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TVA POPULATION REMOVAL: ATTITUDES AND EXPECTATIONS OF THE DISPOSSESSED AT THE NORRIS AND CHEROKEE DAM SITES

MICHAEL ROGERS*

CONVENTIONAL WISDOM HOLDS THAT RURAL SOUTHERNERS, particularly those living in the Appalachian Mountain region, traditionally rejected the values of mainstream American society and were in turn seen by the majority of Americans as backward "hillbillies" and "rednecks." As Jack E. Weller put it in his 1965 book *Yesterday's People*, in Appalachia "the mountain man has a regressive outlook and he does not look forward to tomorrow with pleasant anticipation."¹

In recent years a number of authors have questioned this belief and determined that such stereotypes are not always valid. Ronald D. Eller's *Miners, Millhands and Mountaineers* forcefully challenges the assertion of Appalachian backwardness. Eller believes that by the late nineteenth century few locations "more closely exemplified Thomas Jefferson's vision of a democratic society than did the agricultural communities of the southern Appalachians." Eller maintains that poverty began with the economic development brought by industrial capitalists. Eller, however, does not limit blame to the private sector for Appalachian problems. He states that "when the Park Service and TVA condemned hundreds of family farms for parks and hydroelectric facilities, it appeared to many mountain residents that the government was delivering the final blow to the region's independence and traditional way of life."²

* The author is a graduate student in history at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. He gratefully acknowledges the assistance of Dr. Gary Fink of Georgia State University as well as that of the staff of the National Archives-Southeast Region in East Point, Georgia, particularly Ms. Mary Ann Bailey.

¹ Jack E. Weller, *Yesterday's People* (Lexington, 1965), 38.

² Ronald D. Eller, *Miners, Millhands and Mountaineers: Industrialization in the Appalachian South* (Knoxville, 1982), 3, 240. See also David Whisnant, *Modernizing the Mountaineer: People, Power, and Planning in Appalachia* (Knoxville, 1994). Like Eller, Whisnant sees failure in both state and federal efforts to deal with Appalachian poverty. Other studies concerning government's effect on the lives of twentieth century Appalachians and Appalachian reaction to those efforts include Durwood Dunn, *Cades Cove: The Life and Death of a Southern Appalachian*

Recently Crandall A. Shifflett has called Eller's view into question in his study of Appalachian coal towns. Shifflett states that while it is easy to romanticize the pastoral lives of preindustrial Appalachians, "farm life was far from idyllic." Many farm families lived lives of "chronic misery." For this reason, and notwithstanding the unforeseen problems that would accompany industrial development, many in Appalachia welcomed the economic opportunity offered by the arrival of the coal industry. But what of Eller's contention of Appalachians' fear regarding governmental development?³

In a study of TVA's effect on a group of people removed for the construction of Norris Dam in East Tennessee, Michael J. McDonald and John Muldowny concur with Eller and also judge TVA's impact on rural Appalachians to be negative. They conclude that at Norris TVA did not immediately enrich the lives of the "forgotten Americans" that the Roosevelt administration promised to help, and conclude also that most Norris residents resented the Authority's development plans. McDonald and Muldowny also maintain that "the literature in TVA for all population removals in the period covered by this work bears out contentions similar to the ones made here for Norris."⁴

McDonald and Muldowny conclude that removed residents considered themselves unfortunate because the agency destroyed their traditional way of life. In writing their book (*TVA and the Dispossessed*, 1982), these University of Tennessee historians relied on TVA removal data maintained at the National Archives-Southeast Region in Atlanta. The Archives stores removal questionnaires that were administered to displaced families from not only the Norris site but

Community, 1818-1937 (Knoxville, 1988); Denis E. Simmons, "Conservation, Cooperation, and Controversy: The Establishment of Shenandoah National Park, 1924-1936," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 89 (1981): 387-404; Charles L. Perdue and Nancy J. Martin-Perdue, "Appalachian Fables and Facts: A Case Study of the Shenandoah National Park Removals," *Appalachian Journal* 7 (1979-1980): 84-104.

³ Crandall A. Shifflett, *Coal Towns: Life, Work, and Culture in Company Towns of Southern Appalachia, 1880-1960* (Knoxville, 1991), 26. See also W.H. Droze, "TVA and the Ordinary Farmer," *Agricultural History* 53 (1979): 188-202. Droze discusses the impoverished situation valley agriculturalists found themselves in at the time of TVA's development.

