



Spring & Summer
2025

News from THE BERRY CENTER



WENDELL BERRY TEDDING HAY. PHOTO BY TANYA AMYX BERRY, CIRCA 1979

THE WHOLE HORSE AND THE BERRY CENTER

“This modern mind sees only half of the horse —that half which may become a dynamo, or an automobile, or any other horsepowered machine. If this mind had much respect for the full-dimensional, grass-eating horse, it would never have invented the engine which represents only half of him. The religious mind, on the other hand, has this respect; it wants the whole horse, and it will be satisfied with nothing less. I should say a religious mind that requires more than a half-religion”—ALLEN TATE, “Remarks on the Southern Religion,” in *I’ll Take My Stand*

I CAN SAY, ALONG WITH MY FATHER, that I am an agrarian. He says in his essay, *The Whole Horse*, “I was raised by agrarians, my bias and point of view from early childhood were agrarian...” He goes on to say that he had never heard of agrarianism defined,

or even named until he was a sophomore in college. He defines agrarianism as a way of thought based on land as opposed to industrialism a way of thought based on monetary capital and technology. What I learned from my father and others is that it is

Farming and raising a family in a beloved and declining rural county led to the start of The Berry Center. I knew that our problems were not simply agricultural but cultural, after all, I had read [The Unsettling of America](#), but I also had eyes that could see. Why had we had so little defense against the industrialization of agriculture? How could we go on destroying the source of what we need to survive? What is our countervailing idea? What are we for?

dangerous to think of agrarianism as simply an idea. Agrarianism is a practice based on a loyalty and a passion for particular places. I was lucky to be raised by an agrarian culture and to come home to live and farm in what was left of a healthy farm community.

Farming and raising a family in a beloved and declining rural county led to the start of The Berry Center. I knew that our problems were not simply agricultural but cultural, after all, I had read *The Unsettling of America*, but I also had eyes that could see. Why had we had so little defense against the industrialization of agriculture? How could we go on destroying the source of what we need to survive? What is our countervailing idea? What are we for?

We are for an economy and a culture that supports good land use. We seem to have lost the understanding that we have a land-based economy and without proper care of the soil we can have no life.

Our programs at The Berry Center are our effort to think of the ‘whole horse.’

This is the first sentence of *The Whole Horse*: “One of the primary results—and one of the primary needs—of industrialism is the separation of people and places and products from their histories.” I’ve heard my father say that his work has been to change the way the history of agriculture in this country is judged. We certainly can’t be adequate judges of

what has happened to our rural places if we don’t remember what has happened. [The Archive at The Berry Center](#) collects, catalogues, and preserves the papers of John Berry, Sr., John Berry, Jr., and Wendell Berry, which give us a window into their lives and work, their habits of mind and the history of agrarianism here.

To answer the question, what is our countervailing economic idea, we have started [Our Home Place Meat \(OHPM\)](#). The program has brought back to life two essential ideas, supply management in order to maintain parity pricing. We are working with ten farm families in Henry County to supply the market with delicious well-raised beef. My grandfather thought that controlling supply to maintain fair pricing would work for anything farmers could produce and so do I. In *The Whole Horse* my father says, “The global economy institutionalizes a global ignorance, in which producers and consumers cannot know or care about one another, and in which the histories of all products will be lost.” OHPM is a transparent program that allows the people who purchase the beef to know where their food is coming from without expecting the farmers to do the marketing, transporting, etc. Our Home Place Meat is making good farming pay fairly and encouraging a farm culture of cooperation not competition. This is the way to build back a population of good farmers. We must never forget that our great difficulty now is that we don’t have the people who know how to take good care of the land and no technological fix will work without them.

