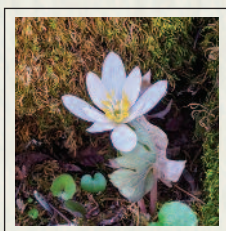


Spring &
Summer 2024



News from THE BERRY CENTER

LETTER FROM MARY BERRY



A BELATED HAPPY NEW YEAR from all of us at The Berry Center! I started this year, as I have started the last twelve, with gratitude to the membership of the Center for the continued

support of our work. Even as I write this, I am struck by how inadequate that last sentence is. Of course, I am grateful but maybe amazed is a better word. Let me tell you why.

In 1977 my father published a book called, “*The Unsettling of America: Culture and Agriculture*.” The book received few reviews and little attention. I have heard him say that his hope was to be invited to take part in a conversation about what was happening to farms and farmers at that time. He hoped especially to be invited into a conversation with land grant colleges about the decline of farming cultures and communities. To this day the invitation has not come.

Meanwhile we have lost almost all of our small farmers. In Kentucky we have lost 6,500 farms in the last ten years. Most of the farmers we have left are dependent on off-farm jobs. Rural communities have fallen apart. Our small towns are dead or dying. We have addiction problems and hungry people in counties that are still mostly rural. In my lifetime we have lost most of the culture of agriculture that my father spoke of as indispensable in “*The Unsettling of America*.” These problems are not in the news or on any political agenda. The question of whether or not we are going to take care of the land and the people who should belong to the land remains answered in the negative in spite of a local food movement that has been going on for decades. And in spite of the

fact that good land use is the answer to our most pressing problems, climate change first among them.

The Berry Center was started to continue my family’s advocacy for small farmers and their communities. We are working for a culture and an economy that will support good farming. As my dear friend Wes Jackson has said, “If you are going to help farmers you must help their communities.” I believe that the improvements needed must start from the bottom where we can see what must be done and do it. From that work is coming the examples needed for lasting change in our country.

“*The Unsettling of America*,” with little official attention, has stayed in print for 47 years and has, as my father says, “had a curious kind of private life.” We hear from people regularly for whom “*The Unsettling of America*” has been a deeply meaningful book. I certainly think a lot of it myself!

The Berry Center is putting my father’s work to work by advocating for small farmers, land conserving communities, and healthy regional economies. We are a part of a long strain of agrarianism that has existed for centuries. Word of “*The Unsettling of America*” spread mostly by mouth among sympathetic readers. We are in a very different time now but I feel that knowledge of our work at the Center has grown in much the same way. We know that our work, like “*The Unsettling of America*,” exists way out on the margins but we are out there with our friends and the company couldn’t be better.

Thank you for taking your part in that membership. 🍓

Your friend, —MARY BERRY, Executive Director

PROGRAM UPDATES

THE AGRARIAN CULTURE CENTER AND BOOKSTORE

THIS YEAR MARKS The Bookstore at The Berry Center's 10th anniversary! A triumph for any independent bookstore, but perhaps especially for one in a rural town with a population of 800. Thank you to all of our neighbors, near and distant, who have shopped with The Bookstore over the past decade and, in turn, supported the vital work of The Berry Center. Your orders through our website and visits to the store have kept us in the heart of the community.

You can help us celebrate our 10th birthday by joining us for a party (cake and party hats will be available!) and our first-ever KID'S Arts & Letters Day—held alongside The Berry



Center's Spring Open House—on June 8th, 11:00am–2:00pm

All are welcome to join the fun and hear from Kentucky children's book authors and illustrators as they share their work with the whole family. A food truck and ice cream will be on site, along with our perennial favorite straw bale tower on the Center's lawn. Best of all, kids will be invited to sign up for our Youth Agrarian Literary League, taking place this summer at The Berry Center Farm!

Sign up for The Berry Center's newsletter and follow us on social media for more ways you can take part in The Bookstore's anniversary celebration through the year, including giveaways and limited-edition merchandise. 🍓

Traveling at Home

Even in a country you know by heart
it's hard to go the same way twice.
The life of the going changes.
The chances change and make a new way.
Any tree or stone or bird
can be the bud of a new direction. The
natural correction is to make intent
of accident. To get back before dark
is the art of going.

