

## The Bitter Southerner Podcast: Hillbillies Need No Elegy

**Chuck Reece (00:09):** Hello, friends and neighbors. Chuck Reece here, it's The Bitter Southerner podcast from Georgia Public Broadcasting and the magazine I edit, The Bitter Southerner. Today, we're talking about Appalachia. I grew up in the north Georgia mountains and that makes me Appalachian by birth and raising. And mountain people talk kind of funny, I guess I-I have to acknowledge that. The first time I lived in New York City back in the mid to late '80s, I made friends with a guy from Detroit, who once heard me say that my grandparents had grown up in a hollow. Now, how I said that word to him, of course, was "holler," because holler was how I always said it. It's how I learned to say the word. And, as our friendship grew, that word became his code word for the south. Every time I left home, he'd say, "have fun in the holler!"

**Chuck Reece (01:12):** And I discovered that, you know, if you make the Big Apple and probably any other giant city your home for a while and your roots, in ways, are Appalachian, the friends you make in that big city will, indeed, joke with you and call you a hillbilly. I think you can count on it. I just try not to let it fluster me. I just own the fact that I was a hillbilly, born and bred. I mean, I adapted to New York, didn't ever wear my overalls out on the street, I don't think. But I didn't hide who I was. And when I think back on that time, it, it reminds of one of my favorite books, a great pulp novel by Jim Thompson called The Killer Inside Me. Well, I had a hillbilly inside me, as it were, and I let him speak when he needed to.

**Chuck Reece (02:10):** What I know is that the same choice faces every mountain kid who winds up in a conversation with someone from off, someone who ain't from here, someone who might believe that the word "Appalachia" equals poverty and stupidity and nothing else. And some offspring of Appalachia, like me, want to complicate that simplistic and stupid perception, and we believe that owning the word hillbilly is part of the deal. So listen to one of our Bitter Southerner family members, Chelyen Davis, who grew up in the mountain town of Blue field, Virginia in Tazwell county and now lives in the big city of Richmond.

**Chelyen Davis (02:58):** When I was growing up in Appalachia, I heard hillbilly mostly used as pejorative word, a slur kind of used against us by outsiders, and it signified stereotypes to me. And I live outside the mountains now, and sometimes I still, in the year of our Lord, hear people use it as a slur. But, these days, I feel like mountain people are trying to own that word and focus more on the positive aspects of the word "hillbilly." I'm very proud of where I'm from and of being a hillbilly, and to say I'm not a hillbilly seems like a repudiation of Appalachia. It's like I'm not not a hillbilly. So I'm trying to come around to using the word more and trying to own it more, but I st- feel like I still have work to do on that.

**Chuck Reece (03:33):** But, of course, Appalachia's perception problems are way deeper than whether us hillbillies decide to call ourselves by that name. The problem is an even bigger perception, the way that most of the world sees the Appalachian mountains. They see it as the home of the unmotivated and uneducated. They, they even see people that they believe are just happy as hell in their poverty. And J.D. Vance's multimillion selling book of 2016, Hillbilly Elegy, didn't help things much because he simply concluded that his own people were those cartoon images and, by their very nature, unable to put themselves to the hard work of rising through the Ivy Leagues to become a venture capitalist, as J.D. himself did. To my reading, Hillbilly Elegy argues that the people of Appalachia are the cause of the region's problems, but not the industries that have spent centuries extracting Appalachia's rich

resources. Because, ever since there has been industry, it has come into these mountains, carved them up for the valuable resources like coal that are in those mountains, and then they walked away. But, in Vance's view, the problems come almost entirely from the people. He imputes their spirit, their work ethics, their very hearts, concluding that their very culture is the handicap. So, on this episode, six in our second season, we're going to set you straight about Appalachia and we're going to do it with the help of three mountain women. Welcome to The Bitter Southerner podcast. Today's episode is called: Hillbillies Need No Elegy.

Song: "Bitter Days Ahead"

**Chuck Reece (05:20):** You can't understand the culture of any group of people without understanding their history. So, briefly, a little history about the Appalachian mountains. The colonists who first settled in Appalachia were folks who landed on America's northeastern shores and made their way, over the generations, into the oldest mountain range on the continent. One of the tricky cultural perceptions, which persists until this day, is that all those people were white. They were all of European descent. Well, they were not, and they are not. So, if anything had you believing otherwise, you were relying on bad guidance. So, let's shoot the biggest, wrongest stereotype down with finality. Appalachia is not entirely white. Isn't now, and never was.

