in Richmond that is now thirty-five years

old. They are members of the KGAC and the Kentucky Craft Marketing Program, which awarded them Kentucky Crafted Emeritus.

Nancy and Jim talked about the development of a family run ceramics business and how over the years the services available to independent craftspeople have expanded.

Lila Bellando

8/12/08

Lila Davis Bellando graduated from Berea College and obtained a master's degree at Eastern Kentucky University. Before becoming co-owner and president of Churchill Weavers in charge of design and product development, she was an elementary art teacher. She has extensive affiliations, past and present, with boards of arts, civic, and education organizations, including serving as the vice chair of the Kentucky State Board of Education. In 1988 she received the Education Award, Governor's Awards in the Arts, for significant contributions to the arts in education.

Lila talked about taking over the Churchill Weavers and how she and her husband guided the businesses until its recent closing. She also talked about the many craft organizations that Churchill benefited from and that she helped to guide.

Linda Fifield

8/12/08

Linda Fifield was raised in rural Kentucky with her extended family engaged in functional crafts. She was inspired by seeing an exhibition at Chicago's Field Museum and began her exploration of beading. Linda has evolved a unique presentation of beading over wood turned vessels.

Linda talked about influences of place and family in the development of her career. She discussed the work and benefits she has derived from participation with many different craft programs in Kentucky.

Miriam Woolfolk

8/20/08

Miriam Woolfolk joined the Lexington Art League in the mid-1960s and served as president of the board of directors during the mid 1970s. She helped to start the Woodland Art Fair in Lexington. She is a painter and has engaged in many different types of crafts.

Miriam talked about the creative process in many different types of media. She also discussed the role of a local artist support system and her participation with the Lexington art community.

Marilyn Moosnick (2 tapes)

8/21-22/08

Marilyn Moosnick was an art activist. She received the Michael Newton Award presented by the Americans for the Arts for leadership in arts fundraising. Moosnick was instrumental in starting the Lexington Council of the Arts in 1972 and served as the first chair. She was on the state arts council under five governors and served as chair. She lent her support to several craft initiatives in the state.

Marilyn talked about how she became interested in the arts and her many efforts to support arts activities.

Jim Foose

8/20/08

Robert James Foose is a landscape painter, a watercolorist, and a book illustrator. He has taught at the University of Kentucky since 1984 and served as chair of the Art Department. He was the third president of KGAC.

Jim talked about the KGAC in his and that of his students' careers. He had observations on exhibiting at early fairs.

LaVon Williams

8/20/08

LaVon Van Williams, Jr. is a fifth-generation woodcarver and folk artist and maintains a studio in Lexington. His work reflects the African-American experience. He received the Artist Award in the Governor's Awards in the Arts.

LaVon discusses being a sculptor and folk artist who deals with ethnic subjects.

Tim Glotzbach

8/21/08

Tim Glotzbach earned a Master of Fine Art in Jewelry/Metalsmithing from Southern Illinois University. He is the current director of the Berea College Student Crafts Industries and former dean of the Kentucky School of Craft. He was awarded the Rude Osolnik Award for outstanding individual efforts in crafts advocacy and education, and excellence in personal design and workmanship.

Tim discussed being a craft educator and helping to define some of the major craft institutional programs in the state.

Garry Barker (2 tapes)

8/21/08

Garry Barker grew up in Eastern Kentucky and graduated from Berea College. His first job out of college was working for the Southern Highland Handicraft Guild in the late 1960s. He returned to Kentucky as the director of KGAC and then moved to Berea College where he held several positions in the crafts program. He directed the Kentucky Folk Arts Center in Morehead. Garry is a writer of several books, including *The Handcraft Revival in Southern Appalachia, 1930 – 1990* (The University of Tennessee Press, 1991).

Garry talked about promoting and supporting crafts activities in a series of institutions over the years. He particularly addressed his time as director of KGAC.

