

THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC WORLD OF FARMERS MARKETS

Mary B. LaLone, Editor

Contributing Researcher-Writers:

**Justin P. Dowdy
Joseph A. Gregory
Jessica E. Hamby
T. Nolan Jamba
Mary B. LaLone
Becky L. Minter
Richard O. Sarver
Kirstin D. Sawicki
David A. Self
Joshua R. Spencer
Jeri St. Clair**

**Department of Sociology & Anthropology
Radford University
2004**

Table of Contents

	Page
Acknowledgements	2
1. Researching Farmers Markets: An Economic Anthropology Study <i>By Mary B. LaLone</i>	3
2. Traditional Markets in the Modern World <i>By Jeri St. Clair</i>	8
3. Learning to Grow: How Farmers Market Vendors Acquire the Knowledge They Need <i>By Richard O. Sarver</i>	17
4. Farmers and Artisans, the Roots of a Region <i>By Justin P. Dowdy</i>	27
5. Farmers Markets: Changes in the Farmers Market Vendors <i>By Joseph A. Gregory</i>	34
6. Cooperative Success: A Study of a Community Based Farmers Market <i>By David A. Self</i>	43
7. Lean on Me: A Look at the Importance of Family and Friends in the Southwestern Virginia Farmers Markets <i>By T. Nolan Jamba</i>	49
8. A Study of Southwest Virginia Farmers Markets <i>By Jessica E. Hamby</i>	57
9. Cultural Themes and Gender in Farmers Markets <i>By Becky L. Minter</i>	70
10. Farmers Markets in Southwest Virginia <i>By Joshua R. Spencer</i>	78
11. The Little Farmers Market that Could <i>By Kirstin D. Sawicki</i>	82

Acknowledgements

We wish to thank all of the farmers market vendors and coordinators who helped us with this research project. Thank you for taking the time to share information and stories with our research team. The farmers market participants made it possible for us to learn about the social and economic world of farmers markets.

We would also like to acknowledge the work of Garrett Smythe and Steve Storer on this project. Although they chose not to have their work appear in this volume, they provided input as part of the research team during the project.

Our appreciation goes to Dr. Peggy Shifflett, Chair of the Department of Sociology & Anthropology, at Radford University. She and Dr. Ivan Liss, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, have lent solid support to my efforts at Anthropology experiential learning at Radford University. We would also like to thank Ms. Pat Rupe, secretary in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, for office support that she provided during the research. Funding for printing this volume was provided by the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Radford University.

Mary B. LaLone
Radford University, 2004

Chapter 1

Researching Farmers Markets: An Economic Anthropology Study

By Mary B. LaLone

Open-air marketplaces are found around the world. Some are periodic marketplaces, meeting once a week or on other periodic schedules. Others, in larger city settings, are daily marketplaces. Open-air marketplaces commonly occur in Latin America, Africa, Asia, and Europe – and we shouldn't be surprised to find them in the United States as well. In the United States, they take the form of flea markets and farmers markets.

Wherever they occur, open-air marketplaces are sites that come alive for 5-6 hours as buyers and sellers mingle to do business and enjoy the social setting as well. Economic anthropology studies examine marketplaces as socio-economic settings, recognizing that economic and social relations are highly intertwined in these settings. Said in another way, the economy of small-scale marketplaces is “embedded” in the social life of family and community. There clearly is an economic dimension to marketplaces. Vendors bring their produce and wares to sell, and buyers come to purchase items to fulfill their needs and wants. But the marketplace is also a place for visiting, chatting with friends, conducting social business, and enjoying the entertainment value of the setting. Vendors often run their businesses as family affairs and build upon social connections with customers and suppliers. Many vendors describe a linked mixture of social and economic motivations as their reasons for selling in the marketplace. Similarly, many buyers describe a preference for the informality and mixed socio-economic atmosphere of the open-air marketplace as the reason for choosing it over shopping in commercial stores.

The intertwined social and economic world of marketplaces is a common theme running through this volume of studies on farmers markets in the Appalachian region of Southwestern Virginia.

Background to the Study

The flea markets and farmers markets of the United States provide good fieldwork settings for investigating the workings of marketplaces in a way that can directly engage Economic Anthropology students in experiential learning. I first put this to the test in 1992-93 by engaging my Radford University Economic Anthropology class in a study of Southwest Virginia flea markets. Using observation, interviewing, and participant-observation techniques, the research team delved deeply into the social and economic world of flea markets (LaLone et al. 1993; LaLone 1994). We found many parallels to the flea marketing patterns and multiple livelihood strategies of vendors that Rhoda Halperin had discovered in her study of Kentucky flea marketing (Halperin 1990).

Later, after conducting a 2002-03 oral history study of family farming in Southwest Virginia (LaLone et al. 2003), it seemed an appropriate time to return to the topic of marketplaces and to investigate the world of farmers markets in this Appalachian Virginia region. The 2004 Radford University Economic Anthropology class formed a research team to take on this fieldwork investigation. This volume is the result of their farmers market studies conducted under my direction from August through December 2004.

Research Methodology

The research project was organized to carry the student research team through the full process of an Economic Anthropology marketplace study within a fifteen-week period.

The project started with an orientation stage designed to give the student participants a “sense of problem,” orienting them to Southwest Virginia farming and regional open-air marketplaces. The research team started by reading *Appalachian Farming Life*, a recent oral history study of farming in the region. This provided them with an understanding of the importance of farming in the region, plus an understanding of the production and marketing strategies of farm families. They also read the flea market study done by the earlier Economic Anthropology research team (LaLone et al. 1993). Later reading focused around the topic of multiple livelihood strategies and the way in which the concept has been applied to understanding Appalachian household economies by Halperin (1990) and LaLone (1996, 2003). The team also read extensively about economic adaptive strategies (Bates 2001) and Economic Anthropology (Plattner 1989).

During the orientation period, team members also made an initial visit to selected farmers markets to familiarize and orient themselves to the setting, start meeting the vendors, and begin building a sense of rapport with selected vendors.

The orientation was followed by a research stage in which team members carried out fieldwork in farmers markets for a two-month period while the markets were at their autumn height, September and October. The team members worked individually during the research stage, studying marketplace(s) that particularly interested them. The study region was Southwestern Virginia. Between the team members, we covered farmers markets ranging from the very smallest rural marketplaces (1-3 vendors), to middle-range town marketplaces (7-20 vendors), and urban city farmers markets (20+ vendors). Weekly discussions allowed the team members to share information and discuss research techniques.

As professor and project director, I organized a structured set of fieldwork assignments for the research team to conduct so that a similar set of data would be collected from each marketplace. First, we started by mapping the marketplaces. Team members drew sketch maps that provided a sense of the market layout, including the layout of each vendor’s display, the spatial relationship of each stall to one another, and the relationship of the farmers market to roads and town features.

Next, the team conducted a marketplace census in each of the marketplaces under investigation. Census-taking is another relatively unobtrusive field technique that can capture a wealth of data about the types of goods and vendors in the marketplace. The goal was to start at one end of the marketplace and systematically, stall by stall, record information on the gender and approximate age of each vendor, plus the types of goods being displayed by that vendor and the approximate quantity of each type of good. Upon completion, this gave us a very good

picture of each marketplace: the number of vendors, their sex and approximate age, and the numbers of specific goods sold in each marketplace under study. An example of mapping and census data appears in Chapter 8 written by Jessica E. Hamby.

At the same time, the team was engaged in the fieldwork techniques of observation, participant-observation, and rapport-building each week in the marketplaces. The participant-observation took the form of becoming buyers and establishing regular customer relations with vendors in the marketplace. The rapport-building led to initial information on marketplace vending, and then graduated into opportunities for the researchers to interview vendors about their vending practices. Toward the end of the research stage, as their relationships with vendors were more firmly established, the interviews became more focused on specific topics of interest to the researchers. Some researchers also conducted interviews with farmers market coordinators to learn about the organizational history, development, and regulation policies of particular marketplaces (e.g. Self and St. Clair in this volume).

In a final phase of research, after researchers knew one marketplace very well, each team member selected other regional farmers markets to visit in order to collect comparative data. Some of our team members also conducted internet research to learn more about farmers markets in the region and to study the nationwide trend of promoting farmers markets and other “value-added” opportunities for farmers to market their products (e.g. Gregory and St. Clair in this volume).

During the analysis stage of the project, researchers assessed their field notes, noting socio-economic patterns that emerged from their fieldwork during the two-month period. The patterns, topics, and specific data laid the groundwork for the final stage of the project in which each researcher wrote up his/her research findings in the form of a chapter to be printed in this volume. Some writers also conducted research on worldwide marketplaces in order to place Virginia farmers markets into a cross-cultural comparison (e.g. Sawicki, Hamby, and Sarver in this volume).

Project team members were responsible for writing the chapters based on their own research, but the chapters in this volume also reflect the collaborative ideas and analysis discussed by the team as a whole during classroom discussions.

Following a standard practice in anthropology, the chapters in this volume attempt to disguise places and people as much as possible in order to retain the privacy of our interviewees. To this end, we have not used the names of specific farmers markets or specific vendors, and at times we have altered the descriptions of vendors somewhat. Nevertheless, the descriptions of the farmers markets and vendors of Southwest Virginia contained in this volume retain overall accuracy and their portrayal of regional farmers markets will be recognized as accurate by regional residents.

One other standardization bears mentioning. We discovered that there is great variation in the way that “farmers market” is spelled. Most often it is spelled incorrectly using an apostrophe before the final s (i.e. farmer’s), erroneously implying a single farmer’s involvement in the market. On official farmers market web sites, we noticed that occasionally the apostrophe comes after the s, more correctly implying multiple farmers’ involvement, while other times the apostrophe is dropped altogether. Acknowledging of the wide range of variation and confusion, we have simply chosen to spell “farmers market” without using the possessive apostrophe at all in this volume. A farmers market is both a farmer’s and a farmers’ market – a place where farmers and crafters come together with buyers either daily (in the cities) or weekly (in the

towns) to sell their products and participate in socio-economic activities on a summer or autumn morning.

The Social and Economic World of Farmers Markets

Interest in farmers markets seems to be growing across the country. That certainly is the case in Southwest Virginia. Some of the markets we studied started twenty years ago, others opened 2-3 years ago, and others are just now getting started up with a few vendors. In this volume, we discuss and compare farmers markets ranging from large, well-established markets to markets newly forming with 2-3 vendors.

We also found that farmers markets contain more than farmers. It is true that some vendors are farmers who sell their farm produce – from vegetables to apples to pumpkins – in farmers markets as an additional, value-added way of marketing their produce locally. But farmers markets in Southwestern Virginia also contain a large assortment of alternative organic growers, flower and nursery stock sellers, craftspeople, and people who process and produce products such as soaps, cheeses, and bakery goods.

The diversity of vendors will come to life in the chapters of this volume.

On the surface, all farmers markets appear to be simple systems of transactions between vendors and customers. Delving deeper, however, it is apparent that each market has its own personality and story to tell. As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, we found that the social elements of family, place, and region intermix with economic transactions in the farmers market. Vendors and buyers are motivated to come to market in part because they enjoy the social life of the marketplace as well as have a desire to sell and buy products. Many come to market because they enjoy the people, the entertainment, and the updates of community information that go along with the economics of farmers marketing. Many vendors carry out economic business as a family affair. Other vendors engage in vending as one of multiple income venues in a multiple livelihood strategy. Each vendor has an interesting story to tell. As we reveal in the chapters of this volume, there is truly an intertwined social and economic world of farmers markets.

Works Cited

Bates, Daniel G.

- 2001 Human Adaptive Strategies: Ecology, Culture, and Politics. 2nd ed.
Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Halperin, Rhoda H.

- 1990 The Livelihood of Kin: Making Ends Meet "The Kentucky Way." Austin,
TX: University of Texas Press.

LaLone, Mary B.

- 1994 The Flea Market: An Economic Anthropology Class Project. Anthro Notes
16(2):14-15. National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian
Institution.
- 1996 Economic Survival Strategies in Appalachia's Coal Camps. Journal of
Appalachian Studies 2(1):53-68.
- 2003 Adapting Appalachian Household Survival Strategies to Deal with
Globalization and Modernity. Paper delivered at the American
Anthropological Association conference, Chicago, November.

LaLone, Mary B., Liz Godoy, Diane Halsall, and Deanna Matthews

- 1993 Making a Buck: Economic and Social Adaptations in an Appalachian Flea
Market. Paper delivered at the Appalachian Studies Association
conference, Johnson City, TN, March.

LaLone, Mary B., Peg Wimmer, and Reva K. Spence, eds.

- 2003 Appalachian Farming Life: Memories and Perspectives on Family
Farming in Virginia's New River Valley. Radford, VA: Brightside Press.

Plattner, Stuart

- 1989 Economic Anthropology. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Chapter 2

Traditional Markets in the Modern World

By Jeri St. Clair

As the United States becomes increasingly saturated with colossal chain store conglomerates, we are losing our traditional marketplace systems of exchange. This trend does not simply affect urban areas, but encroaches into rural areas as well. Today's farmers have found that in order to be successful, they must embrace new methods and technologies indicative of the new wave of intensive agriculture as we see in the interviews with farmers in "Appalachian Farming Life." Becoming extinct are the small, family owned entities that provide a face-to-face, personal social interaction and relationship-building opportunity. This encompasses the small farmer who must constantly evolve and seek new ways to sell their produce for good profits as they are being squeezed out by intensive agriculture conglomerates that are not even locally owned. Farmers markets are one way for farmers to rekindle the one-on-one social interactions that are being lost in our fast pace, increasingly global economy. Additionally farmers can gain a better price for their produce/products, and still maintain a sense of autonomy. Although there are many strict rules and regulations that they must follow, selling in the markets has great benefits for customers and vendors alike. Coordinators for the markets often take vendors through the maze of regulations to help them to better understand and adhere to all of the mandates handed down by the Department of Agriculture. The coordinator/vendor relationship has much to do with the success of farmers markets. There are so many intertwining contingencies upon which the success of a market is determined, that I probably only scratched the surface in my short, three-month study. This paper is based on an ethnographic study of farmers markets in the Southwest Virginia region. My fieldwork study was mainly visiting a very small, very rural farmers market in southwest Virginia for approximately 7 weeks every Saturday morning starting August 30th through October 10th, 2003. Then, I spent the next 3 weeks visiting a mid-sized farmers market and a large farmers market, both in southwest Virginia. Although all three markets had basically the same sights, sounds, tastes, and smells, they possessed very different "personalities". There were major differences between the extreme rural and the relatively urban markets. On the surface, farmer's markets are loosely defined as, and truly appear to be "gathering places" where vendors and consumers come together to buy, sell, and barter produce, products, and crafts. But, when delving deeper, we see that they also serve as social arenas for people to build relationships, learn about the produce/products indigenous to their area, and learn to appreciate and support the endeavors of their local farmers and crafters.