**Chuck Reece (06:35):** But, regardless of pigmentation, the people who populated Appalachia were the kind of folks who preferred the quiet paradise of the mountains to the hubbub of cities. But to think they were all loners is wrong. Because they moved into those hollers and built small communities and they fiercely defended them. And we could tell stories for months about the problems and challenges Appalachia people have faced throughout American history, but we're paying particular attention to the Appalachian story since the industrial revolution.

**John Prine:** When I was a child my family would travel, down to Western Kentucky where my parents were born. And there's a backwards old town that's often remembered, so many times that my memories are worn.

**Chuck Reece (07:10):** John Prine, the songwriter the New York Times called An American Icon, his roots are in the coal mining country. Wrote his immortal song, Paradise, about the monumental changes that big industry brought to Appalachia, how industry extracted resources and then repeatedly left the land and the people on it to fend for themselves. I've always loved the fourth verse in Mr. Prine's song best.

**John Prine (07:58):** And the coal company came with the world's largest shovel and they tortured the timber and stripped all the land. Well, they dug for their coal till the land was forsaken, then they wrote it all down as the progress of man.

**Chuck Reece (08:17):** And every generation of mountain folks has dealt with the other problem: the way non-Appalachians see them, the ones who believe hillbilly means lazy and stupid. Over the last century or so, as the mountains produced great writers, artists, and musicians, the world has heard more complex and truer stories about Appalachia, but nothing lasts like television, y'all, and the dumb hillbilly thing has been a Hollywood play toy since the beginning, from the Beverly hillbilly's of my childhood to the southern reality shows that cable television turns out these days like widgets in a factory.

**Chuck Reece (08:57):** But the hollers of Appalachia are teeming with people who don't look like and don't live like those stereotypes. Hollywood has just never been most interested in hearing their stories. And when Appalachian folks of the sort I describe read *Hillbilly Elegy*, they're hurt. When we did the first episode of this season, the one about the southern accent, one of our listeners commented on Apple Podcasts that, and I quote, "I'm from Appalachia. I learned to hide that when my family migrated to Michigan to survive. Listening to this podcast brought me home again in a way that reminds me that we don't have to be like J.D. Vance in *Hillbilly Elegy*."

**Chuck Reece (09:50):** As it turns out, that person was not alone. In the months when *Hillbilly Elegy* sat firmly atop all the best seller lists, conversations began among many native Appalachians and amongst some academics who were fascinated by the region, even though they didn't grow up there. Two of these people were Meredith McCarroll, a North Carolina mountain woman who is now the director of the Writing and Rhetoric program at Bowdoin College in Maine, and Anthony Harkins, a non-Appalachian steeped deeply in the region through his work as a history professor at Western Kentucky University. And their conversations led them to assemble a book called *Appalachian Reckoning: The Region Responds to Hillbilly Elegy*.

**Chuck Reece (10:36):** *Appalachian Reckoning* includes 40 voices; white, Puerto Rican, black, queer, straight, trans, activists, teachers, preachers, artists, sociologists, historians, legal scholars, literary scholars, and organizers. About half of them are women and every damn one of them is Appalachian. Now, if you've read *Hillbilly Elegy*, but have not read *Appalachian Reckoning*, please buy yourself a copy because, in it, you will find in the amassed weight of those 40 voices the real truth about Appalachians.

**Chuck Reece (11:28):** Now, when *Appalachian Reckoning* came out, I was asked to interview Meredith and Tony in front of an audience when their book tour brought them to Atlanta. What you're about to hear right now was recorded in front of a live audience at Manuel's Tavern, an Atlanta institution of sorts.

**Tony Harkins (11:43):** I'm Tony Harkins. Um, I am not from Appalachia, but I have been writing about Appalachia for quite some time, mostly about the image of Appalachia, the representations of it.

**Chuck Reece (11:53):** And Tony Harkins said he was surprised by how frequently the word "hillbilly" comes up in the media.

**Tony Harkins (12:00):** It constantly comes up, again and again and again, and *Hillbilly Elegy* is just the latest rendition of that, in a way that reinforces many of the stereotypes that really go back a century or more, but get reframed each time in a new, in a new style.

**Meredith McCarroll (12:16):** Hi, I'm Meredith McCarroll and, as you've heard, to have so many people say, "Oh, I read *Hillbilly Elegy*, I get where you're from now," and I was like, whoa! No, you don't!