⁴ Michael J. McDonald and John Muldowny, *TVA and the Dispossessed: The Resettlement of Population in the Norris Dam Area* (Knoxville, 1982), 265. See also William Bruce Wheeler and Michael J. McDonald, *TVA and the Tellico Dam, 1936-1979: A Bureaucratic Crisis in Post-Industrial America* (Knoxville, 1986). Wheeler and McDonald examined a later dam construction and discussed community reactions to TVA land purchase policy at a time when power, flood control, and the reduction of poverty were no longer the sole reasons for dam construction.



Norris Dam in 1937. Courtesy of the Tennessee Valley Authority.

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called Eller's view into question in Shifflett states that while it is easy to romanticize preindustrial Appalachians, "farm families lived lives of 'chronic hardship' in the face of the unforeseen problems of development, many in Appalachia were offered by the arrival of the coal industry a new life of Appalachians' fear regarding

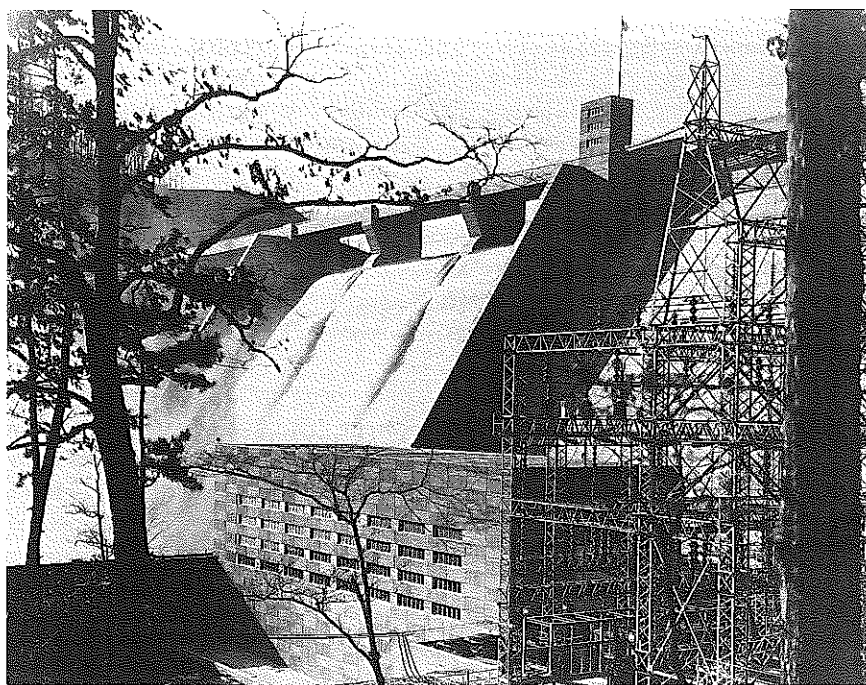
a group of people removed for the Tennessee, Michael J. McDonald also judge TVA's impact on them and conclude that at Norris TVA the "forgotten Americans" that they helped, and conclude also that the Authority's development plans. In that "the literature in TVA for the project covered by this work bears out the same here for Norris."⁴

McDonald conclude that removed residents because the agency destroyed their way of life. Their book (*TVA and the Dispossessed*) of Tennessee historians relied on the National Archives-Southeast Region to analyze removal questionnaires that were sent to not only the Norris site but

); Denis E. Simmons, "Conservation, the Establishment of Shenandoah National Park," *History and Biography* 89 (1981): 104; Martin-Perdue, "Appalachian Fables and Shenandoah National Park Removals," 104.

Work, and Culture in Company 1960 (Knoxville, 1991), 26. See also McDonald, *TVA and the Dispossessed* 53 (1979): 53. The situation valley agriculturalists faced during development.

TVA and the Dispossessed: The Dam Area (Knoxville, 1982), 265. Michael J. McDonald, *TVA and the Dispossessed* 53 (1979): 53. The situation valley agriculturalists faced during development.



Norris Dam in 1937. Courtesy UTK Special Collections.

also Watts Bar, Guntersville, Cherokee, and several others. To make relocation as easy as possible, TVA personnel visited every affected family. They assessed the families' economic and social condition, asked about their desires upon relocation, and rated the household head's reaction to TVA itself on a scale ranging from antagonistic to active booster. Realizing that regular TVA workers might interpret answers more favorably toward TVA than the residents intended, the agency employed local citizens, many of them schoolteachers, to conduct these surveys. By using local citizens instead of outsiders, TVA hoped to obtain a truer picture of the residents' attitudes and expectations.

TVA and the Dispossessed is the only scholarly work that makes extensive use of the removal questionnaires, and it is a valuable contribution to the literature on Appalachia. Many of the book's conclusions are called into question, however, when a statistical study of the removal data is conducted. By examining the opinions of Norris residents removed in the 1930s and Cherokee Dam area residents removed in the early 1940s, one finds that these Appalachian people

did not universally resist TVA and reject modernity. Instead they exhibited a range of opinions, many of them saying (like the coal miners studied by Shifflett) that Appalachian life was difficult and that some sort of regional development was needed to enrich the lives of themselves and their posterity.