Which leads me to [The Farm and Forest Institute](#). Because we have lost generations of farmers, we have also lost the farm culture that was once handed down from generation to generation. This cultural knowledge must now be taught. How can we use land to feed ourselves without living each year at the next year’s cost or at our children and grandchildren’s cost? In *The Whole Horse* my father says that the agrarian mind is forever fascinated by questions leading toward the accomplishment of good work. Particular questions about the care of fields, woodlands, livestock—these skills must be taught. But not just skills, also the written record of agrarianism that continually affirms Nature as the final judge, law-giver, and pattern-maker. Maybe hubris is necessary to



Brennan Gallagher taking a 2018 course on draft animals. The Berry Center has recently added two horses to the farm to be used in upcoming classes.

teach, too? (This might be the easiest ‘whole horse program’ because there are actual whole horses.)

An agrarian culture needs story tellers, gatherings, and books that tell the stories of particular places. It needs the connections, influences, and exchanges that we mean when we speak of a local community.

[The Agrarian Culture Center and Bookstore](#)

brings people together to hear writers and to talk about books read in common. It has encouraged people to know their own county better and to be proud of a shared history instead of embarrassed to be rural.

I believe that ‘whole horse’ thinking is the answer to the assumptions implicit in our industrial economy. Is it all right with us that a stable and preserving relationship among people, places, and things doesn’t matter? Do we believe that there is no conflict between self-interest and public service? Do we think that the loss of the capacity anywhere to produce necessary goods does not matter? Do we think that our country, our actual land, should be sacrificed for short term gain while we stay dependent on long

distance transport totally controlled by corporations to take care of all our needs?

No, I don’t believe that we are all right with these assumptions. ‘Whole horse’ thinking will lead us to develop and put into practice the idea of a local economy. We will want to shorten supply lines between producers and consumers and make local economic activity a benefit to the local community. We will learn to use the consumer activities of local towns and cities to preserve the livelihoods of local farm families and local communities. Everyone in the local community should have a direct, long-term interest in the prosperity, health, and beauty of their homeland. This will take time but along the way there will be improvements. The work itself is satisfying and, I can attest, the company is great. But make no mistake, without local economies the people have no power and the land no voice.

The Berry Center is working to build that economy, and your support is critical to our success.

Your friend,

—MARY BERRY, Executive Director

PROGRAM UPDATES

THE AGRARIAN CULTURE CENTER AND BOOKSTORE

OVER THE PAST MANY YEARS meeting visitors at [The Bookstore at The Berry Center](#) I have shared how lucky we are that, when The Berry Center board and my mother, Mary Berry, decided in 2014 that there ought to be a place to buy Wendell Berry's books in our community, an ancient cabin sat empty and available to lease just next door to the Center. When I came along to manage the bookstore two years later, I was struck by many things that made this place special: the logs with a patina that comes with 230 years, the giant stone fireplace, the smell of books mixed with wood warmed by the sun. And it didn't take much longer to notice the problems: a collapsing corner foundation, doors that stuck, the occasional pest infestation, and, worst of all, interior logs that wept with every decent rain storm.

It wasn't until The Berry Center was able to purchase the cabin in 2019 that we could begin to address the many structural needs. Besides its importance to us, the cabin means a great deal to the history of our community, and so we have tried to be thoughtful in its restoration.

First, a new roof, and then many conversations with consultants and cabin experts. Finally, work began in earnest last summer and, with the exception of a record snowstorm and a few torrential rains, has gone strong. As with any construction job, we were sure to be met with surprises along the way. Unfortunately, there were no treasures hidden in the walls, but a second floor support beam resting on a rotten log did send our friends on the construction crew outside to do safety assessments.

As difficult as it has been for the Bookstore to be moved out of its home over the last months, I am thankful for the kindness, skill, and hard work of Drew, Karol, and Derek who have gone beyond the requirements of their job on the cabin and brought lots of exciting activity and good music to the campus of The Berry Center.