According to the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Directory of Farmers Markets, there are approximately 31,000 farmer's markets currently operating throughout our country. Most of the items for sale are grown or made locally by farmers and crafters who live in the vicinity of the markets. One informant from a mid-sized southwest Virginia market reports that the market rules requires vendors to adhere to the "75/25 percent

rule”, meaning that at least 75% of the vendor’s items must be produced by that vendor, and up to 25%, but no more, can be brought in from other people for reselling. During the months of October through December, the vendors of the mid-sized market are allowed to import fruits such as tangerines, oranges, and grapefruits to sell. The “mostly local” rule helps to keep the local farmers benefiting from the markets in their locality, thus, keeping out outsiders who take the profits back out of the area—much like what happens when “big business” infiltrates an area, and the major profits are going elsewhere. The smallest farmers market that I visited has a 100% rule. The brochure I received from the Chamber of Commerce stated that the farmers and producers of agriculture products can sell only the agriculture produced by the farmer and grown in Virginia, although, the farmers *are* allowed to bring in a neighbor’s harvest for sale if their produce is not yet ripe. But, nothing can be bought from the wholesale market and brought in for resale. Both the small and mid-sized market informants agreed that it is difficult to enforce such rules, and that you do have to trust that the vendors that you are working with will sell all or mostly what they themselves produce. The mid-sized market informant stated that they do go visit and work with the farmers and producers of their market to see what they are growing and inspect the process, plus help the farmers with any questions or concerns they may have as growers. The vendors and coordinators were referred to as being “one big family.” You could truly tell that this coordinator was extremely passionate about the market and worked to bring out the best in what the market and vendors had to offer. This is definitely a factor in to the success of that particular market. Keeping products mostly local or strictly local in some cases, also encourages the consumer to be aware of where their food is coming from, and hopefully to find comfort in knowing that the products they put on their tables have not changed hand many times before actually reaching *them*. The average item found in the large chain grocery store travels approximately *3000 miles!*

The larger the market, the more elaborate was the structure and placement of the market. The small market area was simply an empty parking lot across the street from a fast food restaurant at the end of the town’s main street. In fact, if I had not been seeking it out, I would have never known that it existed! There were no signs through town letting potential customers know of the market, and no decoration or anything eye-catching at the actual market site to draw attention. It was quite possible to drive by and never take notice of it. So, aesthetically, it was not very pleasing, and I do believe that is a big part of being able to draw customers in. The mid-sized market was a parking lot on Main Street, but still not exactly in the middle of where everything was “going on”. But, it did have nice wooden structures with tin roofs lining the outside of the lot where passersby could not help but see all the vendors had to offer. It was also decorated with a “harvest theme” of fidershocks (corn stalks banded together), pumpkins, ribbons, and flowers. It was very aesthetically pleasing and would have enticed me to stop, even if not for this project!

The largest market that I visited was in a relatively urban area right in the middle of the downtown district with access to a massive customer base and other stores that were very complimentary of what the farmers market had to sell. These vendors lined the main street sidewalk and their structures had bright colored awnings to attract customers. The more vendors there were in a market, the more decorative and elaborate their displays of products. This stands to reason, as the greater competition increases the need for a vendor to attract potential customers’ attention. The small market was only in session on Saturday mornings from about 7:30am to 11:00am. Although the sign said the market days were Tuesday, Friday, and

Saturday, there was never anyone there except Saturday mornings. Vendors and informants alike stated that the Tuesday and Friday mornings simply did not have the customer turnout that the Saturday mornings had. The two larger markets, on the other hand, were in session 6 days a week and from early morning until late in the evening past dark if they wanted to be there. The area, placement, hours, and availability are key to the success of growing a vendor's customer base. An informant of the mid-sized market says that because our area is seasonal in growing patterns, customers are lost to the chain grocery stores during the "off season" months and sometimes it is hard to reclaim them when the market is in session once more in the spring. It is important to keep the market running as long into the fall and winter as possible to keep customers coming in. It is truly important as well to have hours of business for the market that make it easy for customers shop there. The longer the hours and days the market is open, the more successful the market will be according to informants and vendors. It is imperative for vendors to be there when they *say* that they will be there to build customer loyalty and trust. An extreme example would be when Vendor A from the small market calls me to say that he and his wife are making bread (when the market itself is not in session), I place an order and agree to meet them at, say, 10:00am on a specified Saturday morning to pick it up. If I go to pick up the bread and they do not show up, I will, quite likely, never place another order with them in the future. This is an extreme example, but it does get the point across that loyalty plays a significant role in the vendor/customer relationship and economic situation for the vendor.

Although all three of the markets are non-profit, the vendors must pay fees for their spaces in the large and mid-sized markets, so it behooves them to be there as much as possible to get a better return on their monetary and physical output. The mid-sized market has a very flexible fee schedule in order to meet the needs of the different vendors. They have a daily fee of \$5.00 for vendors who want to test the waters before committing to a longer period. They also have a monthly, quarterly, six month, and nine month (full season) range of fee schedules which cost \$45.00, \$120.00, \$210.00, and \$270.00 respectively. However, the small market does not charge anything for a space in their current market location. The Chamber of Commerce absorbs all costs incurred. The informant expressed to me that if they could charge enough rent to cover the usage of a new facility, that it may be possible to have a better site, but that the vendors were not accepting of this idea. I, however, discovered conflicting information on this subject when conversing with the vendors about this issue. At any rate, a cohesive relationship between vendors and coordinators would be highly beneficial for this small, struggling market.

The small market was mainly comprised of two steady vendors. Only twice were there other vendors at this site. It had no shelter—only a sign at the right side of the parking lot denoting that the area was a market with the market hours on it. Having no shelter forced the vendors to sell out of the back of their vehicles, or to set up small tables for displaying their items. It also occurred to me that having no shelter would hinder the vendors from selling on days it rained. When I arrived on a "misting" morning, week 7, and no one was there, it made me realize how important it is for the vendors to have shelter so they can sell their produce come "rain or shine". I will refer to the two main vendors as "vendor A" and "vendor B". Both of these vendors were *direct producers*---growing and /or making everything that they sold at the market. Neither vendor used the market for their total livelihood strategy, and both emphasized that there would really be no way for them to do so. Vendor A works for a large company and Vendor B is retired, and these avenues are where the bulk of their livelihood is derived. Vendor A sells produce that is in season at different times from his garden along with homemade bread,

jellies, jams, and salsa that his wife helps prepare. The salsa is a product which is considered “*value-added*” marketing. In this strategy, the vendor takes items that he currently sells and turns them into a completely different item for sale. In this respect, the vendor is considered a “*product modifier*”. Vendor B is a beekeeper with more than 20 years experience in raising bees. He sells the honey that he harvests from the hives. Additionally he sells the beeswax to people for making candles and beauty products. He also provides a local restaurant with honey for making dishes and sauces. He is taking the one strategy of beekeeping, and diversifying by selling the different by-products of the strategy. Both vendors agree that word-of-mouth is their best advertisement. Everyone knows that Vendor A has the best bread, salsa, and jellies and that Vendor B has the best honey, and the customers truly come for those items each week. They both have found their *niche* in the market and I am sure that is why they are both there week after week. They have become friends and plan to set up at different markets together occasionally. Vendors A and B also barter with each other. Vendor B told me that he trades honey to Vendor A for salsa. Both of these vendors were very typical of the vendors I saw throughout my observations, although their placement of the market and hours of business there did not allow them to expand their market strategy. These barriers are simply out of the vendors’ control, as the local Chamber of Commerce is the coordinator for the market. The Chamber of Commerce currently rents the empty lot from a utility company for the farmers market. The utility company owns the lot and has an empty facility adjoining that the Chamber was looking into buying for the market, but someone else bought it first according to an informant for the market for the Chamber. The informant said that the farmers market may very well be turned over to the hands of the new owner of the building which makes the future of this market is uncertain. This small market has been completely static, and in the beginning stages for several years now. It would certainly be beneficial for the town to get more involved and take a proactive approach to getting this market more stable, growing, and “on its feet”. One informant said that a new “higher traffic” area for the market and an indoor structure would be very beneficial to increase vendor participation and increased customer base. But there is nothing in the works for this to happen at the present time. One article I read from the April 2003 Global Chefs magazine stated that location is the key to a successful farmers market as it is with any other type of business.

The mid-sized market was mainly comprised of about 6 vendors on the Saturday morning that I visited. These vendors had large quantities and various types of fruits, vegetables, and products anticipating a large customer base for that day. This market was certainly a stark contrast to the first market I had visited. The vendors were of the same basic demographic group, but the items were extremely diversified. Most everyone had apples of every kind that you could possibly think of. No one had pumpkins, surprisingly enough! I saw a lot of potatoes, cabbage and broccoli every time I visited this market. I also saw sweet potatoes—which, as I understand is a very difficult vegetable to grow in our area. Supposedly, we do not have a warm and long enough season to grow them. Wonder if those were the 25% of items from elsewhere that the informant was telling me about which applied in the 75/25% rule? Most of the vendors I spoke with grew or made all of their products that they were selling. I spent some time with one vendor in particular, which I will refer to as “Vendor C”. This vendor was working to help her son, who actually owned the business. She and her husband, who are retired, joined forces with their son to make the most of selling at the markets. Her husband was setting up that day at a nearby market with the exact same products that she had for sale at the mid-sized market. Making this a family endeavor allowed them to diversify and exploit more than one market.

Using a mill bought by her mother years ago, Vendor C processes organic grains into flours and mixes for making breads, pastries, and muffins. She told a story of her mother being a “survivalist” and how she bought the mill in case of a day that we would all have to fend for ourselves. She said her mother never even opened or operated it, and she (the daughter) found it years later and realized the value of it and decided to incorporate the mill into their strategy. She also sold herb plants in the spring and summer, and then sold the dried herbs for seasoning in the fall and winter when she could not sell the plants. She also had packets of “herb mix” which had a recipe on them stating how they could be mixed with cream cheese or creamery butter for a dip or spread. She also sold flower arrangements for tabletops that she made herself from homegrown and collected materials. She was going to make some especially for the Thanksgiving and Christmas season. These vendors really possess much ingenuity to create different ways of taking the same products and modifying them to sell in a different fashion depending on the market and holiday season.

The large, rather urban farmers market had as many crafters as they had vendors selling produce. There were approximately 25 vendors set up the Saturday that I visited (November 8th). The other two markets had dwindled down in the amount of vendors setting up as the season moved on, but this market seemed to hold its own even nearing winter! The aspect I found most fascinating about the few craft vendors that I spoke with was that they did not hold jobs in the formal economy, only in the informal economy of selling their items at shows and at the market. One vendor selling leather work and jewelry said that she works the market until it really gets cold here, then she goes to Florida for the winter and works crafts shows there where it is warm, and comes back in the spring to work this market again. It is fascinating to look at her migratory pattern which allows her to remain her “own boss” and to have a total sense of autonomy. Another vendor selling homemade purses, satchels, and handbags said that he and his wife do this for a living. His wife makes the items, and he sells them. The craftsmanship of these items was just phenomenal and offered at a price considerably below what you would discover in a retail store of comparable quality. It is rare though to find vendors who do not work in the formal economy and most everyone *has* held jobs in the formal economy at different times in their lives. In fact, most people have held many different jobs in the formal economy. “Virtually no one works in any single sector on a full-time basis for a lifetime,” according to Rhoda Halperin (Halperin 1982:6) It is also imperative, as a vendor, to find a niche to aid in creating a draw of customers and to diversify into as many areas as possible with a special product or products. The Politis family owns and operates Brush Creek farm in Pilot, Virginia. Their niche is buffalo farming. The family farm belonged to three generations of Janice Politis’s family although they were the first to raise buffalo on it. This is a prime example of the way family farms must evolve to keep up with changes in the world. Buffalo meat, being leaner, was a draw to an ever-changing, more health conscious society and this aspect was taken into consideration when pondering the idea of buffalo farming. Also, buffalo meat brings more money per pound at the market than beef cattle bring which allows them to earn higher profits in the formal economy. Janice said that the fact that the buffalo were raised naturally and organically was a positive aspect for her (LaLone 2003:292). In addition to the buffalo meat that they sell to restaurants in surrounding areas, they have their own restaurant and store in Riner, Virginia. Their buffalo meat is also sold at the farmers markets. Customers who shop at the farmers markets are usually people like who value the freshness and availability of organic and locally

grown foods that have not been shipped from across the world and changed hands many times over.

Starting up, promoting, and maintaining a farmers market takes much time and work to be successful, as I have gathered in speaking with informants in the coordinating position and researched. All informants I spoke with agree that the ultimate goal is to have at least one person who does nothing else and who is responsible for coordinating the farmers market in any area, but neither market actually had that one person yet. Strong leadership is a *must* in order to create a strong market. The market must have ample support of the city or town if they want to get past the beginning stage, and should be considered a service and non-profit, just like the parks and recreation department of every locality are. Agri-tourism works to promote farmer's markets as well. Agri-tourism is defined as "travel that combines agricultural or rural settings and products within a tourism experience". This seeks to give visitors a "total experience" of agricultural in motion---from the field to the table, so to speak. Agri-tourism seeks to boost the economic sector of rural areas by putting together different aspects of agriculture to draw in potential customers. Janice Politis makes reference to agri-tourism and how it could help promote their buffalo farm by organizing fieldtrips to the farm for churches, nursing homes, and tourists coming through the area. They have already participated in some events sponsored through the Roanoke Parks and Recreation Department (LaLone 2003:299). If properly organized, farmers markets as a product of agri-tourism can be an economic enhancing endeavor simply by creating awareness of the markets. One informant for the small market expressed that it was definitely an economic stimulus for other local businesses to have the draw of customers that a successful farmers market has. Developing what is referred to as an "anchor" market (one that can be open indoors all year around) is the ultimate goal to strive for with any farmers market. Also, fundraisers can be very effective for promoting a farmers market as well. Fundraisers bring together a community, which can work to sustain the cohesiveness of the concept of "local"—it helps people to start thinking on maintaining their community. They also work as advertisement for the market itself as well as bringing in money for structures and so forth. Anything that brings a community together as a whole tends to be utilized and supported.