For this paper a random sample of roughly 350 of the almost 3,000 Norris removal records and a random sample of over 100 of the 400 Cherokee removal records were studied. The conclusions drawn from a comparison of these records may surprise those accustomed to thinking of rural Southerners as people lacking the foresight to welcome economic development.⁵

Most Norris Basin residents in 1934 lived in dire poverty with seemingly little hope of material betterment. The average Norris family earned an annual income of \$329 and lived in a four-room house with no electricity. The majority of heads of households attended school only through grade five, farmed for a living, and had spent most of their lives in the Norris area. Those families fortunate enough to own their land possessed roughly fifty acres while tenants survived on plots of fewer than twelve acres.⁶

For many Americans, statistics like these suggest a region in which the ideal of American progress had failed. Yet many Norris residents viewed their economic situation with some equanimity. As subsistence farmers with little connection to a market economy, they provided for themselves. In spite of the Depression, they fed and clothed their families just as their forebears had done for generations. After hearing from one man that the "depression hasn't hurt us. We make good here, no debts," the field worker commented that "These people are really proud of their place—proud of the way it produces and their ability to be independent on it."⁷

Were a majority of the Tennessee Valley residents contented to live in impoverished, subsistence conditions forever, or did they have high hopes for the future? According to conventional wisdom, most felt content with their situation, but a thorough evaluation shows that a large number of Norris residents sought to achieve a lifestyle similar to that of mainstream Americans.

⁵ After the Norris removal, TVA revised the removal questionnaire form and reduced it from seven to two pages; thus, less information is available for Cherokee and a thorough evaluation of post-Norris removals is impossible.

⁶ All statistics in this paper are derived from RG 142 (Tennessee Valley Authority Records), National Archives-SE Region, unless otherwise noted.

⁷ J. Bailey to TVA field worker, August 1934, folder 6, box 11, RG 142.



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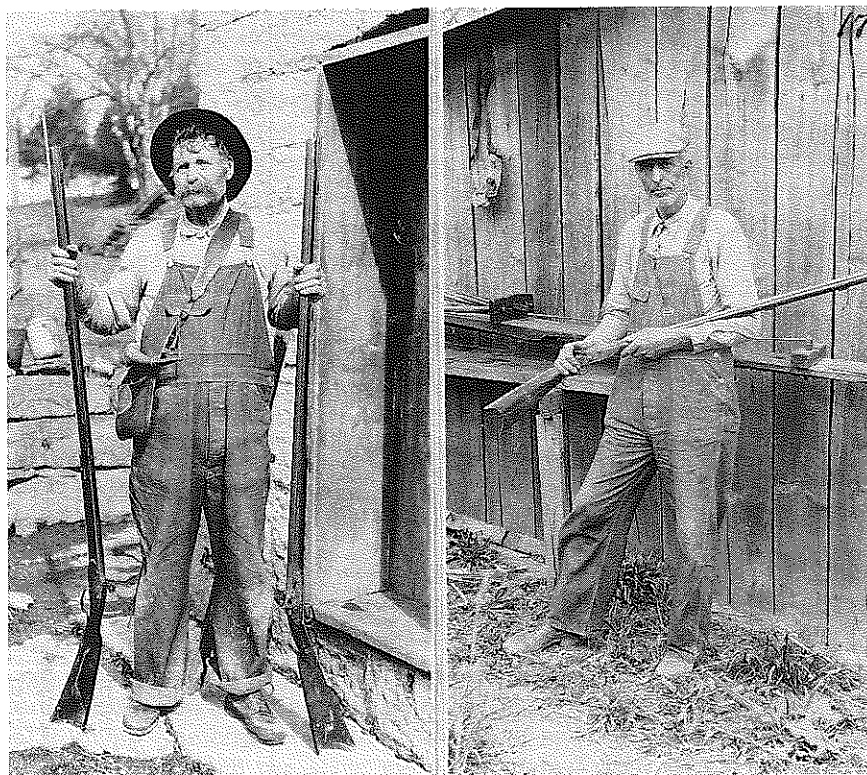
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Two residents of the Norris Basin area posing with antique rifles (photographs taken in the mid-1930s by TVA employee Marshall Wilson). *Courtesy McClung Historical Collection and Gail Wilson Knoll.*

A people dedicated to preserving the status quo would no doubt uniformly deplore an agency that threatened to alter their way of life substantially. Yet the attitude of the Norris Basin population toward TVA varied according to particular demographic characteristics. For example, only those seventy-five years of age and older (less than 4 percent of the household heads studied) exhibited marked hostility to the agency (see Table 1).