**Chuck Reece (12:30):** Meredith says Appalachia is a much larger and diverse region than how it's depicted in *Hillbilly Elegy*.

**Meredith McCarroll (12:35):** Appalachia is a 13-state region and it's, it's an incredibly diverse place. And what most people in the region were frustrated by, uh, was the audacity of J.D. Vance to make these claims about his own experience speaking for others-

**Chuck Reece (12:52):** That, friends, is the crux of the problem with Hillbilly Elegy. Because, brother J.D., what you did, was you turned your story into our story. And that's why Meredith and Anthony felt compelled, in their book, to collect the voices of many different kinds of Appalachian peoples.

**Tony Harkins (13:12):** The single story that J.D. Vance offers is not the only story, that there are many Appalachian experiences, there are many Appalachian people, this is a diverse place. And, uh, we wanted to make sure that, that that complexity was being, was being made clear.

**Chuck Reece (13:31):** It's pretty rare to see a book published specifically in response to another book. But Meredith McCarroll, one of Appalachian Reckoning's editors, says she sees those 40 voices as a chorus that pushes back against the stereotypes that follow them.

**Meredith McCarroll (13:49):** There is radical activism that has been going on in Appalachia for a very long time, because this, this idea of people, of outsiders coming in or of, I guess, in this case, it's insiders going out, but people, um, writing about and talking about Appalachia in a particular way that's really damaging and holds on to these stereotypes of a place that is, um, that is of another time and is really backwards. Those are really damaging stereotypes and there's nothing new about it, and so that's led to a ferocity among Appalachian people, and it's led to incredibly rich and beautiful storytelling and writing and, uh, photography and filmmaking-

**Chuck Reece (14:36):** Meredith McCarroll herself is one of those Appalachians who has written richly and beautifully about her experience and, that night, when we recorded Meredith and Tony, she read from one of her own contributions to Appalachian Reckoning, an essay called On And On: Appalachian Accent and Academic Power. Here she is reading a little bit of it.

**Meredith McCarroll (14:59):** We studied the foxfire magazines like those that line the bookshelves in my childhood living room, we practiced churning butter, we read about quilting, and some of this resonated with me because it was familiar. My granny painstakingly taught me to quilt one summer, which mostly meant that I spent my time watching her pull out all of my sloppy handwork. My granny and pa, who lived next door, grew and canned tomatoes and green beans. I knew the difference between half-runners and blue lakes, and know of no sound more satisfying than the "pop!" of lids sealing on the kitchen counter in the late afternoon. But there are plenty of Appalachian traditions that I did not know and there was nothing markedly Appalachian that we did because we had to. It is true that I had eaten groundhog on a camping trip and could name most of the local peaks by sight. But it's also true that I bought incense and [inaudible 00:07:37] at health food stores in Asheville. I ate more tempeh than I did fatback and I loved Ani DiFranco and Doc Watson equally. After graduation, I moved to Boston and became, for the first time, an outsider. Like so many before me, it took leaving home to understand it. While I was proud of my home, I was also learning the powerful stereotypes about Appalachia had arrived in places like Boston well before me, and had influenced the way that even the most considerate people thought about me. So I actively tried to talk right, to be correct, to hide my accent. There was this one lingering linguistic marker that caused me the most panic when I stilled. Long after I had attached G's to my gerunds and bleached out the local color from my language, I stumbled over the

word, "o-n." My mom told me to put my coat on, and those words rhymed. She told me to call her when I was on the road, and those words rhymed. To my Appalachian tongue, o-w-n and o-n were pronounced exactly the same way. But, not for the rest of the world, I learned. This reminder that I was not from around here meant, to me, that I might not belong in a Boston graduate school. So I learned to always use adverbs. I took my groceries from a buggy and put them in a cart. I nearly stopped calling my hat a toboggan. I forced my vowels into shape. And it worked. I got into graduate school, I got a PhD, I learned to pass. But I had lost my voice. And it wasn't until a decade later that my own repressed voice echoed back to me in West Virginia as writer and activist, Silas House, spoke at a conference, addressing the theme of new Appalachia, urging his audience to bring civil rights issues for LGBTQ people into our classrooms, our scholarship, and our conversations in order to make Appalachia a safer place. In one moment, his voice cracked as he was overcome with emotion, remembering the violence enacted upon queer youth in Appalachia. Throats tightened across the room. He paused, and then said, quietly, "And it will go on and on and on, until we, the teachers and writers and students in this room, commit to change." Now, to an outsider, that might have sounded like he was saying o-w-n over and over. But when I heard Silas House repeat this word in this context, I felt the ground shift beneath me because, while he talked about justice, I heard the timber of my pa. And as he read his own poetry, I heard the cadence of my Aunt Betsy. As he addressed his audience, I heard my mom talking. I heard established scholars speak in accents and it did not change the content of what they were saying. It did not change the power of their intellect. Then I stood up to deliver my paper about the politics of representation in Appalachian film, and my G's were intact, my vowels stood up straight, my "on" was not my "own," and I felt a powerful loss of my own voice and my own accent.