—WENDELL BERRY, *A Part*, 1980

THE ARCHIVE AT THE BERRY CENTER

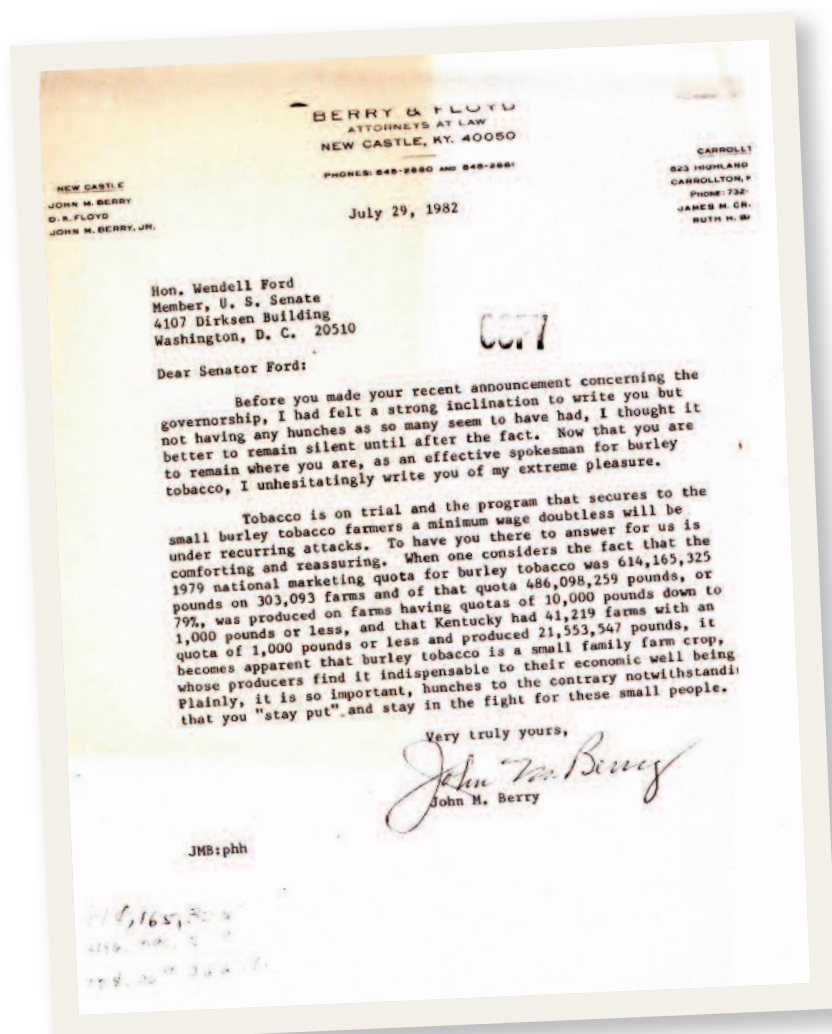
THIS IS A COPY of a letter sent by John Berry, Sr. to then Senator Wendell Ford of Kentucky, in 1982. Mr. Berry, as president of the Burley Tobacco Growers Cooperative Association, shepherded the Tobacco Program, which he wrote, in Congress and regularly communicated with the Kentucky delegation in the Senate and the House, encouraging support for it. I have many letters such as this one in our archive. In this letter, he thanks Senator Ford for deciding to stay in the U.S. Senate instead of running for governor of Kentucky; he commends him for staying in the “fight for these small people.”

In his young life, he witnessed his father and other farmers and their devastation at low tobacco prices, in some instances so low that they got nothing for their year's work, but still owed the warehouse fees and transportation. He determined even as a young person, that if he could ever do something about it, he would.

He joined the Burley Tobacco Growers Cooperative and encouraged others to do the same. He wrote the Tobacco Program, which, when it was put into federal legislation during the New Deal, put a dependable economy under farming in tobacco-producing areas for 60 years.

He always had the concerns of farmers, particularly small farmers, at heart. He felt the Tobacco Program fulfilled the intention of the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution, bringing as it did a welcome stability to rural areas, and thus, in the words of the Constitution, “. . . promoting the general welfare.” Indeed it supported farmers in the marketplace and later inspired the development of Our Home Place Meat, a farmer co-op directed and administered by The Berry Center. 🍷

—MICHELE GUTHRIE
Director, The Archive at The Berry Center



“ . . . it becomes apparent that burley tobacco is a small family farm crop, whose producers find it indispensable to their economic well being. Plainly, it is so important, hunches to the contrary notwithstanding, that you “stay put” and stay in the fight for these small people.”

OUR HOME PLACE MEAT



Attendees, volunteers, and staff gather for a photo on a windy, January morning at The Berry Center's farm.

I'VE SPENT A LOT of time as of late reflecting on 2023 and how Our Home Place Meat affected the agricultural economy in Henry County, Kentucky. In 2023, we paid \$767,000 to farmers to purchase 327 animals and paid \$206,000 in processing to Trackside Butcher Shoppe. That's \$973,000 directly impacting Henry County. We're building something special- something that will support our farmers and their families for the generations to come.