Agri-tourism works to enhance the opportunities for farm operators in rural communities by helping them to develop a new market niche in a time when they are slowly being phased out. It helps to spread the word and knowledge on the appropriate uses of land and local produce production that should be sustaining our farmers. Living in the country, as I always have, I often don't realize that there are people who never give the question, "Where does my food really come from?" a second thought. I always want to know where my food comes from and I, most of the time, **do** know where my food comes from! I loved an example of the 2nd grade teacher bringing her class to the small farmer' market that one student was conducting an ethnographic study of, to teach them about the importance of knowing where foods come from and the times each item "changes hands". Planting a seed in the mind, and instilling such values at such an early age really enhances the chance that it will stick with them and become important for them as adults.

Grants are available for building structures and paying for areas for a farmers market. The United States Department of Agriculture's Fund for Rural America funds farmers market projects. The Federal government has also developed programs that distribute coupons for WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program for participants to buy fresh fruits and vegetables at local farmers markets. This serves three purposes: it works to provide nutritious foods for people most

at risk for being nutritionally deficient, gives the farmers market vendors a customer that they may not ordinarily have access to, and creates awareness and use of farmers markets. Also, a new Seniors Farmers Market Nutrition Program coordinated by the Department for the Aging, the Area Agencies on Aging, and the Virginia Department of Agriculture provides coupons for low-income seniors to be redeemed at local farmers markets, who also fall in the category of nutritionally at risk. It will be the responsibility of the Department for the Aging to identify the senior citizens who qualify for the program. They will then distribute 10 five-dollar checks/coupons (\$50.00) to each of the participants who qualify. This program only covered fruits, vegetables and herbs in their fresh state. The paperwork specifically denotes the exclusion of the sale of honey, jellies, ciders, meats, eggs, and anything processed should be adhered to. This program was developed to increase farm sales and profitability, as well as to help senior citizens, according to a Director of Marketing for the VDACS memorandum.

The Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Division of Consumer Protection provides potential vendors who are considering setting up at the farmers markets “start-up” packets with step-by-step guidelines, including all of the Virginia laws concerning the business. If a vendor is going to prepare food to sell at the market, their kitchen or processing center must be inspected prior to starting the food preparation. There is a \$40.00 inspection fee for the initial visit, which was mandated July 1, 2002. This requires the vendor to spend money before they even find out if they meet the requirements. Random inspections of the vendor’s preparation facilities are unannounced and the attending food safety specialist likes to watch the vendor’s process of making his/her products in order to be able to pinpoint where the safety of a product may be compromised. If the vendor is using a private well rather than public supply, a water sample must be taken and tested for bacteria. The vendor must also submit a drawn diagram of their processing area as to where sinks, prep areas, drainage, storage, and such are located in relation to the other. Weights and measurement guidelines state that scales can be mechanical or electronic and must be commercial grade quality which is approved by the National Type Evaluation Program certifiable by Virginia Department of Agriculture. Wrapping and packaging materials are considered “tare” and are not to be part of the products being weighed. Fruits and vegetables are to be weighed only at the time of sale. One informant for the small market felt that the vendor turnout was low due to the weights and measures regulations. The vendors must submit recipes with the exact measurements of ingredients, whether the ingredients were grown by the vendor or if they were purchased and where they were purchased from, the cooking steps from the raw materials to the finished product, and how the finished product is stored, transported, and displayed. They must also label each prepared item with a list of ingredients in order of highest to least content, the total weight of the products minus the packaging, nutritional information, and contact information with an address. Vendors preparing acidified foods (low-acid) like pumpkin butter, pepper jelly salsa, etc., must follow all of the previously mentioned steps, plus submit two samples of their finished product for testing to the Virginia Tech Department of Food Science and Technology along with the following written information: complete flow diagram with times and temperatures, final pH of the product, container size, temperature at time of filling the container and the holding time, and a list of the concentration of acidulates used. Virginia Tech and other unnamed universities hold “Better Process Control Schools” to aid in meeting the Code of Federal Regulation requirements. The Code states it is required to be under the supervision of, or have completed one of these schools before processing and/or packaging foods. Those are basically state requirement rules and regulations.

Then each locality has their own registration form and rules for participating in the farmers market. The small farmers market registration form states most of the same rules and regulations that the state sets forth with a few exceptions. The local registration form says that state sales tax must be collected for all items sold and the form for that must be picked up at the Commissioner of the Revenues office. The registration form also states that the vendors must carry minimum product liability coverage of at least \$1,000,000.00 in insurance and that the Chamber cannot be held liable for action which may arise from the Farmers Market. There certainly seems to be a massive amount of forms to be filled out and a lot of hoops to jump through before a vendor can even get started. There is a general feeling of “too much red tape” to muddle through. Vendor A, when asked in my questionnaire about any changes they would like to see in the farmers market stated that less red tape would be appreciated. The impact of rules and regulations upon vendor participation is a major issue for all markets. The ease with which vendors can slide into a comfort zone with the rules and regulations is often a direct determinant of the participation of vendors an area farmers market will experience.

In order for a farmers market to be successful, it must have the support of the farmers. That is, you must have farmers and crafters who are willing to be active participants in the market, adhere to the rules and regulations, and show up on a regular basis to sell at the market. This often requires the support of the entire farming family, as you can't work in the fields and tend to a garden and be a vendor at the market all at the same time! And, the city, town, or organization in charge of organizing the market must provide support for the farmer in turn. There must be a cohesive relationship between the two for the market to be a success and stimulate a draw of customers. This leads to another aspect: the customer base must see the value in shopping at the local farmers market over the large chain grocery stores. The customers I have spoken with who shop at the markets do so because of the freshness and great taste of the products which can't be matched by the large grocery stores that ship in produce from “who knows where”. Also, customers and vendors alike enjoy the comradery of the market. The social bonds between vendors and customers are a very important aspect of the transactions between them. Transactions can be *atomized*, which means that they are impersonal, or they may be *embedded*, which means that they are personal (Plattner 1989:210). These embedded transactions are indicative of what you find in farmers markets. Knowing who a trader is may sometimes be the best way to know what he is buying or selling (Granovetter 1985 in Plattner 1989:218). Some relationships become very constant and are important mechanisms in reducing risks for buyer and seller. The seller knows that he *will* sell certain items to certain buyers and the buyer knows that this particular seller will always give him good, quality products. It serves to maintain the *income* of the seller and the *desire* of the buyer (Plattner 1989:213).

It is estimated that food processing, packaging, transportation, and marketing of food products consume up to 85% of the energy used, and 80% of every dollar spent on food in the commercial food industry. Essentially, we are paying for “fluff”, not the actual food item itself. As consumers, we need to consider *what* we are actually paying for in these large grocery store chains, and what the history is behind all of the items we purchase everyday. We must consider what pesticides, hormones, and antibiotics have been used in the growing/raising of the foods we consume and where the profits actually end up. The alternative to combat this waste and uncertainty is to support our farmer's markets which bring together the producer and consumer without the many middlemen used in large grocery operations. The future of farmers markets is contingent upon the longevity of the small farmer. The change starts at the grassroots level with

individuals making an effort to push out big business that has invaded our country by purchasing food locally from local growers/raisers. It takes an entire community of social change to lead to political change, and political change to actually see the change come into fruition. As consumers, we have the most influence to shift the system of exchange in our country back into the hands of our farmers and out of the hands of corporate conglomerates. Where there is a demand for locally grown produce, there will be farmers to fill it.

Works Cited

Halperin, Rhoda

1982 *Livelihood of Kin*. Austin: University of Texas Press. P. 6.

LaLone, Mary B., Peg Wimmer, and Reva K. Spence, eds.

2003 *Appalachian Farming Life: Memories and Perspectives on Family Farming in Virginia's New River Valley*. Radford, VA: Brightside Press. Pp. 292, 299.

Plattner, Stuart

1989 *Economic Behavior in Markets*. In *Economic Anthropology*. Stuart Plattner, ed. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. Pp. 210, 218.

St. Clair, Jeri

09-16-2003 Field notes for Farmers Market study, Economic Anthropology class, September 16, 2003. Radford, VA: Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Radford University.

10-23-2003 Field notes for Farmers Market study, Economic Anthropology class, October 23, 2003. Radford, VA: Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Radford University.

Chapter 3

Learning to Grow: How Farmer's Market Vendors Acquire the Knowledge They Need

By Richard O. Sarver

In the field of anthropology, it is recognized that all aspects of culture are learned, and that all aspects of culture are invented by people. Enculturation is the process by which culture is transmitted from one generation to the next. The transmission of culture is accomplished when an individual grows up within a group of people, learns standards of behavior, religious practices, the language, and livelihood strategies. Each person learns the culture that is available to him or her; we are all products of cultures that exist in specific times and places. All aspects of culture are integrated, but it is livelihood strategies that enable people to procure the basic materials necessary to sustain life. While the range of livelihood strategies is wide and varied, this paper focuses on farmers and other food producers in their utilization of local farmers markets to sell their goods.

Over a nine-week period in the fall of 2003, two farmers markets in Southwest Virginia were visited on a regular basis with the purpose of learning details of the markets' operation. Information was sought on the physical layout of the markets, the products vendors had for sale, the requirements for becoming a vendor, market rules, and, specifically, how the vendors learned to produce the items they brought to the markets to sell. The field research shows that farmers and other vendors who sell at the markets have learned their livelihood strategies from a variety of sources. These sources include formal education, inter-generational learning, learning from media, learning from gardening or doing farm work, learning from peers, and learning through trial-and-error. Of these strategies, trial-and-error is mentioned most frequently; it is a resource that is available and beneficial to nearly everyone.

The two towns in the study are about thirty-five miles apart. It would be easy to travel from one town to the other in less than an hour. The market in Town A is on a corner lot that fronts on two fairly busy streets, and it is in the central part of town. The thirty vendors that are registered for 2003 sell a wide variety of produce and other goods, including but not limited to garlic, honey, baked goods, nursery stock, bedding plants, and dozens of types of locally grown fruits and vegetables. Some of the vendors have stalls under roof to provide shelter from the sun and rain. Others must bring their own tables and set up in the open. The market in Town A operates on Wednesdays and Saturdays, year round. In Town B, the farmers market also is on a corner lot in the central part of town, but all the vendors have a substantial area under roof, with running water and electricity. The Town B market provides public restrooms for shoppers and vendors, while the Town A market does not. The market structure in Town B has twenty-five spaces. The vendors there also sell a variety of locally grown fruits and vegetables, and nursery stock, much the same as what is available in the Town A market. In fact, two of the vendors who

have stalls at the Town A market also have stalls in the Town B market. The market in Town B is open Monday through Saturday.

After several weeks of getting to know vendors at the markets, buying their goods and engaging in rapport building, especially with a two-way exchange of personal information, a relationship was established in which the vendors were comfortable with being observed and answering questions. In interviews, vendors at both markets were asked specifically how they learned to grow crops, make bread and other baked goods, process berries or fruits into jams and preserves, harvest honey, and utilize the farmers markets for selling their products. In the details from those interviews that follow, the names of the vendors have been changed in order to protect their privacy.

Jim and Peggy Riker own and operate a greenhouse and have land on which they grow trees, shrubs, mums, and other plants to sell. They also purchase a variety of naturally-grown grains, that is, grains produced without the use of chemical fertilizers or pesticides, which they grind into flour and sell. Peggy also arranges dry flowers for her farmers market customers. Being experienced at canning fruits and vegetables, Peggy sometimes has to choose between selling all of their produce at the market or putting some up for her own family's use. The Rikers consider their enterprise work rather than a hobby, but they both enjoy it. They sell at the farmer's markets in both Town A and Town B.

When asked how they acquired the knowledge necessary to produce the goods they sell at the markets, the Rikers explained that they had always had a large garden, so they have long had a familiarity with growing things, but a potent source of agricultural know-how for them comes from their son – who has a degree in horticulture (Sarver 09-17-2003). Jim also added that there is really no skill involved in arranging dry flowers, so there was no need to learn that. The mill they use to grind grains into flour is pretty simple to operate; the degree of separation between the stones determines the coarseness of the flour. Wider separation yields coarser flour, and fine flour is produced when the stones are closer together.

One of the vendor's stalls at the Town A market was occupied by a teacher and two of his students. Their school is an alternative education institution; it serves students whose educational needs are best tended to outside the traditional school setting. The students, both teenagers, were polite and seemed to be interested in the fact that their endeavors at the farmers market would be mentioned in an anthropological study. In the late summer, the only product they had for sale was pumpkins. There were a variety of sizes and shapes, but pumpkins were their only item. The teacher, Mark, said that in the spring they would be selling hanging baskets filled with plants the students would propagate. Their involvement in the farmers market, Mark explained, was "happenstance." One spring, students noticed plants growing from a compost pile located in back of the school. The plants were obviously different from anything else growing in the area, so it was decided to allow them to grow. That fall, the students had their first harvest of pumpkins (Sarver 09-17-2003). This instance is reminiscent of the very origins of horticulture. Hunter-gatherers may have begun to intentionally cultivate plants after they noticed that seeds in their refuse heaps would sprout and grow (Bates 2001: 112).

Mark is well qualified to guide his students' horticultural endeavors as he majored in biology in college and interned in a botanical garden. It is noteworthy that both Mark and the Rikers benefit from formal education that relates to growing plants, and neither mentioned the use of trial-and-error as a strategy for their operations.

That leads one to ponder how institutions of formal education acquire the agricultural knowledge that is taught to students. In at least one instance, evidenced by a vendor from the farmers market in Town A, it is by trial-and-error. Norman Latham is a retired business executive who grows raspberries and blackberries which he sells at the market and to a gourmet restaurant. All of Norman's berry stock, which is supplied by a local university, is genetically engineered. Norman has the right to raise and sell the berries, but not any part of the plants; the university has them all patented. The university monitors the growth of each type of berry, looking for information on the berries' hardiness, flavor, ease of cultivation, and marketability. Recently, one type of berry Norman grew for the university did not do well, so after this season it will not be grown again (Sarver 09-05-2003). Most other types of berries Norman grows are suitable for marketing. Next spring there are plans to try more new types of blackberries and raspberries. The university that supplies Norman's stock works closely with the United States Department of Agriculture's Cooperative Extension Service. Extension Service agents are often a vital source of information and ideas for local farmers. In this indirect way, both agriculture students at the university and the farmers who rely on Extension Service agents benefit from knowledge gleaned through this controlled, scientific type of trial-and-error.

An interesting and friendly presence at the market in Town A is Don Waldron. Don benefits from a lifetime of gardening and marketing experience in producing and selling plants, fruits, and vegetables. Don's experience began when, as a child, he spent time on his grandfather's farm, which was located near Town A. Don's grandfather worked as a night watchman, which left his days free for farm work. The elder Mr. Waldron grew many types of fruits and vegetables, including raspberries, plums, and apples. The produce, along with eggs, were sold from a wagon Mr. Waldron parked at the roadside. This was an early lesson in growing and selling agricultural products for young Don. His grandfather used a sign, scales, and operated his very own farmer's market – years before the market was established at Town A.