Joe Molinaro (2 tapes)

8/21/08

Joe Molinaro studied ceramics at Ball State University and received a master's degree from Southern Illinois University. He now teaches ceramics at Eastern Kentucky University and is a KGAC member. He has long been interested in the pottery traditions of Ecuador and makes frequent trips there. He is a Rude Osolnik Award recipient.

Joe talked about the relationships between contemporary and traditional pottery, his own approach to ceramics, and his work with students—both in Kentucky and Ecuador.

Anne Ogden (2 tapes)

9/19/08

Anne Ogden took the job of craft coordinator with the Kentucky Arts Commission in the late 1970s and quickly acquainted herself with craftspeople around the state. She made connections in the formative years between the Kentucky Guild, the Craft Marketing Program, and the Kentucky Art and Craft Foundation. She recently retired from working at the J. B. Speed Museum.

Anne discussed the starting of Kentucky Craft Marketing and the Art and Craft Foundation and how it fit with the efforts of KGAC to serve craftspeople.

Sarah Frederick (2 tapes)

9/19/08

Sarah Frederick has degrees from Mills College and the University of Louisville and has studied at the Massachusetts College of Art and the Haystack Mountain School. For years she supported herself and her children with pottery business in Louisville. She is a KGAC member and a Rude Osolnik Award recipient, and a Kentucky Crafted Emeritus designee.

Sarah talked about running a ceramic studio with employees and balancing making a living with also producing art.

Wayne Ferguson

9/19/08

Wayne Ferguson attended the University of Kentucky and worked for many years in specialized art programs in public schools throughout the state. He is interested in pottery of Native Americans, which is reflected in his own work. He is a Kentucky Guild of Artists and Craftsmen member and a Rude Osolnik Award recipient.

Wayne talked about his work with young people and learning from Native Americans. He discussed the major currents of his production.

Crit Luallen

9/23/08

Crit Luallen has been in public service for over 30 years and most recently served as Kentucky State Auditor from 2003 through 2011. Prior to public office, Ms. Luallen served seven years as Secretary of the Governor's Executive Cabinet. During her public service career, Ms. Luallen worked for six governors in the positions of State Budget Director, Secretary of the Finance and Administration Cabinet, Secretary of the State Tourism Cabinet, Commissioner of the Kentucky Department of the Arts, and Special Assistant to the Governor. During her state government tenure, Ms. Luallen helped secure funding for the Governor's School for the Arts and the Kentucky History Center. She was also instrumental in the development of the Kentucky Craft Marketing Program. She initiated the country's first economic impact study on craft with an Appalachian Regional Commission grant. The significance of Ms. Luallen's work has been recognized with many honors including the 2011 recipient of the Livingston Taylor Ethics Award and Governing Magazine's Public Official of the Year 2009 Award. Ms. Luallen is a graduate of Centre College, where she serves on the Board of Trustees.

Crit talked about the importance of crafts as economic development in Kentucky and the many different ways that she encouraged crafts as worthy of government resources.

Lois Mateus

9/23/08

Lois Mateus was the first commissioner for the Department of the Arts under the Brown administration. She was active in both the creation of the Craft Marketing Program and the Kentucky Art and Craft Foundation. As Arts Commissioner she and her staff oversaw the initial department store promotions, initiated by Phyllis George. Later she was instrumental in establishing the Kentucky Museum of Art and Craft and continued on the board until her recent retirement. After leaving state government she rose to the position of vice president for corporation communications at Brown Forman.

Lois talked about the sequence of events that led to crafts support by the state. She also addressed the need for another separate craft organization—The Art and Craft Foundation.

Al Shands

1/30/09

As a young filmmaker Alfred Shands produced 35 documentary films for television and received many distinguished awards. He and his wife became interested in Kentucky crafts in the early 1970's, ceramics in particular, and set about educating themselves about art and craft. They put together one of the most significant private collections of contemporary crafts in the country. Reverend Shands has served on arts boards across Kentucky including the J.B. Speed Art Museum in Louisville, University of Kentucky Art Museum in Lexington, Actors Theater of Louisville, Kentucky Opera, Shaker Village at Pleasant Hill, and Kentucky Museum of Art and Craft. Shands has also served on many nationally significant boards, including the American Craft Council.