I am also deeply grateful to our customers who continue to place orders through our website, who have



*Restoration work on the log cabin that houses
The Bookstore at The Berry Center*

chosen The Bookstore at The Berry Center as their preferred store on [Bookshop.org](#) and [Libro.fm](#), and to all those who have made donations toward the completion of the cabin restoration. It is a comfort that so many people understand the importance of this place—a place where the very walls tell the story of what the land once looked like here and how the abundance of natural resources have been used.

If you have interest in contributing to the last leg of restoration and the future of The Bookstore at The Berry Center, please visit [berrycenter.org/donate](#) and include bookstore restoration in the comment box. You can also contribute to this work by returning a check in the included envelope and noting that you'd like your gift to support the bookstore.

We hope you will come celebrate our grand reopening on June 7th for The Berry Center's Spring Open House and 2nd annual Kids' Arts & Letters Day! 🍷

—VIRGINIA BERRY AGUILAR
Director, Agrarian Culture Center & Bookstore

THE ARCHIVE AT THE BERRY CENTER

THIS IS AN EXCERPT from our most recent Journal, a story entitled, “Wheeler Catlett Goes to Washington,” by Wendell Berry. The story corresponds closely with what we know of the life of his father, John M. Berry, Sr, who in the twenties in law school at night and working for a congressman during the day, seems to have kept no journals or diaries. We do, however, have his annotated “Cases on Constitutional Law Selected from Decisions of State

and Federal Court,” his correspondence, speeches, articles, photographs, and a precious set of notebooks – his handwritten analyses and summaries of his learning. And this gift is enough for us to know something of the habits of mind that served him so well in his life, and, considered carefully, provides a “master class” in the art of studying. 🍎

—MICHELE GUTHRIE

Director, The Archive at The Berry Center

“... For Andy does know how well and thoroughly his father studied, and this he knows from evidence that is plentiful enough. The only relics of Wheeler’s Washington years that seem to have mattered to him were a textbook, “Cases on Constitutional Law,” and a stack as tall as wide, of pages mostly handwritten, tied with a string. The textbook has 1,404 pages, virtually all of which bear Wheeler’s careful annotations in pencil. On the stack of pages he seems to have briefed or analyzed every case that he encountered in his studies. His annotations in the book and his written summaries have the character not of notes made in preparation for tests, but rather of a relentless self-testing. He seems to have denied himself any willingness to pass through his reading without understanding thoroughly what he had read. On all those hundreds of pages his sentences are swiftly written – the crosses of the t’s flying above the lines of script—but nonetheless careful, economical, and complete. The style is direct, the syntax strong. He was in search of the essential points of contested events, of arguments, precedents, and judgments. He seems to have thought—rightly, his son thinks—that what he knew was tested and secured by his ability to



“Cases on Constitutional Law” with John M. Berry, Sr.’s notes in the margins and, right, one of the notebooks Wendell Berry referenced in “Wheeler Catlett Goes to Washington.” These items are on display in the Archive of The Berry Center.

write it into sentences. Using only the necessary technical or legal terms, he wrote with practiced elegance in plain English, the common tongue, as if speaking to a jury of his neighbors. He had already formed his lifelong habit of speaking clearly and for clarification, as well as his settled conviction of the need to ‘study your lessons.’ ”

From “Wheeler Catlett Goes to Washington,” by Wendell Berry. Reprinted from The Berry Center Journal, Vol. 7, 2024.

OUR HOME PLACE MEAT

THIS WINTER, Henry County and Kentucky have witnessed more “winter” than the last five or six winters combined. The snow and ice haven’t stopped [Our Home Place Meat](#) from continuing our good work of supporting farmers and our communities.

The last weekend of January, we hosted our fourth annual Hog Killing at The Berry Center in collaboration with Hand Hewn Farm. This year, we had 11 adult participants, a handful of kids participating on Education Enhancement Waivers, and the best volunteers any event organizer could ask for.