Households headed by individuals between twenty-five and forty-four years of age exhibited the most positive attitude toward TVA. People under the age of twenty-five also exhibited attitudes toward the agency more positive than those of the population as a whole. Indeed,

Table 1
Norris Basin Removal Data by Age Group

Age Group	Number in Category	Head of House Age	TVA Attitude	Current House Size	Desired House Size	% Change in House Size	Education Level	Current Acres	Desired Acres	% Change in Acres
Under 25	21	22.48	3.41	3.33	3.57	7.14	7.48	32.61	40.44	23.27
25-34	58	30.59	3.50	3.12	3.67	17.68	5.46	36.19	48.57	34.20
35-44	64	39.31	3.50	3.55	4.14	16.74	5.86	52.19	46.43	-10.84
45-54	78	49.10	3.20	4.13	4.81	16.46	4.99	68.73	57.63	-16.15
55-64	56	59.16	3.25	4.36	4.45	2.05	4.24	83.98	44.98	-46.44
65-74	35	68.97	3.13	4.56	4.71	3.23	4.11	108.29	58.26	-46.19
75+	15	80.40	2.60	4.87	4.80	-1.37	3.80	81.80	55.07	-32.68
Average		47.48	3.28	3.91	4.33	10.74	5.13	64.27	50.22	-21.86

TVA Attitude:

- 1 = Antagonist
- 2 = Critical
- 3 = Neutral
- 4 = Interested
- 5 = Booster

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⁸ Report on J. H

⁹ C. Brantley to

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75+	15	80.40	2.60	4.87	4.80	-1.37	3.80	81.80	55.07	-32.68
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all of the age groups with above-average opinions of TVA fell below the average age (47.5) of respondents to the questionnaires.

The receptivity to TVA exhibited by the generation coming of age in the 1930s reveals a sharp rejection of the status quo. The young clearly had higher hopes for material betterment than their elders. Some Norris residents realized this themselves. A field worker reported that one thirty-eight-year-old farmer "thinks the TVA will be of much help to future generations" but "the moving of the older people in this area will be a great hardship on them."⁸

On average, Norris residents were willing to accept a 22 percent reduction in acreage in hopes of acquiring better land upon relocation. Even those in their middle thirties and early forties would have accepted a reduction. The youngest segments of the population, however, those under thirty-five, actually hoped to increase the amount of land owned. One field worker reporting on the reaction of a family headed by a thirty-four-year-old noted that "they are glad they're getting on a good farm. . . . [I]f it hadn't been for the TVA they never would have moved."⁹

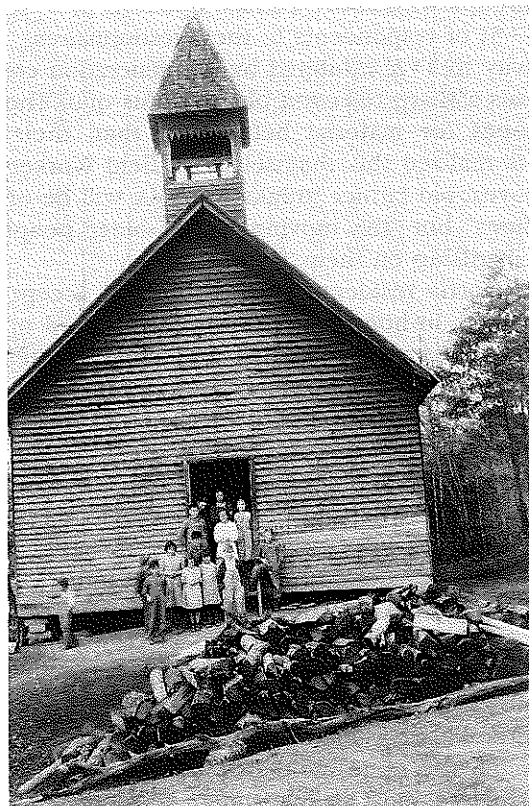
The tendency of the young to want a better future is also exhibited through an examination of anticipated changes in housing. The average house in the basin had slightly less than four rooms, and no age group showed a desire to increase the size of their home by even one room on average. This helps account for McDonald and Muldowny's determination that "life upon relocation was expected to cast itself in much the same mold that it had prior to the coming of TVA."¹⁰ Nevertheless, most people sought to increase their house size: the average Norris family sought an 11 percent increase. Most families headed by those over fifty-five years of age wanted only a small increase, while the few people over seventy-five actually sought to *decrease* the size of their homes. Younger people, however, wanted substantial improvement, especially those aged twenty-five to thirty-four.