Al talked about the development of the Kentucky Museum of Arts and Crafts and his wife's involvement in its history, as well as his involvement in the museums in Louisville.

Gwen Heffner

1/23/09

Gwen received a Master of Arts from the University of Louisville and became a gallery owner and studio potter. Gwen is well respected in her field as an artist, workshop presenter (teacher/lecturer), juror, arts consultant, curator, and writer. She is the recipient of the Al Smith Fellowship and has been presented the Rude Osolnik Award from the Kentucky Arts Council and Kentucky Museum of Art and Craft. She is currently curator and artist liaison for the Kentucky Artisan Center in Berea.

Gwen talked about her development as a potter, her involvement in the community as a gallery owner and educator, and the founding and development of the Kentucky Artisan Center.

Marlene Grissom

1/30/09

Marlene graduated from the University of Pennsylvania with a Bachelor of Arts. Three years later became a board member of the Art Center Association and in 1965, served as the acting director of the Louisville School of Art. Marlene opened and directed the Byck Gallery of Art. She led in the development of the Kentucky Art and Craft Foundation (now the Kentucky Museum of Art and Craft) including chair of the board. She is active on many boards

and committees serving the community at the local and state level and has received outstanding awards as a woman of distinction in business and the arts.

Marlene talked about the history of the Kentucky Museum of Art and Craft, the integration of the waterfront development and the Fund for the Arts in Louisville.

Walter Hyleck

1/22/09

Wally Hyleck graduated with a Master of Fine Arts in ceramics and art history from Tulane University in New Orleans, Louisiana. He was a professor of fine art at Berea College from 1988 - 2008. He served as director of the Ceramic Apprenticeship Program and chairman of the art department as well as the Berea College Executive Council for several of those years. As an artist his work has been shown nationally and internationally in several hundred exhibits and is in many public collections.

Wally talked about his life, from being a student of ceramics, to becoming a professor of fine art, and art department chair, at Berea College. He also gave a tour of his home studio and discussed his ongoing work as a potter.

Mary and Robin Reed

1/23/09

Robin and Mary Reed, a husband and wife team, established Appalachian Crafts in 1972. They operate this small cottage industry from their farm in the mountains of Eastern Kentucky. The Reeds create baskets and cornhusk dolls and flowers, a crafts tradition which dates back over 300 years. Robin and Mary have been active members of the Kentucky Craft Marketing Program since 1982 and received their Emeritus Award in 2002. They are members of the Kentucky Guild of Artists and Craftsmen and the Kentucky Museum of Art and Craft. They are featured in Phyllis George's book "Kentucky Crafted, Handmade and Heart Felt."

Mary and Robin discussed the history and cultural significance of basket making and cornhusk art, which both go back to early Egyptian times, and the importance of local art and craft organizations in the development and preservation of craft work in Kentucky.

Carole and Chris Pierce

1/22/09

Carole is a self taught artist who is inspired by nature. She is an accomplished weaver and exhibiting member of the Kentucky Craft Marketing Program and the Kentucky Guild of Artists and Craftsmen.

Chris is a retired Art Education professor from Berea College and Berea Community Schools and continues to direct a summer creative arts program for children. He is an accomplished artist in mixed media metal jewelry and a member of the Kentucky Guild of Artists and Craftsmen.

Both Carole and Chris were founding members of the Berea Arts Council.

Carole and Chris spoke of their involvement in the Berea community through their craftsmanship and college crafts and teaching. Carole explained how her interest in weaving lead to her employment and later volunteer activities. Chris spoke of his medium and teaching position at Berea College.

Larry Hackley

1/22/09

Larry Hackley studied ceramics and sculpture and received a Master of Fine Arts in 1973 from the University of Kentucky. He taught ceramics and design prior to becoming a private folk art dealer. He opened Hackley Gallery in Winchester in 1995. He continues to specialize in contemporary folk art.

Larry spoke of the issues relating to definition, value, and appreciation of folk art in Kentucky. He shared information on its history and sources.