February’s weather led to disastrous flooding in Eastern Kentucky, in areas not yet recovered from the storms of 2022. Our Home Place Meat donated

meat to feed people then, and in 2025 we were able to do so again. Wendell and Tayna Berry challenged our Berry Center membership to match their \$10,000 donation (used to purchase meat) and the membership did not disappoint. Overall, we’ve raised \$24,000 to feed displaced Kentuckians.

The first round of donations totaled over 1,400 pounds and around \$13,000 worth of meat. There will be a second trip of deliveries happening soon!

It warms my heart for our membership to so selflessly support our efforts to be an organization that can act quickly and make a significant impact. 🍷

—BETH DOUGLAS, Director, Our Home Place Meat



The efforts to deliver meat didn't only come from Membership and OHPM. Trackside Butcher Shoppe did an amazing job organizing the meat to optimize stops and maximize impact.

The delivery of 180 pounds to West Perry Elementary for temporary storage was designated to Perry County Fiscal Court to distribute to families who were being relocated and would have access to kitchens.



The first meat delivery of 475 pounds was to CANE Kitchen in Whitesburg, Ky. to cook meals and feed the local communities

The most special delivery of the day was to Buckhorn Lake State Resort Lodge. The on-site cooks were thrilled to receive 750 pounds of frozen, uncooked meat. The opportunities and flexibility to feed a variety of meals meant the families being fed wouldn't receive the same meal multiple days/weeks in a row.



THE BERRY CENTER FARM & FOREST INSTITUTE



LEFT: At TBC Farm's portable sawmill, Marissa Beinhauer (left) and FFI Woodland Instructor Rick Thomas (right) guide the blade across a cedar log in the Farm & Forest Institute's 1-day "Logs to Lumber" workshop.



RIGHT: A construction crew works to frame the walls and ceiling of the new TBC Farm's shop.

THE FARM AND FOREST INSTITUTE'S (FFI) vision is for our Henry County neighbors to learn with us and with people from other parts of Kentucky and across the country. In the first 18 months of community education programming, this vision is coming to life. Nearly 400 people from near and far have participated in courses, workshops, and field days.

Henry Countian Darlene Hawkins Tipton, for instance, enrolled in a rural memoir-writing class led by Owen County author Georgia Green Stamper. Darlene had the farming stories in her head, but she says, "The class gave me the courage to write my stories." In her detailed account of raising, harvesting, housing, and stripping tobacco, she recalls that "every leaf mattered in tobacco." Quality mattered then, and it matters now. This is a central value driving The Berry Center's mission. Our courses expand people's access and contribution to our mission.

From "Farm Woodland Management" to intensive study of *The Unsettling of America*, our instructors are adapting over a decade of college agriculture, conservation, and agrarian studies curriculum into an accessible, community-education design. As one "Logging Unplugged" participant put it: "These small, intimate, and hands-on classes really help me learn about the farm skills that are all very useful in my everyday life on a farm."

EDUCATIONAL FARM IMPROVEMENTS

We also made headway on critical improvements to farm, forest, classroom, and equipment. We completed our first phase of fencing, watering, and facilities work to allow energy and cost-effective rotational grazing, restorative woodland management, waterway protection and, ultimately, soil and livestock health improvements. The additions include:

- ♦ 6,000 feet of fence built—farm perimeter & internal fencing around woods and waterways
- ♦ Portable sawmill procurement and sawmill shed built onto side of existing barn
- ♦ Twenty farm gates replaced / installed / repaired to facilitate cattle rotations
- ♦ Logging shop and small group classroom built into existing barn



FARM AND FOREST INSTITUTE : BY THE NUMBERS

REGISTRATIONS	391	VOCATIONS	67 Farmers 64 Land and forest stewards 55 Teachers 57 Students 31 Veterans 166 Supportive agrarians
ENROLLMENT INCREASE	700%	HOME PLACES	310 Kentuckians 37 Regional neighbors 28 From across the US (& Canada)
TOTAL COURSES OFFERED	50	PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS	21 Presentations 8,500 People engaged in-person & online

- ▶ Stalls for draft horses built into existing equipment shed
- ▶ General barn repairs (roof, exterior painted, rewired to safety specs, equipment shed added)
- ▶ Farm pond cleaned for reliable year-round emergency water source
- ▶ 100 hp tractor purchased; bale spear & bushhog replaced; forest winch for tractor purchased

Many thanks to the generous individual donors and foundations (NoVo, Norton, Tallgrass Farm, Hard-scuffle, and the Trager Family) for making these improvements possible.