For understandable reasons, established residents of the Tennessee Valley with more to lose felt threatened by TVA. Older people, for example, had more land and larger houses than the aggregate population. One sixty-three-year-old man lived in the only home in the basin observed by the TVA interviewer that had both an indoor bath and toilet. He told the Authority representative that he was not going to

⁸ Report on J. H. Tolliver, August 1934, folder 1, box 27, RG 142.

⁹ C. Brantley to TVA field worker, September 1934, folder 9, box 11, RG 142.

¹⁰ McDonald and Muldowny, *TVA and the Dispossessed*, 240.



One-room schoolhouse in Union County, Norris Basin area (photograph by Marshall Wilson, mid-1930s). *Courtesy McClung Historical Collection and Gall Wilson Knoll.*

accept TVA's purchase of his farm. The field worker sympathized, writing that "they have everything that anyone could have . . . they sure do hate to leave their home for they know they'll never have another home like they have."¹¹

If age alone dictated the attitudes and expectations of Norris residents, the stereotype of a people rejecting modernity would need only to be modified to say that Appalachian people began to reject the values of mainstream society as they grew older. Other factors,

¹¹ C. A. Bowman to TVA field worker, September 1934, folder 9, box 11, RG 142.

however, played different attitudes, education levels, and income level, those who were more hostile attitudes group with the much more positive.

Acceptance of the educated. With the increase in household income, one-third larger education of our families told for thirty-one-year-old all she was interested would be able to education said than he." Of course have the same member of the personnel that College, or the further their education.

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¹² U. Andrews to A. Weaver to same, August



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however, played a role in forming opinion. For example, strikingly different attitudes and expectations existed among groups of varying education levels (see Table 2). The group with the lowest education level, those who attended school from zero to three years, showed a more hostile attitude toward TVA than the population as a whole. The group with the highest level of education, thirteen or more years, had a much more positive response to TVA.

Acceptance of mainstream material desires clearly prevailed among the educated. While the lowest educational group wanted only a small increase in house size, those with some years in college desired houses one-third larger than they currently owned. Education, particularly the education of one's children, attracted Norris residents. A number of families told field workers about the importance of learning. One thirty-one-year-old mother with a fourth-grade education reported that all she was interested in "was being near a school where her children would be able to attend regular." A fifty-nine-year-old father with no education said that he "wants his children to have a better education than he." Of course, well-educated parents wanted their children to have the same advantages afforded them. A college graduate and member of the local school board, H.B. Albright, informed TVA personnel that he wanted to locate close to public schools, Maryville College, or the University of Tennessee so that his daughters might further their education.¹²

Rural Appalachian people supposedly found education unnecessary for earning a living. Norris statistics fail to confirm this stereotype. Households headed by individuals with some college education earned on average over five times the income of those with a third-grade education or less. The number of people in the basin with a college education, however, was just over one percent of the population, while almost a quarter of the people fell into the lowest educational category. Because of the scarcity of people in the highest educational group, strong conclusions about that group cannot be drawn. One can say with confidence, however, that the least educated failed to meet the average income standards of the aggregate Norris population. Those families headed by an individual in the lowest educational category earned over \$100 less than the average basin family. Furthermore, this group wanted and expected less from TVA than the others. They

¹² U. Andrews to TVA field worker, September 1934, folder 2, box 11, RG 142; A. Weaver to same, August 1934, folder 3, box 27, RG 142; and H. B. Albright to same, August 1934, folder 5, box 11, RG 142.

Table 2
Norris Basin Removal Data by Education

Education Level	Number in Category	Head of House Age	TVA Attitude	% Change in House Size	Total Income (\$)	Desired Electricity
0-3	83	52.07	3.16	7.09	217	1.7647
4-6	137	48.79	3.36	11.45	358	1.6140
7-9	87	42.76	3.29	10.21	368	1.4714
10-12	14	36.92	3.50	19.61	302	1.3333
13+	5	45.20	4.00	33.33	1,123	1.0000
Average		47.48	3.28	10.74	329	1.5919

TVA Attitude:

- 1 = Antagonist
- 2 = Critical
- 3 = Neutral
- 4 = Interested
- 5 = Booster

Desired Electricity:

- 1 = Yes
- 2 = No

sought a very small amount of electricity.

Those with education had a lower average desire for electricity. Their attitude toward the basin and they desired a smaller increase. In the group below that of the highest educational group but the lowest financial productivity.

