SHOUTING THE GLORY

or

SINGING THE GLORY DOWN

A Musical Play in Three Acts
by
Shirley Gish

to be
Produced and Directed by
Travis Lockhart

c 1991.

FIRST DRAFT
SHOUTING THE GLORY
or
SINGING THE GLORY DOWN (permission being sought for this title, from University of Kentucky Press).

A musical drama that explores the interaction and personal conflict between two ages, traditions and the distinct cultural setting of small town Kentucky. The action centers around the relationship between two people in this Kentucky culture, one rooted in the modern academic world and one in a culture that encompasses the earliest American singing tradition: Sacred Harp, Southern Harmony shape note singing. interwoven through this drama will be the music and the story of the evolution of shape note singing.
January 27, 1992

Dr. Shirley Gish
212 North Wilson
Morehead, KY 40351

Dear Shirley:

I can't begin to tell you how much I truly enjoyed going through the gospel music script with you Saturday evening and again on Sunday morning. I must confess that reading aloud the words spoken by the character who portrays me gave me a weird feeling at first. After a few minutes, however, I really got into the spirit of things and thoroughly relished my role -- both as a character in the play and as the "actor" playing the part. Truly, this script goes far in capturing the "real me," both as a field researcher and as a human being.

The information presented in the script is right on target with its accuracy, and is well presented through the different characters involved. You can't begin to imagine how close Etta comes to matching the real person after whom she is patterned.

You have succeeded in accurately portraying the folk culture of south central Kentucky. I only wish that everyone in this part of the state could see the actual production. Too, I wish that it were possible for me to be in the play, but time constraints preclude this. I'll just have to be content in hoping that my name and book, Singing the Glory Down, will be mentioned as the source of your inspiration. You did say that such credit is possible, didn't you?

Thanks again for the wonderful few hours we spent together going over the script, and continued best wishes as you put the finishing touches on the play.

Sincerely,

Lynwood

Lynwood Montell
Professor of Folk Studies

The Spirit Makes the Master
February 3, 1992

Dr. Shirley Gish
212 North Wilson
Morehead, KY 40351

Dear Shirley:

This is to inform you in writing of my willingness for you to use selected verbatim passages from my book, Singing the Glory Down, in your script on gospel music. Too, you have my permission to use the title of my book as the title of your play. Likely, you should ask for clearance in the latter regard from the book's publisher, the University Press of Kentucky, as well.

Good luck as you enter the final stages of script writing and begin to think about casting. I truly look forward to the stage production. Keep me posted on developments.

Sincerely,

Lynwood Montell
Professor of Folk Studies
SHOUTING THE GLORY

RESEARCH SOURCES USED

BOOKS AND JOURNALS.


Walker, William. (Edited by Glenn C. Wilcox) The Southern Harmony & musical Companion; Containing a Choice Collection of Tunes, Hymns, Psalms, Odes, and Anthems; selected from the most eminent authors in the United States and well adapted to Christian churches of every denomination, singing schools, and private societies. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1987. (A reprint of Walker's original songbook first issued in 1854. The songbook still used at the Big Singing in Benton, Kentucky).
SOUTING THE GLORY

Other Sources Used.

Recordings.

Private recordings done in South Central Kentucky, donated by Barbara Pierpont, Edmonton, Kentucky.


*Ring It out! and Old Time Religion.* Tapes produced by Dan Hitepol at the Lacy Creek Church of Christ, Cottle Creek, Morgan county, Kentucky.


Recording done on-site at the Benton Big Singing in March, 1991 by the author.

Letters

The collected letters of Ona Barton. Donated to the author by the Department of Library Special Collections Archives. Letters were from 1977 to 1988 written by Ona Barton of Pell Mell, Tennessee to Dr. Montell - with some responses. In addition, letters from 1989 - 1990 were given to the author by Dr. Montell directly.

Interviews

Dan Hitepol, singer and church member, Lacy Creek Church of Christ.

William Lynwood Montell, Three interviews, June, Nov. and Jan.

On-Site Visits

Lacy Creek Church of Christ, Cottle, Kentucky.

Christian Church, Morehead, Kentucky

Big Singing, Benton, Kentucky (2 days).

Lick creek Holiness Church, Pike County, Kentucky
Note of Appreciation

Although this is the first draft of a play, it is with the first draft that the director can begin to work with the playwright and bring the story to life through people. It is understood that a play must first be written in order to be rewritten. Nevertheless, the play begins with the initial script. That script would not exist now without the assistance, advice, and encouragement of many people.

Travis Lockhart collaborated on the basic plot outline and gave hours of meeting time to discussion of stage possibilities and character conflict. It is a rare opportunity to work with a play director before the play is fully formed, for usually the director and the playwright are miles, if not centuries, apart. Whatever happens to this play now will be essentially in the competent hands of the director, Travis Lockhart.

Dr. Lockhart and I would both like to thank Dan Hitepol and the congregation of the Lacy Creek Church of Christ for their information, tapes, and welcoming us to record in their church.

For the research materials and endless answers to my questions and unflagging support, I must thank Dr. William Lynwood Montell. Dr. Montell generously gave me the manuscript for his book on gospel singers a year before it was printed, plus his photographs and video tapes. In addition, Dr. Montell has patiently read the script and gave a great deal of encouragement plus advice on language and customs. His approval of this script has been very heartening. This was recently signified by his noting that he wished he could be in the play even though he is neither actor nor singer.

Encouragement in a most solid form came from Morehead State University who, through the Research and Creative Arts Grants Program, supplied Dr. Lockhart and myself with funds that enabled us to travel and to purchase supplies needed to get this project underway. More than the financial aid, however, is appreciation for this encouragement from our own university.

In addition, I must thank Dr. Henry Sauerwein and the Wurlitzer Foundation of Taos, for the residency grant given to me for two weeks in December and for the peace and isolation that permitted this script to be completed. Also, thanks to Mr. Dale Blair, a playwright and theatre director working at the Wurlitzer, for being the first person to read this play and for his positive encouragement and for wishing he could have been the director.

With such encouragement, we look forward to all the work ahead to put this play on the stage.
This play is set in a tiny rural community in South Central Kentucky. The time is in the 1960s, before the major highways were built in Kentucky; before these small communities were linked by more than winding narrow dirt roads. Even into the 60s, these small isolated communities (as they still are in some areas today) were centered around their local church. The church was not only the source of spiritual guidance but was also the major place for socializing and information; for talk and gossip and suppers and mutual aid and for courting and entertainment. The practice of shape note singing took root and grew in these small communities. This kind of singing became a part of life in a town for several reasons, not the least of which was the chance for people to get together and socialize. They sang without the accompaniment of any musical instruments not only because they were often too poor to own organs or pianos, but because of a deep belief in the words of their songs and the wish not to obscure those words by a musical instrument.

However, the music of the shape note - or Sacred Harp singers has a place in American music and a history that is not strictly rooted in liturgical rules - Sacred Harp is a musical focus all its own. It is still being sung today, but the tradition is weakened and weakening because of our own cultural, educational, and geographic changes. At best there could be a revival now or, at the weakest, some will carry on the singings until they die and we will be left with a few recordings and some scholarly studies. What is interesting here is that this tradition carried on into the 1960s in the southern rural areas, and what is even more fascinating is that in the 1960s there were still small pockets of relative rural innocence in the south. There continued to be a kind of parallel culture of 'old ways' running strong even after the years of the atom bomb. It is the meeting of these two cultures that is the subtext of this play.
In this play, the contemporary world, signified by Woodward, who is a folklorist and University professor, and the rural world of moral values and traditions both personal and religious, is found in the character of Ettie who is a southern Kentucky country woman of some standing in her own small community, but who has isolated herself from the modern world just as much as the modern world is an unknown quantity to her.

Several crossovers of culture, knowledge, and expectation take place in the course of the meeting of these two people. Perhaps there are several unanswered questions as well. We are trying to understand what we are doing here on earth, what we are supposed to be doing, what other people expect us to do and what our moral conscience, or God, has meant for us to discover to do. Here are two characters who approach these questions from opposite points of view and who end up with absorbing answers or actions from each other. This is the conflict—buried in the natures of two people whose sets of expectations are entirely different yet who believe—each in his or her own way—to be the possessor of acceptable values.

Woodward, the professor, is involved with the academic world and its values and prizes. He, like so many others in the 60s, is studying his own time period, is approaching the past through the people of the present who remember that past. The 60s, a time of folk revival and of the beginnings of the human potential movement, had in it the seeds of the self-conscious self-study to add to our own history. The portable tape recorder, invented by the Japanese during WWII made personal interviews possible in places never before thought of, and the recording of primary source material i.e. the interview on cassette tape, was argued for among historians as being valid as historical document. Many a would-be historian trekked off into remote places to do "oral history."

Woodward is a University professor steeped in his own discipline and in very little contact with human beings. He has been divorced and this has made him emotionally remote. To Woodward, people are subjects to be tapped for information; people are no more than 'informants' that he can use to write from and about and thus advance his own career academically. He is traveling through south central Kentucky, along the Tennessee border, to try to interview people about gospel singing and their lives in that tradition. He is charming and deeply interested in his subject, he talks to people easily and listens well. What he is missing is the deep simplicity and religious faith of the people who are involved in this music. Woodward is something like an archaeologist of human beings.
Ettie has lived in the little town of ( ) all of her life. She lives on a very small farm, inherited from her parents, has a small garden, some pigs and tobacco, but lives very simply although not in poverty. Ettie has electricity and could have a phone and radio but chooses not to have them as she has deliberately isolated herself in this small community because she had been deserted by her husband - a former music teacher and gospel singer. She is bitter about the community, men, and music. Ettie makes quilts, sings, (only for herself) plays her organ, takes care of many cats and her garden and has one son (Alonzo) and her next door neighbor, Sarah Jane, who is older than Ettie and an eccentric spinster who is congenitally happy.

Alonzo, Ettie's son, is the link to the small community. He does her chores, goes to the store for supplies and takes care of his own small farm. Alonzo is not very bright but loves his mother even though she is not very loving to him. It is through talkative Alonzo that Woodward will be able to hear about and to meet Ettie in order to try to interview her for his project. Alonzo is in his late 30s - not too bright but very friendly and well-liked by the town people. He hangs out at the local store a lot. Unknown to his mother, he plays a few musical instruments, learned from friends in the store. He goes to church meetings but mainly to socialize as he is rather pure.

Sarah Jane is Ettie's next door neighbor who now lives with a married niece. Sarah Jane 'doctors' some but is a spinster and former some-time school teacher. A pleasant little lady, she is active in everything and also plays the guitar and sings (very badly). She 'pops by' to visit with Ettie and is really the only townsperson Ettie trusts any longer because Sarah Jane is non-judgmental. 'Sarry' Jane can more or less drop by any time she wants to. Sarah Jane becomes really worshipful of Woodward and it is she who finally persuades Ettie to cooperate in giving an oral history into Woodward's tape recorder. Either that, or she tries to be in on all interviews. She is not a gossip but is a town contact who moves information.

Other characters will be small and interchangeable parts for about five men and five women who will play the singers, the people in the general store, the interviewees and also the modern gospel rock musicians in the first scene.

In addition, two young characters will be needed to portray Ettie as a young woman and her 'singing teacher' lover and then husband. These two characters will be used in flashback scenes to be run simultaneously with Ettie and Woodward's taped interview sequence.

* In the best possible circumstances, strong and true shapenote singers and individual singers should be used.
In the opening scene we see the three platforms or places:
The General Store with men standing and sitting around doing nothing but miming conversation - on the second level right.

On the back level, center - there is the church setting. This is a very simple place and young men are carrying in cords and wire and musical equipment for a rock gospel concert or sing to be held that night. This will not be equipment as elaborate as today's gospel groups might have, but there is enough equipment for a plug-in guitar and amplifiers and microphone to make it evident. While this is taking place, the men in the general store begin talking about that evening's odd musical event.

In Ettie's area on lower stage right, we see her table and back porch. (?) Ettie is sitting at her table, still, and staring off to stage right. (Or, established to be central char.)

Into the scene in the general store come Alonzo buying some supplies for his mother and talks with the men about the gospel event that evening. 'Woodward,' dressed casually in a plaid shirt, jacket and jeans and hat, comes into the store and buys an RC and a candy bar. He opens these and stands by the men and in an interval he introduces himself and says why he is in town - to record the evening's concert. He tells them exactly what he does and why he is there - that he's writing a book about gospel music, and that he would like to interview any singers they might have in the area too. The men refer him to Alonzo as being the son of the best singer (by reputation now) in their town. Alonzo says she won't talk and there is no use in asking her. Sarah Jane bustles into the store and is introduced to Woodward as Ettie's best friend and they explain to her that Woodward would really like to interview for his book if she is the singer he has been told she is. Sarah Jane is immediately taken with Woodward and says she plays the guitar and sings herself - but the men in the store tease her. Woodward charms her into promising that she will try to talk her friend into letting him interview her.

They may also meet before the persuasion by friend and son.

Lighting shift to Ettie's kitchen.

Lights up in back as the gospel group plugs in and begins a song to warm up - with starts and stops.

(What song?)

The order to the opening is optional at this point - as the first reading will probably determine the opening order.

SEE: Set sketch - next page..........................
Sarah Jane knocks on Ettie's door and is let in. In the back the rock-like music is dimmed but Ettie can hear some of it and comments on how awful it is to have songs drowned out by 'all that noise.' Sarah raves about the professor who wants to interview old time singers. Ettie reminds her that that part of her life is over and mentions her bitterness about the 'singing master' husband who deserted her... and her child. Lonzo comes in with her groceries and also tries to persuade his mother to talk to 'that man as Lonzo knows how much a part of her life singing once was and how much she knows about it. She also says she will not go to the gospel singing that night either. Sarah Jane and Lonzo are going.

Stage darkens and the lights go bright focusing on the center back stage where the gospel sing is going on - Only the backs of the audience are seen. There is a minister standing after the first song and he speaks. This is the conclusion of the music.

Slowly the lights go down to Ettie who is sitting on her front porch steps. In the dim background the gospel band is packing up and Woodward is packing up and people leave.

Ettie sits on her porch, humming. She begins to sing an old Shape Note song, "Farewell my Friends." Her voice is not practiced and it is old but true. From the background, Woodward, the professor, is leaving the church setting with his tape recorder and hears this voice singing. He walks downstage toward the voice. He sings, in perfect harmony, the last verse of her song. When she hears another voice she is shocked and still fascinated that someone can sing with her and knows the song. Still, she begins to stop singing. He asks her to please go on. He asks her if she knows another song (title not yet chosen) because he loves that song. She begins to sing it and he harmonizes at the ending.

Woodward then introduces himself and takes her hand. We see right away that she is interested in him, shy but charmed. He compliments her on her voice and songs. She is flustered but flattered and talks with him. They talk about the old style of singing. She says she was trained as a shape note singer in an early singing school but that that kind of singing is lost now. Then he tells her who he is and that he is working on a book about singing in that area. He asks if he can come the next day to interview her. He asks if she knows how to make a certain kind of food - which she does and does well. She agrees to talk with him the next day.

The next morning Sarah Jane and Lonzo enter the kitchen and Woodward is set up with tape recorder. Sarah Jane and Lonzo are shocked that she is really going to talk with him. Ettie gets rid of both of them as quickly as possible.
Ettie and Woodrow have a scene together, interrupted by Sarah Jane who brings her guitar and tries to sing for him. This scene will take place in the foreground but in the background will be the scene of an early singing school complete with faltering singing. In this scene we see a rapport being established between the two characters. She begins to reveal a little of her hurtful past. Ettie had married a singing school teacher and been deserted by him when her son was very young. This is the reason for her withdrawal from the community. At the end of this scene Woodward asks Ettie if she knows any other singers in the community. By this time she has decided that she is the authority and she wants to keep Woodward to herself. She says she will tell him people to interview but that he will have to take her with him. He asks to come back the next morning to complete their interview and she agrees. There are several interviews and these are announced or broken by the store people talking about them. The next day he comes in with a second tape-recorder and says that she can use it herself and, with it, can help him to interview other singers. She begins by interviewing Woodward and we find out a little bit about him and his past. Ettie is quite obviously 'taken' with Woodward and has never met so worldly a person. He is divorced, has been to Europe and has written many other books. He finally tells her that she can be his assistant in this area. Then, he continues to find out more about the singing schools and the music.