Don's parents were also involved in agricultural endeavors. They owned and operated a thirty-five acre farm on which they raised their own cattle, hogs, and a variety of vegetables and fruits. The Waldron family was nearly completely self-sufficient because they grew almost everything they needed. Don recalls that one spring, about 1970 or so, the family had raised a huge quantity of strawberries. His mother took orders for them over the phone, and Ron delivered the strawberries in his 1960 Volkswagen. The gross sales from the strawberry crop was over \$4,000.

A prominent institution in the lives of many rural youngsters is the 4H Club. This organization is a part of the Cooperative Extension Service, which is a program of the United States Department of Agriculture. 4H has a focus on teaching agricultural practices to young people and sponsors fairs and competitions so that participants can showcase the goods they produce and the animals they raise. 4H was part of Don Waldron's youth. He recalled several 4H projects that involved growing plants, and one project in particular in which he was able to grow an experimental type of berry when other 4H members had failed to do so. This berry was most difficult to grow, but Don's plot was successful because it was on a small hill that had a unique microclimate. Although Don did not specifically use the term, it could be argued that the berry experiment was an organized, scientifically oriented type of trial-and-error.

Don's knowledge of agriculture is augmented by his education and experience in business. He has a degree in business management from a local community college, has been the assistant manager of a restaurant, and for several years ran his own store. He also operated a

greenhouse. When a Wal-Mart moved in to Don's community and took a large share of his business, he sold his store and expanded the greenhouse operations. Now Don raises plants full time, using the slow winter months to read horticultural magazines and other literature dealing with plants. He has amassed a considerable library of agricultural and horticultural books. Interestingly, Don finds other greenhouse operators, his potential competitors, a valuable source of information. He sometimes visits other greenhouses and talks with their owners. They exchange ideas and news relating to plants. Agents from the Cooperative Extension Service are also helpful to Don, especially with the identification of plant diseases.

Don spends quite a bit of time passing on his agricultural knowledge to his customers. He provides information on how to care for plants, what to do if they suffer from certain types of diseases, and so on. Some people even buy plants at area retail stores, such as Lowes, then come and ask Don for advice on how to plant and care for them! In these cases Don is friendly and gracious. He provides the information requested and hopes that the next time these individuals buy plants, they will come to see him before they go to Lowes (Sarver 09-17-2003).

Sally Russell operates a blueberry farm that she took over from her sister-in-law. The blueberries are in season for just a few weeks each year, so it accounts for only a part of Sally's income. She thinks of it as a fun endeavor, and she learned almost everything she has to know about raising blueberries and marketing them from her sister-in-law. In addition to what her relative taught her, she has also relied on books for general information, and she sometimes learns from other blueberry growers. Sally mentioned that Cooperative Extension Service agents are quite helpful from time to time (Sarver 09-24-2003).

Greg Huff and Shannon Moore have an extensive farming operation and derive their entire income from the produce they sell. This couple, like the Rikers, sells at both the farmers market in Town A and the farmers market in Town B. Greg was for many years a meat cutter for a local supermarket, and Shannon was a school teacher. They engaged in selling produce as a sideline at first, and gradually their business grew to the point that they rely on farming exclusively as their means of support. In addition to produce, Greg is growing several thousand Christmas trees.

When asked how he learned to grow things to sell at the market, Greg replied, "Trial-and-error" (Sarver 09-24-2003). He says that, in farming, one can learn a lot from mistakes. Like Don Waldron, Greg adds to his agricultural knowledge by doing quite a bit of reading, especially in the slow winter months. Greg's agricultural background extends back to his childhood, as he grew up on a farm. Greg also relies on Cooperative Extension Service agents, especially for help with the identification of plant diseases.

In the midst of all the produce vendors at the Town A market, there is a stand where one can buy homemade cheese. Ernest and Faye Ridgeway have a small farm where they produce a variety of cheeses from both cow and goat milk. Faye is the cheese maker, and Ernest grows an assortment of unusual vegetables that they sell at the market. Faye's first response to the question of how she learned to make cheese was "trial-and-error" (Sarver 09-27-2003). There are a large number of variables in making cheese, such as acidity levels, temperature level requirements for various parts of the process, and considerations of texture and taste. In part, Faye learned the art of cheese making through a grant program sponsored by the United States Department of Agriculture. She coordinated classes for other people to take in order to learn the craft, and she herself was able to attend the classes for free. Faye also attended three cheese schools in France. A big part of learning this craft is interaction with other cheese makers. The cheese makers in

this area all know each other and frequently socialize with one another. They exchange ideas and help each other perfect their technique.

According to Ernest, in Wisconsin, where cheese is big business, one becomes a state certified cheese maker through an apprentice program. In Virginia and the rest of the south, apprenticeships are less formal, but still involve working with others who practice the craft. He says that one virtue required for cheese making is patience. He has witnessed his wife waiting and waiting for parts of the cheese making process to be complete, contending with variables, before going on to the next step.

Ernest has been gardening since childhood. The vegetables he sells at the market, things like blue potatoes and tomatillos, are certainly not run-of-the-mill, and they are organically grown.

Many of the customers at the Town A market prefer organically grown produce. The vendors explain that organically grown foods are raised without the benefit of chemical fertilizers or pesticides. Certification by the USDA is required before a vendor can legally advertise produce as being organically grown. Sometimes fruits and vegetables that are organically grown do not look very appealing, for example, they may have bruises, rotten spots, and even worms. Even so, these items are on display and sometimes customers buy them. One eager shopper, on spying some bruised and pock-marked peaches, commented to his young companion that the fermenting fruit looked “really good,” and then, as if to allay any suspicion that the remark was made with sarcasm, he inquired as to the price. Some organically grown produce is visually quite appealing, and is difficult or impossible to distinguish from produce that is grown with chemical fertilizers and pesticides.

For the last twelve years, Libby and her husband Jack have operated a farm that is near Town A. Their operation is a certified producer of organic fruits and vegetables. In addition to the produce, Libby bakes scones to sell at the market. Before starting their own farm, Libby and Jack worked at other farms. They learned a lot about agriculture by doing. Hands-on experience, Libby indicates, is one of the most reliable ways of learning. They are still learning by trying new and different crops from time to time, seeing what practices will successfully yield a harvest (Sarver 09-27-2003). In other words, they continue to add to their agricultural knowledge by trial-and-error.

The Cooperative Extension Service agents that are so helpful to many other farmers are not often called on by organic growers. At this time, the agents are not really oriented towards organic farming, Libby says.

In addition to the fruits, vegetables, and scones, Libby and Jack offer something that cannot be purchased at any other vendor’s stall at the Town A market: herbal medicines that come in the form of tinctures. Herbal tinctures are preferred by many people as an alternative to drug store-type medicines. They contain water, alcohol, and an herb. When asked how she learned to be an herbalist, Libby replied that she had taken classes on herbalism, talked extensively with other herbalists, and read many books and articles on herbs and the remedies that can be made from them. Also, Libby stated that she relies quite a bit on trial-and-error in the practice of producing herbal medicines. She is still adding to her knowledge of herbs even though she has been working with them for many years.

The knowledge of how to practice organic farming and produce herbal remedies can take a long time to acquire and perfect. At one point Libby and Jack took on an intern, a young woman named Sally. In exchange for her labor, Sally was to receive room and board, a small

salary, instruction in preparing tinctures, and experience and instruction in raising, harvesting, and marketing organic crops. It would have taken more than one season for Sally to learn all that Libby and Jack had to teach, but she left after only a few months. Libby says that there is a lot of hard work involved in farming, perhaps more than many people realize. Having to direct and motivate an intern meant additional work for Libby and Jack. They are undecided about looking for another one.

Interspersed among the fruit and vegetable vendors at the Town A market, one finds the occasional baked goods vendor. Their tables and baskets are usually piled high with delicious smelling loaves of bread that come in all sizes and shapes. In addition to bread, these vendors often sell muffins, cookies, and pastries.

One of the bread vendors, Scott, learned his bread-making skills from a man in California who builds and sells brick ovens, then teaches his customers how to use them. In addition to the farmers market sales of about 150 loaves per week, Scott also sells bread to a local health food store (Sarver 09-27-2003).

Bread vendors Teresa and Jim sell different types of bread, scones, cookies, and other baked goods. They also sell salsa that Jim makes. The scone recipe was an old family recipe that Jim altered. Seeking to simplify the recipe and economize, Jim made adjustments to the ingredients and process of making the scones until he had a product that was easy and inexpensive to make, and that the customers liked. The salsa recipe was also handed down in Jim's family. As with the scones, he streamlined the salsa recipe so that it was more economical to make, but still appealing to customers. Jim stated that the salsa he produces "evolved" as he made batch after batch, making changes here and there to perfect the taste (Sarver 09-27-2003). Although Jim did not specifically use the term, one could argue that the method of evolution for the salsa was by trial-and-error.

Teresa learned bread baking from her grandparents, both paternal and maternal. They emphasized thrift, and making things from scratch. Teresa herself is a hardworking individual, arising early in the predawn to bake the goods she sells at the market. As a marketing strategy, Teresa invites potential customers to try samples of her baked goods. She finds that getting people involved by letting them taste things and engaging them in conversation usually promotes sales. To supplement their knowledge of food preparation, Teresa and Ben sometimes watch cooking shows on television and read magazines related to baking and cooking.

Lisa, a newcomer to the Town A market, sells a variety of produce. Farming, says Lisa, is her husband Ray's passion. Ray has a degree in biology and has worked for other farmers, but for the last five years, Ray and Lisa have been farming on their own. Lisa reports that she and Ray learn agricultural techniques from a variety of sources, including hands-on experience, agents of the Cooperative Extension Service, farming publications, conferences, seminars, and workshops. They find out about upcoming conferences, seminars and workshops from the Internet.

The main resource for learning used by Lisa and Ray is trial-and-error (Sarver 09-27-2003). Over the last five years, they have lived in three different states. Each place they lived had a different climate, different types of pests, different growing seasons, and different soils. "What works in one place usually doesn't work in another," Lisa said with a hint of despair. Failures can be frustrating, but they can yield valuable information that may ultimately lead to success.

Upon entering the farming business, Lisa had no prior market experience, but she has come to enjoy being a farmers market vendor. She is often asked for advice on how to prepare the items she sells. It is great fun most of the time, and she likes being her own boss.

Hank is a vendor at the Town B market. He sells an assortment of produce that he grows on his farm, which is about fifteen miles from Town B. Hank, who is fifty-seven years old, has Parkinson's Disease and has some difficulty moving his body and sometimes has trouble talking. He enjoys working in the fields and interacting with his customers. Hank started working in gardens and on farms as a child and has well over forty years of gardening experience. Gardening is as much a part of Hank's nature as anything else (10-08-2003).

Just prior to Halloween, Mike was at the Town B farmers market with an entire truckload of pumpkins. Mike is one of the few people encountered at either the Town A or the Town B market that all of his income from farming. In addition to the pumpkins Mike had cabbages and some apples for sale. Earlier in the season, he had a wider variety of produce to sell. Besides fruits and vegetables, Mike also raises nursery stock, including Christmas trees, and beef cattle. Mike also makes hay, both for his own cattle and additional hay to sell to other farmers.

As to how Mike acquired his knowledge of agriculture, he was raised on a farm, and learned most of what he knows from his parents. He sometimes seeks assistance from Cooperative Extension Service agents, especially when his plants or animals have a disease that he cannot identify or treat. He also reads some horticultural magazines, but he no longer subscribes to any of them. Sometimes, Mike reports, older farmers can be a good source of information, but he cautions that many of them are stubbornly rooted in the methods of the past, and are unwilling to consider new ideas. When asked if trial-and-error was a beneficial learning tool, Mike replied that he is always trying new ways of doing things, especially with some of the trees he grows (Sarver 10-18-2003). Further, Mike indicated that trial-and-error was a natural part of farming, even something that was done automatically, sometimes without conscious effort.

A singular and interesting figure at the Town B market is a sprightly septuagenarian named Bob. Bob is as much a part of the Town B market as any of the fixtures, and his function, which he performs without seeking remuneration, is to help market vendors and customers. He helps shoppers find what they are looking for. He helps vendors make sales, relate to customers, and he even helps them load and unload their trucks. Bob is energetic, friendly, and very good with people. The vendors trust and rely on him, especially when they are new to the market and need guidance. Customers learn to appreciate Bob's guidance as well (ibid.).

To recapitulate, in all the cases of farmers market vendors cited above, there are several methods for acquiring agricultural knowledge that were mentioned time and again. They include:

- Life experiences, such as being raised on a farm and learning from parents.
- Formal education, as with horticultural studies, or cheese schools.
- Learning from peers.
- Learning from the media, e.g., television shows, books, and magazines that relate to agriculture or cooking.
- Learning from Cooperative Extension Service agents, especially with plant diseases.
- Learning by trial-and-error.

Of all the learning strategies, trial-and-error is the most frequently cited by farmers market vendors as providing the knowledge necessary to produce the items they sell. As with all

other aspects of culture, the different livelihood strategies are integrated into a complete whole. Trial-and-error alone would not likely be sufficient to help with the production of any goods; some basic knowledge is requisite for growing and harvesting crops, processing fruits and grains, or rearing nursery stock.

Still, trial-and-error is unique in that it is a dynamic strategy. It involves repeated, on-going efforts to improve practices that assure success in producing agricultural goods. Trial-and-error is an adaptive strategy that helps growers of agricultural products contend with variable conditions such as weather, markets, and the characteristics of the land that is available for growing crops. When general, basic knowledge is augmented by trial-and-error knowledge, a degree of success will usually result, and the practices that produced the success can be repeated.

In thinking about the literal meaning of the term “trial-and-error,” it seems to imply that error is the inevitable outcome of trial; yet successes do result. Otherwise trial-and-error would be useless as a strategy. Perhaps a more accurate term would be “trial-and-refinement,” or simply, “learning from one’s mistakes.” Regardless of how one interprets the literal meaning of “trial-and-error,” it is a common phrase in North American English and is taken to refer to repeated attempts at any endeavor that will eventually facilitate understanding of the conditions that lead to the desired results. Hence, “trial-and-error,” misnomer or not, persists as an everyday phrase.

Trial-and-error learning is not limited to Southwest Virginia farmers market vendors. On the world stage, other groups of people engage in this practice to make the most of the resources available to them. Two interesting cases are the Kofyar of Central Nigeria and the Dogan of Mali.