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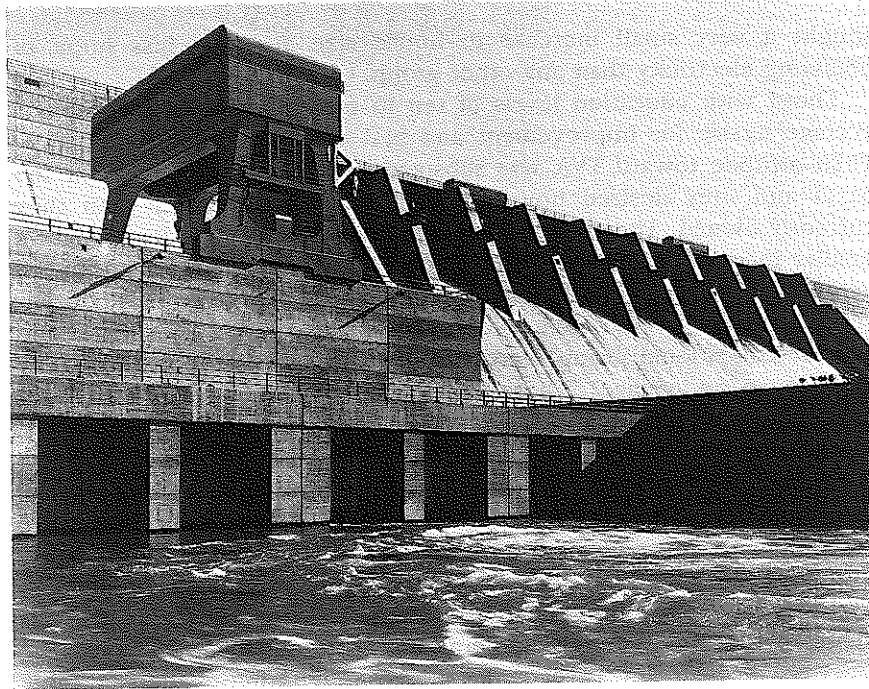
sought a very small increase in house size and had less hope of obtaining electricity than any other group.

Those with education levels of ten to twelve years showed above-average desire for improvement and had a positive opinion of TVA. Their attitude toward TVA was substantially above the average for the basin and they desired houses almost 20 percent larger than they currently owned. Those with a grade school education or less sought a smaller increase. Income for the second highest educational group fell below that of the population average, which was true of no other group but the lowest. Age accounts for this. Those in the second highest educational group were the youngest of all the groups (only thirty-seven on average). These individuals had yet to reach their most financially productive years.

Age and education tended to correlate inversely. Except for the few individuals with a college education, a direct link existed between age and education. Those with less than a seventh-grade education were older than the average of the questionnaire respondents while those who attended school between seven and twelve years were younger. In conjunction with the education statistics shown in Table 1, this suggests that the younger generations were moving closer to the American mainstream. Perhaps the most revealing information in Table 2 is the correlation between educational level and a desire for electricity. Fewer than half of the respondents in the two lowest educational groups desired electricity, while two-thirds of those in the high school range and all of the college-educated did so. In a region becoming more educated with each generation, traditional resistance to change was weakening.

By 1940 the Tennessee Valley Authority affected the lives of millions of people throughout the South. The Norris Dam and other TVA projects provided tens of thousands of formerly isolated people with the modernizing agent of cheap electric power. While TVA and other New Deal programs had failed to return the economy to the booming prosperity of the late 1920s, the nation at last showed signs of emerging from its economic doldrums.

Meanwhile, a new challenge, the approach of World War II, faced the American people. In July 1940 Congress authorized the construction of the Cherokee Dam on the Holston River near Knoxville to provide cheap electric power for the production of aluminum, a



Cherokee Dam in 1943. *Courtesy UTK Special Collections.*

vital material needed by the defense industry. Thus, TVA began removing yet another group of valley residents from their homes.¹³

In spite of the changes the New Deal had brought to the region in the previous six years, the people of the Cherokee area lived in poverty compared with those in the rest of the United States. In 1940 per capita disposable income in the country as a whole reached almost \$1,300. In Cherokee family income was less than \$700. The average Cherokee reservoir family lived in a four-bedroom house on a thirty-five-acre farm.¹⁴

Still, some Cherokee residents found their situation satisfactory. One family of eleven people, for example, rented a thirty-seven-acre farm and was headed by a father who never attended school and had earned cash income of less than \$350 in 1940. TVA removal personnel

¹³ "The Cherokee Project: Technical Report Number 7," in TVA Corporate Library, Knoxville.

¹⁴ Arthur S. Link and William B. Catton, *American Epoch: A History of the United States Since 1900*, 2 vols. (New York, 1980), 2:566.