These scenes give the history of the singing and has many songs. Increasingly fine and complex and truer. Ettie talks about the singing teacher, who on his second trip back to this town begins to woo her. For these scenes two more actors will be needed to portray Ettie as a young woman and the singing teacher (Randall Cranston). Ettie tells about her marriage and about accident (she has a pronounced limp) and the child and how her husband traveled so much to teach the singing schools and how, in the 40s gospel quartets began to travel - and then he ran off with another singer's wife. Then came the war - then came Ettie's cutting herself from her own community and she let her son take care of her needs. Sarah Jane is her persistent friend but Ettie hates the community gossip. She has left the church meetings - though she has never lost her love of singing.

At the end of this scene we can see that Ettie is slowly beginning to feel more interested in life - in her music - and begins to tell about all the people she can interview to help him. He says that he has to go to another town for an appointment and that his University will begin soon but that she can call him and write to him with her information. She says she has no phone but will write to him and will send back the tapes he sends to her. He leaves the tape recorder with her. She is reluctant to let him go and wants to bring out old pictures, and compliments him and anything she thinks of to keep him there. Finally she sings him a kind of 'goodbye' song and at the end of it she gets very near to him but he backs off and takes her hand and kisses it fondly and says how much meeting her has meant to him. He leaves and she sings her last verse again.

End of this Act I
7.
ACT II.
Set in Ettie's kitchen where Lonzo comes in with the mail and it is winter now and we note that Ettie must be looking for mail from Woodward all the time. It is March and she has not heard from him since the previous September. We see Woodward reading her letters - begging letters - letters begging him to write to her. She reads these as he reads them aloud. Ettie notes that he is getting a telephone and gives him her number and that Sarah Jane has a number now too. This letter exchange is rather poignant but inbetween the letters we see Ettie becoming 'somebody' in her community. In this scene Ettie interviews several old singers and so we hear more music and also get more information on the history of the shape note singers and the conventions. We also hear about the formation and traveling of the more modern gospel quartets.

Finally, Ettie does get a letter from Woodward. She is crushed because he tells her he has been in England with his new bride, a young student of his. Ettie weeps over this with Sarah Jane and then Lonzo comes in to say he is getting married and is leaving home but will still come for chores.

Ettie's phone begins to work and the messages that come in are all good for her morale because they are from old singers who want to talk with her. Then comes a letter that asks her to come to a singing in the next town and be a leader in their singing. Slowly the local people ask her to organize a singing in their church. Ettie cannot help but accept this inclusion in society again that has made her a 'somebody in the community.'

She is still writing to Woodward and the years are going by as signified by the dates of the letters and some change in their appearance. He sends her a copy of his now compiled book and says that he is now a full professor. She does not understand this, but writes back that she has never forgotten his birthday and he has never remembered hers. She becomes very bitter to him, finally, and writes that he was only using her and her friends for his own advancement and then forgets them. This middle section (Second Act) is taken up with the letter exchange and Ettie's interviews too. SOLOR SINGERS MAY BE USED IN HER INTERVIEWS TOO.

ACT III. Final Scene.
The resolution is that Ettie has found herself again through her reentering the world of shape note singing, the words to the songs and the singer, through the prodding of Sarah Jane and through the pride she has refound from the respect from all the other singers. However, she is out leading singings and organizing them, still limping but also becoming rather
With the scenes of Ettie interviewing various old singers and even musicians, there are also exchanges of letters—the letters are written by Ettie but read (aloud) by Woodward who is on the opposite side of the stage. These letters show that she is still working and getting reinvolved with the singings.

A singing is scheduled in her honor and this news comes at the same time that a letter finally comes from Woodward to say that he has married. Ettie is angered and hurt but she resolves part of that in a discussion with Lonzo where her forgives her for the accident and they become more understanding. He is proud of her.

The big singing takes place and the best songs and singing takes place in this section.

In the final scene, Ettie receives another letter from Woodward saying that his marriage didn't even last very long and that he has begun work on another book. This book will be interviews with people about haunted houses and ghost stories. Ettie is hesitant, talks with Sarah Jane, and then they begin to remember some ghost stories. Ettie takes out her tape recorder and begins to record Sarah Jane telling a ghost story or she tells Sarah to return later to be recorded and the curtain falls on Ettie beginning to write to Woodward to say she knows some wonderful ghost stories.
CAST OF CHARACTERS

ETTIE. A Kentucky farm woman, about 60 years old.
SARAH JANE. Ettie's neighbor, early 70s.
LONZO, Ettie's son, late 30s
WOODWARD. A University Professor of Folklore, mid-40s.
STOREKEEPER
TOWNSMAN I -
TOWNSMAN II
TOWNSMAN III Ages, 30-50
TOWNSMAN IV If possible, they are also singers.
TOWNSMAN IV

ETTIE, As a young woman, 18 to 20
CRANSTON, Ettie's husband (must be a singer)
STUDENT, Young woman, about 25.

In addition, a group of actual shape-note singers.
The larger the group, the better the singing, but there should be a minimum of 8 singers.
"Miss Tilley" Morris was a crowd pleaser with "Wreck of the Old 97" on the harmonica.
ACT I

Set - All three tiers will be used.

Characters - All of the cast is used
ACT I

Scene 1.

(Each of the three tiers of the stage set are used briefly in this first scene).

Tier 1, or stage floor, stage right - Ettie's kitchen, porch.

Tier 2. First tier Stage Left, the General Store.

The other side of this tier is a path to Ettie's house.

Tier 3. The highest tier is all across the back of the stage but the Church sanctuary will the center Stage.

These spaces will be established not only by props and actors, but also the lighting will be important in each area.

In a simple production all three areas can be simply set out by props with the center section consisting of four long benches in a square formation. A table for the General Store and a table and kitchen chairs for Ettie's house.

Lights go first to establish Ettie in her kitchen.

Lights up on third back tier. From the sides and back four men are seen plugging in cords and equipment and loud speakers. They are putting up instruments for the evening's gospel sing. The men wear blue jeans and plain shirts, sweaters or jackets.

One young man stands to the back and already has his guitar strapped on and is talking to the man plugging in the cords. These characters are only Musicians 1, 2, 3, and 4.

MUSICIAN 1.

Not gettin' anything over here - what's wrong?

MUSICIAN 2.

Ah, these old country churches - built 'em before electricity, and the wirings usually is kinda......(mumble)

MUSICIAN 3.

Yeh, but I played in these old buildings with no power at all and I tell you, they was built for sound - practically didn't need no speakers at all.

MUSICIAN 4.

My mama told me she used to sing in old wooden churches like this when she was a girl, said they kept the windows shut and the door shut so no wind blew in, but said the sounds could about make you faint. Some people did.
I.2.

MUSICIAN 2.
OK, Chet, I think I got it. Try 'er now.

MUSICIAN 1
(Begins to strum his guitar with a modern, near rock, gospel song)

MUSICIAN 3.
Sounds good (He goes over and plays a drum beat.)

MUSICIAN 4.
(Finishes plugging up his keyboard) Try this one. Hey, (to singer, l). Go on outside there and listen and see what you think.

((Musicians continue to play, he goes outside) They keep playing and singing but the light shifts now down to the General store

General Store scene.
(In the store is a storekeeper behind a counter or table. Sarah Jane comes in first. In the meantime, the musicians have gone and put on jackets or something to change their clothes - hats with hair - to change their appearance. The musicians double as townsmen.)

SHOPKEEPER
Well, well, mornin' to ya Miz Sarry. You back again? You took home half my thread supply yesterday

SARAH J.
Got enough a' that, certain. What I need is more a' that red sateen. Cain't get enough red I guess. I figure if I'm gonna' win that quiltin' prize, it better be somethin' to catch the eye.

STOREKEEPER
(Begins to measure out the cloth.)
You planning on going' to that gospel revival tonight? A few minutes ago you could hear 'em down here to the store. Nothin' but racket seems like to me.

SARAH J.
'Course I'm going' - you know I don't like to miss any 'kind a' activity. But I coulda played for a revival myself. Seems like now all it is, is some a that rock 'n roll with a few prayers thrown in.

FIRST TOWNSMAN
(Comes in stamping) Nice day, Gus. Miz Saryl, how do you do this fine day?
I. 3.

SHOPKEEPER
(He is unwrapping some items from newspapers. He stops to read the papers) Well, well, guess we ain't missin' much a anythin from havin' no television - this here Nixon and that rich boy Kennedy are havin' arguments on that television.

SECOND TOWNSMAN
You all hear that noise comin' from the meetin' house? Guess I'll have to go on up and take the kids tonight. Might be that's the only way to get my kids into the church.

TOWNMAN THREE
Hey, I just ran into some new guy in town, says he's some kinda professor and he was askin' did I know any oldtime singers who might live in this town.

SARAH J.
Where is he, I kin talk to him!

TOWNMAN ONE
Sarry, you couldn't carry a tune in a jug and you know it. Now, if'n it was good cooks he was lookin' for, I sure send him to your place.

SARAH J.
You don't know nothin' but hogs, Floyd. Why I sure sound better than that racketin' I heard from up on the meetin' house hill comin' over here.

SHOPKEEPER
There you be, Sarry. Three more yards of red, that be it?

SARAH J.
Oh, no. My, I forgot. Ettie needs a few things, got a note from her right here. (Give him a paper out of her pocket).

SHOPKEEPER
Yep, I'll just get this together. Got everything but the postage stamps. My, wants 50 of 'em!

SARAH J.
That Ettie is the writinest woman I ever saw. Waitin' for the mail seems to be her bright spot. She got all these catalogs n' stuff, seeds, and whatever. She sure loves to get mail.

TOWNMAN TWO
Don't understand it. Why doesn't she come out to the suppers and the meetin's stead of hid away like she does. She could talk to real people and not look for the mail to come.

SARAH J.
Her choice - let her be.
TOWNSMAN ONE
Now, from what I've heard, that was one grand lady for singing. Course it was the old kinda singing' but my Mama still makes remark about what a voice she had in those old singings.

TOWNSMAN FOUR
(He enters with Woodward in tow).
Hey, here, folks - uh, mornin Miz. Sorry - Here's a visitor for us, from up North at a University. Says he needs our help. So hot out there - thought he'd like him a nice cool drink.

Everyone acknowledges Woodward).

SARAH J.
(Her mouth is open and she is transfixed) Well, welcome to you sir. (She puts out her hand. He does not shake it but takes it gently and looks into her eyes with full attention). Good morning, it is an honor.

(Then he shakes hands with everyone there.)

Morning, my name is Woodward , and I'm here from Cincinnati, Ohio. I'm with the school there and am traveling through your beautiful county hoping to find some information for a book I'm working on.

SHOPKEEPER
Look in the cooler there friend, pick yourself a cool drink. Need somethin' else here (indicates stand of moon pies etc.) just hep yourself.

WOODWARD
(Takes out an RC Cola and picks up approving nods about his choices). I do thank you, indeed it is hot out there and the trip from Byrdstown was a long one.

TOWNSMAN THREE
Got kin over in Byrdstown, Glovers, did you meet 'em? Too much of a trip to make, 'sides they's ornery people. Too far to go fer fussin'.

TOWNSMAN THREE
So, hear you lookin' for singers you kin talk to. You got anythin' to do with that bunch gonna' play our revival tonight?

WOODWARD
Well, I do plan on tape recording that group but actually, down here I was hoping to talk to people who know something about the old shape-note singing. Maybe who did sing shape-notes or who still do sing. I know there are still big singings around here. I thought maybe someone might know some old singers, maybe some of you still sing, your family... I just would like to talk to them and learn more about that music for a book I want to write about our early singing in this country. I certainly would appreciate any help you kind people could give me.
I. 5.

SARAH J.
(Sort of giggling) Well, I'm a singer! Kin play a guitar too.
(Townsmen are kind of smiling and she hushes them).

TOWNSMAN ONE
You might call it that - but you was never a singer. Now, your
letter writing friend, Ettie, now we just was talking about her.
From what I hear she was some kind of singer.

SHOPKEEPER
Fine, but she ain't talked to her own neighbors in town, what
makes you think she is gonna talk to this here teacher fellah?

WOODWARD
Does someone know this lady? Ettie? Maybe if I could just be
introduced, she might talk with me. And any other singers
you might know about.

SARAH J.
Well, I do play the guitar and I got my harmonica too - ain't
got it with me today but...

TOWNSMAN FOUR
Why, here comes Ettie's boy, Lonzo. Let's see what he could
do. Now, Lonzo just didn't have all the sense he was supposed to
get, but he's a good boy. Looks good after his Mama too.

LONZO
Howday there. Fine day. How ya' all doin?

STOREKEEPER
We was just talkin' about you Lonzo.

LONZO
Huh? What for? Ain't done nothin' special to be talkin'.
Thought I'd just get me a drink - got to go pick up some
packages for Mama at the post Office. She done got her another
load a' books.

TOWNSMAN ONE
Lonzo, th... here is Professor............. from up in Ohio
and he is visitin' with us to ask around about talkin' to some
people who did that old time singing - like your mother used
to do.

LONZO
What with what my Daddy done to her, I don't think she's gonna
talk to no one, even that President. You know she don't sing
no more. She don't even want to see you people, you knows that.
What with her leg and all - no. She just gonna read and take
care 'a her garden. No stranger gonna go there. Course she
might know the names and places a' some of them others but
she don't never see 'em no more.
WOODWARD
I certainly appreciate it if you might ask her about some people
I could talk to. What I like to do is to just interview people,
talk with them, and if they will, I'll put that conversation on
my tape recorder. That way I can go through it later. You can tell
her how much I'd appreciate it - some help, you know.

SARAH J.
C'mon, Lonzo, we'll go together and talk with her. I'll tell
you what Mr. Woodward, professor sir, uh, you can come to my
house for some pie and I'll tell you what she says.

LONZO
No harm askin' mister, but I can tell you the answer now - it'll
be no and no and never. But, we lives over there at the
der end of the road, just below the meetin' house. Anyways, there's
gonna be music up at the meetin' house tonight, you go to
that. Course I kin talk to you myself if you want to know
anythin' about playin' a saw. Ah kin take ya to Hermann Cronk too,
he's real good with the spoons.

SARAH J.
Now, I live in that big yellow place just beyond Ettie's house.
You come by now, anytime. I kin feed you real good. You ever
had you any catfish barbecue? Lemon meringue tarts, shuck beans?

(They both leave)

TOWNSMEN
(Each saying something to the effect that that Sarah Jane
sure can cook).

TOWNSMAN ONE
Tell you what, mister, we'll ask around some too and we'll all
be at the meetin' house tonight. Tell you what we can find out then.
See you at the meetin' house.

TOWNSMAN TWO
Say, you got you a place to stay tonight? We could put you
up if that's your need. We'd be proud to have a professor by us.

WOODWARD
Why, I do thank you. If it would be no trouble, I just never
know what I might find, but if this lady might talk with me
tomorrow... why, thank you.

TOWNSMAN TWO
(Writing out a little map on a slip of paper) Ain't but down the
road a piece over thar. Fact is, it's just beyond Sarah Jane
- that big yellow house with the high fence. We'd be proud to
take you in. You come on after the singing, or come on now
and leave your things and you can walk on up with us.
(They go out the door as the others say 'see you later' etc.)
Now, you know, I'll just bet you my wife Dora can tell you some
singin' kin a' hers over ta Winchell.
(they sort of face out) You have any plan on going over that
way - bout 30 mile say due south? She...etc. etc.
Where's your car put?
(They exit stage left).
(Scene focus now changes to Ettie's kitchen on stage right)

(Lonzo and Sarah Jane leave by going around the store and along the second level which will serve as a path or road to Ettie's house. Before they take this path, they go off stage left as if to the Post Office so Lonzo can pick up packages for Ettie (& time) Ettie is cutting stems on flowers she has just picked from her beautiful garden. She is humming a folk tune to herself - Baez song "If only that my own true love....." (?)

