

George Dougherty's Tape to John Parris  
No Date  
HL-MSS17-03-19-55-Dougherty

Transcribed and Edited by  
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For ENGL 659-70: Southern Literature  
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## Introduction to the Series

This transcription and its attendant annotations, explanatory material, and bibliography was prepared by students in ENGL 659: Southern Literature. The learning outcomes for this class include the following:

- Demonstrate proficiency with research tools and relevant technology for this subject along with appropriate scholarly material
- Communicate scholarly information to a group of peers
- Develop an appreciation of the culture, history, and art of the region

All work is presented as submitted by the graduate students. While they take great care with their transcriptions and annotations, errors are possible. As they learn throughout this class, good scholarship requires meticulous research and corroboration by authoritative sources. Our objective is to provide transcriptions and annotations of WCU's Special Collections materials that will be useful to the institution, students, scholars, patrons, and all users of our library's resources. If you wish to submit an emendation or correction for this document, please email Dr. Mae Miller Claxton ([mclaxton@wcu.edu](mailto:mclaxton@wcu.edu))

## Introduction to the Document

This transcription reproduces a personal audio recording sent by George Dougherty, a West Virginian trial lawyer and part-time entertainer, to Western North Carolina journalist, John Parris. Parris was a long-time columnist for the *Asheville Citizen-Times*, writing columns on Appalachian life and storytelling, preserving twentieth century mountain culture in his writing. Parris wrote over seven thousand columns and five books during his lifetime.

John Alivis Parris, Jr. was born in 1914 and grew up in Sylva, North Carolina. Parris began his reporting and writing as a teenager and joined the Associated Press, working as a war correspondent in London during World War II. After returning home in the 1950s, Parris joined the *Asheville Citizen-Times* and started his long-running column, “Roaming the Mountains.” This column ran for over forty years, blending journalism, local folklore, humor, and cultural writing. Later in his career, Parris wrote five books, some based on popular “Roaming the Mountains” stories. Parris passed away at age seventy-four in Sylva, North Carolina. The *John A. and Dorothy Parris Distinguished Professorship in Appalachian Cultural Studies* was established in 2002 at Western Carolina University to ensure that Parris’s dedication to preserving mountain culture endures. The professorship is currently held by local fiction author, Ron Rash.

The sender of the transcribed tape, George Dougherty, was a West Virginian attorney based out of Charleston, known for his persona as “The Earl of Elkview,” in which he performed songs on radio and stage. In the transcribed recording, Dougherty gives compliments on Parris’s writings, shares anecdotes of his West Virginian influences, and sings a song likely titled “Snuff-Dippin’ Woman for a ‘Baccar Chewin’ Man.”

### **Editorial Note**

The following transcription uses creative choices to preserve Dougherty's spoken rhythms and regional dialect. For instance, em dashes are used to preserve Dougherty's natural false starts in his speech and his natural interruptions in his dialogue. Minor punctuation has been added for sentence clarity without altering tone or meaning. Transcribed text was proofed against the original audio for accuracy to the best of the transcriber's abilities.

### **Transcription**

Yeah. Mr. Parris<sup>1</sup>, is it? Mr. Parris, I was quite taken by your article in this morning's paper about Aunt Tennie<sup>2</sup> and her proclivities towards sni— toward dipping snuff<sup>3</sup>. And my name is George Dougherty<sup>4</sup>. I am a trial lawyer from up in Charleston, West Virginia, and my daughter, Nancy, is going to go to school at Warren Wilson<sup>5</sup>, and I brought her by here to look it over while I'm on my way down to Charleston, South Carolina, to make a lecture to nurses about how to keep from getting sued for— for malpractice. And so having read this, I came by the newspaper office and wanted to share with you a— a song that an old trial lawyer in West Virginia, knowing I wrote comedy songs and did some entertaining as the Earl of Elkview<sup>6</sup>, one of my dear friends named Jack Savage<sup>7</sup>, who's now gone, came by one morning and said, “George, did you ever hear it takes a snuff dippin’ woman for a ‘baccer chewing man?” And I said, “No, Jack, but good lord, get it for me right away. I need comedy material.” He said, “Well, there isn't a such song that several years ago,” Jack was kind of a kindly practical joker, and he went into Galper Music Company<sup>8</sup> and asked a young lady if she had that song. And she said, “Why, of course.” And of course, she couldn't find it, so she said she'd order it for him. And of course, she looked all over the country to try to find it. And Jack's kids came home from college, and they thought it was funny, so they got all their friends to go in and ask. And this girl thought she had a hit on her hands that she couldn't find so well, you know, like any song, if you got the basic idea, that's the start on it. And so, I sat down and wrote this song and performed it on the

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<sup>1</sup> John Alvis Parris, Jr. (1914-1999). Western North Carolina newspaper columnist and author.

<sup>2</sup> Likely refers to Tennie Cloer (1886-1980) of Sugar Fork hills, Macon County, NC. She was featured in Parris's cooking volume, *Mountain Cooking*.

<sup>3</sup> Smokeless shredded or ground tobacco leaves. Wet snuff is absorbed through the mouth, and dry snuff is inhaled through the nose.

<sup>4</sup> (1931-2019).

<sup>5</sup> A private liberal arts college in Swannanoa, North Carolina. Formerly a farm school and vocational trade school.

<sup>6</sup> One of Daugherty's stage names. Elkview is an incorporated township in Kanawha County, West Virginia.

<sup>7</sup> Likely a fellow Charleston, West Virginia man. Exact information unknown.