The Kofyar were subsistence farmers who expanded their level of agricultural production to utilize the income potential from the commercial sale the crops they produce, namely rice and yams. After 1930, political conditions changed to give the Kofyar access to more land, and they began farming this land to produce food in excess of what they themselves could consume. At first the Kofyar grew crops in swidden plots. Later, as they realized the potential economic benefits, the Kofyar intensified their agricultural efforts by weeding, using chemical and natural fertilizers, and practicing crop rotation (Bates 2001: 149). Gradually, the Kofyar made a niche for themselves and their crops in the marketplace. The Kofyar have been so successful with their agricultural endeavors, that they have been able to make improvements to their homeland by building roads, schools, and churches (Bates 2001: 150).

The efforts of the Kofyar in switching from subsistence agriculture to intensive agriculture were not directed or overseen by any government agency. The change occurred gradually and was self-directed. In his book *Human Adaptive Strategies*, Daniel G. Bates asserts that the Kofyar were able to successfully become part of the larger market economy because they were left to manage their own resources and to discover for themselves what would and would not work in relation to growing and marketing crops. While Bates does not specifically use the term “trial-and-error,” he does say the Kofyar “had the time and opportunity to learn from their mistakes” (ibid.).

In Mali, the Dogon have also made the transition to intensive agriculture, raising crops such as onions, sorghum, millet, rice, and beans. In a 1993 article W.E.A. Van Beek writes that while the Dogon fail to realize the physical limitations of their habitat, these people have acquired an intimate knowledge of their land and the other resources available to them. The varied areas that the Dogon farm are often marginal, inhospitable places for growing crops, but

their knowledge of how to utilize the resources available to them, like building retaining walls to trap scarce water, placing soil and manure over large expanses of barren rock to transform it into a field, and obtaining fertilizer from phosphate-rich rocks, allows them to successfully raise crops. The Dogon are a hard-working, innovative, and resourceful people. The Dogon's knowledge is very specialized, for example, in addition to the phosphate-bearing rocks already mentioned they utilize seven other types of fertilizer, each having specific benefits for specific plants (Van Beek 1993: 55-56). Dogon farmers, Van Beek writes, can tell at a glance what has been grown in a field, what kinds of fertilizer it needs, how much it will yield, and how much weeding will be required when the field is in cultivation (ibid.).

The source of the Dogon's extensive and specialized knowledge is trial-and-error (Van Beek 1993: 56). These people are successful at farming because they are willing to try new and different strategies and crops and they are quick to incorporate the successful ones into their repertoire. The process is a continuous one; its practitioners are always seeking new opportunities for enrichment and for making the most of the available resources. Van Beek stated that in 1993 the Dogon were in the process of learning to store their onion crop. At the same time, the Dogon had been introduced to something new: watermelons. They were struggling to find out particulars about watermelons, such as how to determine when they are ripe (Van Beek 1993: 57). Given their proclivities for practicing trial-and-error, The Dogon are doubtless, by this time, successful watermelon farmers.

The world is always changing, becoming more interconnected as populations grow, resources shrink, and technology increases. At its current phase, globalization leaves almost no group of people unaffected. Sooner or later, global changes dictate that all groups who want to stay viable adjust to new conditions that become part of their world. In order to do this, groups of people have to make the most of the resources available to them, and look for new resources and new ways of doing things. Staying viable often means being innovative, and the mother of innovation is usually trial-and-error. This is true for individuals, industries, societies, and nations. From the Dogon and Kofyar farmers in Africa, to the farmers market vendors in Southwest Virginia, to many other places in the world, trial-and-error is a reliable tool that facilitates survival.

This look at farmers markets in Southwest Virginia has shown that participating vendors learn their livelihood strategies from a variety of sources ranging from family tradition to formal education, and that a large number of the vendors rely on trial-and-error as a tool for realizing the fullest maximization of available resources. Even a local university practices trial-and-error in its experimental agricultural programs. It has been demonstrated that other groups of farming people, such as the Dogon and the Kofyar, likewise rely on trial-and-error to help them successfully grow and market crops. Because it is versatile and available to all who have the time to invest, and because it helps with adaptation to changing conditions, trial-and-error is likely to persist as a human resource for learning for a very long time.

Works Cited

Bates, Daniel G.

2001 Human Adaptive Strategies. 2nd ed. Boston: Allyn and Bacon. 2001.

Sarver, Richard.

09-05-2003 Field notes for Farmers Market study, Economic Anthropology class, September 5, 2003. Radford, VA: Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Radford University.

09-17-2003 Field notes for Farmers Market study, Economic Anthropology class, September 17, 2003. Radford, VA: Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Radford University.

09-24-2003 Field notes for Farmers Market study, Economic Anthropology class, September 24, 2003. Radford, VA: Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Radford University.

09-27-2003 Field notes for Farmers Market study, Economic Anthropology class, September 29, 2003. Radford, VA: Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Radford University.

10-08-2003 Field notes for Farmers Market study, Economic Anthropology class, October 8, 2003. Radford, VA: Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Radford University.

10-18-2003 Field notes for Farmers Market study, Economic Anthropology class, October 18, 2003. Radford, VA: Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Radford University.

Van Beek, W.E.A.

1993 "Processes and Limitations of Dogon Agricultural Knowledge" IN An Anthropological Critique of Development: The Growth of Ignorance, edited by Mark Hobart. London: New York: Routledge, 1993.

Chapter 4

Farmers and Artisans, The Roots of a Region

By Justin P. Dowdy

The occasional visit to the farmers market is an event many have experienced. Whether one has found themselves mingling amongst markets with only a few vendors or with many, the experience is often times fondly remembered. These memories are made as all five senses are stimulated within uniquely diverse, close nit environments. However, it isn't until one's visits become steady that these sources of stimulation can begin to be soaked in and absorbed by the onlooker. After spending a period of ten weeks regularly visiting a farmers market in a city located in Southwest Virginia, I began to experience a deeper kind of connection. Rather than feeling as if I was merely enjoying a short lived social event, patterns of operation were revealed to me through bonds only made possible by a familiarity gained over time. Within this ten-week period, I was able to scratch only the surface of what makes this particular market so vital to the community, as well as to the farmers and artisans involved. Progressions within this market continue to be made in accordance with the rich traditions and values that have shaped the surrounding Appalachian region throughout history.

Within my experience I was able to observe and interact with two specific types of vendors selling their products at the market. One of these types is the farmers themselves. For over 125 years local farmers have been bringing their fresh fruits and vegetables, along with flowers to this market (Black, 2003:1). They make up the majority of vendors and use the market as a means to sell what they have put much work into. Although the greatest percentages of farmers sell fruits and vegetables, I met one lady, Betsy, who raises goats in order to produce goat cheese. Betsy's eyes lit up as she spoke about her goats claiming that, "Once a goat comes to her farm it will never leave (Dowdy 10-11-2003)." She saw each goat as a member of her family and to give one away or sell any of them simply would not occur. Those who grow their own produce seem equally as passionate about their product as Betsy is about her goats. As I was considering buying a man's vegetables a group of people were milling around behind me. I overheard a man say, "Those beans look pretty stale." I wasn't the only one to hear this for the farmer looked up quickly and said, "Bill, you look pretty stale yourself (Week 1)!" Everyone laughed, but nevertheless the farmer was quick to defend his beans. The relationship between the farmer and the food he or she produces and sells at the market resembles traditional Appalachian cultures of this area. What the farm produces is a means of survival for many of the farmers and their families. The result is a love and appreciation for the gifts of the land. This attitude is slowly vanishing with the industrial trends sweeping the globe, yet they are prevalent here at the farmers market.

The second type of vendor is the artisan or craftsman. Unlike the farmers, craftsmen are a more recent addition to this Southwest Virginia market. They make up a much smaller percentage of the market, yet over my ten-week experience I noticed more and more of them. Artisan vendors are located at the entrances of the market with a diverse number of trades. I

observed a potter, a couple of people selling exotic and interesting photos, jewelers, candle makers, a glassblower, and a number of other unique types of trades being used as a way to earn some money. Ryan, a potter from a small town outside of the immediate area, uses the market as a way to sell what he can as he apprentices another experienced potter. It seems as if this is a way for Ryan to measure where he is as a potter and see how far he has to come in order to make pottery his profession. Some artisans creatively team up with other artists to make the most of each others products. One candle maker bought several pieces of pottery from another potter (he is from the same area as Ryan) and poured his candles inside the small pots (Dowdy 09-27-2003). The result was that the potter benefited by selling a large amount of pots, the candle maker benefited by being able to sell his candles at a higher price, and the customer is able to burn a candle to its end, then use the piece of pottery left over. Although this person seemed more anxious to make money than Ryan, it didn't seem to be the dominating reason that he was doing what he was doing. This was apparent to me as he was talking about his product with so much excitement, knowing I was broke and unable to buy a thing.

From my experience I found that both farmers and artisans are passionate about what they are producing and selling to the community. There is a sense of pride that accompanies the display of what one works so hard on, whether it is on their farm or in their workshop. This passion is a slice of what makes the market a unique, colorful place to come. It is also this passion that allows vendors to be able to relate so well with one another. It is as if the same type of blood is flowing through the veins of the people behind the stalls. Bonds can be created in minutes and last lifetimes here. My friend Carolyn, who I knew before I decided to observe the market, was selling baked goods one day. Her table was beside Betsy's, the lady who sells goat cheese. It only took a couple of hours for Betsy to invite Carolyn to her farm so she could visit with her goats (Dowdy 10-11-2003). The atmosphere that fills the market is one in which people are willing to help one another, for many are in the same "boat." Ryan the potter wrote down the directions to his teacher's studio for me when I revealed to him that I was beginning to practice pottery (Dowdy 09-20-2003). Rather than having an attitude of competition, he wanted me to learn and profit from the experience that he has found so beneficial within his life. This type of attitude creates bonds and friendships today and has in the past as well.

More so than artisans, farmers at the market seem to be working alongside other family members. In some cases the tradition of farming has been passed down from the previous generation. An older lady selling peaches told me that, "her husbands' family had always had a farm and brought them into it (Dowdy 08-30-2003)." Her and her husband worked together, planting over 1,000 peach trees. One family from a rural area about 35 miles outside of the city sells clay from their land as a facial cleanser. Each week I saw a mother and a daughter, and most weeks the son was helping as well. Another married couple sold flowers at the market, and had seemed to be doing it for years, for they looked to be in their 70's.

Although most artisans worked independently, a few worked alongside family members as well. One couple sold beautiful rocks they had collected along with other items. Another couple sold jewelry and other types of art together. However, rather than having multiple livelihood strategies, the couples worked at the market daily, essentially using it as their crafts shop. One very important aspect of the market is the community in itself. In many cases the farmers market is not only a family endeavor for those working, but also for those shopping. Many times I noticed and spoke with families that I already knew or was just meeting. This adds to the atmosphere and creates close nit and personal interaction.

Multiple livelihood strategies are a part of the lives of many participating in the market. It is nearly impossible to live off of the income made at the market alone, especially with a family to support. In speaking to the farmers, many said they sold their products at other locations as well. One lady told me that she had a shop alongside a major road in the area where she sold the majority of her goods (Dowdy 10-25-2003). Craftsmen also are involved in multiple livelihood strategies to make ends meet. Ryan, the potter works as a waiter and cook at a restaurant near his home. In putting both incomes together he is able to support himself. Having a number of trades is and has been essential to the survival of many individuals and families in the Appalachian area. This tradition continues at the farmers market, for it has been passed down throughout time. In the 125 years of operation, many generations have been involved in similar strategies. It is as if those at the market today are walking in somebody else's shoes, perhaps their great, great grandparents or beyond. These shoes have become worn out but there still what fit, there still the most comfortable and reliable way to get around.

As I continued to go to the same market again and again, I began to enjoy the new revelations that would occur each time I visited. I found that anyone can enjoy their time at the market, yet when I began to understand certain techniques and ways to move to the rhythm of the place I became even more excited. Certain deals were cut with certain people, but not others. Why? Well I didn't exactly pin everything down, but I know friendliness gets you a long way at a place like this. After becoming familiar with many vendors they were quick to knock off a few bucks from the original price. This was not my intention; I didn't have enough money even with the discount! However, they seemed to value our relationship more so than the almighty dollar, at least some of them. Ryan gives us an example of this. When he told me his mugs were \$18 I raised my eyebrows, not necessarily implying anything, and he quickly responded with "ok, or 15, it doesn't matter (Dowdy 09-13-2003)." There are other patterns of deal making as well. The longer the day goes on the cheaper things become. With crowds usually at their maximum in the morning, approximately 10:00, vendors want to get rid of the extras by noon. This occurs more with farmers than artisans, for the food of many farmers will rot before they can return to the market the next week. One other specific example of being "cut a deal" is when an artist named Jerry drew my caricature for \$5 rather than \$7. He did this telling me to pass the word along so he could get more customers (Dowdy 09-20-2003). A possible factor in being on the receiving end of a bargain may involve dress. Although I can't point to a specific example, I didn't witness a single businessman (someone dressed in a coat and tie, or expensive clothing) being cut a deal. However, in my ugly, inexpensive clothing I was offered several bargains. Nevertheless, I am not claiming that a businessman who develops a relationship with a farmer or artisan will not be cut a deal simply because of his status. In fact I believe the opposite is true. To sum this idea up, it appeared that those people who were closer on a personal level with the vendors were more likely to be cut a deal.

In passing traditions along over the past 125 years, many rules and regulations have come about and been implemented in the market. Many of these rules have been formed due to the large amounts of artisans that have become a part of the market. In the rule book it states, "a prospective vendor wishing to sell handcrafted items, including, but not limited to, jewelry, art, pottery, or photography must, before offering items for sale:" 1) File an application with the Market Manager specifying the nature of the product being sold...2) Obtain the appropriate licenses from the City...3) File an affidavit with the Market Manager...4) If someone files a complaint that the vendor's crafts are substandard, or not made by the vendor then the vendor

will have a chance to respond and appropriate actions will be taken (Black, 2003:5). Many other rules attempt to ensure that crafts are genuinely unique and not resold. In doing this it keeps the farmers market what it is meant to be and doesn't allow it to turn into a flea market. Rules such as these aren't so much limiting as they are vital to the originality which makes the farmers market a place where artisans and farmers can work and be recognized for their passions.

Local events occurring within the area seem to affect this market in different ways, both positively and negatively. In my fourth week at the market the nearby college had a football game. This is a major football program and the game was televised on ESPN. That particular day I noticed a drastic difference in not only the amount of customers, but in the amount of vendors as well. In this case the nearby event impacted the market in a negative way. Another example occurred in the following week. As rain drizzles turned into splashes many farmers and craftsmen were disappointed. It was the jazz festival weekend, which in the past has brought many people to the market. However, with the rain falling there was only a small amount of people shopping. Hits such as these can dramatically impact those families that highly depend on success at the farmers market (Dowdy 09-20-2003/09-27-2003).