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Table 3
 Cherokee Basin Removal Data by Age Group

Age Group	Number in Category	Opinion of TVA	Head of House Age	House Size	Education Level	Land Owned	Land Rented	Total Income (\$)
Under 25	6	2.50	23.00	3.00	5.00	0.00	21.17	397.33
25-34	20	2.20	30.15	3.67	5.95	12.35	62.75	577.60
35-44	23	2.13	39.48	4.22	6.22	15.83	13.74	584.48
45-54	25	1.96	48.84	6.20	5.52	33.48	13.48	704.56
55-64	15	1.87	59.80	4.83	4.53	49.80	10.64	708.64
65-74	14	1.71	69.00	4.29	4.21	108.29	2.07	778.43
75+	3	1.33	79.67	3.00	2.33	1.67	0.00	521.67
Average		2.01	46.91	4.33	5.32	35.06	21.22	641.69

Opinion of TVA:

1 = Negative

2 = Undetermined

3 = Positive

reported that "all of the members of this family seem to be intelligent and are hard workers but for some reason they have never taken the opportunity to train themselves as well as they could have." This family rejected a generous offer to manage a farm in another county where they would be provided a house, work stock, and \$45 per month in guaranteed cash income as well as one quarter of all farm income above \$3800. Rejecting the mainstream idea of material progress, this family fit the stereotype of Appalachian people content in their poverty and unwilling to improve their situation. But were their opinions typical of other families in the region?¹⁵

The comments attached to the Cherokee removal forms reveal the opinions of the removed residents concerning TVA. Roughly half of those studied expressed no opinion. Of those individuals whose opinion can be discerned, twenty-six reacted positively and twenty-five reacted negatively. By examining groups according to demographic characteristics, it becomes clear that Cherokee residents held varying opinions of TVA, depending on such factors as age, education, and years spent in the community.

The average person at Cherokee reacted neutrally to TVA, signalling neither strong acceptance of nor resistance to the agency. Nevertheless, when the data are examined by age group, differences of opinion become discernable (see Table 3). People forty-four years of age and younger reacted more positively to TVA than the reservoir's population as a whole.

Older residents felt differently. Each group over forty-five reacted less favorably than did the aggregate, with those over seventy-five having the most negative reactions. One family headed by a couple (ages sixty-eight and sixty-six) proved extremely difficult to please. Field worker W.R. West reported in March 1941 that he had finally achieved the Tate family's removal after months of trying. "This was a somewhat remarkable feat," he added, "since none of them would cooperate." Mrs. Tate always "disappeared during an interview, had resisted removal, and also failed to cooperate with her husband, refusing to look at any places and telling him that she intended to remain on the place."¹⁶ Mrs. Tate clearly preferred her life as it was before being forced to change by TVA. People in their sixties like the Tates generally exhibited attitudes traditionally associated with Appalachia; but as at Norris, the younger population, those who might yet achieve material prosperity, sought admission to the mainstream of

the nation's economy. One couple in their thirties were "well pleased" and "energetic and try ve

Along with age, with attitude toward most time in school was substantially more than the three age groups with below the mean. The region's population.

The study group Since one of these years of educational This would explain those under twenty of the population older segments. Still favorably to TVA, important factor that change. Such a small conclusions.

Through an examination combined influence more clear (see Table 5.0 years in school fifties who never adjustment problem "it is difficult for situations" and that available."¹⁸ Positive on average and had respondents. In addition children in their homes surely believed TVA

¹⁵ Report on M. Marshall, December 1940, folder 1, box 118, RG 142.

¹⁶ Report on W. A. Tate, October 1941, folder 11, box 119, RG 142.

¹⁷ Report on L. C. Ma

¹⁸ Report on Stoke Ri

family seem to be intelligent they have never taken the s they could have." This a farm in another county work stock, and \$45 per as one quarter of all farm nstream idea of material alachian people content in r situation. But were their n?¹⁵

removal forms reveal the ing TVA. Roughly half of those individuals whose positively and twenty-five ccording to demographic ee residents held varying s as age, education, and

centrally to TVA, signalling the agency. Nevertheless, p, differences of opinion rty-four years of age and the reservoir's population

p over forty-five reacted those over seventy-five nily headed by a couple mely difficult to please. 1941 that he had finally hs of trying. "This was a e none of them would uring an interview, had ate with her husband, m that she intended to eferred her life as it was e in their sixties like the onally associated with lation, those who might on to the mainstream of

the nation's economic system. For example, a fieldworker reported that one couple in their early forties with eight children living at home were "well pleased with the new opportunity" and "seem to be energetic and try very hard to improve their economic status."¹⁷

Along with age, a person's education level tended to correspond with attitude toward TVA. Those aged twenty-five to forty-four spent the most time in school of any group (roughly six years on average). This was substantially more than the average for all reservoir residents. The three age groups with the fewest years of schooling had opinion scores below the mean. These groups also were the oldest segments of the region's population.