**Chuck Reece (19:12):** That's Meredith McCarroll, reading part of an essay she wrote for Appalachian Reckoning. We'll be back in just a moment. This is The Bitter Southerner podcast from Georgia Public Broadcasting.

**Chuck Reece (19:43):** Welcome back. On this episode, we're talking about perceptions of Appalachia, and I want to introduce you to another contributor to the book Appalachian Reckoning that we've been talking about. Her name is Ivy Brashear and, for 10 generations, Ivy's family has lived on the left fork of Maces Creek. That's in Perry County, Kentucky, county seat, Hazard. Now, she's the Appalachian transition director at something called the Mountain Association For Community Economic Development in Berea, Kentucky. She's also a writer whose work has appeared, not only in The Bitter Southerner, but also in the Huffington Post and other outlets. Ivy is in her early 30's and she says she's seen way too many oversimplified stereotypical images about the mountain people she loves.

**Ivy Brashear (20:37):** You know, I've made it my entire life, actually, to combat those narratives, um, which are oftentimes false and misleading about, uh, who lives in this place, uh, who gets to claim it as their own and who gets to tell the stories about the place. And so, when I was asked to be a part of this, uh, part of this book, I wou- I was glad to do it, and was glad to share some stories, uh, of my people, my family, uh, and my place as a way to further complicate the narrative of Appalachia.

**Chuck Reece (21:12):** For Appalachian Reckoning, Ivy contributed an essay called, Keep Your Elegy: The Appalachia I know Is Very Much Alive. We published that in The Bitter Southerner magazine, too, and she opens that piece by talking about her granny, Della, who absolutely never backed down from a fight, especially when it came to defending her home and her family.

**Ivy Brashear (21:40):** Della Combs Brashear had had enough. She backed her Cadillac longways across the one lane road in front of her house, lit the Virginia slim in her mouth, pulled her .38 pistol from her purse and waited, stone-faced and determined for the next coal trip to come along. The trucks had been running, day and night, up the left fork of Mace's Creek in front of her house every day for weeks. They were coating every bit of furniture in and outside her home with a thick layer of coal dust. Her kitchen counter, the rocking chair she sat in while watching *The Price is Right* in the morning and *Wheel of Fortune* in the evening, the porch swing, the hanging ferns that encased her porch. Nothing could escape the intrusive, insidious dust kicked up from the road by the trucks as they barreled back and forth to the strip mine on the overlooking mountain. The dust swirled in thick gray clouds around the house, sweeping in under the front door and closed windows. It buried everything.

**Ivy Brashear (22:50):** No matter Della's efforts to keep the tides at bay, coal dust tsunamis were inescapable. There's only so many times a woman bound to the code of Clorox, Pledge, and Windex can clean up after someone else's mess before the time comes to act. She wasn't afraid of jail; "they'll give me three hot meals a day and a place to sleep," she proclaimed to my dad when he tried to persuade her to remove her one woman barricade. And she wasn't really making a political stand against an oppressive thieving industry. She was more interested in defending her home from unwanted, unclean intrusions.

**Chuck Reece (23:32):** That was Ivy Brashear reading a portion of her essay, *Keep Your Elegy*. She says her beloved granny, Della, was very much the fierce mountain woman, an archetype that those of us in Appalachia know and revere.

**Ivy Brashear (23:47):** Granny Della was never more fierce than when it came to protecting her family, when it came to standing up for her family and her place but, also, she was very joyful. Um, the joy that she had was really infectious, um, and the joy of her laugh that she had was really infectious, and I think that's also something that we need to tell in these stories, because Appalachian joy is not really featured in these negative stories that we see.

**Chuck Reece (24:14):** For Ivy, telling the stories of Appalachia helped keep memories like the ones she has of her granny Della alive.

**Ivy Brashear (24:21):** Honestly, I'd look for any opportunity to bring her back, uh, back to me, and share her with the world.