Sarah Jane and Lonzo call to her as they come near.

SARAH JANE
(Knocks on side of door which is already open) Look what I got you Ettie!! You liked that red I had so much that I thought you might like to put some in your quilt too.

ETTIE
I do thank you, Sarah Jane. I thank you kindly and my stamps, kin I have them too! Got two letters ready to go here.

SARAH JANE
Oh, no, with all that excitement from the nice professor... Oh, Ettie I plain forgot yer stamps. I mean, this is more important!! Ettie, there's this here handsome professor from up to a University in Ohio, and he's writin' a book and he needs to talk to you and asked could we help him (gets breathless) and oh, Ettie, you just got to talk with him. He's even got some machine you do it with - I heard him tellin' ole Joe... And, oh, Ettie, he is the handsomest you ever seen...

LONZO
Mama - I did remember your packages - put 'em right here. Oh, Mama, we promised, we promised we'd fix it with you to talk with him.

ETTIE
You are both just talkin' and talkin' and I got no idea at all what this is about. Make sense if you please. I don't know professors nor anything any professor could ask from me either. Slow down and make yourselves plain.

SARAH JANE
See, He wants to do interviewing, talk to like, people who are singing gospel music and especially the old-time singing like you used to do, like Cranston......oh, oh,..

LONZO
...Say it plain, like daddy was a music teacher for. Singings from them old time books, like when daddy taught you and everyone one around here, and he wants to put you singers into some kind o' big book. He says, could we fixit-fy you to talk to him and tell about what that old singing was like...

SARAH JANE
...or, at the leastways, maybe you know some people who was in with you a'singing who you could tell him about - introduce him to.
I.6.

ETTIE
Tell him to go up to that new gospel singing they are gonna
do tonight. Tell him I can't remember no more...

SARAH JANE
Well, if you won't talk with him I bet there's plenty folks here
he can scare up who will be proud to talk with him. Joe's already
took him to his house for tonight and you know his woman's gonna
take on like she was the best singer ever - like she used to do a
time back. Everybody knows it's you was the best at singing
and knew the most songs and went to the most singings...

LONZO
Never did understand why you let what poppa done spoil the
singing for you ... wudn't the singings' fault none. He wuz
just one weak man we didn't need anyhow.

(Stares into the distance)
(In the background the gospel group is getting ready to play and
seem to be miming playing).

Git - git gone. I don't need no talkin' with no one. Go, go on
now to yer meetin' - leave me be.

STAGE DARKENS IN ALL AREAS.

Slowly the light picks up the back church scene and the gospel
singers are performing - but we do not really hear them yet.
The benches are out in front of them and Sarah Jane and Lonzo
are among the figures on the benches.
Lights come up full on this scene, the people are swaying
and some are raising a hand here and there

In this Scene:
When the lights are full, we hear the minister get up at the
end of a song, to pass the basket and to thank the musicians,
say there will be an altar call during the last number. Then the
quartet beings with singing and music too.

(If it would be possible, a really good men's quartet would
be hired for this scene with an especially good bass singer as
part of this group).

If no musicians can be used, they can mime this scene with a
taped background.

Front of Scene: At Ettie's place, lights show up dimly as we
see Ettie sitting on her porch or front step. She can hear a
bit of the music and she hums the last line as it fades out
above her.
ACT . scene 2. 1.

ETTIE
(Sitting on her step and humming).

We see Woodward waving to some people and figures departing from the church. As they seem to be walking home, they walk on the level (or path) that would be behind Ettie's space.

Ettie has begun to sing an old shape-note song. Woodward hears her and is transfixed and waves the people ahead of him to go on as he stands on the second tier to listen to her. Then, as she continues to sing, he comes around what would be the back of her house. She cannot see him.

He joins in with her - in perfect harmony, on the last line.
"FAREWELL MY FRIENDS" (possible song choice.

In this scene, Ettie is in a long nightgown, her long hair is down, maybe in a braid across one shoulder. She does not move so her limp is not noticeable. It is soft light and she looks much younger than she is.

Woodward is enchanted with her and this scene.

WOODWARD
That was beautiful.

ETTIE
(Halves turns to go) Oh, you scared me. But, then I thought, anybody could sing like that wasn't no one to fear.

WOODWARD
Please, don't be afraid of me. I....I was just coming down that path from the meeting hou and heard your voice - so May I say, you are as lovely in this light as your voice is lovely.

ETTIE
But...but you know the old singing.

WOODWARD
No, not really. What you were singing, made me remember my being a kid a long time ago. Mama sang that song. Not as sweet as you sing. Made me remember my Granny so. There was another song she sang...I loved it so. I don't know it had a name but I remember some of the first words, " (find a song". How I would love to hear that one again.

ETTIE
(Sits on step and begins to hum a little and then begins to sing the song in a high, true but wavering voice.

(Woodward
(He is crying).
ACT I. Scene 2. 2.

ETTIE
(She pats his arm.) Didn't mean to make you cry none now. My voice ain't what it used to be any more. Please, don't be cryin'. Why those old songs was meant to make you feel good.

WOODWARD
Sorry, I guess you just made me - that music, that song - just made me think back so much. No, it wasn't you. Thank you, that was more beautiful than you can know - for me.

ETTIE
That's the trouble nowadays I guess, people forget so much. Get them so many new ways - get modern, change and forget. And it can't ever be the same again...

WOODWARD
You know, I just heard the singing up at the meeting house and if I can be honest with you, Mrs.... Mrs....

ETTIE
They call me Ettie - she give him her hand)

WOODWARD
The you, Ettie,... and my friends call me Woody. Will you be my friend and call me that?

ETTIE
Be proud to, Mr. Woody. And I'll tell you what, I know why the old songs make you cry and ain't nothing but something' to be proud about. Back, then, when we sang, why it was 'like the spirit truly came - with that music and all of us: singing, why, it was like angels were singing and you got some hope. Ain't like that no more I guess.... I guess, don't really know.

WOODWARD
You were a singer? You know, I'm very interested in the singers around here now - I'm trying to write a history; keep the tradition.

ETTIE
Yes sir, I mean Mr. Woody. That I was and we learned the old shape-note way of singing and everybody sang and there was a power. This new kind a singing - I kin hear it - this is just like taking nothing but an aspirin when you got a serious pain.

WOODWARD
You mean, singing helped with living?

ETTIE
Oh, yes, we san' what we felt - what we was really feeling, not just to cover up feeling. We sang and got comfort for livin'. We san about real things, like being lonesome or loving, like being afraid and wanting comfort. And with the singing all around you, power and good fellowship in the Lord, why that comfort always come and you could keep them words for the whole week. That music - those words - wasn't all watered down.
ACT 1. Scene 2. 3.

WOODWARD
Did you have instruments, like they had tonight?

ETTIE
Ha, if'n the power blew out up there tonight couldn't none of 'em keep going at all. We didn't need no noise - new things, ... love the Lord and help each other. But that's all gone now - all changed. We don't sing right no more. It's the words what count - why when you really sing out those words it's like praying - it's like praying twice.

WOODWARD
So, you don't think it's wrong to use instruments in a church?

ETTIE
Wasn't that. Why, I got me an old organ in the house and I play that still, just for me, but that's not like the real 'singing' used to be. But doin' that don't give me no satisfaction anymore. You had to have all them voices and spirits together - a wonder. Didn't all have to be good singers - just trained and lovin' and together.

WOODWARD
How did singing satisfy you? You didn't sing for applause or....

ETTIE
Oh, it was like good greens gave you strength. And you also had the fellowship. It ain't nothin', singing alone - you had to have the whole fellowship and all them people what loved the old songs like life itself. Kept 'em going. Ain't like that no more far as I know. When they change the music so much, well, it just gets weaker and weaker - like gettin' parts taken off'a you in the hospital. Think they're helpin' you but you just miss more parts.

WOODWARD
Do you know any people around here who used to sing at those meetin's when you did? I mean, I'd certainly like the chance to talk with them, learn about their lives and feelings....

ETTIE
Oh, yes, they are here and there. I don't see none of 'em anymore. Don't get about much since....well, sure, they are still around here. We was good too. Wish you could'a heard it then. But we didn't sing for no audience. All the men and women singin' together in parts - it was oh, ravishin' and sweet and felt good all the week long. Course it was also the chance back then to meet you a fellah and we'd walk each other home and that was dure for the times the music teacher first came. Well, our first music teacher, he wasn't much - he looked like three miles a bad road. But, then a real good music teacher come and then... Well, things did change and I just can't....
ACT I. Scene 2. 4.

WOODWARD
I wish you could tell me more about what the old music schools were like, exactly...

ETTIE
See, it gets to be hard, that part. After that first teacher, the only reason we went back was to see each other. Why, we'd pass notes back and forth and arrange who would walk home with who and...

WOODWARD
I really like to know more... About what those singins were like?

ETTIE
(Sort of dreamily)
No, not now... don't really want to go on, If'n you don't mind. But I'll tell you what, I'm old now and then it took strength and energy, why we would sing from 9 of a morning' to 4 in the afternoon sometimes. But it left you with a feeling of glory - just glory.

WOODWARD
(He stands and takes her hand and kisses it). How can I tell you how happy you have made me tonight? Look, I'm going to be very honest with you. This conversation we're having, I mean I will treasure it no matter what happens - even if we never meet again. But, the real reason I'm in your town here today and tomorrow is so that I can find singers, like you, who will talk with me - and let me use a tape rec...er - because I want to write a book about people like you, singers, who still sing and can remember the old 'singing schools' and how to sing the shaped notes.

You can say no, and I'll understand that, sweet lady, but I am asking you as sincerely as I know how right now, please help me. I need your help...

ETTIE
(She puts her face in her hands and shakes so that he takes hold of her shoulders and pulls her shawl back up around her shoulders)
Ain't no fixed-up trick - this night?

WOODWARD
No, Ettie, my friend. I think God must have put you here to help me and maybe all those other singers too. But, take my word I'll go away now and never come back if you don't want me to.

ETTIE
(She takes his hand from her shoulder and holds it in both of hers -)
Tomorrow morning...(she can barely speak)
(to herself)
Tomorrow (she turns qu and runs into her house.)
ACT II

Ettie's kitchen area.

Background, meeting house area is now set up with four benches facing in a square and a black cloth board is also set up.

Time: The next morning.
ACT II. Scene 1.

WOODWARD
Now, let me show you how this works. You will see a little red light here, and that means that the tape is going around and that what you say will be on this tape. 

(He is sitting, she is standing, looking skeptical)

ETTIE
Kin I hear what that's a gonna sound like first?

WOODWARD
Of course, let me turn it on and then you just talk. Let me ask you a question and you just answer it and I'll play that back for you. Would you like to tell me your whole name and where you live?

ETTIE
My full born name is Henrietta Effie Ann Combs, I was born that but now I got a married name and folks call me Ettie Neeley. I live in Combs, Kentucky. That's in Arden County; lived here all my life but I ain't gonna say my age.

WOODWARD
Fine. Now, let's push this button (she gets up and watches this carefully) and then this button, and now you can hear what you have just said. Lean over hear and watch this now (she gets very close).

My, you smell like a rose...

(MACHINE REPLAYS HER STATEMENT)

ETTIE
Say, now (she is delighted with this). Kin I ask you a question and have this say it too?

WOODWARD
Of course, just ask me something.

ETTIE
Well, let's you say the same thing, name and where you from, and all the same things. Are you married? What all you done?

WOODWARD
Alright (clears his throat and comes out pompous) I was born in Cincinnati, Ohio. My name is Dr. Richard Woodward Winston and I am a Professor of Folklore and Intercultural Studies. 42 years old - no wife any longer. Alright?

(Playing with the machine) Now, how do I get this back again? (Tape replays both recordings). Well, now do I sound like that? But, I'll tell you one thing sure, you sound pretty 'high falutin' on this thing. You're a'tellin' me to sound like me but you try to sound like some smarter person. You just want me to talk funny - well, I ain't just no dumb hill lady for you to take back up thar and laugh about.

WOODWARD
No, please no. That's not it at all. I just wanted you to be comfortable with this machine. See, what I would like to have you 'just talk' about is what it was like back when there were singing schools in these towns and how it was done - what you remember.
(Sarah Jane and Lonzo meet each other outside Ettie's door - as they freeze or appear to be talking inside):

LONZO

Monrin' Miz Sarry. You thought any how we're a' gonna talk to her?

SARAH JANE

Ain't never understood that woman - fine though she be - just say it outright is the best I can figure. You ain't fool Ettie none.

I guess I knows my own momma.

SARAH JANE

(Knocks on the door and opens it at the same time) Mornin' Ettie - got you some visitors here.....

(She stops dumbfounded when she sees Ettie and Woodward already sitting together).

WOODWARD

(Rises immediately and comes to them with an extended hand - full of charm) And how are you beautiful people this fine morning? So nice to see you again.

SARAH JANE

(Hands Ettie a pie) Thought you'd like to have this. I came by to have me some coffee with you and to talk about... (She stares at Woodward and Ettie and then back again).

LONZO

Well, gee Momma... what we was gonna' ask was.... How'd'you (to Woodward) When did....?

SARAH JANE

Well, I'll say this plain. How'd you get here?

ETTIE

Sarry, me and him are having a serious talk here and you just ain't needed right now. And, I already baked first thing this mornin' so I don't need your pie either.

What's that thing thar?

WOODWARD

Well, Miz Sarry - Miss Ettie has agreed to have a little talk with me. She's going to tell me about the old singing schools and the songs and...

SARAH JANE

(Sits down as if to stay). Well, now I know all about those things and I'd be proud to tell you. I kin run on home and git my guitar and play you some too. And Lonzo here, he kin git his saw and...

ETTIE

(very upset) Out. That's all for now. You're disturbin' - now go feed your chickens or somethin'
(They leave and Ettie stands watching them (taped history scene) resumes speaking from door)

ETTIE

... try not to think too much 'bout that anymore. That's done, over. Don't care to sing no more. 'Bin a long time too.

WOODWARD

But, anyone I talk to here tells me you were a great singer, that you know more than anyone else here. They tell me that you were even married to a 'singing teacher'.

ETTIE

If you think one second I'm gonna' talk about that you well take this hyar machine and go away right now. Folks in this place talk too much - said too much already.

WOODWARD

Really, look, you don't have to tell me anything personal at all, just describe, if you would, how the singing schools worked, how did you learn, exactly what would happen.

(At this point the lights go up dimly on the third level and people begin to take their places on benches in the back.)

ETTIE

Well, first, we only had that same meeting house then and we didn't have but one preacher who rode his horse over here - didn't come in but for Sunday meeting. So, there would be this announcement made at the meetin's that a 'singing teacher' would be comin' here and he would stay for two weeks. Then, anybody wanted to go to that could go. Cost you 75 cent each - an that was some kind of money too. Well, you had to buy the book, you see.

WOODWARD

You mean the 'singing teacher' would sell books too?

ETTIE

Why yes, see, that's how they sold books and this teacher was workin' for the book people. Could, sometimes, he was workin' for the Lord too, but mainly he was trained at them musical schools and got him a certificate sayin' he knew this music book and how to get any folks to read it...still got my first one - lot of other too.

WOODWARD

Do you think you could show that to me? I've seen some, but your first one - may I see that?

ETTIE

Well, yes, that I could - pretty old and used now but I know where it is. Didn't want to see it for years - but sure, I kin. git it for you. Long time since I looked at that - probably a heap a dust.

(She leaves and searches in something and comes out with the book and drops it in front of him - it misses the table and falls on the floor and many papers and pictures and pressed flowers, etc. fall out of it. They both get down on the floor to pick up all the articles. He picks up one photograph and sits on the floor staring
at it and then hands it over to her - staring hard at her. Then he looks away as she stares at the photograph, he keeps picking up things and putting them up on the table. She is quietly crying and dabs at her eyes with her apron.) Oh, no, there he is. (Stamps of makes some loud noise).

ETTIE
(Puts the photo in her apron pocket as she begins to get up - he gets up quickly and helps her up. He takes out a handkerchief and begins to wipe at her face - fleetingly she puts her head on his shoulder, then backs away and looks at the machine). Sorry - forget it!

This ain't on that machine is it? Turn that off!