Although some do depend on the market as a vital piece of their income, there are also those who come simply to enjoy the day and aren't as dependent on their product. Ryan is this type of vendor. In fact there is quite a few of this type of vendor. Carolyn sells baked goods and has lost money on at least two occasions out of no more than five visits to the market. However, she says that she does it for fun. It is a way for her to make money and make people happy at the same time. Her goal is simply to enjoy the experience.

Within my experience at this farmers market, I noticed that many of those participating in selling their products held close to many of the same traditions of Appalachian cultures surrounding the area. Diversification, multiple livelihood strategies, reciprocity and community support are just a few of the aspects that parallel one another. I believe these traditions have been passed down from past generations and are holding firm within this farmers market community. Apprenticeships and family endeavors allow for trades to live on and values to be carried out.

When one observes this particular farmers market, diversification can be seen on an individual and community level. In looking at the individual vendor, one immediately notices the numerous amounts of fruits and vegetables that are grown on the farm and sold at the market. Most vendors had at least five different types of produce, with only one or two specializing their product. In looking at the entire community at the market, one immediately notices that there are several different types of vendors, selling different things. This variety makes this particular market attractive for shoppers from within the immediate and outside areas. This is one of the larger, if not the largest market in Southwest Virginia. The variety of crafts and foods pulls people from a number of different places.

Another aspect of the market that is similar to the traditions of Appalachian cultures is the multiple livelihood strategies that many of the vendors have. In the 1930's families within this area were participating in multiple livelihood strategies in order to support themselves while maintaining jobs in nearby coal camps. The most common technique was gardening (LaLone 1996). Like many of the family farms typical of this farmers market, the gardens of the coal mining families were highly diversified. With a wide range of foods to choose from, communities were able to survive through periods where money and work were scarce. Not only would these people farm, they would work and develop skills as craftsmen. Some would build

furniture to make an extra buck. Making moonshine was also a way to provide for the family. As I grew to know Ryan better, I found out that he was not only a potter, but a cook and a waiter as well. Multiple livelihood strategies such as these are common here at the Farmers Market.

Betsy, the lady who raises goats, gets them for free from a friend who shows goats for a living (Dowdy 10-11-2003). This type of relationship is quite unique and can be viewed as a sort of reciprocity. I am not sure what Betsy does in return for her friend, but undoubtedly she somehow repays her. The two types of reciprocity, or ways of exchange, that I observed at the market were balanced as well as general. In most cases the exchange is simple and obvious in that the customer gives the vendor money for a product. This is as balanced as it gets. However, at times I noticed a type of general reciprocity. What general reciprocity means is that a gift is given without the expectation of immediate returns. An example of this took place in week seven. My brother and I were talking with Betsy about her variety of goat cheeses and with a broad smile that produced two dimples she began to feed us and feed us and feed us. We sat at her table and stuffed ourselves as she talked about her farm and her beloved goats. The unique thing about this was that she didn't expect us to, and didn't seem to care if we bought a thing. She was simply excited for us to try her cheeses! Eventually we did buy some cheese, yet the expectation to immediately return the favor was not there. This typifies general reciprocity.

Finally, the community plays an important role in supporting the farmers and artisans of the market. This type of relationship is evident in the shoppers who buy the goods and services from the vendors, as well as within the vending community itself. There are those shoppers who come back, again and again and buy from the same vendor. I noticed this taking place within the produce vendors more so than the craftsmen. One man sold the most beautiful, plump peaches I've ever seen. His customers would come back weekly to get a couple more peaches to last them through the week. Vendors seemed to have a trustworthy relationship with one another. One week I noticed Ryan missing from his booth for a long period of time. As someone watched his pottery for him, he was wandering around enjoying the market (Dowdy 09-27-2003). This type of support between customers and vendors, and from vendor to vendor, makes the market an easygoing, highly personal place to come. Once a sense of trust is gained, it wouldn't be surprising if a vendor asked me or another customer to watch his table for a while. This trusting atmosphere reminds me of how deals used to be made simply on a handshake. Handshakes still work at this market.

In looking back at my ten-week experience, I am reminded of the bonds I was able to make with members of the community along with the farmers and artisans. These bonds were formed in an environment where economic gains were excitedly hoped for, while strong relationships were counted on. It is these relationships that make the farmers market experience one in which you look forward to coming back to. Although artisans and farmers are selling different products, they are faced with similar challenges at the market. These challenges are based around selling the product that one is passionate about. This adds to the excitement, while testing ones ability to progress and maintain quality as a farmer or artisan. Behind these challenges lies a piece of living Appalachian history. However, this history cannot be labeled as such, for its ways are flourishing and are far from dead. Traits such as diversification, multiple livelihood strategies, reciprocity, apprenticeships, and community support are what give this farmers market life. Rather than the unfamiliarity that industrialization has caused on many farms in this country, the farmers market is filled with people who are deeply connected to their product. In buying a mug, I gained a piece of Ryan's creativity and personality. The goat cheese

that my brother and I shared came from Betsy's goats that I learned were like precious children to her. As Appalachian values are lived out in the different vendors and their families, they are shared with other members of the community in personal interaction. This type of communication ensures that at least some of the essential aspects of Appalachian livelihoods will be passed along and shared within the community. Whether you find yourself bargaining with an artisan, taking a bite of a juicy peach, or observing in the distance at the next market you go to, I hope you remember a few of the things my ten week experience taught me at this market in Southwest Virginia.

Work Cited

Black, Larry

2003 The Historic City Market (Roanoke City Market Handbook). Pp. 1-5.

Dowdy, Justin

08-30-2003 Field notes for farmers market study, Economic Anthropology class, August 30, 2003. Radford, VA: Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Radford University.

09-13-2003 Field notes for farmers market study, Economic Anthropology class, September 13, 2003. Radford, VA: Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Radford University.

09-20-2003 Field notes for farmers market study, Economic Anthropology class, September 20, 2003. Radford, VA: Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Radford University.

09-27-2003 Field notes for farmers market study, Economic Anthropology class, September 27, 2003. Radford, VA: Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Radford University.

10-11-2003 Field notes for farmers market study, Economic Anthropology class, November 11, 2003. Radford, VA: Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Radford University.

10-25-2003 Field notes for farmers market study, Economic Anthropology class, November 25, 2003. Radford, VA: Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Radford University.

La Lone, Mary B.

1996 Economic Survival Strategies in Appalachia's Coal Camps. *Journal of Appalachian Studies* 2(1):53-68.

Chapter 5

Farmers Markets: Changes in the Farmers Market Vendors

By Joseph A. Gregory

Marketplaces have been around since the early agrarian societies. The Aztec had their marketplaces and many still exist today all over Latin America. The Greeks and Romans each had their marketplaces, as the Chinese do even today. These early marketplaces have been continued through centuries of change and have been adapted into our way of life. The farmers markets of Southwest Virginia are a form of today's marketplaces. Farmers markets are typically found in many towns and cities of this area. They are a common facility or site where vendors gather on a regular basis to sell their products. A variety of products are sold by the vendors including fresh fruits, vegetables, crafts, and pre-made food items. Farmers markets are categorized as open-air, for non-permanent sheltered booths, and closed-air, for permanent sheltered booths. The smaller markets are usually open-air and the larger markets are usually closed-air. The farmers market itself has changed in the past few years. The vendors have evolved from classical farmers into craft artisans and/or pre-made food producers. This paper focuses on the various types of vendors, specifically the resellers/middlemen, the functions of warehouses, and the analysis of the reseller/middleman concept.

Research Methods

This study was conducted over a nine-week period in the Fall of 2003. The purpose was to gather research information on farmers market vendors, focusing extensively on the reseller/middleman vendor. Two of these vendors were located in one of the larger cities in Southwest Virginia. This type of vendor and farmers market was the subject of my study. The first two weeks was spent watching all the market vendors at work, conversing with the vendors, and building rapport with each vendor. Participant observation consisted of buying some of the products and interviews with the vendors were conducted during that time. The third week consisted of gathering information regarding the structural makeup of the market, mapping out the market's layout and the products available from each vendor, categorizing the vendors according to sex, age, ethics, and the type of vending they were involved in. Field notes of each visit were taken directly afterwards, photographs and notations of each were logged. Weeks four to nine were spent interviewing two reseller/middlemen that are at the farmers market I choose to study. The interviews were conducted during the week after two o'clock because the vendors indicated that was when the market slowed down. Two of these last five weeks were also spent observing and analyzing a smaller farmers market, about 30 miles away. This part of the study was based upon the type of vending, prices of the products, the variety of produce, and the openness of the vendors.

During this nine-week period, two articles were researched in order to locate prior studies. The studies found were by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) regarding rising trends in farmers markets and a master's thesis by Paul S. Trupo (1997) on produce marketing in Southwest Virginia. Both studies were helpful in order to understand the structure of the market, beginning with the farmer to the final destination of the farmers market.

Today's farmers markets are not just farmers selling produce, but vendors selling produce, along with various crafts, and other merchandise. For ease of discussion, I have categorized the vendors into six specific groups: Direct Producers, Food Producers, Craft Merchants, Product Modifiers, Co-op Vendors, and Resellers/Middlemen, as described below.

- **Direct Producers:** The direct producer is the farmer who grows and sells the fruits and vegetables such as tomatoes, cucumbers, apples, and strawberries. He is the one who grows, picks, and sells the plants grown in his fields.
- **Food Producer:** Food producers usually make some type of bread or pastries to sell at the market. We did run across a food producer who sells buffalo meat. Food producers have become popular in about the past ten or fifteen years.
- **Craft Merchants:** Many craft makers have turned to farmers markets to sell their crafts. Craft makers sell anything from birdhouses, wooden toys, pottery, jewelry, or handbags.
- **Product Modifiers:** Product modifiers are close to craft makers, but the modifier will take an original product and modify it into something else.
- **Co-op Vendors:** Co-op vending has become popular lately as well. These are usually about three to five families that sell different products, but sell from the same vending booth. By combining their resources they cut the individual cost of vending. The different families in the group usually alternate days or weeks working the vending table.
- **Reseller/middlemen:** The reseller/middlemen is a vendor who travels and purchases produce at a produce warehouse and sells it at a farmers market. The reseller/middlemen travels to the wholesale warehouse because they can purchase the produce at bulk rate and sell the produce at a lower price.

The reseller/middlemen are the main focus of this study. These vendors have been categorized as such because they are both resellers and middlemen. The reseller/middlemen who are found at farmers markets sell produce that has been purchased elsewhere. They are considered middlemen because they purchase produce from warehouses and/or farmers selling it to the public, fulfilling the role of a "go-between." The reseller/middlemen travel great distances to obtain the produce that is not grown in the area, purchasing the produce at bulk rate. Buying the produce at bulk rate enables the reseller/middleman to offer the produce at lower rates to the general public. Also by traveling long distances picking-up out of season produce meets the supply and demand of the cliental and also reduces the risk of produce spoilage.

Examples of Resellers

Harding's Market Place

The larger towns and cities are most usually where the reseller/middleman operates. In one of the larger cities of Southwest Virginia there are two reseller/middleman vendors. They both travel to Meadows of Dan where the Woods Brothers Warehouse is located, in order to pick up produce that is out of season or not grown locally. George Harding is a farmer, vendor, and storeowner. He has a 250 acre farm in which he grows some of the produce he sales. Most of this produce is usually tomatoes, corn, cucumbers, and squash, which grow well and have a long growing season in this area. He grows the vegetables he thinks will be most profitable to his vending booth. Harding also sales produce purchased from area farmers. These area farmers provide about 25% of the produce supply. The farmers may grow some similar produce or they may grow different produce. Because of the produce from the farmers and Harding's produce he raises, this enables him to have a diverse and fresh supply to offer the public.

Some area farmers transport their produce to a warehouse in order to sell their homegrown goods. Harding, in turn, purchases goods from the warehouses, obtaining produce that is grown locally and from other areas. The produce that is grown out of the area is picked green and shipped to the warehouses. Refrigerating the produce is necessary, as he attempts to sell it fresh. Many times he will pick up items, such as melons and peaches that are not grown locally in large enough quantity, allowing it to be purchased at a bulk rate from a farm. Harding is a storeowner as well. He owns three stores that are interconnected, selling a variety of goods. Harding spends the majority of his time at the vending booths. Harding commented, ...“vending was the only way to sell on the market.” (Gregory, 9/25/2003: 2)

Blevins Store

The Blevins Store is a little store on the corner of the farmers market in a large city in Southwest Virginia. Along with this little store that sells baked goods and canned goods, there are also three vending booths selling fresh produce. Each booth has a different name on the title. The titles are different because this consists of a three or four family conglomeration. According to Webster's Dictionary a conglomeration is ..."made up of various parts from various sources...(Babcock, 1989: 478)." Blevins Store fits this definition perfectly. Paul Blevins is the owner who manages the business. Two other families are part of this conglomeration, which are extended family members. The Johnson Family owns' a 350 acre farm of which the surplus produce is sent to the farmers market to sell. The Johnson Family has been selling produce on the market since about 1900. The vending booths were operated by the Johnson's and eventually passed on to Blevins when he married their daughter in 1981. The corner store was purchased shortly after Blevins took over operating the vending booths.

There is also a large farm in a smaller town outside of the city, owned by Blevins' brother that supplies part of the produce. These two farms make up one avenue of supply. Another avenue of supply is the farmers', which are located in a particular county village and a corridor of Virginia's highway. Blevins occasionally goes to these farmers to pickup produce and also at times the farmers bring the produce directly to him. This way the farmer does not have be

concerned about selling the produce to the public. The farmers supply him produce that grows well in this area. Tomatoes, corn, beans, and squash have a good growing season in this area, and are some of the produce that the farmers supply.

Another avenue of supply is the produce warehouses in the area and across the state border. The Woods Brothers Warehouse is located in Meadows of Dan on route 58. Blevins usually picks up produce that is out of season at this warehouse. Blevins also travels to the Columbia State Warehouse in Columbia, South Carolina, where he picks up cantaloupes, melons, and occasionally peaches and strawberries as well. Most of these fruits grown in this area have a short growing season and are not grown to a capacity that they can be purchased at a bulk rate. Blevins can buy the produce at a bulk rate and sell it at a cheaper price than most supermarkets. He also travels to Wilmington North Carolina to pick up sweet potatoes. The North Carolina plains have a sandy soil and a hotter climate, which produces better sweet potatoes.

Similarities of the Two Resellers

One of the similarities of the two resellers is that each is a farmer. They grow some of the produce or someone in their family will grow it. They can put their main effort into a numerous variety of produce, knowing that they will have the option of picking up produce from other sources.