Kay Lowe-Masuhr

2/19/09

Kay was deputy commission and later commissioner of the Department of the Arts following Lois Mateus. She oversaw the early development of the Craft Marketing Program, Kentucky Crafted: the Market, as well as the Kentucky Art and Craft Foundation, now the Kentucky Museum of Art and Craft. She continues to be politically active.

Kay talked about the significance of craftwork in the cultural heritage of Kentucky and the role government and private initiatives have played in developing the arts and encouraging the growth of markets for quality craft products.

Minnie Adkins

10/27/09

Minnie is a seasoned woodcarver who started carving in her childhood but did not achieve notoriety until well into her 50's when she received national attention for her whimsical, original carvings, and particularly distinguished herself as a mentor of other folk artists. She has received many awards for leadership and folk art, as well as an honorary Doctorate from Morehead State University.

Minnie Adkins talked about the role of her husband and others had in her development and the obstacles she had to overcome.

Tim Lewis

10/27/09

Tim began as a maker of decorative walking sticks, but went on to become one of a very few self-taught stone carvers in Kentucky. His first major recognition came in 1996, when he was commissioned to create a large outdoor piece that became a permanent installation in Atlanta, Georgia and was underwritten by Coca-Cola in honor of the Summer Olympic Games.

Tim Lewis talked about his development from carving sticks to becoming a successful stone carver.

Ronald Cooper

10/27/09

Ronald began making art in the late 1980's when he was already in his late 50's. Cooper is known for his graphic portrayal of hell and the devil, which he presents in the form of cautionary tales narrated through his pieces. In 1995 he was honored to receive an Al Smith Fellowship for Individual Artists from the Kentucky Arts Council.

Ronald Cooper talked about the role of religion and narration in his work.

Calvin Cooper

10/27/09

Calvin became known late in life when he began crafting birds and animals assembled out of wood, using specially selected twigs and natural branch formations. The Cooper Rooster, typically painted in two colors, with white or other colored spots, has become highly recognizable and is sought after by collectors. He is nationally recognized for his craft.

Calvin Cooper talked about the influence of growing up in Eastern Kentucky and serving as a veteran in WWI.

Donna and Lewis Lamb (daughter and father)

2/8/12

With the support and influence of her father, and some instructional books, Donna Lamb began to build guitars and pursued the art of inlay, using only hand tools. Lewis built string instruments early in his life, out of necessity, because there was no money to purchase one. He farmed and he and Donna still live on the same property where he was born in rural Kentucky.

Donna Lamb tells the story of her interest in music from childhood.

Warren May

2/8/12

Warren was born in a log cabin without electricity and was always whittling and making things in his dad's workshop. He was exposed to gospel and country music and influenced by Homer Ledford. He received a teaching degree in woodworking and carpentry from Eastern Kentucky University (EKU). While teaching he started building instruments. With his father's support, he developed his skills as a luthier and opened a retail business in Berea.

Warren May tells about his rural upbringing and experience as a student at EKU as well as his work as a luthier in retail business in Berea.

Gary Cotton

3/9/12

He is accompanied by Dr. John Rice, a friend and avid collector and player of the mandolin. Gary talks about his philosophy as a luthier and gives a description of many of the instruments and their history. He expresses his

appreciation for clients such as Dr. Rice, and talks about the information gained by Dr. Rice's radiology skills by providing x-rays and MRIs of instruments.

Neil Kendrick

3/9/12

Neil's father played the guitar and bought one for his children when Neil was 10 years old. Neil built his first guitar from a kit and thereafter learned to make them from scratch using journals and the Internet for instructions. Homer Ledford was a mentor to Neil.

He talks about the evolution of machinery and finishing products, materials he likes to use, his customers and his views on apprenticeships and being a luthier as a primary career.

Cathy Currier

4/18/13

Cathy currently owns and manages a sales and repair business in Richmond where she teaches classes in luthery.