WOODWARD
It's off now, don't worry. And, my dear, you didn't say anything anyway. This doesn't record tears.

ETTIE
That was him - on this hyar picture. That was him, long time ago and that girl with him...

WOODWARD
...and a beautiful girl that was too, such beautiful long hair and such a sweet smile, was that...

ETTIE
...YES, THAT WAS ME. That was me and that hair - what he loved so much, he said, was my hair. But the one he run off with didn't have no beautiful hair like that... 'Ain't looked in here fer years - didn't intend to neither. Past is gone - long time ago. 'Ain't no man anybody could trust, none.

WOODWARD
Look, Miss Ettie, my dear, maybe you should...

ETTIE
Don't you be tellin' me no shoulds, you don't know nothin' from should...

WOODWARD
Miss Ettie, I had a wife once too and went away with my best friend, my colleague, (He looks off in the distance) I may not know your pains, Miss Ettie, but I know what it is to be left alone and go on and on wondering why... what you did... or said... or didn't do - always wondering. They went off together, our west, said they were doing research on Indian stories, and then I found out...

ETTIE
She told you? Leastways, you knew what happened - weren't fooled none.

WOODWARD
Well, there were photographs - too - and motel bills and... please, it is still difficult, please....
(Lights and scene shift to the general store).
(The storekeeper is arranging things on the counter. Townman I comes in.)

TOWNMAN I
Hey there, mornin'. You ain't gonna believe what I'm gonna tell ya!

STOREKEEPER
Sounds like you're fixin' to replace Nosey Rosie - she sick today and you're a spreadin' her tales?

TOWNMAN I.
Don't need her - cuz this I know first place. It's that feller from the University up there...the one stayed by us last night? Well, my ........, done fixed him up a good breakfast and he says' thank you kindly' I got a few things to do now but don't say what it is - and that he'll be back directly. So, where do I see him and his carrying voice machine?

STOREKEEPER
Why you askin', you're fixin' to tell me anyway no matter what I'm gonna say.

TOWNMAN I.
Don't need to get like that - I mean cuz you're gonna be amazed.

STOREKEEPER
So, amaze me...

TOWNMAN I
Well, I saw him with my own eyes...he walked up right to...

TOWNMAN II
(Comes flying in the door). Miz Ettie, Miz' Ettie....she let that teacher feller into her house!! I saw her. He walks right up to the door like he's bin 'sted to tea or somthin' and she opens it with this big smile and in he goes... Don't that beat all?

STOREKEEPER
(Trying not to laugh) Reckon.

TOWNMAN I
Why'd you do that? Only time I ever knew anythin' first place and you dumb ox - Well, what my........is sayin' is that she woulda' talked on his machine.

TOWNMAN II
How do you suppose he got her to let him in? She ain't even talked to us in 20 year. Always liked that woman too... Purtiest gal this town ever saw.

TOWNMAN I
Don't let my ........hear that one or you'll never taste her chess pie again. Wisht I was a fly on that wall...
(Lights back to Ettie's kitchen) (taped history scene).

ETTIE
Well, you know. I mean, I couldn't have nothin' to do with that music no more. Couldn't go nowhere - didn't want to see them at the singing conventions and all. Everybody was laughing at me and then my foot - had this accident with my foot and it just dragged and - oh, Lord, I missed the singing.

WOODWARD
Miss Ettie, all I have now is my work, help me. Help me to write about that music so it won't disappear, so people can hear about it and know it. Don't let one man take that away from you and from me and anyone else who might want to know. Why, talking might help.

ETTIE
You mean, you think what I know could be important to anybody?

WOODWARD
Oh, yes, yes. See, we each have a story, each of us has somethings that no one else can have in just that same way. Yes. Miss Ettie each of us, and you do have experiences and saw things and heard things and music that no one else did in just that same way. Trust me, Miss Ettie, (she breaks down sobbing) (Woodward strokes her arm gently -- pats her hair) Your hair is still very beautiful I think.

ETTIE
(She stiffens and turns.) Alright, alright. I'm gonna tell you a bit how it was then. Let me get you some of this good coffee here first. I got pie too? You want some pie? Ain't fresh made but it's good.

(He fixes the machine again and she sets coffee and pie on the table and composes herself.)

WOODWARD.
This is Thursday morning, April 11, 1961 and I am in the home of Miss Henrietta -Ettie Neeley? ..and we are going to hear about her experiences in early singing schools and a special kind of American music, called the first traditional American music, shape note singing or Sacred Harp singing.

ETTIE
(He moves microphone to face her). Well, finally, it was the best music you ever heard except we didn't sing it for others to hear. We didn't sing for no audience, we sang for ourselves and most of us sang for the Lord too. It was all mixed up. But, at first we didn't have none of that stuff in the books we bought with our lesson fees. Why, we'd just sing on behind the preacher and sing what he did. Mostly them preachers didn't have no voice at all but that was all we knew. They wuz simple songs we followed on him with.
WOODWARD
Can you sing me one of those songs?

ETTIE
Wasn't singing alone that counted. This was not singing for no one single voice. Besides, don't know how good I can sing anymore - it's been so long.

WOODWARD
Oh, yes, you can. I shall never forget your singing in the night, last night. If your heart's still there - and I think it is, you are still a fine singing woman.

ETTIE
Well... those songs were different when I was little. We really didn't have no songs, no books even. We sang whatever the preacher told us to. See, he'd start preachin' and get hotter and higher and on and on and pretty soon people's be agreein' and then he'd give out a line and we'd repeat and on from there.

WOODWARD
So, you kind of sang to the sermon.

ETTIE
Well, not really, but he was the only one knew any songs and he 'lined' em out and we followed. Now, we had visitin' preachers, circuit preachers, and some was better than other and some had more energy and knew more songs.....

(In the background is a preacher who begins and the congregation comes in with the verse he is lining out - see added page for musical intervals. This one is very short).

ETTIE
Well, then when he announced that a 'singing teacher' was coming to our area, well, I knew I had to go to that. They would announce the coming for a couple weeks in advance. The 'teaching' and all would cost each one seventy-five cents for the two weeks he would be here. Course we needed time to save up that much.

WOODWARD
Was that exciting, when a singing teacher would come?

ETTIE
Oh, my, yes. But, we had no idea what this could be like or be about. We wuz real young then, me and Sarah Jane, she went too maybe sixteen, seventeen - well, Sarah Jane is older than me by a lot. But, we wuz friends and we liked the idea to get out of a night to just about anywheres - but there was no wheres to go here than - now even - but the meetin' house.

WOODWARD
So, singing was not your real motive so signing up for the 'music school'....? You know, I could use more of your good coffee and another piece of that.....
(Lights and scene shift back to General Store again)

TOWNMAN III

Hey, anybody in here?

STOREKEEPER

On my way - on my way. (Comes out with a rag) What kin I do fer ya......

TOWNMAN III

Did ya' know? He's there again.

STOREKEEPER

So.... You payin' fer that today?

TOWNMAN IV

(Comes in wiping his brow). Whew! Hot out there, need me an RC. Guess who is at Ettie's house again.

TOWNSMAN I

He's a' stayin'. Come in real late last night. Didn't come back for dinner or nothin' An here ...... had done a skillet chicken 'n taters and shuck beans and set it back for him...too late.

TOWNMAN IV

You wann' see one wet hen - get ready, Miz Sarry is a trudgin' this way. She looks like bad news...

(Townman II)

(Pretending to look out the window) Guess we're about to hear whatever's a' auguring her - she's comin' in.

SARAH JANE

(Comes in and stands stock still and stares at them all but says nothing. Goes over to the counter rummaging in her bag).

STOREKEEPER

Mornin' Sarry. Yer lookin' uncommon fine this day.

SARAH JANE

Huh. Here, I needs sugar 'n some 'a them cherries in a bottle, 'n what's the best kinda tea you got.

STOREKEEPER

(Packs them up) This gonna' cost you some. So, thank ye - and what you plannin' these days Miz Sarry?

TOWNMEN

(Sort of chuckling and listening)

SARAH JANE

Ain't nobody's bidness but my own. So, good day to all of you.
ETTIE
We was young, and fit and we worked hard with our parents on the farm - didn't have much chance to socialize. My momma died when I was 15 so I had to leave the school then and take care here at the house. About the only place to see friends was at the meetin's and the church dinners. We knew that singing was for the Lord, but we wanted to have fun too.

WOODWARD
So, you paid your money and went up to the meeting house and then what would happen.

ETTIE
First, understand, it wasn't like no choir seating like you got now. There would be four long benches set aroun' up front, like a big square. The the teacher, he would stand in the middle there with all four sides of folks facing him. Then, some of 'em (see we did have several teachings back here). Then he'd show us those notes and our parts in the books. Then we'd begin to sound our places.

WOODWARD
Sound your places?

ETTIE
We didn't get to the words until we had sounded out our parts and had some idea on the time. Oh, at first it just plain was like some kind of racket.

(In the background, with benches moved) the group begins to sing FA SO SO SO LA FA FA (etc. and then go into a simple song but not done very well. Slowly this picks up and sounds a bit better).

(See attached page for the music in this section).

ETTIE
Well the, that teacher, he would stand in the middle, if'n he knew what he was doing and he'd lead us - we knew he knew what he was about when the teacher would put one arm behind his back and wave with the other hand. Might be better to say that he would run around in the middle and he would bet time - like this (she beats time up and down vigorously with long sweeps of her right arm, up and down and right and left). Well, he some kins' time tryin' to keep us together.

WOODWARD
So, he told you what to sing and it could be things you had never heard of - well, it would be wouldn't it.
ETTIE
See, those 'singing teachers' - well, after the first was when the
good ones come, when my husband come, they had maybe way over a
hundred songs. They had odd names too - like we knew Amazing Grace
but in the book it was titled "New Britain".

WOODWARD
Can you go back and tell me about how you would learn those notes,
and those parts. How did you learn music?

ETTIE
It wasn't really music like you know it now. It wasn't until much
later that we didn't learn nothing about the basics of music
we only learned what the 'teachers' taught us; what they knew.
anyway, see here, in the book (she gets very close to him) see they
don't look like regular notes and, at first there was notes on three
lines. The fourth part was sun a whole jump apart and that went
together.

WOODWARD
Where's the tune?

ETTIE
Later on I did get to read real music but here - well, it was here,
it was the tenor that had the main tune. Fact is, back then, I
don't any a' them teachers couldn't known their favorite song if
was written like your music is now.
So, we each hed our part and our shape, there was the low, the
base and the tenor, that took the tune and the treble, and the
alto. I was an alto. Wasn't just divided parts by men and women.
Oh, that harmony come out sweet.

WOODWARD
So, later, the singing teachers got better and better?

ETTIE
After that first war, they trained those teachers good, it was
the folks that published the singing books that trained 'em and
so they could sell the books better - and oh, the singing was better
too. That's what he was - well, my husband. See, I met him
when he came here to be leader of a 'singing school.'

WOODWARD
I understand - you'd rather not talk about him...tell me more
about those singing lessons.

ETTIE
Well, a good teacher, like he was, could pure wear himself out with
the teaching. He would know each part too, and we stuck with him
and followed where our shape was on the page. He would be running
around getting all those parts together on the same place. If we
got to stragglng behind, he would be over to our side and pump
us up to the right place, and if anyone got ahead of the other he would rush over, listen for the strongest singer in that part and stand in front of him and just stamp his feet and sing out at the full power of his voice and swing that arm more than ever till he got 'em check.

(Musical section)
(In the background the group goes through the FA SOL LAs and then struggles into "Wondrous Love").

WOODWARD
It must have been thrilling to be so involved with the songs.

ETTIE
Oh, yes, how it was!! And if the teacher loved the songs and loved the Lord too... why you could pure feel yourself lifting from the floor - or make you weep right there a'singin'. Saved many people right there on them benches, that singing did.

(Musical Section)
"O Man of Gethsemene."

At the end of this song, the people file away leaving a young woman and the singing teacher who are Ettie and her husband.

CRANSTON
Miss Ettie, wasn't that a beautiful time?

ETTIE (Young)
(She is very shy) Oh, my, yes, sir. It was pure thrillin' - my soul is just lifted so.

CRANSTON
Miss Ettie, I was wondering, I was hoping, I mean you sing so pretty and look just like you sing and... I mean, would you permit me to walk you back to your home? That is, if there isn't someone already waiting for you, to walk. I mean, pretty girl like you are probably got six handsome men waiting to walk you home.

ETTIE (Young)
Fact Is, that ain't so. Usually Sarah Jane and me, we walk back together but she had to stay in with her sick Mama... her Mama's bad sick so she can't come to the 'singing no more this week -

CRANSTON
Oh, I'm sorry. Guess she will miss the singing.

ETTIE (Young)
Truth is, she cain't sing a lick. She just comes to look at you if the truth be told...
CRANSTON
I'll take that kindly - as a compliment. What about you?

ETTIE (Young)
I love the singing. Why, I wish we could do this every night. I'd like to never stop. Tell you what's the truth, I'm always sorry when we come to an ending song. Every new song you teach us - why, it just lifts me up through the day.

CRANSTON
Miss, Ettie, do you know what you would love? You would love to go on up to Benton and join in with all the big singers - I mean it is a big singing and what a wondrous time it is. Why, up there they sing at the Courthouse and they sing for two whole days. I surely wish I could take you along.

ETTIE (Young)
Oh, how grand that must be. But, my Daddy wouldn't let me go off with no man for two days... Leastways, I guess he wouldn't mind if you walked me on home though.

(On the way he takes a flashlight out for the path. Together they start to sing a song - a simple one - like "This Little Light of Mine" and they laugh and finally he takes her hand. At the door he kisses her cheek very lightly).

(Lights back to Ettie's kitchen).

ETTIE
Twas Sarah Jane saw him first. He come riding into town on a horse, see our roads was rough in those days. She come a runn' and said I had to go out on the road and watch him a'comin'. We never saw anything as beautiful as he was. Course we'd a gone to the 'singing no matter, but we sure did want to see that man up close. Well, Sarah Jane she headed straight for home when she saw him, to put the curling iron on to heat. He surely was the most beautiful man ever. See, there wasn't nothin' here but rough young men we grew up with, worked the farms like we did. So, off we went and Sarah Jane had to help me with the money that time.

WOODWARD
And he was a good teacher?

ETTIE
Oh, yes, he could make anyone understand the reading and he had such a voice - gave me a thrill to hear him singing out aloud and ahead of everyone. And, oh, all us girls, we was in love with him. It pure scared me to find it was me he took notice of. At first I thought it was because I was such a strong singer and pretty soon, you know, different churches and singing teachers would get bigger groups together and so, finally, he had my father to let me go along when there was a big group. Oh, it was the best time of my life. Even after we were married, he still kep traveling and singing but then... then...

WOODWARD
You don't have to talk about him anymore - stay back with singing.
(General Store lights)

(All the townsmen are just sitting around)

TOWNSMAN IV
...don't say.

TOWNSMAN III
You reckon she really got that much to say?

TOWNSMAN I
Well, if you ain't talked much for twenty years she probably sayin' whatever it is by the mile.

SHOPKEEPER
Well, at least him bein' up at her house every day is givin' you fellers more to talk about than fishin'

TOWNSMAN I
My ....... says I can't go fishin' one more day this week - got chores to do.

TOWNSMAN IV
so, why ain't you doin' them?

TOWNSMAN I
Had to be here to speculate...

TOWNSMAN III

TOWNSMAN I
Well, you know as how this here University feller has been a restin' by us. Ain't et nothin' but breakfast except this morning. This morning he wasn't there at all.

SHOPKEEPER
What you sayin'

TOWNSMAN I
I'm sayin' this as simple as I can - he didn't come to his bed in our house last night.

Huh?

TOWNSMAN II

TOWNSMAN III
Oh, oh, here comes Lonzo.

TOWNSMAN II
Don't say nothin' ... He wouldn't know no how anyways.
(tape recording scene)

ETTIE
Oh, yes. And my... oh, that first teacher, he couldn't do so much, but he sang any part and he could make anyone else sing too. Even Sarah Jane got so she thought she could sing. But mainly, she just wanted to get close to him and she'd sing off so she could get his attention. She was somethin' Sir Myrtle - she had the biggest house here then.