**Marie Cochran (24:28):** When I read the story about Della, I thought about an even more complex thing, the true civil rights moment of my mother.

**Chuck Reece (24:37):** Now, that last voice you heard belongs to Marie Cochran. Marie was born and raised in southern Appalachia, specifically in Toccoa, Georgia, which is in Stephens County, about 90 miles east of where I grew up.

**Marie Cochran (24:51):** And that means that my hometown is named after Alexander Stephens, who was the vice president of the confederacy, and that it also has a Cherokee name for the city. And so it's like a walking contradiction.

**Chuck Reece (25:03):** Marie and I met because she runs a most amazing organization. It's called the Affrilachian Artist Project. And, yes, you heard that right: Affrilachian. It gathers the work of black artists from the mountains into art exhibitions, and they travel to esteemed venues like the most recent at the August Wilson Cultural Center in Pittsburgh.

**Chuck Reece (25:25):** And going back to her mother, Marie remembers living in Toccoa in the 1970's, long after schools in her community were desegregated, and she says her mom did something pretty amazing that lives in her memory.

**Marie Cochran (25:40):** She had been told, okay, this is the bus that your children catch. And she noticed, uh, that, okay, well, this just happens to be all the black kids in the community. But one day, I think one of us was sick or something, and she saw another bus come by. We had to walk down the street to the corner to this first bus, the black bus. And then she saw this other bus come by our house and she said, "Wait a minute, my kids don't have to walk down to the corner. There's another bus." So she stood in the middle of the road and stopped the bus.

**Chuck Reece (26:22):** A black woman staring at a bus full of white kids down in the deep south... now, that would have been unthinkable in other parts of the region but, in Appalachia, it was a little different.

**Marie Cochran (26:35):** She didn't have to go to the superintendent or anything. They just changed it, um, and they pretty much easily found out the err of their ways because Ms. Mabel took no junk, still takes no junk.

**Chuck Reece (26:47):** (laughs) And how old is she now?

**Marie Cochran (26:53):** (laughs) She will be 80 soon but she looks like a 55 year old woman.

**Chuck Reece (26:58):** Bless her heart, that's awesome.

**Marie Cochran (27:01):** Yeah. She, she looks like, I don't know, Diahann Carroll on really good days.

**Chuck Reece (27:06):** That's awesome.

**Marie Cochran (27:07):** Um, you know, any of these would make great, dramatic moments, um, humorous moments, um, especially, you know, 'cause my mom would've pulled a pistol if they hadn't listened to her.

**Chuck Reece (27:18):** You see, it's stories like the ones we've heard from Marie and Ivy and Meredith about their own families, and the ones that come from the three dozen other or so contributors in Appalachian Reckoning; that's what tells you the truth about Appalachia, not an investment banker's interpretation of it. Every one of the folks who contributed to Appalachian Reckoning, they worked every day to further the world's understanding of the region they loved, the place that made them who they are.

**Chuck Reece (27:59):** Ivy's job, for instance, at the Mountain Association For Economic Development, is to help small Appalachian communities figure out how to change their economies so that they can

support the entire community. And she believes that gathering up the stories of any community has great power to bring people together around new ideas.

**Ivy Brashear (28:20):** If we can get folks in the region to really buy into and own their own stories and own their own narrative, um, that is real and that is tangible, in all of its beauty and heartache and joy and, um, tragedy, then we will have accomplished something really great. We will have, uh, re-empowered the people of Appalachia to create an economy and to create a place, um, that really reflects who they are, um, in all of that complexity.

**Chuck Reece (28:52):** Marie Cochran's approach, on the other hand, is to preserve the Appalachian story through it's visual arts.

**Marie Cochran (28:57):** Even as Ivy's talking about organizing and having the stories weave through that, you know, I decided that I was going to curate artists who were doing social justice themes or community memory, um, restoration projects in their work.

**Chuck Reece (29:16):** That's why Marie began the Affrilachian Artist Project. Now, the word, "Affrilachia," was originally coined by a poet named Frank X. Walker, who was Kentucky's first African American poet laureate. Marie's greatest statement of purpose for herself is an article that she wrote called, I Pledge Allegiance to Affrilachia. Now, we'll put a link to that on our website, but let's hear what she has to say about it.