<sup>8</sup> Owned by Stephen H. Galperin, Jr. and had two places of business, one in Charleston, West Virginia and one in Beckley, West Virginia.

Capitol City's Jamboree<sup>9</sup> on its opening night back in about 1969 or so, or 70, I guess. And incidentally, the star of that opening show was Billy Edd Wheeler<sup>10</sup> from up here at The Swan Millet<sup>11</sup>, who's also a West Virginian, and we all know and think a lot of. Anyway, this is a song that was inspired by— by Jack Savage's little joke that he told me. Incidentally, I love the kindly way that you wrote the story. The humor just had such kindness in it. And I'm sure Aunt Tennie was flattered to death. So, if she ever hears of this or if you'd like to send her this tape, feel free to do so. This is copyrighted. Use it any way you want to use it without cost, of course. But if— if—if you'd like her to hear this, why I'd be delighted.

I was sitting there one morning, Sears and Roebuck<sup>12</sup> in my hand with my Mail Pouch<sup>13</sup> in my pocket, just a'spittin' in a can, when a thought just run right through me like them salts will do a man. It takes a snuff-dippin' woman for a 'baccar-chewin' man. Where did you end up together? You're close as you can be. It'll help your disposition. It'll cure your misery. On the snuff the Mail Pouch mixes like a hound dog and the flea and the kiss that sure is better with a girl who tastes like me. Sister Sarry<sup>14</sup> sat in church behind the undertaker stand. She reached down in her pocketbook and come up with the can of Honest<sup>15</sup> snuff's best dippin' is made in this great land. And she's a snuff-dippin' woman for a baccar-chewin man. Now here's the love part: me and Sarry, we got married on the 13th day of June. We chewed and dipped together on that summer honeymoon, and now we got a little dipper comin' pretty soon, and life sure can be

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<sup>9</sup> Refers to the Wheeling Jamboree, an annual event at the Capitol Theater in Wheeling, West Virginia. The event began in 1933 and eventually hosted country superstars like Waylon Jennings and Loretta Lynn.

<sup>10</sup> Billy Edd Wheeler (1931-2024) was a singer-songwriter from Whitesville, West Virginia. He later resided in Boone, North Carolina and Swannanoa, North Carolina.

<sup>11</sup> Location unknown. Likely a music venue in Charleston, West Virginia.

<sup>12</sup> Customer catalog from the consumer corporation Sears.

<sup>13</sup> A brand of chewing tobacco from Bloch Brothers Tobacco Company of Wheeling, West Virginia. The company is now Swishers International.

<sup>14</sup> A variant of the name Sarah.

<sup>15</sup> Honest Scotch was a brand of snuff from American Snuff Company.

beautiful when you chew and dip in tune. Where did you end up together? You're close as you can be. It'll help your disposition. It'll cure your misery. On the snuff and Mail Pouch mixers like a hound dog and the flea and the kiss sure is better with a girl who tastes like me.

Now, you might wonder why I haven't had a ukulele with me. I take it along to these nurses because they're awfully— you know the subject of malpractice is very grim, and God bless them. The nurses are doing their best to lick that problem by understanding it and not putting their head in the sand, sometimes like the doctors do. And so they invite us, the former Dean of Law School and me, to go around the country making these talks in an effort to avoid malpractice and deliver— to bring about the better delivery of total medical care. Well, I take the ukulele along about every hour or so. It's an all-day lecture and about every hour, so do a little comedy song for 'em to kind of relieves the thing. Again, I want to compliment you on your— on your article. I just wish I was in this area so I could be exposed to— to your writing, because the preservation of the— of the true heritage of this country in kindly humor is a wonderful— a wonderful thing, and you have a beautiful talent for doing that. I was reminded my old friend West Virginia's most famous storyteller was Sam Chilton<sup>16</sup>, who was related the Chilton family up here in Charleston, who in fact his Uncle Joe<sup>17</sup> bought that *Charleston Gazette* and Sam was— he went through life being a, you know, getting along by telling stories and being a kindly gen— old gentleman. When he was 91, somebody asked Sam if- when he started smoking. He chainsmoked. He said, "Well, I started when I was seven." I said, "Well, how much have you smoked?" "Well, I've chainsmoked ever since." They said, "Well, did that ever bother you?" And he said, "Not yet." He was 91 although that Aunt Tin— Aunt Tennie might enjoy— I know she'd enjoy Sam, because he would, he would approve exactly what she said that having a little

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<sup>16</sup> Samuel B. Chilton (1934-2021) was a West Virginian storyteller and Appalachian historian.

<sup>17</sup> J.E. "Mayor Joe" Chilton (1855-1937) along with others, became incorporators of the *Charleston Gazette* in 1912.

modest habit, like dipping snuff or— or smoking a little bit does tend to prolong your life. Sam was the fellow who, for years, would go up to the Press Club<sup>18</sup> at 10 o'clock in the morning and stay till 2am the next day when they closed it the next day in and some lady came in and said, "Sam Chilton, don't you get sick and tired of— of hanging around here doing nothing to open to this place, closing it every day?" And he looked right in the eye, and he says, "Madam, you don't quit just because you're tired." Well, this lady, Mrs. Bryan<sup>19</sup>, I believe is— was, was very kind to let me make this tape for you, and I do hope you enjoy it as much as I enjoyed your article.

### **Annotated Works Cited**

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<sup>18</sup> Unknown location likely in Charleston, West Virginia.

<sup>19</sup> Unidentified. Likely an employee or owner of a recording venue or studio.

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