Cathy describes her history as a luthier, growing up as part of her family's music store, and studying woodworking and instrument making. She talks about her decision to do repair work in lieu of building instruments, the challenge of being a problem-solver, making her own tools, collecting string instruments, the ongoing changes in instruments, the value of networking with other luthiers, and the enjoyment of her informal music club.

George Wakim

4/18/12

George is a self taught violin player whose talents led him to perform with Homer Ledford and Jean Ritchie. He bought a violin from J.B. Miller and began to experiment with repair. He spent time observing what J.B. did in his shop and J.B. allowed him to use his tools and provided advice. George continues to play Middle Eastern music in Lexington and in his native country, Lebanon.

The interview starts with George playing the Oud, an instrument from Syria that he became familiar with while living in the Middle East. George reviews his history of discovering string instruments in this region and coming to the United States in 1984 to study engineering at the University of Kentucky. He talks of his musical pursuits in Kentucky and the designs and acoustic effects of making the Oud.

Ron Pen

4/19/12

Ron grew up in Chicago and began piano at an early age, but guitar later became his passion. He was Chair of the Fine Arts Department at the Latin School of Chicago and subsequently chair of the Fine Arts Department at Saint Martin's School in New Orleans. Ron's mother's family was from Kentucky, so Ron moved to the University of Kentucky to pursue his doctorate. This led to his authorship of a book on John Jacob Niles and his appreciation for instrument makers.

Ron talked of the differences in the behavior of children from differing socio-economic families. He speaks of his childhood in Chicago and his search to find the history of the guitar that took him to Ireland and Scotland. He reviews his education and how he ended up at the University of Kentucky. The interview ends with him reflecting on the changing technology and the use of computers in making instruments.

Art Mize

4/19/12

Art was raised in rural Kentucky in a religious environment that did not allow the playing of instruments and limited singing to religious hymns. In spite of this, his family obtained string instruments and played together in their home. In sixth grade his dad was transferred to northern Illinois where Art had private violin lessons and played in the school orchestra. Two years later the family moved back to Kentucky where he encountered blue grass, jazz and other diverse types of music. He was influenced by Ron Pen, Homer Ledford, whose band he played with, and J.B. Miller.

Art discusses his personal history, his admiration and apprenticeship with JB Miller. He showed samples of violins from various European countries.

Roy Bowen, Scott Leedy, and Monti Weaver

4/26/12

Roy grew up in Winchester where he still lives. He played in bands throughout junior and senior high. He developed his skills as a woodworker and worked in a repair shop in Lexington to gain experience.

Scott lived in different locations in central Kentucky as a child. He learned bass guitar and drums and played with friends in bands. He was working in construction cabinet shops when he answered an ad for repair work that Roy had listed. They worked out of Roy's basement repairing instruments and it soon became clear that there was a need for a full-time luthier service.

Monti is from London, Kentucky. After working as a car mechanic for several years, he heard about Roy and Scott's business and applied for a job. He assists in building the guitars and works in the paint studio applying the various colors that customers choose.

Roy tells how playing in bands and needing to repair his own instruments lead to his current career.

Scott talks about his childhood interest in music and how he became an employee and later, a partner of Roy's in business. They talk about the recent use of a CNC machine and the shifting to computerization and growing the business. Roy and Scott reflect on going into business on their own and offer advice to others considering this

Steve Rigsby

5/18/12

A trumpet player since fourth grade, he majored in music at Morehead State University. He taught music, retiring after 27 years. An uncle gave him a guitar that he repaired, since there were no luthiers in the area. He later took an instrument repair class at MSU, where he found his talent. Restoration became an interest and he worked in many repairs shops before opening his own in Lexington.

Steve talks about the influence of his family, his experience at Eastern Kentucky University, and his career as a music teacher before becoming a luthier. He defines the difference between restoration and repair and explains his definition of a luthier. He talks about the certification required to work for dealers, the local woods he uses, the need to involve the musician when performing a set up, and the business side of making parts.