This work allows us to foster the health of people, land, and community through education about the relationships between soil, plant, and animal. Instruction began with woodland courses as we prepared the farm for production, research, and training in pasture and forage management and diversified livestock genetics. We will be announcing field days and workshops for “farming in the middle” soon.

On Earth Day, we will launch a new “Reading in Place” series with a 1-day study of Wendell Berry’s essay “Conservation Is Good Work,” followed by a 2-day study of his novel Jayber Crow on May 9–10. Culture and agriculture are inseparable. We need to keep and learn from the saving remnants of cooperative communities and economies, just like the one Darlene describes in her memoir:

“My dad [William Van Hawkins] ran the hardware store in Port Royal, Ky. Most of the farmers in the



Photo submitted by William Van Hawkins at Hawkins Farm Center

area bought stuff from my dad on credit. Dad would write all their purchases from tobacco seed to canvas, fertilizer, and all other supplies they needed for their crops. He wrote their purchases on a 5x7 index card and ran an accumulating total. Farmers would go to the warehouse in the morning to sell their crop and be at Hawkins Farm Center to pay my dad before the end of the business day. Dad would always say his famous line, “Thank you, old buddy.”

[Read Darlene’s essay](#) and learn more about our courses on the FFI website. You can also sign up for e-news, follow FFI’s social media, or contact Program Coordinator Shannon Boyd (shannonboyd@berrycenter.org). Special events are also advertised in the Henry County Local and other area news outlets. 🍷

—SHANNON BOYD, Program Coordinator

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

2010

XI The need comes on me now
to speak across the years
to those who finally will live here
after the present ruin, in the absence
of most of my kind who by now
are dead, or have given their minds
to machines and become strange,
“over-qualified” for the hard
handwork that must be done
to remake, so far as humans
can remake, all that humans
have unmade. To you, whoever
you may be, I say: Come,
meaning to stay. Come,
willing to learn what this place,
like no other, will ask of you
and your children, if you mean
to stay. “This land responds
to good treatment,” I heard
my father say time and again
in his passion to renew, to make
whole, what ill use had broken.
And so to you, whose lives
taken from the life of this place
I cannot foretell, I say:
Come, and treat it well.

—WENDELL BERRY

This Day: Collected and New Sabbath Poems, 1979-2013.
Counterpoint, 2013



SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

April 22	Reading in Place: “Conservation Is Good Work” short course
May 9–10	Reading in Place: <i>Jayber Crow</i> short course
June 7	Berry Center Open House and Kids’ Arts & Letters Day
June 5–26	Agrarian Voices Study: <i>The Unsettling of America</i>
June 21	Y’ALL Field Day
Sept. 6	Agrarian Literary League Fall Festival
Oct. 11	Beef Bash
Nov. 8	Kentucky Arts & Letters Day

Please note that registration is required for many of our events.

The Farm & Forest Institute's fall course listing will be announced in July.

Go here for more information:

www.berrycenter.org | www.berrycenterfarmandforest.org | www.ourhomeplacemeat.com
www.berrycenterbookstore.com | www.facebook.com/TheBerryCenter

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

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

JACOB ROSENBAUM, Chief Financial Officer

YANCEY J. McDERMOTT, 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

MEMBERS AT-LARGE

Katherine Dalton Boyer

John Logan Brent

Christina Lee Brown

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