**Marie Cochran (29:44):** I pledge allegiance to Affrilachia because, when I found that word, it gave me peace, it sort of clarified in so many ways, my ability to deal with, um, the, you know, what do they say? I have, uh, like a, uh, complicated relationship. That, that's my relationship with Appalachia. Sometime, I have to critique it, um, but I also love it. It's home, and I claim it, and it claims me, most of the time. But I claim it all the time.

**Chuck Reece (30:29):** And so, to conclude, let's speak for a moment directly to brother J.D. Vance. You see what we're talking about here, dude? Your stories of Appalachia failed, in our view, because they were too damn narrow. Three mountain women, just now, told you what you overlooked in Hillbilly Elegy, and what they told you was only a little bit of what you overlooked. Now, here's what I think happened, J.D.; your roots are in Appalachia and they did result in a hard upbringing for you, and I will even operate from the assumption that, in your heart, you want better for all Appalachians. But when you sat down to write Hillbilly Elegy, I think you took the stereotypes of our region that Hollywood gave us a long time ago, saw your own story inside them, and then extrapolated one big conclusion. And, son, we're a damn sight more complicated than that. We pray that, one day, your eyes will open more broadly.

**Chuck Reece (31:44):** Now, before we end today's show, let's hear from some of our listeners from Appalachia, proud hillbillies, one and all.

**Karen Guidry (31:56):** Hi, my name is Karen Guidry, from [Bahaman 00:32:00], North Carolina. When I think of hillbillies, I think of my family and friends I grew up with, and we were just normal people. If you want to call me a hillbilly, that's just fine by me.



**Ashli Stokes (32:18):** Hi, my name is Ashli Stokes, and I'm calling from Charlotte, North Carolina, but I grew up in a place called Hillsville, Virginia. So, when I hear the word hillbilly, for a long time, it really bothered me because I combated just all sorts of, uh, jokes and teases growing up about the name of the place that I came from and the type of people who lived there. Um, I have since moved and I've come to much better terms with the, the, the label of hillbilly. I feel like there is some power in reclaiming it for those of us who have grown up in the mountains and who love Appalachia. Thanks, bye!

**Jason Downey (32:59):** Hi, my name is Jason Downey, and I live in Macon, Georgia. I've lived there for about 19 years, but I grew up in West Virginia, right outside of Charleston, West Virginia. I grew up believing that the term hillbilly could mean both a derogatory term and a term of endearment. When I moved to Georgia, I embraced the term hillbilly as a tie to my roots, because I, I like to think that I am half-Georgian, half-West Virginian, but those Appalachian roots are strong.

**Chuck Reece (33:34):** Yep, Jason, they're strong, and they run deep, and that's true for every Appalachian, no matter what they believe or who they love or whatever beautiful color God made their skin.

(music)

**Chuck Reece (34:05):** That's it for us today, y'all. Our producer Sean Powers and editor Josephine Bennett make this particular hillbilly sound good. We posted a link to the book Appalachian Reckoning in the show notes section of our website. There, you will also find a link to Meredith McCarroll's essay, exclusive to The Bitter Southerner, called, Hillbillies Need No Elegy, which we drew the title of this podcast from. You will find Ivy Brashear's, Keep Your Elegy, and you will find Marie Cochran's, I Pledge Allegiance to Affrilachia. I thank all these women for helping build a better south. Our them song is Ever South, written by Patterson Hood for his band, Drive By Truckers. You know, we rarely listen to the lyrics of that song on our show but, among other things, it chronicles the centuries long journey of Americans down through the Appalachian mountains. So, Sean, let's bring up a couple of particularly good lines about that from Ever South.

**Patterson Hood (35:02):** And we fought our losing battles and we held onto our ways, And we talk of how we left behind our better days, Some were living lives of leisure, some surviving hand to mouth, Bash our heads against the future, ever south...

**Chuck Reece (35:23):** Our other music today is original and composed for this episode by a fine musician from my hometown of Ellijay, Georgia, Eric Sales, my mountain brother for a long, long time. We heard additional music from De Wolfe Music, and if you liked The Bitter Southerner podcast, we would appreciate it so much if you would review it and rate it on Apple Podcast, even if you listened somewhere else. Our show is a co-production of Georgia Public Broadcasting and The Bitter Southerner magazine. You can access more from each episode at [GPB.org/podcast](http://GPB.org/podcast). Once again, I'm Chuck Reece, and my three instructions remain constant: hug more necks, abide no hatred, and spend your time doing what you love with who you love. And if a hillbilly happens to be among those you love, I'm so glad to hear it. See y'all on the next episode.