Another similarity is that the resellers receive part of their supplies from area farmers. The area farmers grow a different variety of produce as opposed to the resellers. Area farmers tend to grow the same produce from year-to-year, which enables the resellers to predict what produce will be available. The resellers also purchase some of the produce from area farmers before the market opens.

The third similarity is that both resellers/middlemen purchase produce from the Woods Brothers Produce Warehouse. Each estimated the round trip time is approximately 4 hours to Meadows of Dan. The produce that is picked up at the warehouse have been picked green and shipped to the warehouse. The produce is refrigerated during the transportation and storing process in order to maintain the freshness over an extended period of time.

The fourth and final similarity between the two resellers is that they both practice long term business relationships. The long-term business relationship, also called Personalized Relationships, are ones "...that endure past the exchange... (Plattner, 210)." Resellers and other vendors maintain relationships with each other as they exchange produce. It important to keep these relationships in a good standing in case of a need for help with their supply of produce. The reseller maintains long-term relationships with area farmers who do not sell their produce at the farmer's market and those who do. These relationships enable the resellers to predict what the area farmers will grow, repeatedly using the same farmers to build a relationship gaining knowledge of the farmers growing habits and their loyalty in business relations.

Resellers also keep long-term relations with the warehouse managers. The relationships with the warehouse managers can be very important when the reseller has to travel 4 hours or over 500 miles to pick up produce. Without the long-term relationship the risk of coming away empty handed is much greater. Blevins spoke of a cantaloupe farmer in South Carolina that he knew who had 50 trucks transporting melons to the warehouse in Columbia everyday.

Warehouses

Functions of the Warehouses

The produce warehouses can be looked upon with a negative slant at times. The public may view the warehouses as hostile to the area farmers, creating a hostile atmosphere of competition. But, the produce warehouses are sometimes the safety valve keeping the farmer's head above water. With the laws and regulations on produce, many area farmers are blocked from selling directly to supermarkets. Area farmers will look to warehouses or to farmers markets in order to sell the produce they grow. Neither reseller spoke of using the Southwest Virginia Farmers Market in Hillsville, it is a temperature controlled warehouse and a state run facility. The Southwest Virginia Farmers Market was built to help farmers changing from tobacco to other produce such as bell peppers and cabbage. Its main objective is to help regional farmers sell their produce (Carroll County, 2003). This farmers market is one of five shipping points created by the state to give the farmers the capability to have a smaller volume of produce graded, and packaged (Virtual Farmers Market, 2003). The farmers need such facilities in order to connect with wholesalers, retailers, and the public.

The produce warehouses are not only supplied by the area farmers, but also by shipments from other areas. The warehouses ship in produce that is not in season or does not grow in the local climate. They also ship in exotic fruits such as bananas, mangos, figs, and pineapples. None of these fruits will grow in this area, but the reseller buys these fruits and sells them at the farmers market usually at a lower rate, because they buy them in bulk. Not only can exotic fruits be found at the warehouse, cantaloupes, watermelons, honeydews, peaches and apples can also be found there. The reseller takes advantage of these fruits and sells them on the market. Before area fruits and vegetables start to ripen, some of the produce in South Carolina and other southern states are already ripening and ready for harvest, allowing them to be picked and shipped. This enables the resellers to take advantage of a longer-term selling cycle, offering the produce from out-of-state, until the local fruits and vegetables are ready for harvest and brought to market.

Warehouses Mentioned

The warehouse spoken of by both resellers is the Woods Brothers Produce Warehouse up on Route 58 in Meadows of Dan. Both explained that they pick up produce that is out of season. Tomatoes, beans and squash are collected there until they start to ripen in the area fields. Once these plants are ready to be picked, the area farmers and the resellers/middlemen supply the vegetables native to the area. A "vine-ripened" tomato sell much faster than one that is "picked green and shipped" The resellers also pick up exotic fruits such as bananas, mangos, kiwis, and pineapples at the warehouses. Sometimes the reseller picks up fruits and vegetables that are native to this area but the growing season is short. Since the growing season is short, the accessibility is also small. Peaches, apples, cantaloupes, watermelons, and some other fruits will grow in this area, but the supply is so small that finding a bulk rate and supply is virtually impossible except at a warehouse.

Some melons and other produce are much more accessible in other areas and the price is lower because of the supply. Paul Blevins spoke of the Columbia State Farmers Market in

Columbia, South Carolina (South Carolina Department of Agriculture, 2003). He indicated that is where he purchases his cantaloupes and other melons. He spoke of this market as a very large building with four lanes of traffic going in and four lanes going out. Blevins commented that tractor-trailers were constantly hauling cantaloupes and other melons in. According to the Internet this farmers market encompasses 50 acres with 500 open stall, 100 wholesale units and 38 retail units (South Carolina Department of Agriculture, 2003).

The last warehouse spoken of is near Wilmington, North Carolina. The name of the specific warehouse was not disclosed, but there are quite a few warehouses in the area. The North Carolina Department of Agriculture (NCDA) also has a Shipping Point in Lumberton, North Carolina. The NCDA emphasized of the quality of the sweet potatoes grown in the counties of this area. Blevins indicated this is where he picks up the sweet potatoes and this is the best place to buy sweet potatoes. As mentioned earlier, the costal plains of North Carolina have a sandy soil that drains better, suiting the sweet potato best. The humid sub-tropic climate is warmer in the lower altitudes of the costal plains, once again suiting the sweet potato best (North Carolina Department of Agriculture, 2003).

Analysis

Through the process of this study three themes are apparent regarding the reseller/middleman vendor. First, the lifestyle of a reseller/middleman is a type of multi-livelihood strategy, as described below. Secondly, vending consists of a family endeavor, including the reseller/middleman. Thirdly, the adaptations that each reseller/middleman experienced enabled the successful function of the operation.

Multi-livelihood

The lifestyle of the reseller/middleman can easily be tied to a multi-livelihood concept. A "...multi-livelihood strategy refers to people performing many kinds of tasks in a given day, week, season and lifetime. The notion that a person ... retires...in leisure is foreign to the concept of multi livelihood strategies." (Halperin, 1990: 19) Each reseller mentioned has diverse roles that they live- farming, vending, storeowner. They each depend on different avenues from which to collect produce. The reseller keeps his chances of finding produce open, which cuts his risk of losing money. If the area farmers have a bad season the warehouse can supplement the supply or it can supply it alone. The resellers also do not depend on one crop in which to vend. They have a diverse arrangement of fruits and vegetables. They carry tomatoes, beans, squash, melons, peaches, other produce, offering some in a diverse arrangement such as red, yellow, green, and cherry tomatoes. The resellers also offer yellow, crooked neck, butternut, winter, and zucchini squash.

The resellers have stores that sell canned goods, baked goods, and a variety of other goods. This income supplements the vending booth income. The diverse roles of farming and vending are tied together in an indirect fashion. Many farmers do not operate vending booths, instead they sell the produce to wholesale warehouse and/or a reseller/middleman. The reseller takes advantage of this situation and purchases the produce in order to market it. The reseller/middleman purchases the produce at a bulk rate, not to intentionally cut the farmer but to take the risk of buying the bulk supply, not knowing for sure that it will sell. The reseller does

not cut the farmer because he knows that he must preserve the long-term relationship he depends upon.

Family Endeavor

Both of the reseller/middlemen spoke of how their family members are willing to help run the vending booths as needed. Harding spoke of how his wife and kids are willing to help run the store and/or the vending booth anytime. For example, while at the market speaking with Paul Blevins his father was helping him run the booths. Paul indicated that most of his family members are willing to help. Both resellers have hired one or more part-time workers, as another way to fulfill the task. The part time workers were more visible at Harding's vending booth. Blevins has 2 part-time helpers working at the store while the family operates the vending booths.

Adaptation

“Adaptation [is] the process of adapting to environmental circumstances.”(Bates, 2001: 25) Although it may be difficult to observe, both of these resellers/middlemen are adapting to this area. Harding purchased the store on the market in 1991, but soon found that vending was the most beneficial approach to selling the products on the market. So he adapted his methods to the social environment, by purchasing a vending booth. The variety of goods Harding has in the store does not attract the customers at the market. He took on the role of a vender, selling produce from the booth along with the store goods. This strategy has enabled him to adapt to the present farmers market.

Paul Blevins' in-laws, the Johnson's, have been selling on the market since around 1918. Paul Blevins began managing the vending booths in 1981, and then later purchased the corner store. He displays fresh produce in two booths and also inside the store. Canned goods such as jellies, jams, apple butter, pumpkin butter, are all common items used to draw attention to the store. This is the only store on the market strip where a drink can be purchased. Across the sidewalk are two vending booths with different names on them. They have the name of the farm where the fresh produce was grown, but both booths are part of the Blevins' store conglomeration.

Conclusion

As time and culture continue to change, so too will the farmers markets as they are known today. Obviously, the farmers markets have adapted to the time and needs of the culture of the day. The vendors will continue to evolve, the structures will perhaps change, and some unforeseeable aspects will change as well. The farmers market will change just as the marketplaces of yesterday have changed. While researching the information for this study there were some changes already occurring. Many of the large shipping points have vending booths inside and are indoor farmers market. The state run farmers markets are mainly large warehouses built to help the farmers in selling their produce to wholesalers, retailers, and to the public. This is quite a difference from the roadside stops of our past. The reseller/middleman is an adaptive strategy that has become popular in the areas where the concept will be successful. They are

found mainly in the larger cities because of the need for a larger clientele. The bulk of produce purchased from the different avenues of supply need the larger clientele in order for the reseller strategy to work.

Works Cited

Babcock, Philip

1993 Webster Third New World Dictionary. Springfield, Massachusetts: Merriam-Webster Inc. Publishers.

Bates, Daniel G.

2001 Human Adaptive Strategies: Ecological, Cultural, and Political. Boston: Allyn and Bacon. P. 25.

Carroll County

2003 Carroll County: Southwest Virginia Farmers Market . Electronic document: <http://www.co.carroll.va.us/FarmersMarket.html>, accessed 11/19/2003.

Gregory, Joseph

09/25/2003 Field notes for Farmers Market study, Economic Anthropology class, September 25, 2003. Radford, VA: Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Radford University.

Halperin, Rhonda

1990 The Livelihood of Kin: Making Ends Meet "The Kentucky Way". Austin: University of Texas Press. P. 19.

North Carolina Department of Agriculture

2003 North Carolina Department of Agriculture. Goodness Grows In North Carolina Sweet Potatoes: Ags Cool Sweet Potatoes. Electronic document: <http://www.ncagr.com/agscool/commodites/sweetkid.htm>, accessed 11/19/2003.

Plattner, Stuart

1989 Economic Anthropology. Edited by Stuart Plattner. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

South Carolina Department of Agriculture

- 2003 South Carolina Department of Agriculture. State Farmers Markets. Electronic document: www.scda.state.sc.us/aboutdepartment/divisions/marketservices/statefarmersmkts/scmkts.htm, accessed 10/14/2003.

Trupo, Paul S.

- 1997 Agricultural Cooperation and Horticultural Produce Marketing in Southwest Virginia. Master's Thesis, Agricultural and Applied Economics, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

Virginia Department of Agriculture

- 2003 Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. Farmers Markets System: Virginia Shipping Point Farmers Market System. Electronic document: www.vdacs.state.va.us/frmmkt/index.html, accessed 11/19/2003

Virtual Farmers Market

- 2003 Virtual Farmer's Market: Business Listings. Southwest Virginia Farmers Market. Electronic document: <http://www.farm2market.org/bizlist.asp?BizID=355&what=details> . accessed 11/19/2003.

Chapter 6

Cooperative Success: A Study of a Community Based Farmers Market

By David A. Self

Human beings have been employing a variety of subsistence strategies as long as they have existed on earth. There are many factors that contribute to the different types of survival strategies, with the local environmental resources being the most obvious. The one thing that has set humans apart from other animals is the ability to adopt several methods of survival to minimize the risk of each strategy. Traditional foraging societies may have a small “kitchen” garden to supplement the wild plants and animals that make up the bulk of their diet. Conversely, a horticulturalist that depends primarily on domesticated crops may hunt wild animals for a source of protein or when times are tough and one subsistence strategy is not sufficient enough. This form of survival strategy diversification is seen throughout all societies, from traditional to modern. The modern day farmers market is a perfect example of how humans supplement their other forms of economic subsistence to gain a well-rounded livelihood.

I have conducted a semester-long study on a farmers market in Southwest Virginia that is located right in the heart of a small university town. It consists of approximately twenty vendors from up to ten surrounding counties and it has been operating for about twenty years. From my participant observation and interviews I discovered that there is a considerable amount of centralized regulation and control of this particular farmers market, which is necessary to achieve a certain market identity that is desired by the town, the downtown merchants, and most importantly the vendors. This concept is interesting to the anthropologist because the average customer at the farmers market probably has no idea what is going on “behind the scenes.” In Anthropological research, the main goal is to obtain the insider’s perspective on the specific cultural setting that is being studied. This is why I concentrated my research on the rules and regulations of the farmers market, as well as the marketing strategies that are being employed by the town and the market coordinators for the benefit of the entire market. To preserve anonymity, I did not use the real names of the people I interviewed for this research paper.

As the farmers market became larger and therefore more complex it needed a form of control that was beneficial to the town as well as the vendors. This particular farmers market is not just a place for people to sell their products; it is a partnership with the town, the downtown merchants, and vendors to make the market area a social as well as an economic setting (Self 9/27/03). The marketing strategies serve not only to increase sales but make the market more of a public institution where people can shop and socialize with others simultaneously. I would first like to concentrate on the rules and regulations of this particular farmers market, which were developed with the well being of the vendors and the local downtown merchants in mind. The rules of this market reflect its goals which are not limited to mere economic success.

The town provides administrative oversight at the market, and there is also an on-site market coordinator with a vendor committee composed of vendors that have been associated

with the market for a minimum of five years (Self 9/27/03). Seniority at the farmers market plays a role in many different situations that will be discussed shortly. The market coordinator works directly with the vendors and she happens to be a vendor herself. This makes the other vendors feel more comfortable because they know that the rules affect her as well. The designated hours of operation from May to October are 8:00-1:00 on Wednesdays and Saturdays and during the winter months the market operates on the same days of the week but from 9:30-2:00, obviously for temperature changes.