WOODWARD
What do you mean?

ETTIE
Someone in the meetin' house group would have to put-up the 'singing teacher' when he came in - we didn't have no motels you know and they didn't make much money either. Sides, folks took it to be an honor to have him in their house. Helped the long times here too, ta have somethin' new around here and Sarah Jane's aunt - Miss Myrtle - she had the biggest house here then.

(There is a banging and hollering at the door - it is Sarah Jane)

WOODWARD
Seems like you have company at the door there.

ETTIE
"Speak of the devil..." you heard that sayin' That's got to be Sarry - When I told her I changed my mind about this recording - she about fainted! (She opens the door. Sarah Jane is all dressed up and has a cake in one hand and a guitar in the other). I told ye Sarry, 'hat this would hafta' be private, so....

SARAH JANE
Thought you might need you a bite to your coffee over here.

ETTIE
I do thank you Sarah Jane (she takes the cake). Thank you. And you know I made three cakes and a pie, you saw me early this morning, thin' we et 'em all already. Right?

SARAH JANE
Well, I.... I only wanted to .... (Looks around Ettie to smile and flirt with Woodward). Hi ya there. I came over ta - well, brought this as I heard you was lookin' for some singing and music for your collecting and so I brought...

WOODWARD
(He smiles, gets up and goes to the door too). Of course, how nice to see you again (he puts out his hand and she about faints putting our her hand. Ettie stands to the side with the cake, then sighs and turns to put it down).

SARAH JANE
(Comes into the room and puts her guitar in playing position)
I come to sing this good tune for you.....

She begins to play - it is all terrible and even Woodward winces - Ettie turns her back but then turns around again and goes to the machine and switches it off and turns back self-satisfied - while Sarah Jane bellows on).
(Singing)

SARAH JANE

I'm gonna take a trip
On that old Gospel Ship
I'm goin' far beyond the sky.
I'm gonna' shout and sing
'Til the heavens ring,
and I'll bid this world goodbye.

I have the news to bring,
and that is why I sing
My joy with you I'll share,
I'm goin' to take a trip
In that old Gospel ship
And go sailin' through the air.

I can scarcely wait,
I know I won't be late,
I'll sit right down and cry
And when the ship comes in
I will leave this world of sin,
And go sailin' through the air.

(At this point Ettie goes over and takes the guitar away from Sarah Jane's hands and turns her around to the door).

ETTIE

That's enough. You can't sing no way, never could and, 'asides you wasn't invited here today. And we don't need none a' them instruments, you know that too. Cake, my foot, git. Come on over when you're asked.

SARAH JANE

(From out in the yard - picks up the guitar and sings louder than ever, bellows ...)

If you are ashamed of me,
You ought not to be,
Lest you better have a care,
If too much fault you find,
You will sure be left behind,
While I'm sailin' through the air.

ETTIE

(Stand with her back to the sound of Sarah Jane, arms folded and rather angry). Well, now, you just can't call that singin' and besides instruments just mess it up anyway. I apologize for her.

WOODWARD

But, that was charming, that was pure and real music, don't you think? At least I'll have it on the tape.
ETTIE
No you ain't, ain't on that tape.

WOODWARD
What?

ETTIE
I bin watchin' that thing and I turned it off. You want to talk to me, then talk to me and none of that stuff from her. In fact I don't even need you now, I kin just sorta sit and talk to this machine by myself. Fact is, I could talk to other people on this too couldn't I do that?

WOODWARD
Well, I guess . As a matter of fact, Miss Ettie, I was going to ask you if you might not know some other people who did the old Sacred Harp singing and who might like to be interviewed too. Do you?

ETTIE
I do. Yes, I rightly do. But, I thought it was me you was arguing to get to. Now, you wants other people. Well, I'll tell you what, You let me use this here machine some and I'll get them for you, the other people I mean. Otherwise, I cain't be no more help to you. I reckon I know better than you do how to talk to my own people.

WOODWARD
But I,...I mean, this is what I do...this is my profession.

ETTIE
(Stands firm) I kin help and you need me.

WOODWARD.
Alright, I'll tell you what, we'll pretend that I'm a general and you're my lieutenant. I have another small machine in the van and it runs on batteries anmd so you can come with me as my back-up person and then you help me meet these other people.

ETTIE
Well, I ain't really had no truck with much of anybody for a long time now, but I rec they wouldn't be a 'laughin' at me if I come in with this new-fangled machine and a University professor - might put me back to be somebody. Yessir. That's what it's going to be.

(Door bangs open and it is Alonzo with an arm load of wood for the stove).

LONZO
Thought you might be a needin' some wood here and... (He dumps the wood and pulls a harmonica out of his back pocket). Sir, I thought I'd do you some music too. Folks say you lookin' for the music around these parts... (he starts to play)

ETTIE
(with a broom, shoos him out the door). Not 'til I ask you, you hear? Nobody doin' this machine story without me chekcin' on it's right or not.
WOODWARD
(Puzzled about what to do now) Miss Ettie, you know I respect you and find your company delightful - but I need to be the one who -

ETTIE
I knows what to ask better'n you do - I was doin' it.

WOODWARD
True, very true but - alright - let's make certain you know the whole history here - of this shape note singing I mean. Do you know when it started?

ETTIE
Started ehre with the first singing teacher - like I told you - I was just a slip of a girl - I was there.

WOODWARD
True, Miss Ettie, but do you know how this kind of singing started in this country - where it came from? How old it is? For example, some folks now say that this shape note singing tradition is the first native music in this country.

ETTIE
What about them Indians - they got songs?

WOODWARD
You have to know this, Miss Ettie, dear lady. Best we know now is that this singing style began in England and came over here with the first sttlers - maybe the Pilgrim fathers sang like this, they sang the Psalms. Now, there weren't music books back then, wasn't much of anything and the people could only learn the songs that their preachers knew.

ETTIE
You mean they sang "The Lord is My Shepher...? Psalms from the Bible.

WOODWARD
That's what the word means, my dear. A Psalm is a song. So, they wanted some new songs and the people enjoyed singing too. Then there would be the camp meetings, and people wanted to sing - they could only sing what the leader knew.

ETTIE
Yep, I know that kind - the leader sings a line and then the congregation sings it on.

WOODWARD
Well, group singing was considered a bit too worldly so some men decided to write new songs and songs anyone could sing but also songs that were acceptable. Pretty soon the people wanted more songs and men wrote them and then put them into books. Well, how to make people read those songs was the problem and that's where the four shapes came into being. See, you didn't have to study music for a long time to find your part - just a few weeks practice. Then they went travelin' about with those books and to give the lessons.
ETTIE
You mean they was singing like we used to do up in them big
Northern cities?

WOODWARD
At first, yes. But then more and more people came over to this
country and they wanted to be as much like the people in Europe as
they could - sing that way and use that music. So, the men and the
music books - well, they started to send them to the smaller towns,
especially in the South, like Kentucky and Tennessee and Georgia
and in small towns like yours here - that's where people got to
learn and love this shape note singing the most.

ETTIE
Well, whatever they was all doin' - we certainly did have us a
fine time with that singing. You know, after a while we got to
goin' out and singin' for other churches. Why, I've been as
far away as Tennessee and twice I went with Cranston over to
Benton.

WOODWARD
Do you hear something?

ETTIE
No - what is it?

WOODWARD
(Looking out the window) It appears to be Miss Sarah Jane and
she is playing - why, she's playing a harmonica - maybe she's
dancing...can't tell.

LONZO
(He appears with a banjo) Why, that's right perty Miz Sarry.
Hold on now, I'll catch up with ye.
(He begins to play with her).

ETTIE
(Goes out on the porch) What do you think this is?
You stop that right now. Lonzo, get on back to the barn.

WOODWARD
Oh, don't stop them. They are wonderful.

ETTIE
No, they are not wonderful. They are pure tryin' to interrupt us.
Git now. We got history things to talk about.

LONZO

ETTIE
Git! Now, My Woodward - I mean Mr. Woodward - you was 'askin'?
TOWNSMAN I.
(As Townsman I comes in) Well, he done it agin, cept this time he showed up late this mornin' to get his bag.

SHOPKEEPER
Yep. Guess that means he's a leavin'.

TOWNSMAN II
(Runs in breathless). Here's there again!

TOWNSMAN III
(plops himself down). What you bet Miz Ettie's done got herself a beau. Got him his bus parked right at her house now.

TOWNSMAN IV
(Slowly enters, looks around, smiles) Spect we're a' gonna have us a weddin' around here? Think a' that old woman - sittin' over there alone all that time. kin you believe it? I tell you what, my old woman is fit to bust to know what's goin' on over to Ettie's.

SHOPKEEPER
Had lonzo here for more vittles than she buys in a year... and that ain't no lie.

TOWNSMAN I
My ........ is about fit to be tied six ways to know what kin they be doin'. I told her, mind her own bizness - does set one to wonderin thought.

SARAH JANE
(Comes in very business like with her shopping basket). (She does have on a new hat). Need five more pounds of sugar.

SHOPKEEPER
You baking a powerful lot these days.

TOWNSMAN I
You gonna' bake the wedding cake?

SARAH JANE
What you talkin' - whose gettin' married.

TOWNSMAN II
Just speculatin' that Miz Ettie's got her a beau. What all they doin' there every day?

SARAH JANE
Talkin' - far as I know. Just sit there at her kitchen table and they talk to this here little machine he got. Says he's interested in music, singing. Well, I'll tell you, I was there and offered to play and sing and they didn't want that. So, I say, Won't let lonzo on that machine either. Seems she just got herself pretty uppity to friends and family - just talkin' - uppity, that my pure and simple opinion.
E. (Scene shift back to Ettie's)

WOODWARD

So, you did get up to the other singins, especially that one they have every year in Benton? Did you go traveling some?

ETTIE

Oh, yes, many years we went to that, faithful. At first we went by wagon a ways and met up with others and then later we had this car - new car it twas too. Cranston, he worked hard and he took over the farm when Papa died and still took in extra for teaching the singing schools. He took me along when he could - but he had to stay with folks sometimes for two weeks and it was hard to leave the farm and then have a wife along.

Also, I wasn't a real strong one - as a woman. Couldn't seem to carry no baby.

WOODWARD

Did you quit singing then?

ETTIE

Didn't stop singing entirely. No, no, we still had regular singing of a Sunday and especially Sunday nights. Sometimes we had all day singins or went to 'em if they weren't too far away. Oh, it was grand, all them voices and seein' all them people and you got to make real good friends then, good Christian singing friends. And the women would bring food and set out the dinner at noon and we'd socialize and oh, the food. Why, twasn't nothin' to do away with 25 chickens - and tables of desserts. But no such things like that can last forever. I'm no sayin' there ain't people who don't still do this - have the all day or week end singing. Just for me, it got different and I just couldn't bear to go no more. Hurt me so.

WOODWARD

I know I said I wouldn't ask anything personal Miss Ettie. So I'm not going to ask... Are there others around here who would remember those singings?

ETTIE

Come close to it so many times, might as well go to the end. Had something to do with the singing too. See, sometimes, at the end of a singing, well before the prayer and the goodbyes, the teacher, he'd call out four singers to do one song together, called them the.......... Probably that's how the quartets got started - with that, having the best singers come up. Then too, See, what with the cars coming in and the call to sing at other places, why what we would do was send our best singers. Usually, then, the women couldn't go for so much to do with the house, so the men went. Pretty soon they were adding a piano or a guitar to kind of give 'em some back up power.

WOODWARD

Then, they weren't singing the old shape-note style anymore.

ETTIE

No, what I'm sayin' is that they started by the four part kind of singing that we used to do. So, when they took along this woman to play the piano - she was one of the men's wives too - well, slowly it got back that Cranston had took up with her.

WOODWARD

People in small towns gossip so - yes, I know.
ETTIE

So, that was it. I was home with Lonzo and went about crazy. So, one time they went in another car and I knew where they was supposed to be singin'. I took the car and went there. Weren't no singin' there at all. I went to her house then and her husband, well he was all tore up. Said she went away and left a note. Said it was with some other man, he didn't know who. Well, I did... Funny, it just made me cold and then... I guess the car just went every which way. Lonzo got him a concussion and my leg was broke all up and down.

WOODWARD

(He comes around to put his arm around her and comfort her) So, there it is and all the town already knew about 'em but not me... So, I don't care to have no business with them no more. (Begins crying) and he said he loved my hair so and hers was just frizz permanent - short and fat .......

WOODWARD

Please, Miss Ettie, ... Let's go on, and you know so much about the singings and all - look, please.... put that all in the past. You've still got a future.

ETTIE

(She is standing and turns to him - he is almost forced to put his arms around her - he strokes her hair, etc.

WOODWARD

I wish I could console you, dear. Wish I could help you - and I think I know a way.

(This is a tense moment and we know she feels something for him and he backs off but still wants to be kind).

I think I know what you can do for me Miss Ettie. Sit down here and see what you think of this. You can be my assistant for interviewing. You know the people around here and you know the kinds of words and the songs and everything. You could help me to interview other people - be my Assistant. Here, I'll knight you as Assistant.

ETTIE

It's too long since I talked to.... Mr. Woodward, you stay here and you come with me. I won't know how to talk like.....It's too late for.

WOODWARD

No, it is not. Tell you what, you may not believe it right now, but people love to talk, love to be listened to and they love to be on this machine's tape. See, it makes them feel as if their life really was something, important.

ETTIE

'But how...? Just stay on here. You can have that spare room again, and that quilt you loved so and - my cookin's good ain't it? Without you with me, why, how will I......
I'm givin you this WOODWARD
and you'll have your own tape recorder and you can get started.
Make a list of people you remember, write to them - why, sometimes people hear about what you want to know and they come to look for you. Maybe you could get people back together to sing again? And you'll invite me to hear it... alright?

ETTIE
(She thinks this over - she likes the idea too) Why, you know, Lonzo has been wantin' me to get a phone - now maybe I could just get me a phone... then you can call me and I can report in to you and... talk to you... call people to get them together. And you'll call me?

WOODWARD
Yes, there you go - help work to let people know about the singing and maybe get people interested again - forget that one man - there are other men - don't let one man just ruin what you can be doing.

ETTIE
Yes, Well, now I got me a that tape recorder. Yes, I like that - just wait until Mis. Burkes hears about this and wants to talk.... and I'll.... When?

WOODWARD
(takes her hand, both) And now, my dear, my dear lady it's time...
(looks out the window)
I'll leave you to use this... for tonight and if you feel like talking into... you can do that. People begin to remember things once they start talking you know. Sometimes just sitting & talking alone to this can help you to remember...

ETTIE
But I was going to give you some good dinner, can't you stay?

WOODWARD
(This is awkward for him) I think they are expecting me over at ............ (the next town). I'm already days behind my dear.

ETTIE
(She goes up very close to him and puts her hand on his chest and kind of pets him) Please, Mr. Woodward, please - couldn't you just please stay with me tonight.....?
You got a room here.
(Curtain cut)

WOODWARD
I know that and you just keep that for me. Now, you have my number and my address and you must carry on the work - understand?

ETTIE
Seems like I just don't. (As he leaves her) Don't you forget me, you hear? She stands alone - torn between humming and desolate).

CURTAIN.
ACT III

Set is Ettie's kitchen
Set on Stage left with a
desk and light for Woodward
(The tree behind Ettie's scene is turned to a leafless winter tree - as the months change, this tree will indicate the season.)

(Ettie's kitchen is changed, brighter, more modern in some way. Ettie herself has a new hairdo and nicer clothes - earings or things like rouge or high heels).

ETTIE
(She is on the phone) Denzill? Do I know you? ........Oh, well, yes, might could do that today, but it'd have to be (she looks into a daytimer book) It would have to be this evenin' sometime, let's see, around four o'clock I kin see you ...you don't care to? Fine, you know where I live.

SARAH JANE
(comes stomping up the steps carrying a big package or a quilt) You just wouldn't believe who called me this mornin' Just pure wouldn't take it in...called me on my phone.

ETTIE
What's that you carryin'?