Frank Neat

5/22/12

Frank bought his first banjo in 1965, as a teenager, after seeing a neighbor play one. He met a luthier who piqued his curiosity and soon after was offered a job making banjos. Many of the old banjos needed neck repair or replacement, which Frank became proficient at doing. He works with his son Ricky, who specializes in inlay.

Frank talks about his first banjo that he played as a teenager and his exposure to a luthier shortly thereafter who influenced him. He reviews the history of the Gibson banjo, which was initially used by bluegrass musicians in the 1920's. He talks about three-finger banjo picking, its history, banjo parts, banjo players who use his instruments, bluegrass musicians and, what influences the quality of the banjo.

Arthur Hatfield

5/23/12

Arthur Hatfield built his first banjo as a young teenager, but chose to become a cabinet maker. At the age of 50, he became a full-time luthier. He refers to himself as an instrument maker, which in his mind differs from a luthier.

He discusses the challenges of being a luthier, his one-man operation, and the differences between repair work and restoration, which defines his interpretation of being a professional. He also demonstrates the building of a banjo.

Harry Bickel

5/30/12

A dentist by trade, Harry became interested in stringed instruments in the 1960's when he met Bluegrass musicians in Louisville. He purchased an old Victorian home and rented rooms to musicians. A band was formed and he soon learned how to repair and make parts needed for restorations from one of the tenants. His basement became his workshop and business grew as his reputation spread.

Harry's interview contains detailed technical information regarding different types of instruments and a description of the services he provides.

Gary Cornett

5/30/12

Gary was born and raised in Layson, where he still lives. His mother sang gospel in the church choir and his dad was a woodworker. He learned skills from both. He owned a blacktop paving company until a few years ago, when he was badly injured. He became a self-taught luthier and learned from extensive reading. While passionate about building guitars, he can also do repairs on many different types of string instruments. He is proficient at inlaying, making parts and constructing instruments. He prefers that his wife do the finishing work. He doesn't want an apprentice but hopes a grandchild will carry on with the business.

Gary talks about the special wood he uses and gives us a tour of the studio describing his process and tools. The interview ends with the interviewer, Jesse Wells, playing a guitar that Gary recently completed.

Raymond McLain

7/31/12

Raymond first touched an instrument shortly after he learned to walk and was fascinated by the resonating tone of the strings. As a youngster he joined his family as a player in their consortium of string instruments. The McLain family band soon became a weekly television show, which ended when the family moved to Berea when he was 17 years old. The family band continued to perform and traveled abroad, performing in 53 countries. While living in Berea, he became friends with Homer Ledford, whose support he feels was critical to his family's success. He often had to repair his own instruments while on the road; he does not consider himself a luthier. He is currently the director of the traditional music school in Morehead.

Raymond talks about the importance of music and the value of an academic setting where Appalachian music is studied.

Wayne Andrews

7/31/12

As President of Morehead State University, Wayne Andrews presided over the opening of the new Traditional Music School in 2012, which offers the first traditional music Bachelors Degree in Kentucky. Dr. Andrews was Raymond McClain's student before coming to Kentucky

His interview contains segments with the school's director, Raymond McLain, who demonstrates the banjo and sings a duet with Dr. Andrews.

Kenny and Buddy Ratliff

7/31/12

Kenny didn't have a mentor other than his father, Buddy, which he remembers first watching at the age of three. He began playing violin at age seven and built his first violin in sculpture class at Morehead State University. He designed the instrument to look old by limiting the finish and distressing the wood. He is talented in painting and carving, which adds a unique quality and craftsmanship to the design. He enjoys writing personal notes inside the instruments to reflect what is happening in his personal life at the time. In 1987 Kenny began to build mandolins' which obtained a better tone and sold well.

Buddy played classical music on the guitar before playing the fiddle. His first fiddle was a gift from an uncle. He opened it to make a repair and became familiar with the construction.

Kenny tells of the influence of his father and his experience at Eastern Kentucky University in instrument making as well as his decision to build mandolins as a luthier. Buddy talks about his first fiddle and how he became familiar with its construction and repair. He has passed this knowledge on to his sons, Kenny and Steve.