The study group contained only six residents under age twenty-five. Since one of these individuals never attended school at all, the mean years of educational experience for this group may be artificially low. This would explain the disparity between the low schooling level for those under twenty-five and the overall tendency of younger segments of the population to be more educationally accomplished than the older segments. Still, these young residents of Cherokee reacted very favorably to TVA, which suggests that perhaps youth was a more important factor than education in forming favorable opinion to forced change. Such a small sample has made it difficult to draw strong conclusions.

Through an examination of the population by reaction to TVA, the combined influence of age and academic achievement becomes even more clear (see Table 4). The average negative respondent spent only 5.0 years in school and was fifty-five years old. One man in his mid-fifties who never attended school provides an example of the adjustment problems of older residents. The field worker reported that "it is difficult for him to adjust himself to new people and new situations" and that "this family will need all of the assistance that is available."¹⁸ Positive respondents were almost fifteen years younger on average and had almost a year more of school than negative respondents. In addition, positive respondents had a greater number of children in their households than negative respondents. These people surely believed TVA promised a better life for their offspring.

box 118, RG 142.
box 119, RG 142.

¹⁷ Report on L. C. Matney, December 1940, folder 2, box 118, RG 142.

¹⁸ Report on Stoke Rider, December 1934, folder 1, box 119, RG 142.

Table 4

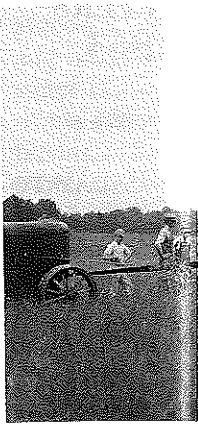
Cherokee Basin Removal Data
by Opinion of TVA

Opinion of TVA	Number in Category	Head of House Age	Number of Minor Children	Education Level
Negative	25	55.36	1.58	5.00
Undetermined	55	46.00	1.82	5.24
Positive	26	40.69	2.12	5.81
Average		46.91	1.84	5.32

In Cherokee, as at Norris, those with bright future prospects made available by youth and education approved of the Authority's actions. They believed their region needed to change. The stereotype holds that Appalachian people opposed change and held little hope for the future. Nevertheless, by approving of TVA, a quarter of Cherokee residents anticipated better lives for themselves and their posterity.

Change is never easy. To residents of Appalachia whose experience with the outside world was limited to dealing with dishonest corporate representatives or avoiding hostile federal revenue agents, the change brought by the construction of TVA dams must have been particularly unsettling. Nevertheless, when Norris Basin and Cherokee Reservoir residents discussed their removal with government personnel they more often than not revealed themselves as individuals desiring to join the American economic mainstream. Their longing for the benefits of mainstream culture belies the stereotype of backward, lazy, and complacent Appalachian hillbillies. Indeed, they wanted to live in a manner similar to other Americans. Why the disparity between image and reality?

In his 1984 work *Southerners All*, F. N. Boney describes mainstream society's view of the Southern "redneck." These rural Southerners include the "hillbilly farmers of northern Georgia, eastern Tennessee, the western Carolinas, and western Virginia." Boney concludes that



Threshing team at
County, Norris B.
Courtesy McClung

"the American
redneck is no
representative A

The "redneck"
era Appalachia
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educated, resen
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their acceptance
alien people th

Data

Number of Minor Children	Education Level
1.58	5.00
1.82	5.24
2.12	5.81
1.84	5.32

future prospects made the Authority's actions. The stereotype holds that the old little hope for the quarter of Cherokee and their posterity. Appalachia whose experience with dishonest corporate agents, the change have been particularly and Cherokee Reservoir management personnel they individuals desiring to join ing for the benefits of backward, lazy, and y wanted to live in a disparity between image

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Threshing team at the farm of George Woods near Andersonville, Anderson County, Norris Basin area, August 1935 (photograph by Marshall Wilson). *Courtesy McClung Historical Collection and Gail Wilson Knoll.*

"the American people are not quite ready for this last hard truth: the redneck is not only a representative southerner but also a representative American."¹⁹

The "rednecks," "hillbillies," and "Yesterday's People" of Depression-era Appalachia were in fact regular Americans. Their isolation, poverty, and lack of education created mannerisms and modes of speech that set them apart from mainstream culture; however, their desires and their hopes for the future, particularly among the young and the educated, resembled the hopes and dreams of all Americans. The East Tennesseans of the Norris and Cherokee areas exemplify this truth. By their acceptance of TVA they disproved the negative stereotypes. Not an alien people that time forgot, they were unmistakably Americans.

¹⁹ F. N. Boney, *Southerners All* (Macon, 1984), 59, 38.