SARAH JANE
It's that quilt I bin finishing.See, your friend Mr. woodward saw me piecin' the top and said how it was (imitates him) just too too beautiful' and it should be in the big quilt contest up to Paducah and so I'm haulin' it to the Post Office. ·But, I (still breathless) just had to tell you about that call his...

ETTIE
Sarry, sometimes I'm think you are dumber than my chickens - wyn't you just pick up your phone and call to me with whatever that news is...?

SARAH JANE
But you're right here next door to me...! Cain't see why I need no telephone anyways - just got one cuz you told me to and besides who knows who's a'listenin in on what you say.

ETTIE
They can't listen in anymore, anyways, what is this news you had to say. Hyrry up, I got things to do here and some calls to make (she shuffles through her book and locks out the window) Lonzo should be gettin' here and bring the mail on the way up -else I'll have to go down to the box myself.

SARAH JANE
Well, this is it. It's the mountain sisters - they called me and wanted to see would I talk to you for them. They heard about your recordin' folks and they wants to be recorded. They 'uz sayin' somethin' about Nashville....
(Scene shift to the General Store)

STOREKEEPER

Why Odie....that is you ain't it?

ODIE (townsman II)

(He has on a suit and has shaved and has shaved and is cap is off)
(He turns around like a model posing) Yep, today's the day.

TOWNSMAN I

(Enters in slacks and shirt) Hey, look at you - thought Ader had
got me done up good but. - whoo-ee, you look like buryin' day.

STOREKEEPER

No doubt - you fellers sure clean up good.
Can't hardly believe this - you fellers on a T and V show.

TOWNSMAN III

Hey there. Ahm ready and the cars warmin out front - where's
Buford? (IV)

STOREKEEPER

I sent him on over to Dorsey's - tole him - get the back of his
hair cut right - looked like he done it himself with an axe.

ODIE

Imagine, us knowin' something that a TV guy would want to see!
takes a bag of marbles out of his pocket). Just cuz I told
that University talkin' guy that we maybe couldn't sing but we
sure was good with marbles.

TOWNSMAN I

Why, who'd a brought that up - when we been playin' rolley hole
since we uz tads.

TOWNSMAN III

All I done was show him my mighty marvel move (he shoots a
marble along the floor) and he was plumb amazed. Guess he never
saw it but didn't know it had all that stuff to it he was a
going' on about.

TOWNSMAN I

My Ader is plub green. But I got to tell you this - I finally
got her a TV and she sure shut up fast. Ain't had no decent
food since we got us that box.

TOWNSMAN IV

(Parades around) Well, am I fit for TV? Don't see why I got to
give up my hair just to talk about somethin' so common as playin'
witht he marbles we used to make.

STOREKEEPER

look, you goes for that championship - you kin grow as much
hair as you want but we don't want you embarrassin' us on the T & V.

TOWNSMAN II

Let's go - c'mon. Gots to carry you all the way to Louisville
we gots to get going"
ETTIE
Mountain sisters? What are you talkin' about - Sarry, I don't know no mountain sisters.

SARAH JANE
Them twins - remember? Don't you remember back in school, there was these skinny little twins and they was new over here - and they wuz so little we called 'em mountains? Well, they called me - can you imagine?

Why they callin' you?

SARAH JANE
They wants to know would you interview them cuz they are singers now - got 'em this gospel duet and they heard you was makin' recordings of singers and they think I could fix it for them. I say as how I'd do it.

Well, fine - let me see here (looking in her book - here you give 'em this date and time - they got to come here I ain't a'ridin' around for two fat old ladies I don't know.

Say, you heard anythin' lately?

ETTIE
What do you mean heard? About what?

SARAH JANE
Don't you be playin' kittinish with me now Ettie, you know fer sure what I mean - you heard from the Professor yet

ETTIE
(stomps and shrugs) Reckon he's just too busy. Sent him a card fer his birthday so I 'spect he could send me one fer mine tomorrow.

DANCIN' MAN
(Pounding on the door) Here I am Miss Henrietta - brought you my dancin' man for yer machine to hear. (He barges right in and sets up his bench and doll).

SARAH JANE
(She likes this man) Why, how do ye do? I'm her neighbor and I'm ... that sure is a fine piece of work - you make that?

ETTIE
(Looking out the window still- impatiently) Well, get on with it, but I don't see how I can use it. (She switches on the machine and Dancin' Man plays his doll and hums and Sarah Jane does a little cog dance too). (At the end of his performance, Sarah picks up her bundle to leave)

ETTIE
(She is not interested) That's it? I thank you, I thank you.... (Shoos him off).

DANCING MAN
Miss Sarry, I'd be proud to help you with that bundle, if you
(Yelling out the door as Lonzo is coming to the door) - Got any mail fer me Lonzo? Any letters? Quick, what was there.

LONZO
(He comes in the door stamping and shaking his head - he does have some mail in his hand). Here you be - lotsa hawful books you got there.

ETTIE
(She is looking for sosmithing special in this mail) No, it ain't here - are you sure Miz Pennington gave you everything - been over the weekend and several day you know.

LONZO
(Taking off his coat) Nope, that's it and what was you expectin' anyhow, as if I didn't guess easy already.

ETTIE
Ain't yer affair.

LONZO
'Tis too, when my own old mother gets sweet on some young University fellah - writin' him all the time. Everybody knows that Momma - you know miz Henderson looks to everythin' going' through her post office, well as I do.

ETTIE
Ain't her business and asides, me and him's still got business together with gettin history for his book. There's things I got to let him know about. Matter of fact i got another of them interviewers comin' this afternoon, old Mr. Denzill, sent over his daughter to say he was gettin' some good memories about the 'big singins' he'd been to way back.

LONZO
(Smiffing around the kitchen) You make anythin' good fer him to eat? Got anythin' put by, chess pie or summpthin'? (He is watching her go even more carefully through the mail). Ain't nothin' from him in there, sure.

ETTIE
Well, leastways he could send me a card for by birthday. His was Jan. last month and I remembered to send him a card. No, didn't make nothin' fer that old man, he's just plain lucky I got some time for him - and I'm running out of tapes too and next time you get over to the store, get me more batteries.

LONZO
Look in the bag, I figured you'd need some so I got 'em already.
II.2. (Lonzo leaves)

ETTIE
(Sits at her table and takes a pencil and nits on the end of it thinking, flips a page on her paper pad and begins to write).
(Errie is speaking the letter and then the lights to stage left go up to show Woodward reading a letter.)

Dear Dr. Woodward: I have been very busy but very well. And how are you my old friend? I think of you so much and wish so much you would be here to talk to. I have been working very hard for you and long to hear how you are liking what I am sending you.
The weather is still cold here and hard to get out much. Lonzo is a good son and takes the chores for me in the snow. I miss my garden so in the winter. I sent you a birthday card and I do hope you got it. Maybe I don't hear from you because I don't have no telephone. If I got one would you call me up? I wish I would hear from you and hope that you are well and that the reason I don't hear from you is because you are sick. May the Lord keep blessin' you. Your Friend Ettie.

(Just as Woodward finished the letter and folds it, a young and pretty woman comes to him and they embrace as he puts the letter in his pocket.)

SARAH JANE
(Pounds a little on the door but just comes in). Why, Ettie, what's ailin' you? You sick or what? (She puts her head almost on the table with Ettie) Tell me now, honey, kin I help you any?

(Ettie raises her head)
Why, honey, those are a lot of tears there. What happened?

ETTIE
Nothin' happened (tries to sound angry) Nothin' at all - (Turns back and decides to say something) Ain't right, it just ain't right. He coulda' at least sent me a birthday card. I remembered his was February and mine is the tomorrow, same day as his but March - least he coulda' sent me a card too. Sent a card with just his name fer Christmas - that's it since way back in September. I'm just an old forgot woman - that's it.

SARAH JANE
What you gotta' do is take it to the Lord in prayer - remember that song "do thy friends despise, forsake thee, take it to the Lord in prayer."

(Ettie just makes a face at her)

ETTIE
Never did see how lonely I was 'til he come along.

SARAH JANE
Ask me, I'd say you was just feelin' forry for yourself and not acceptin' the Lord's will. You just like bein' pitiful
II.3

ETTIE
Gon on - get out! You ain't never had a man to love you and bin left so what do you know?

SARAH JANE
I just plain ain't gonna fuss with you, Ettie. I got what I got and I take it that way. Look here, you got you this machine and the singing people and folks are comin' to see you now like you wuz really somebody. Here you don't see what the Lord gives you and just go moonin' after some young University fellah that's smarter than you and younger than you -

ETTIE
You wouldn't know about lovin' anybody, you silly old woman.

SARAH JANE
At least I trust in the Lord to lead me and I love plenty folks - if I know what love is about. I guess it's about wantin' the best for 'em and that means I even love you even when you git so sorry and mean like this... Sit, be a sorry old cow if you want to.

ETTIE
Please Sarah Jane, I fell in love with that man. But he didn't really care and I thought he did, I thought I was special to him; he made me feel special to him.

SARAH JANE
So you wua, special, still are. Don't mean he has to love you back and why would he want an old woman and to live here and slop your hogs. He made me special too, that's his gift from the Lord, to make people feel good. I loved his too, Ettie, still do. Don't mean he gotta' do one thing for me.

ETTIE
But, I'm so lonely, Sarah Jane. So alone. You never knew Sarah Jane, what lonin' a man was like. like me and Randall, just plain as your nose, attracted like two smells that matched. Mornin's now, when it takes a while to get a movin' I just lie there and think on those good mornin's with him and it makes me hurt even more than my joints do. How do you forget that, Sarah? How? See, I kin forget the meanness that came later...just kind of yearn for those close, warm times back again. If I'm too old now, why does the Lord put me still in mind of that body life?

SARAH JANE
Ain't for you to question the ways a' the Lord, and certainly I ain't about to do it. don't do no good. Take what the Lord give you and say your gratitude for that.
II. 4

ETTIE
It ain't the endings you care about so much anymore - like the trip -
It ain't where you wuz going but what it was like gettin' there.
Ain'ts the endings, it's the journey. It's not knowing day to day
anymore what someone can give you for a thought or an idea or listening
to them - from their world. Don't you know? Helps to get outside
yourself so - And I'm just locked into just me - alone. And you
kin know another body, all the twists and turns - like a constant
journey with new surprises...ain't no more surprises along my way.
Oh, I loved the way them men could take me...

SARAH JANE
Mash the buttons on your machine for me - I wants to sing you a song
you ought to take to heart.

(She beings to sing "Just as I Am).
(Ettie leaves it on for awhile but pretends not to listen to it).

ETTIE
Than'ts enough, Sarah Jane, I got somebody 'acomin' soon to talke
with so you just go on about your business. You want to run around
bein' a sunbeam for Jesus, you just do it and let me be cuz you
got no idea what I'm feelin'

SARAH JANE
You got more than your share already, you just never was thankful
and I'm goin' away and you can bawl all you wants to.

ETTIE
(Takes out her pencil and paper again).
Dear Dr. Woodward:

(Tree is turned a bit and time has passed - it might be April. Ettie
has on a different shawl.

(Lights go up to Woodward's desk as he reads another letter.)

Wed. April 2.

Dear Dr. Woodward.
I keep hoping you will write to me. Maybe you are too busy for us
but I have oh, so many things I have to tell you. I think I
got more things than I can get into a letter. Mrs. Laurel Tubbs
was at our singing meeting last week and she said that she heard you
was over to Jenks County the week before that and talked to her
husband's niece there. I don't understand how you could come so
close to us and not drop by for a talk. Oh, how I wish I could talk
to you again. Sometimes in the morning I think the phone will ring
and it will be you startin' your day. Now, they went and changed
all our numbers here and I got me a private line now and so it might
could be that you need to have my new number and that the old number
you got don't go through no more. That number is 8792 and I'll
write is big on the bottom too. Please don't forget us Mr. Woodward
and I want to see you here again. I got your room fixed up right
nice and made yellow curtains like you said you had when you wuz a
boy. I'm feeling fine and hope you are fine too.

P.S Lonzo shot two muskrats last week.
ETTIE
(She lets denzill in the door) (He is rather old and has his son with him. 
Evening. Right proud to have you here (He can't see very well and she led him to a chair). 

This scene depends on getting an old singer who 'lines out' a song. 

(Ettie records them and we see her in action - as she tries to imitate Woodward's interviewing style)

ETTIE
Now, you sit right here, make yourself ta' home and I'm gonna explain to you what we will be doin' here and why we will be doin' it. Now, when this little red light is on the machine will be - oh, i'm so sorry. Well, I'll tell you when the tape recording machine is ready. Then, anything you say to us or sing for us, will go on a little tape here and you kin hear yourself too. Now, tell me your name and where you from and what you do and how you learned it. 

(She switches on the machine) This is Wednesday April 2 and we are in the home of Mrs. Henrietta combs and we are talking to...

DENZILL
(Feels her hand) Yes, well, ma'am. ah',m Denzill Phillips and I come from the Strode Community over yonder. I bin 'a singin' since I was a tad - was the Lord what called me to do that and I still do that. Don't know where I learned how - guess I just always had the call to sing - and I could remember most any song if'n I just heard it once.

ETTIE
so, you didn't learn to sing from any kind of music or shape notes.

SON
See, no, Daddy, he ain't been seein' since he was a boy. Now, I kin read that music pretty good myself.

ETTIE
Do you sing too?

SON
Of a time, I might could do it. But, reason I wanted to bring Daddy here is that there ain't no one no more who sings the way Daddy does. That's cuz he never learned no new musical ways and he says the Lord done called him to sing in the old way and that's what he's gonna keep doin' til he ain't got him no more breath. Daddy, you wanna' stand now and sing us some?

DENZILL
Usual, I give my testimony a bit first. Seems like I got to say a few words in favor a' the Lord afore my spirit gets taken over.

SON
Aw, you kin just give us a song Daddy, we got to head back afore it gets dark out. I'll bet the spirit will come the minute you opens your mouth. Stand up right here now. Is this the right direction fer him to stand?
DENZILL
(Begins to sing) How firm a foundation....

SON
(Interrupting) Wait Paw, I wants to say something first. Miz Ettie, I feels the need to explain how Papa sings. Miz Ettie, does you love the Lord?

ETTIE
Of course, but let's get on with this. This is for history, got nothin' to do with what I believe.

SON
The way Paw sings got everythin' to do with it - he sings for the Lord.

DENZILL
Be quiet son, Ah wanna sing.

SON
How do you talk into this thing so it comes out clear - cuz I'm gonna be on this too. I studied up some to do it.

DENZILL
Son, I love the Lord and I want to sing now and go home. Hush.

SON
But I just got to tell Miz ettie - here goes, this music is (takes out a paper to read) is is....here it is...is unique. When the separatists came to James town they sang the Psalms like this. But it is older than that, back in Scotland the Psalms were sung by lining them out. There was a big change when people began to sing songs written by people and didn't use the Psalms, so they split. This is called lining out - the lead sings the first line and then...

ETTIE
Look, I'll take care of that history stuff - all we needs here now is for your Papa to show us some singing....

(DNZILL:(Sings his song).

LONZO
(He comes in in the middle of the singing) He hunkers down on the floor and listens in rapt attention.)

LONZO
That uz so pretty, so pretty Mr. Denzill. Must be a fine feelin' to sound like that. guess it don't matter none you can't see if you can sing like that...

DENZILL
Son, this way I can see the Lord clear. Clearer than you kin. Now, I wants to go home.
ETTIE
I do thank ye - thank ye. Sure you don't want to stay, have some coffe or pie?

SON
We thank you but when he wants to go, he wants to go.

DENZILL
I know the Lord is blessin' ye Miz ettie. Trust in the Lord.
(they leave)

LONZO
Sure is a fine thing you a doin' Maw, gettin' all these people out and lettin' 'em sing for you. Ever body says so.

ETTIE
Fine, they talkin' about somthin' good fer a change. Lonzo, what are you wearin'?

LONZO
My best suit, Maw...best I knows to wear anyhow. I was wantin' ta go with the boys from the store today. I kin play as good as they do and they knows it but they said I couldn't go to no city - might get lost or do somthin' ta shame 'em.