And it isn't just the agricultural economy that we're working on. We're working on the farm culture, too. Our Home Place Meat is encouraging cooperation and conversation among our farmers. And, for the third year in a row, we invited Andy and Doug from Hand Hewn Farm back to New Castle to educate a new group of eager learners on the traditions of humanely killing a hog, utilizing everything from the snout to the tail, and inspiring the students to take what they've learned back to their own communities and share with others. This year, the hog was butchered in the same manner as the hogs killed and featured in Tanya Amyx Berry's *"For the Hog Killing, 1979"* (University Press of Kentucky, 2019). All 11 participants received a copy of Mrs. Berry's book to commemorate their experience in New Castle. Many thanks to Berry Center board member Lois Mateus for her sponsorship of this year's event.

Speaking of community, I am pleased to announce that we have officially set the date for the 2024 Beef Bash, our annual celebration of Our Home Place Meat. This year's event will be Saturday, October 12 on the back lawn of The Berry Center in New Castle. Tickets have not yet gone on sale, so be sure to sign up for our email list to be the first to know when they do. We will be joined by some of Kentucky's finest chefs! See you at the bash! 🍖

—BETH DOUGLAS
Director, Our Home Place Meat



Wendell Berry reads his poem "For the Hog Killing" to bless the hog to officially start this year's event.

THE BERRY CENTER FARM & FOREST INSTITUTE

THE BERRY CENTER'S community education program provides the practical and intellectual skills for working with nature. Our courses, field days, and workshops in Henry County, Kentucky, are designed for early career and experienced farmers, woodland owners and forestry professionals, rural leaders, and residents who support the cultures of agriculture.

Join us for our next *FORESTRY FIELD DAY*: Saturday, April 13, 10:00 am – noon at TBC Farm. Contact our Program Coordinator at shannonboyd@berrycenter.org to receive email notifications.

Our other Winter/Spring class rosters are full! Stay tuned for Summer and Fall offerings as they become available. Visit our [website](#) to learn more. In the meantime, here's a look at what we're up to this season:

AGRARIAN VOICES STUDY

Institute Director Leah Bayens leads three Agrarian Voices Study courses per year: Winter/Spring, Summer, and Fall. These season-long classes combine Wendell Berry's writing and The Berry Center's mission with agricultural literature, essays, stories, lectures, and practical examples. [Here's a glimpse](#) of course materials.

WRITE YOUR RURAL STORY:

A Memoir Workshop with Georgia Green Stamper

This 2-day workshop is designed for those who are beginning to collect and write their personal stories of family and rural places. Georgia Green Stamper, a seventh generation Kentuckian and a distinguished writer and teacher, guides local residents in writing and shaping their rural stories. The event is supported by the Kentucky Historical Society's Local History Trust Fund.

LOW-IMPACT FORESTRY SERIES

Featuring seven separate workshops this season. The workshops range from Logging Unplugged: Axes and Crosscut Saws as Woodland Management Tools to Chainsaw Skills Training to Practical Farm Woodland Management. While these workshops are related and can build on one another, they can also be taken as one-offs. Instructor Rick Thomas brings a fresh perspective to woodland management and forest assets. The Low-Impact Forestry series provides practical training in conducting a woodland inventory, selecting trees for harvest, tree felling with chainsaws, and more. 🌲

—SHANNON BOYD, Program Coordinator

—DR. LEAH BAYENS
Director, Berry Center Farm + Forest Institute

Left: Chainsaw Skills Training participant, Jenny Kareem, assesses the lay of a felled cedar before limbing with the chainsaw. Chainsaw Skills Training: Introduction to Chainsaw Safety and Directional Felling and Chainsaw Skills Training: Advanced Tree Felling both begin in the shop with safety procedures, including the use of vital personal protective equipment. Participants spend the bulk of the workshop in the woods for hands-on instruction.

Right: Chainsaw Skills Training participant, Finn Mahoney listens as Rick Thomas highlights the importance of worst first log extraction and bucking to maximize yield.





SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

March 15 - 17	Practical Farm Woodland Management
March 16 and 23	Write Your Rural Story: A Memoir Workshop with Georgia Green Stamper
April 11	Agrarian Lecture Series. Author Brooks Lamb, "Love for the Land: Lessons from Farmers who Persist in Place."
March 23 and 24	Chainsaw Skills Training: Introduction to Chainsaw Safety and Directional Felling
April 6 and April 7	Logging Unplugged: Axes and Crosscut Saws as Woodland Management Tools
April 13	Forestry Field Day
April 20 and 21	Chainsaw Skills Training: Introduction to Chainsaw Safety and Directional Felling (women's only)
June 8	KID'S Arts & Letters Day and Berry Center Spring Open House
September 7	Agrarian Literary League Fall Festival
October 12	Beef Bash
November 9	Kentucky Arts & Letters Day

"Finding ways for continued education is difficult as a mom, a full-time night shifter, and a farm girl. I didn't know if it would be possible to ever pursue more learning outside of online courses . . . which just isn't ever the same. I have been so blessed to have found The Berry Center, it's like everything I've ever wanted to learn within arm's reach, with fellow community members and neighbors, which makes it that much better."

—CASEY DOWDEN, Participant, Berry Center Farm & Forest Institute

JOIN THE BERRY CENTER

BECOME A MEMBER OF THE BERRY CENTER & HELP US PUT WENDELL BERRY'S WRITINGS INTO ACTION. YOUR MEMBERSHIP SUPPORTS HEALTHY FOOD & FARMING.



ALREADY A MEMBER? Support our work by making a one-time gift or by giving the gift of membership to a loved one. You can donate by returning this form and a check to The Berry Center P.O. Box 582 New Castle, KY 40050. Or donate securely online at:

www.berrycenter.org/donate

All members will receive the printed Berry Center summer journal, electronic seasonal newsletters, and 10% off at The Berry Center Bookstore. Port William Circle Members contributing an annual donation of \$1,000 or more will also receive a signed broadside by Wendell Berry.

For more information, please contact Latara Appleby, Director of Advancement at lataraappleby@berrycenter.org or (502) 845-9200

I WOULD LIKE TO MAKE A GIFT OF:

☐ \$25 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$250 ☐ \$500 ☐ \$1,000 Other \$ _____

CONTRIBUTE MY GIFT TO: ☐ Joining or Renewing my membership ☐ Gifting a membership

NAME _____ THIS DONATION IS ANONYMOUS: YES OR NO _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ STATE/PROVINCE _____ ZIP _____

EMAIL _____ PHONE _____

For gifted memberships please provide: Tribute's name, address, and occasion.

TRIBUTE NAME AND OCCASION _____

TRIBUTE ADDRESS _____

*Sustaining members create a reliable stream of support,
which helps us focus more on programming and less on fundraising.*

DONATION FREQUENCY: ☐ Annual ☐ Monthly ☐ One-time

PAYMENT METHOD: ☐ Check (payable to The Berry Center) ☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ Discover ☐ AmEx

NAME ON CARD _____ CARD NO. _____

EXPIRATION DATE _____ CVV2 _____





THE BERRY CENTER

111 S. Main Street
P.O. Box 582
New Castle, KY 40050

Name
Street Address
City, State, Zip

THE BERRY CENTER STAFF

MARY BERRY, Executive Director
VIRGINIA BERRY AGUILAR,
Director, Agrarian Culture Center & Bookstore at The Berry Center
BETH DOUGLAS, Director, Our Home Place Meat
MICHELE GUTHRIE, Archivist, Archive at The Berry Center
BEN AGUILAR, Director of Operations
LATARA APPLEBY, Director of Advancement and Communications
DARRA SMITH, Office Manager, CFO
SAM BROWN, Sales, Our Home Place Meat
EMILY WADE, The Bookstore At The Berry Center

THE BERRY CENTER FARM AND FOREST INSTITUTE

LEAH BAYENS, Ph.D, Director, TBC Farm and Forest Institute
RICK THOMAS, Draft Animal Educator and Master Logger
SHANNON BOYD, Program Coordinator

THE BERRY CENTER
111 S. Main Street
P.O. Box 582
New Castle, KY 40050
Ph: 502-845-9200
info@berrycenter.org
www.berrycenter.org

**AGRARIAN CULTURE CENTER &
BOOKSTORE AT THE BERRY CENTER**
129 S. Main Street | P.O. Box 582
New Castle, KY 40050
Ph: 502-743-1820
bookstore@berrycenter.org
www.berrycenterbookstore.com

OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Maggie Keith, Chair
Mary Berry, Vice-Chair
Bonnie Cecil, Secretary
Jacob Rosenbaum, Treasurer

MEMBERS AT-LARGE

Katherine Dalton Boyer
John Logan Brent
Christina Lee Brown
Lori Collins-Hall
Steven Douglas
Michael Trager-Kusman
Lois Mateus

OUR HOME PLACE MEAT

45 S. Main Street
P.O. Box 582
New Castle, KY 40050
502-845-9200
info@ourhomeplacemeat.com
www.ourhomeplacemeat.com