ETTIE
Oh, Lonzo. Don't you feel bad now. I'd a talked to 'em for you, you coulda' bin alright. Now, don't you fret none - they uz just bein' sorry men to act so big.

LONZO
They said I wuz too 'simple' to go along - I'd be a' embarrassin' them fellers in a city.

ETTIE
I'll tell you what - they ain't gonna look so good themselves - just you wait - tryin' to get above oneself 'll always bring one down - jest you wait.

LONZO
I don't want nothin' bad to happen to 'em. Mama, why do they say ah'm 'simple' - don't make sense to me. Ah'm their friend. why they knows I'd do 'bout anythin' fer them. Never did understand why I was different. I ain't done nothin' wrong Mama - never. I loved you and I loves the Lord 'n the hogs 'n ...

ETTIE
(Breaking down and getting down with him and putting her arms around him - she begins to cry and hugs him) Oh, Lonzo, Lonzo t'aint you, t'aint you a'tall. Lonzo, it's all on me - on me. Oh, Lonzo I wish you could understand and forgive your old Mama.
WOODWARD

Across the stage, lights up to him at this desk. He is writing on a yellow pad:

These people perceive and practice a gospel life. It is women into the emotional fiber of those persons who loved it as children and who have continued to keep up the singing across the years - in the Sacred Harp tradition.

This music cries out to be told as a testament to an artistic, religious force that exhilarates, comforts, and extends a promise of wonderful things to come in yet another life that awaits Christian believers "on the other side of Jordan."

A pretty woman comes in with a handful of mail, bends down and kisses Woodward on the back of the neck.

GIRL
Here is the mail for today, Professor.

(He kisses her hand on the palm - this is more than a secretary).

WOODWARD
Oh, dear. Oh, I've got to get this finished ... got two meetings to get to and that call to make. How can I let her know that I just don't have the time for ... (to himself) I don't know what to do...

GIRL
Bad news? Something wrong, dear?

WOODWARD
No, it's just another letter from Ettie. I know what it will say without even opening this.

GIRL
I know why she keeps writing. ... that woman thought something about you when you were there. What did you do? Lead the poor into falling for you - just like I did? Why don't you just tell her something?

WOODWARD
It was just that - well she reminded me of my Mama so - and, you know, my Mama got taken so soon, back there in Kentucky. It was a pleasure being with her, like being a boy again. She gave me a room with a quilt just like Mama made once, same good food - why chicken dumplings - I can smell them still -. Interesting - interesting and it all meant so much to her. I swear I never did or said anything to make her - You know, my dear, that's the worst part of what we do. We go about and collect stories and histories and memories and make that all important to everyone - don't lose the small parts of living. Remember, that last project, old Ed Cope? Remember how he just wanted to move right in with me, be my advisor. What these people can't understand is that after I collect their information - why, my job is just to keep going... on to the next project.

GIRL
Well, as a female, let me tell you, that you can sure be charming and some women just take that all wrong.
WOODWARD
Remember back - to that first class where I met you? Remember what we talked about? When you work with people, with their stories and their information - you are taking some of their lives. Of course, you have to charm people in order to have them talk to you openly and take the time to remember. You have to really like the people you talk to - and I do like them. Sometimes I even love them - not that way - but as people. So, you see, it is hard because this is what can happen - I mean they give you their lives and memories and then they want to keep you.

GIRL
Sometimes that seems plain heartless, you know? I mean, here you are using live people to get the material for all your books and then when you get what you want - so long, I'm outa town. You know, the more I think about it, the more it bothers me - using people, I mean, like they were research articles to check up on.

WOODWARD
But we talked about all that, my love, look at the other side of the problem - we also give those people importance; make them feel that what they know and lived through was important. Their memories go into books and become history. Don't you think what people have to tell us is more important or even vital to helping others understand their own past? We discussed that over and over.

GIRL
Yes, but that was only a classroom lecture. I mean, when I read this old lady's letters, well, it just breaks my heart. She wants you back and she wants you - just plain wants you and you just let her hang there.

WOODWARD
And if I wrote and visited every single person I've ever interviewed. well, I couldn't do anything else. Isn't it kinder to let this just die out - she will give up pretty soon.

GIRL
That woman has more feelings than just wanting to get a letter - I tell you Woody, that woman has something for you....

WOODWARD
That woman must be at least 18 years older than I am - no, she just wants my attention and to have someone around - she's lonely.

GIRL
But Woody, dear, you are 45 and I'm 25 and you are still planning on marrying me aren't you?

WOODWARD
Look, what if I were a photographer - do I owe something to every person whose picture I've taken and used? Well? And men are supposed to have younger women, that's just usual. It's a wonder you want an old fogey like me anyway. I've got a lot to do, now go and finish our packing.
April,

Dr. Dr. Woodward:

The weather is beautiful here now. We are thinking out our garden and are ready to plant. Everyone is very well. You have left your mark on us all. The boys think they are something now after their TV interview and Sarah Jane has won the big quilting contest - got her enough money to go visitin' over to her nieces in Florida. I took a bad fall in the end of March and am gimping around worse than ever but I will get better. I keep waiting and hoping that you will write or call or care what happens to us here. But I guess I have to think that things are really the way I feared them. You was just using us all for your books and then you just forget us like we never was except what you could use. You are sure good with your nice sweet ways to get what you want and then just forget us. Reason I know this now is because I heard you was over to Carlton (Jenny's sister's cousin knew it) and couldn't even bother to go 15 miles out of the way to see us again. So, I guess I got to understand that you don't want to see us or care to know any more. I'm not gonna bother you no more and you kin just lose my phone number too. Best I kin say is you should be spanked.

WOODWARD

(Lights to him again) He is finishing his book now.

A simple harmonized tune in popular style combined with a religious text of an emotional and personal character in which the individual is usually the center rather than God.

Most gospel songs are not songs of praise...they focus on the individual's relationship to god.

(Girl reenters (dressed differently).

GIRL

Woody, sweet, are you finished with that last page yet? I'm ready to go with the manuscript to the post office. You know they expect is by wednesday.

WOODWARD

Yes, Yes. my dear, just a few more lines - then if you could type this for me.

This music lives only through performances. They do not sing for an audience but for God and themselves and each other. This singing is a true communion of a community of anyone who wants to sing the promises of heaven and hope for a better life. These people have the self-consciousness of the tradition bearer.
c.

(Back in Ettie's kitchen)

ETTIE

(Dressed differently again) She is coming into the kitchen with a hand full of mail - the phone is ringing, she drops the mail and rushes to it.

It's who? Yes, I'll talk to you but call me back I'm too busy right now. What? Yes, you can talk to my machine but there's things I gotta see first, call me back in an hour!

(She is searching through the mail)

SARAH JANE

(Comes flying through the door all excited and waving a paper. You read your mail yet? Why, your names on this - Ettie, you made it happen - oh, I kin barely wait - I'm so excited fer ya.

ETTIE

(She does find a letter from Woodward)

Look here, look at these funnyy stamps - why it is from some far place - looks to be his writing!. Oh, Sarry, that's why I ain't heard for so long - he's been in a long foreign place and couldn't write now -

(She opens this and begins to read).

Dear Miss Ettie:

Yes, it has been a long time since you have heard from me old friend. You must understand that things have been very hectic for me with teaching, and working on completing our book on gospel singers. All your help has made it possible to add so much to that book. Then my assistant and I were married and now I have a little time to write to old friends again. Tiffany and I were married in Cincinnati and then we flew to London, England and now we are on the Riviera in France for a honeymoon. I hope you will wish us hapiness Miss Ettie We are having a very good vacation. Give my best to everyone in town. I do remember you all with great affection. Especially, give my love to Sarah Jane.

Fondly, Woodward

ETTIE

No, oh, no. Oh, Sarah Jane...

SARAH JANE

This letter says that woodward has married his assistant and is on his honeymoon in Europe... Oh, Ettie. Did you know anythin' about another woman he had? Oh, Ettie. That makes me plumb in a fury. he coulda' at least told you.
d. SARAH JANE
(She is bending over and hugging Ettie as hard as she can while Ettie has dry sobs. She dabs cologne on Ettie's head and just begins to talk as fast as she can)

Now, Ettie, what you you ever dreaming in the first place? You had some serious thinking about that man. He was too young for you.

ETTIE
Guess he give me dreams he never said were so. Was me who made them up. It was like he took away the memories and that gave me back some dreams.

SARAH JANE
Now, wait until you see what else you got in that mail - I know the Lord takes but he always give back.

ETTIE
Oh, Sarry. Now everyone will know me for a fool all over again. Sarry, he married him a student. I was so foolish, so foolish, some part of me must have thought I was still a girl, still somebody to love. He made me feel so good.

SARAH JANE
Well, he made me feel good too, I done tole you that. He made everbody feel good. Was just you who took it personal.

ETTIE
Personal. Did he pass a night in bed with you? Did he hold you in his arms all night and whisper to your hair.... (She turns away because she is lying and knows it).

SARAH JANE
Why Henrietta............... Well, I never. That's shameful a' you.

ETTIE
Me? What about him. Wasn't it a shame for him too to do that and know that meant something here. You defendin' him?

SARAH JANE
Them folks is different - different. Might be we're livin' in the same year but they kin do that, and we cain't.

ETTIE
Got to wonder now, does he take every old lady to her bed so he kin get his book information?

SARAH JANE
I talked to him, he didn't care nothin' about me. Look, if'n you never belted bad about it afre this - then you got no call to feel that way now. He never promised to marry you did he? Why, look what he done for me with encouragin' about my quilts... But he didn't promise none of us anythin' - did he?
ETTIE

(Outing)

Didn't promise me nothin' but that I was his assistant and that we would 'keep in touch.' So I wrote and I wrote, got me a phone and heard barely nothin'. That's all I got now, that one memory and I guess no one's to know. Man like that wouldn't go braggin' on an old woman like me fallin' into his arms. Oh, Sarry. I'm so lonely - it aches in me sometimes.

SARAH JANE

Guess I know what you mean - but what's the use wasting the time you got left now moonin' over some man like you wuz twenty one again. Just wastes yer time. Sides' wait till you get to the best letter in there - I know because I got the sheet on it already.

ETTIE

What are you talkin' about?

SARAH JANE

Oh, ettie, it's about the best thing could ever happen fer you and now's best of all. They wann' honor you.

(She shuffles through Ettie's meagre mail) Here, this gotta be it - Read it...just look at this...

ETTIE

I was gonna' make yellow curtains - to make even more sun in this toom...

SARAH JANE

Is that all you can see? Just you and you're own hurtin'. How about tryin' to see God's bigger plan and lookin' at you. God has blessed you more than you know...read that.

ETTIE

(Sarah shoves the paper in front of her) just another notice of the Big Singing in Benton. Why it's...

Read careful.

SARAH JANE

Why, there's my name down there. That's my name - why?

SARAH JANE

Now, read that letter you got from the outfit up there - it's right here.

ETTIE

(She opens it and reads and begins to cry again) Oh, my, oh, my that singing next month - why it's gonna be for me. "For your work in helping to revive interest in our Singing and for bringin back so many singers of the Sacred Harp, the next Annual Big Singing in Benton will be dedicated to you, miss Henrietta ............... We would be honored if you would be with us as a guest leader to accept our gratitude. Further, the Gospel Recording Company from Alabama will be there to record this singing for a record to be placed in the Library of Congress and for distribution to all who love our music. Your name and dedicated sermon will be on this record. We await your reply and if you
can be in attendance, we will send a car for you and have you with us for the two day singing as our honored guest.

Oh, Sarah Jane, imagine...

SARAH JANE
I'm headed straight for the store, I saw some material there to make you the best dress ever - and that's what I'm gonna do. See, Ettie, how mysterious is God's ways.

(She leaves in a flutter).

ETTIE
(She puts her head down on the table in a prayerful attitude.

STOREKEEPER
All the four townsman are sitting around in various slumped poses.
Well, boysseems like it about time you got up to the church fer yer practicin'

TOWNSMAN I
Well, we needs Ettie and she just plain ain't comin' out again.

TOWNSMAN II
Reckon what's wrong with her this time.

TOWNMAN III
Maybe it's just old age got her cantankerous.

TOWNSMAN IV
Ain't fair now, here she got up a practicin' and singin' and we are gettin' real good too. We wuz even thinkin' a' gettin' us suits what matched so we could go out to revivals 'n such.

STOREKEEPER
You fixin' on savin folks now?

TOWNSMAN I
Ain't that directly - no, but what with Miz Ettie gettin' us to sing quartet, well we thought we could do somethin' asides sittin around here 'n

TOWNMAN II
Well, H.....

TOWNMAN III
Watch that, you promised - no more cussin'

TOWNMAN IV
ha...n' here I even swore off chewin'. Miz Ettie said it made my teeth look bad and I couldn' sing with no wad in my cheek.
Now, she won't come to help us practice and we bin tryin' by ourseflies, but h... oh, well

STOREKEEPER

How about you get together and go over and give her some kind 's serenade outside her window.

LONZO

(Comes in lookin' dejected) Hey, fellers... (he sits down and doesn't go on)

STOREKEEPER

You too Lonzo? What's ailin' everybody?

LONZO

Mama. She just acts so hateful lately, ain't even looked at her garden fer weeks.

TOWNSMAN III

Well, we need her somethin' awful Lonzo. Cain't you help us to git her out?

LONZO

Mama scares me when she gets so down like she is. Don't know nothin' could cheer her now.

TOWNMAN IV

Maybe git the doctor. Bet you what...bet you she's sick and jest too proud to tell it.

TOWNSMAN IV

What about Arah - what's she think is wrong?

LONZO

They had them such a fuss a few weeks back - just before Sarry went to Floridy to visit. She didn't even send Mama no card or nuthin'.

TOWNSMAN I

My Ader went by and Ettie wouldn't talk to her. Same old thing said Ader. jAder 'lows as how Ettie's scared.

TOWNSMAN II

Lonzo, you got to try to talk to your Mama - we got to practice and, 'sides, she ought ta be pure thrilled about that singing comin' up.

LONZO

Well, you give me an idear - I'm gonna ask Doc Tucker to come on by to see her. That's what I'll do.

STOREKEEPER

That boy sure loves his Mama, ain't many like that.
(In Ettie's kitchen)
(Later that afternoon)

LONZO
Mama, when you gonna' talk to me?

ETTIE
(Gruff)
About what? What you want me to say that you'd understand.

LONZO
Please, Mama, I know I'm simple, everybody says so, but I kin still love you Mama. What they don't know Mama, is that simple don't even hurt - it's fine by me. I don't hurt nobody and if they want to say names for me - why, simple is just fine.

ETTIE
Oh, Lonzo, Lonzo. I wonder could you ever understand...

LONZO
Mama, I understand more 'n you think sometimes, like I knows about why you bin feelin' so down. I don't think that doctor told you nothin' bad. You know what I think - I think you still moanin' about that perfessor feller. Mama, I knows you ain't a woman should be alone.

ETTIE
Well, you're pumb wrong. That doctor says I got sumthin' -cept it just sumthin' you get when you're old. Got me bad arthuritis. Guess we all get that when we gits old but with this bad leg well, I just am gettin' it worse and worse - that's it. My own fault.

LONZO
How kin thet be your own fault?

ETTIE
If you could only understand - understand what happened and why.

LONZO
About the car addicent? I knows all 'bout that Mama.

ETTIE
How'd you know that.

LONZO
My frens - down to the store - they told a' thet a long time back. Made me sorry, but sorry fer you -

ETTIE
(She embraces him) Oh, Lonzo, I hoped you'd never know about that and about your head 'n all.

LONZO.
Mama, I loves you moren' anything and I don't mind being simple - thet way I likes everbody. You need me Mama and ain't nothin' I'd rather do than take care a' you.

(lights dim as they embrace)
(It is the next March)

STOREKEEPER
(He is dressed in a suit)
(All the men are there - and dressed in suits)
(Takes out his pitch pipe) Ready? 
Fx.....
So.....
Ls.....
Mi.....

They then sing a quartet gospel song (not chosen yet).

LONZO
(Also in a suit)
She's ready to go. Never saw such a fuss as that Sarry tryin' to fix Mama's hair.

TOWNSMAN I
(looking out the window) Here comes Ader and Francie with the truck. She's got chicken bar'que like I'll bet they never tasted up thar in Benton. Put this town on the map fer sure.

TOWNSMAN II
I'll tell you what - my Anna Mary bin cookin' up such a storm she ain't talked to me in two days.

TOWNSMAN III
Count yer blessins'. Marthy bin doin' nothin' but talkin' ever since we all decided to go up with Miz Ettie fer her singin'

TOWNSMAN IV
Well, let's git 'agoin'. I hear they got a dinner up there like a' which you see oncet in a lifetime - or onct a year if'n you get to the big singing every year.

STOREKEEPER
Out, out, keep together now - (in the distance)
(Whose goin' first....

Who knows the way?
What?

BIG SINGING SCENE
The whole cast assembles on the top tier. All are dressed in their best. Extras might be used to swell the crowd.

Ettie comes in either in a wheelchair or on a cane. She is given a place of honor.

The leader rises to give the opening lines and says a prayer.

FIRST SONG - (Holy Manna is the traditional opening song).
Another leader gets up and chooses a song. This song should be the major work of the show. The most moving and the most complicated

OH, MAN OF GOD REMEMBER ME  (or, another song)

At the end he says that this song was for Miss ettie

Ettie then rises - without chair or cane and goes to the center to lead her songs. then she gives her speech.

ETTIE

You people will never know what this all means for me. All of you worked so hard and came so far to be here and now I know you are singing your hearts out today.

(She cries a little)

You know, we have heard a lot of preachin' in our lives and I hate to say this, but you can forget that preachin right away. But, when a group of people like you, all God's children - who get together to sing - then you're just gonna' feel that and you won't never forget it. I know I won't. I feel it and I feel a real love so strong - important love. There's nothin' in this world any more beautiful than a group of God's children who can come together like this and sing. I'm grateful to you people and I'm grateful to someone else too. You know, sometimes we just don't understand how God works. We think we should just have what we wants so bad and forget to say God workin' in our lives. And now I understand how this singing was give back to me. That's what was important and now I see the light.

And I wanna' tell any of you young people here today who was moved by this singing - that now it's up to you to keep this singing going. There just ain't no joy like it. It's my heart's desire now to live on and to keep on singing just like you people do and to keep on learning too.

Lord, I say, Lord teach me how to sing.

I appreciate this, yes, I do.

You know, I bin sick awhile but today I feel free and better. I've sung with many of you and I love you and I've seen the tears on your faces and I know you are God's people and I know that your singing is the best kinda' prayin'. Today, I feel like as if God's people were praying for me and now I know that you were.

I appreciate it

(Almost speechless now)

I want to sing FAREWELL MY FRIENDS, in the memory of someone once was important to me.
(Light shifts to Woodward – who looks a little older).

WOODWARD

(He is writing a letter.)

My Dear Ettie:
The news of the Big Singing dedicated to you and your work has reached me here. I am at another University now not far from you in Kentucky. I am happy to read that life has been giving you the rewards your work so richly deserves. I have been very remiss about letting you know that the book on Gospel singing and singers came out last Fall. I am sending you a copy.

My young wife is no longer with me and that has been difficult for me and after she left me there was a great emptiness in my heart. It made me think often of you, gentle lady.

Because I know that work is the best remedy, I have begun a new project, to collect old ghost stories or tales of haunted houses and then to go out photograph those houses. I may, then be in your area again,

(Sarah Jane is reading this letter ending)

SARAH JANE

...because I have heard of many stories and possible ghosts sighted in your area. I hesitate to even ask if I might drop by to see you again, but....

Oh, ettie, he could be a'comin' back...

ETTIE

(She turns away)
Cain't think right...

SARAH JANE

(Grabs two cups and pours coffee) You sit – now. OH, I got to copy down his address here. Remember that time when old Mrs. Gudge thought her husband had come back from the daid n' she ran around the barn with a board?

ETTIE

(Drinks her coffee) Tell you what Sarry, I knows for a fact that the old Jones place got at least three haunts in it - I seen 'em all three!

SARAH JANE

'n that tree where Jim's brother's boy hanged himself, why.

ETTIE

Did I ever tell you, Sarry, about the time I saw my Granny... I was just a wee bitty thing but I knowed it was her, 'n she....

CURTAIN.
Notes From A Journal
Taos, New Mexico, Dec. 19-31, 1991

Writing a Play.

Dec. 19. Arrived at the Wurlitzer this afternoon after lunch, after surviving a blizzard last night that lasted from the border to Santa Fe and scared me half to death. Dr. Henry Sauerwein was as gracious and as funny and as cantankerous as ever. A Navaho Indian sculptor came by as Henry and I drank some tea. Out the windows of the main Wurlitzer house I could see snowcapped Mount Wheeler (13,000 feet) and the special blue sky of the New Mexico mountain country and I experienced instant culture shock. Henry and his assistant took me over to the guest house and settled me in and then Henry went off muttering, "Well, now I've gotten rid of you, so I'll have to go back and get rid of that Indian!" I've only visited this guest house before. It is warm and comfortable and there is a studio on the back end for sculptors. I immediately got to work in unpacking the boxes of books and papers and tapes and notes and tried to get organized. I'm now ready to go. It is dark dark dark here and so quiet. Because the altitude is about 7,000 feet one tends to have to adjust to it. I adjust by getting sleepy - which I am.

Dec. 20. One of the Beatles, when asked how he wrote a song, said that he, "...just pulled a chair up to a table, sat down, and wrote a song but that the important part was to stay in that chair." This morning I began to rewrite the treatment and to see exactly what had changed. The writing went so easily it almost scared me. Then I realized I had to go back and reread that dissertation on Sacred Harp music. There must truly be something special in the dry air up here because I read that whole thing in one afternoon.

Dec. 21. Why am I sitting here tonight instead of continuing to get on with Act I? It is late and I am stuffed. Henry sent Dale over to 'command' me to go out to dinner with him. It is the night of the Winter Solstice. After Henry takes you out to dinner you are stuffed and exhausted and I am. Henry is treated like a king in this town and catered to so one feels rather special. However, Henry is growing rather deaf now and talking with him in a restaurant can be very embarrassing. We went to a hispanic place, Don Fernando's - not a tourist place. You have to yell to answer Henry and he can be really embarrassing with questions about - why don't I know anything about the death of modern Orientalists?, economics in Holland in the seventeenth century?, why haven't I read all the works of Paul Brach? (which happen to be mainly in German). I am sitting here feeling like a fat tired dummy. Henry is the most intellectually challenging human being alive.

Dec. 22. in order to do anything creative one must really be alone. tonight it hits me how alone I really am. There is not one soul for miles around me and no phone and the paths are snowy and icy and where would I go? I could howl like a coyote and no one would hear me. However, I am also in my glory. I can put anything where
I want to and stay up as long as I have energy, and sleep until I wake up. Henry says that in situations like this one finds out if they have the "right stuff" or not and that this is the test. He says many people come to the Wurlitzer thinking they can create something but when faced with the solitude and silence and no phone or TV, they find out they don't have anything in them and they leave. I guess I am squirming a little because right now I have the treatment finished, my dates in order and my definitions clear. But, I also have a box of blank paper that I hope will have a play written onto in the next 10 days. Are all the things I think are in my head really there? Maybe I'm squirming because I'm afraid nothing will emerge. Tomorrow is the day.

Dec. 23. A play is actually nothing but notations or a blueprint, for actors. I read that somewhere. However, it is also something else, an idea or an event that could transform an audience in some way through some kind of cathartic experience. Horace wrote that a play should give us two things - we should learn and enjoy. Still formulas and ideas don't do a thing for one when sitting faced with a blank new page. All I know is that a play moves along only through one means and that is dialog. Today I got a few people on the page and I think they are beginning to live. The men in the town characters suddenly are beginning to become people instead of just devices to move the action along. I am enjoying them. This peace and quiet is really wonderful. I am very tired tonight but feel - what a luxury this is because when I wake up tomorrow morning I can just go right back to the typewriter and not pass go.

Dec. 24. I labored today, things were slowing down. It seemed like forcing myself to do one more page, one more page. But, the character of Sarah Jane is forming and I really like her so I try to think of what she will say next. I've read about characters taking over the writer and doing pretty much what they want to do and I really experienced that phenomenon today. But, it is not a bad feeling; in fact it is kind of fun because one thing follows another in a more natural way. Had to back track many times today to look up things like dates and pieces of music. I must sit and get some of these songs straightened out. I know there is time for that later but there has to be something and here I can do that.

Dec. 25. Henry declared that we "had" to go to the Deer Dance at the Pueblo this afternoon. I worked on drawings for the set and did some costume sketches too. Didn't finish anything but did get a good start. Didn't want to get too involved in the scene because I knew I'd have to finish that. The dance was so fantastic that, afterwards, I realized that we stood in the cold (21 degrees) on ridges of ice and snow for 3 and half hours and I never felt cold until I got back here. Met Sandra Lerner, from the Wurlitzer last time, and she asked us home for hot soup but I didn't want to waste any more time. Came back and finished the set and drawings. Read back to try for some corrections.
Journal. 3.

Dec. 26. It was cold and crisp this morning and the gas heater makes me wake up with a headache. Walked to the end of the road and fell down - that ought to teach me to stay inside. I felt sorry for myself today. All I knew to do was just sit there and keep going but today it was line by line, pushing - maybe slogging is the better word. Sandra dropped in and took me to the grocery store and I got some pens to draw with and more coffee. The predicted snow never came. Tonight I just kept on and kept on. My back hurts but Act I is finished. I think it is too short but I see several places to be able to add more color to the conversations and draw them out. However, the essential points are in there and that's what counts right now. Tomorrow - Act III. I suspect tonight that Act III will be much different than I had foreseen.

Dec. 27. Tonight I got rather scared. I was walking back in here from the kitchen and I thought I heard footsteps - I did - they were mine. I think I got Act III well underway today. Now the characters are really talking and moving and seem more like real people - at least in my own head. This is getting to be hard work but there is a rhythm to it and I am getting used to the isolation. My main companion has been a spider that lived (past tense) in the bathtub faucet. This morning I looked really closely at it and found it to be a black widow!!! It no longer lives here. Today I think I really experienced total concentration. Just kept on going from sentence to sentence and, suddenly, it was dark. I don't know how to chart stages any more. Too tired. Plans for careful observation are gone.

Dec. 28. This morning I put songs together on one tape. It took all morning but at least there is some choice here and it caused me to realize that I have to get into the actual songs even more. I just knew it was powerful music and mind boggling sounds but I hadn't really taken the time to sort out what would go where. I went back into my Southern Harmony Song book and got caught up in just reading the words. They really are so hopeful. The songs thrill me still. I finished the drawings this afternoon. This evening I got into Act III and had to go back and reread a lot of letters. These are hard because I have to separate what is real from what I can write. I am getting so fond of Ettie and Sarah Jane but still don't feel good about the main character. Obviously it is easier to see the mood changes for a woman than for a man. He feels cardboard to me - as if he is just a device. Woodward needs more personality.

Dec. 29. Woke up cold and sick but with words in my head for letters and a better ending. There were so many papers all over here, floor, couches, bookcases, that I forced myself to go through everyone of them systematically, check, enter and throw away. I carted two bagfuls of paper out to the garbage - equivalent of two boxes of notes. There went a whole year's worth of work. Now it looks pitiful - boiled down to about 40 pages of script. This afternoon went over to Henry's to hear his lecture for the Aesthetics Institute. As usual, his lecture was so erudite and complex that I congratulated myself for even understanding one third of it. It was about Arabia and the influence on culture from the middle east and how it has been misunderstood (I think).
I was happy to get back here to what I can at least understand. I've reached the ending and now have to go back over several areas and enrich them and, in some cases, correct some things. I am afraid to read the whole thing now. What if it is only high school quality? Being alone with no feedback is simply terrifying and maybe I'm just fooling myself and wasting my time and other people's money? I dream about the characters and they talk now. I think this is becoming a folk opera. After some book checking I am as certain as I can be that the history is straight now and is woven in here. Feeling insecure and lonely.

Had to take aspirin and put ice on my neck. A play is so different from a story or a poem - no one wants to read a play and, on top of that, plays are hard to read because so much stage imagination is involved. Now I can hardly wait to see it read and see how much emotion is missing. I've just been worrying about the lines.

My desk sits before a big window that looks straight down the road toward the mountains. It hit me as very odd to be writing in the Kentucky vernacular while looking at the Pueblo Indians' holy mountains.

Dec. 30. This afternoon I finished it! By noon I was within a few pages of the ending. My head was dizzy. Very tired. Henry's assistant wanted me to read his palm this afternoon so after I'd finished I went over and did that. What I didn't know was that Henry's new assistant, Dale Blair, had been the director of the theater in Dallas and now has a play off-Broadway and also taught playwriting at Baylor. This is hard to believe, but, afterwards, he asked me if I would like him to read the play. I didn't ask because I would have been too scared. Even so, he offered. This was exactly what I had been praying for - someone to read this and let me know where I am. Personally, I am in a daze. So, I did give it to him and he took it off until tomorrow. I came back in here and just wandered back and forth. It was as if someone took a new born child away and would come back to say if they thought it was healthy or not. I've already read the book I brought and listened to the tapes and Taos radio music is terrible. Guess I'll draw pictures.

Dec. 31. Banging on the door late this morning while I was trying to add some costume drawings. There was Kathleen Ferguson, who used to live in Lexington and now is in Taos who heard I was here - she had been a Wurlitzer Fellow (Henry called us 'inmates') back in the summer of '89. She came by to ask me to have dinner with them for New Year's Eve. This will be the second cooked meal I have had. Late in the afternoon, Dale said to come over and talk about the script. He loved it! He felt it should be on PBS if nothing else, but that on stage it should be wonderful and he said he wished he could be the first one to direct it. He major advice was to never go the cheap or half way route. He felt it should not be done at all until it could be done first class. He felt, as I was coming to see myself, that it must have real singers and not miming to tapes.
Journal Entry from Morehead.

Jan. 5. Am home and unpacked and tired and amazed. I feel good because I know I did the best work I could do and was also blessed. Have been thinking about a colleague who said to me that writing a play would not be, for me, any kind of professional advancement because I teach speech. I reminded him that I teach more than that and that the department is called Communications. In a play the conversation is the action and moves life and human interconnections along by dialog alone - plus body movement and nonverbal communication. The crutch of narration is not possible in a play. If a play, which is human dialog and interaction, is not about communication, then what is? There is more understanding of human communication in a play than anything I've read in some statistical study. A play might well be called, watching human communication in action.
SHOUTING THE GLORY

RESEARCH SOURCES USED

BOOKS AND JOURNALS.


Walker, William. (Edited by Glenn C. Wilcox) *The Southern Harmony & musical Companion; Containing a Choice Collection of Tunes, Hymns, Psalms, Odes, and Anthems; selected from the most eminent authors in the United States and well adapted to Christian churches of every denomination, singing schools, and private societies.* Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1987. (A reprint of Walker's original songbook first issued in 1854. The songbook still used at the Big Singing in Benton, Kentucky).
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Other Sources Used.

Recordings.

Private recordings done in South Central Kentucky, donated by Barbara Pierpont, Edmonton, Kentucky.


Ring It out! and Old Time Religion. Tapes produced by Dan Hitepol at the Lacy Creek church of Christ, cottle creek, Morgan county, Kentucky.


Recording done on-site at the Benton Big Singing in March, 1991 by the author.

Letters

The collected letters of Ona Barton. Donated to the author by the Department of Library Special Collections Archives. Letters were from 1977 to 1988m written by Ona Barton of Pell Mell, Tennessee to Dr. Montell - with some responses. In addition, letters from 1989 - 1990 were given to the author by Dr. Montell directly.

Interviews

Dan Hitepol, singer and church member, Lacy Creek Church of Christ.

William Lynwood Montell, Three interviews, June, Nov. and Jan.

On-Site Visits

Lacy Creek Church of Christ, Cottle, Kentucky.
Christian Church, Morehead, Kentucky
Big Singing. Benton, Kentucky (2 days).
Lick creek Holiness Church, Pike County, Kentucky