The vendors are requested to be set up by 8:15 and empty spaces will be reallocated by the market coordinator to accommodate the vendors present that particular day. The permanent vendors must pay an annual fee of \$25.00, whereas the daily or monthly vendors have to pay the annual fee plus a stall fee. The fee for stalls 1-9 is \$15.00 and for stalls 10-31 it is less expensive at \$10.00. The market is located on the corner of two main downtown streets and the first nine stalls have physical structures with shelter that are beneficial to the vendors, this is the reason for the higher stall fee. The vendors can't pay the fees at their leisure, the annual membership fees are due by the first of May and the monthly fees are due on the first Wednesday and Saturday of that month. The money goes to the town and it is used to pay for the parking lot area that the farmers market is held in and a portion of it is also allocated to fund the promotion of the market. Again, seniority at the market is important because the permanent vendors actually pay less than the temporary sellers; benevolent treatment of the dedicated vendors is an important aspect of this farmers market in Southwest Virginia. As mentioned earlier, the market contains a set number of spaces or stalls and the full season assignments of these selling spaces are determined by the vendor committee (Self 9/27/03). The stalls are allocated in a fair manner based on seniority, sales volume, and previous attendance. The market coordinator makes the quick decisions regarding the daily space assignments, and the vendor committee has the power to revoke assigned spaces from other vendors given that written reasons are provided.

Not anyone can sell goods at the farmers market, only the vendors with previously assigned seasonal or daily spaces are permitted to sell at this particular market. This differs from other less organized markets that are open to anyone who wants to sell things. Each vendor is required to display his or her business' name and operating hours with an easily visible sign, and only one vehicle per vendor is allowed to park behind the stall in the parking lot (Self 10/4/03). This parking lot was originally for the downtown merchants that are in the vicinity, their approval and support was needed to attain this spot for the farmers market, this emphasizes the "whole town" cooperation concept of this particular market. Vendors are allowed to share spaces with the approval of the market coordinator; she bases her decisions on this matter mainly on the amount of products each vendor is selling, if the volume of produce is relatively low for each vendor she allows them to team up. Sharing of stalls decreases the price that each individual vendor has to pay for the space. These are some of rules that help with the organization of the farmers market, I am now going to discuss the rules that serve to give this market its identity and set it apart from other farmers markets.

This farmers market is also known as a producer market which means simply that the vendors grow their own produce (Self 9/27/03). The main idea of this market is that all the goods sold have to be produced locally; the produce includes fruits, vegetables, herbs, honey and mushrooms. Dairy products such as eggs and cheeses are allowed to be sold when proper refrigeration is provided, and non-perishable baked goods like breads and brownies are permitted as well. Herbal remedies, jams, and jellies are permitted with the proper labeling. A very

abundant item at this market are cut and potted flowers and perennials which are in a way encouraged to be sold at the market because they aesthetically enhance the market area (Self 9/13/03). Handmade craft items are permitted but they must be approved by the vendor committee, and vendors selling crafts only have to obtain approval ten days in advance of the selling date. Although crafts are permitted, homegrown produce has priority over them, this friendly discouragement of crafts is in part a way to not take away from the business of the downtown merchants who sell crafts as well (Self 9/27/03) For goods such as cheeses, canned and jarred items, and baked goods, inspection documentation must be provided prior to the selling of these items. Vendors grow their own produce to sell and they also process their own food items, which is evident with the abundance of cheeses and baked goods available at the market. Some of the vendors sell meat from the animals that they have on their farms, these meats also require adequate refrigeration and certification by the state's health standards. All the "home" processed foods must be packaged individually and labeled with raw material information and the date it was produced. A unique characteristic of this particular market is that it consists of many organic producers which are becoming very popular, customers like to know that what they are eating has not been contaminated with any toxic chemicals or genetically enhanced. This farmers market is known as a place to purchase high quality organically produced food items for reasonable prices, there are a lot of "natural" food stores but they can be pretty expensive. The vendors selling organic products must label them accordingly and have a Certificate of Organic Production from the Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Agriculture (Self 10/4/03). Vendors have the freedom to set their own prices any complaint by a customer has to be dealt with in a professional business-like fashion by the seller. The filing of all related taxes to the farmers market is the vendor's responsibility, but they are required because all state and local ordinances must be followed if someone wants to sell at this market. Fortunately, vendors are exempt from town business license fees. The vendor committee issues monthly permits to the vendors that have to be displayed in his or her vehicle on the days of the market or a fine could result. Vendors can also be fined for selling prior to 8:00 because it gives them an early advantage over other vendors. Since weighing instruments are constantly being used by the vendors when selling produce they too must be approved by the state. Keeping the market area clean is very important, the vendors have to remove any trash they leave and any excessive use of public receptacles will result in penalties. No chewing tobacco or alcohol is permitted at the farmers market, and any vendors or customers exhibiting improper behavior will not be tolerated. Children of the vendors must be supervised by another person since it is difficult to watch over a small child and deal with customers simultaneously. All of these rules for this particular farmers market were not made all at one time, they came about through time and specific events that took place that stimulated the need for control. The need for regulation is evident in any increasingly complex human institution. The vendors of the farmers market have their individual marketing strategies which can be seen by the public eye, but the farmers market as a whole has much more complex marketing schemes for economic as well as social reasons.

In May of 2002 "Friends of the Farmers Market" was founded by Sara Jackson, this program consists of many goals that are aimed to improve the market all around. The main long-term goal of "Friends of the Farmers Market" is to be able to operate the market year-round with the construction of a partially enclosed structure (Self 10/11/03). The first step to an all year market is the permission for the vendors to sell 20 % of farm direct produce, or items not produced directly by them. This will ensure that goods that are in demand during the winter

months will be available to the customers. The farmers market takes supply and demand into account just like any other business. However, the farm direct produce has to come from local or surrounding counties. The “Friends of the Farmers Market” program combines economic and social strategies to produce a dual-natured type of business. It is equipped with an advisory board composed of volunteers who provide development and business support to the farmers and market and work to enhance its role as a civic institution within the community (Self 9/27/03).

When individuals and families come to the market on Saturday they hope to purchase some high quality goods accompanied with social interaction. This is what sets this smaller market apart from larger ones where the vendors are constantly coming and going and market exchange is the primary objective. The advisory board developed five goals for the “Friends of the Farmers Market”: to increase awareness of the farmers market, to increase the awareness of special events and the number of people that attend them, to increase the presence of the market by building a new kiosk-like sign that makes vendor and general market information more available to the public, to raise funds for the special events and structural additions, and with these structural additions expand the farmers market by having indoor and outdoor stalls to sustain a year-round market. To increase market awareness, ads are now being printed in a large neighboring city’s newspaper, and announcements of the market are being aired on public radio. The special events were a success the first year in 2002, they consisted of “Breakfast at the Market” and “Chef at the Market.” “Breakfast at the Market” is a good way to attract early customers because they can get a bit to eat at the market. During “Chef at the Market,” a chef prepares dishes with the vendor’s produce which in turn gives the customers ideas on how to cook certain items, unfortunately the market did not have access to a sanitized kitchen so the customers couldn’t actually sample the food but they did receive recipes from the chef. During the summer and the fall the farmers market has “Music Under the Maple” when they get local musicians to come and play songs for the adults and especially the children who can make requests. One particular Saturday I overheard a young boy request “Old McDonald” (Self 9/20/03). These types of events promote family attendance to the market and also increase the potential sales of the vendors. Funding for future projects and events were supplemented by the selling of canvas tote bags with FFM (Friends of Farmers Market) and local merchant’s logos displayed on them. This further supports the idea that the farmers market is a collaboration of the downtown merchants and they try to help and accommodate to each others needs the best way possible. Sara Jackson, the FFM founder, provided them with her architecture expertise in order to design a sign to increase awareness of the farmers market to the public. Social interaction between vendors and customers is strongly encouraged at this farmers market, even the physical structures built at the stalls offer an “open” selling area with no separation of the two parties (Self 9/27/03).

As I conducted participant observations at the farmers market on Saturday mornings, I really came to see how important the social aspect of the market is as well as the economic. However, rules and regulations are necessary to maintain the desired integrity of this Southwest Virginia Farmers Market. The interesting characteristic about Anthropology is that it can cross over into other disciplines such as Economics, in this case with the farmers market. The marketing strategies of the farmers market serve as the economic basis of the research but the social interaction that is seen throughout the market cannot be explained by simple supply and demand economics. There is something under the surface that makes the farmers market an extremely unique economic and civic institution, and it can only be seen by observing social

interactions which is the core of Anthropological research. Normally, businesses are highly competitive with each other but this is not evident at this particular farmers market, all the vendors seem to know one another and are willing to help each other out in time of need. A team is more powerful than an individual and the farmers market proves it, without the help from the town and the local merchants the market would not be as near as successful as it is today. Group activities are seen throughout all cultures and in the long run benefit the individual as well.

As mentioned earlier, the farmers market is a supplemental subsistence strategy for a majority of the vendors. Multiple livelihood strategies among farmers in Southwest Virginia are popular and necessary endeavors. When an individual adopts multiple livelihood strategies they are simply employing several methods of survival; thereby minimizing the risk of each one. The farmers market is one of many ways that a farmer or non-farmer in the area can make extra income. Off the farm jobs are crucial for the survival of most of the farmers in Southwest Virginia (LaLone, et al. 2003:48). The supplemental income methods in the this region of Appalachia vary considerably, some women would take teaching jobs at local schools and the men would hunt to put extra meat on the table. A majority of the goods available at the farmers market is extra produce from a harvest that wasn't sold to a larger company. The market serves as a back-up selling ground for the commercial farmers and for the small-time vendors as a way to make money from their processed foods such as jellies and jams as well as arts and crafts. Vendors that sell meats have begun to open up restaurants as a way to further market their product and minimize their risk even more, because at the same time they are selling their meats to local merchants and customers at the farmers market. With industrial agriculture becoming more and more prevalent in America, with most of the profit from the harvest going to large corporations, the small farmer is forced to fend for himself in any way he can. If that means taking a minimum wage job in a factory to put food on the table for his children then so be it.

Multiple livelihood strategies are apparent throughout a majority of traditional non-western cultures but most people overlook the fact that they are implemented by Americans as well. As my farmers market research ensued, I found that not everybody works a typical nine to five job like the "average" American. The vendors that sell at the Southwest Virginia farmers market all have a different story to tell about how they came to be involved with the market and most importantly, why? Some do it as a hobby and for social reasons but some depend on it for a portion of their economic subsistence. Whatever the reason, the farmers market serves as a unique place for the people of a community to build relationships with one another and strengthen the commerce of the town and small farmers at the same time.

From an outside view, one cannot see the high level of organization and regulation techniques that exist at this Southwest Virginia Farmers Market. My research enabled me to gain an insider's perspective and see first-hand the coordination methods and the informal bureaucracy at the market. Even though it is a public entity, there are private matters that occur "behind the scenes." The rules and regulations provide a method of control at the market and a way to mold a specific market identity. This farmers market adopts several types of marketing strategies to increase sales, social interaction, and the aesthetic value of this public institution. A unique aspect of this market is that organizational decisions are made by a cooperation of the vendors, the town, and the local merchants. The rules of the farmers market are aimed at catering to the needs of the vendors and the local merchants. This is why some market goods are encouraged to be sold over others, to not take away from the sales of the permanent small

businesses in the community. This Southwest Virginia Farmers Market can be seen as a micro-culture within the larger Appalachian region that it resides in. It has an informal method of control and regulation along with the economic and social aspects seen throughout all types of cultures. Without the generosity and openness of the individuals I spoke with I would not have been able to attain this unique perspective on the farmers market. The willingness to help others is trademark for the citizens of Southwest Virginia and is the “secret to success” for the farmers market that I had the pleasure of learning about.

Work Cited

- Jackson, Sara
9/27/03 Interview with Sara Jackson by David Self, September 27, 2003
Farmers Market Study, Economic Anthropology class. Radford, VA:
Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Radford University
- 10/04/03 Interview with Sara Jackson by David Self, October 4, 2003
- 10/11/03 Interview with Sara Jackson by David Self, October 11, 2003
- LaLone, Mary B., Peg Wimmer, Reva K. Spence, eds.
2003 Appalachian Farming Life: Memories and Perspectives on Family Farming in
Virginia’s New River Valley. Radford, VA: Brightside Press.
- Self, David A.
2003 Participant Observation. Each Saturday of September and October, 2003
Farmers Market Study, Economic Anthropology. Radford, VA:
Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Radford University.

Chapter 7

Lean on Me: A Look at the Importance of Family and Friends in the Southwestern Virginia Farmers Markets

By T. Nolan Jamba

The New River Valley is an area rich with farming culture that is located in southwest Virginia along the eastern edge of the Appalachian Mountains. It is made up of four counties: Floyd County, Giles County, Montgomery County and Pulaski County. Although it is a very small area, its topography is as diverse as the products produced within it. Being in the geologic “Valley and Ridge Province of the Appalachians,” it is best known for the many different types of farming that are done on its valleys, landsides and mountainsides (LaLone et al., 19). Due to these different terrains, the farms produce a wide variety of products that are hard to come by in such a small area. These products include: cow products, goat products, buffalo products, eggs, herbs, tomatoes, potatoes, green peppers, red peppers, yellow peppers, hot peppers, apples, peaches, peas, string beans, squash, rutabagas, watermelons, onions, rhubarb, blueberries, blackberries, raspberries, elderberries, gooseberries, currants, strawberries, sunflowers, flour, pumpkins, cabbage, Swiss chard, chocolate and flowers.

The purpose of this study was to immerse myself in the farmers market culture that has resulted from this diverse group of farms. By doing this I have gotten the chance to see and understand some of the livelihood strategies that farmers employ to make a little extra cash, trade goods, as well as maintaining social ties with the rest of the community. As a result of this research, I noticed a recurring theme from vendor to vendor; a large majority of them were dependent on friends and family for assistance in some part of the process. This dependence could be seen in a variety of places and ways, from the dividing up of responsibilities and duties back at home to the actual farmers market where two people could be seen running their stand together. This dependence on friends and family in the farmers market interested me and therefore, I decided to make it the central focus of my study.

Methods

To maintain the anonymity of the vendors, I have changed the names of the people that I researched. In addition to that, I have also changed the names of the towns in which the farmers markets that I studied were held.

For this study, I researched two different farmers markets in the New River Valley area. Each week I would attend a farmers market in one of the two small college towns. The first and main farmers market that I researched was the Hunter Hill Farmers Market. The other one was the Fox Chase Farmers Market and it was a slightly larger farmers market.

Each week, I would spend about two to three hours on average doing research. This included taking detailed notes on the scenery, the weather, the layout of the marketplace, the vendors, their products, and their customers. I would also spend time talking with the vendors and got to know quite a few of them pretty well. Included in this research is a map of the Hunter Hill Farmers Market and a census of the vendors and their products.

A History of Southwestern Virginia Farming

Many farmers at the markets have ties to the area that go back almost a century or more. Many of these farmers know the history of the area like the back of their hand and remember when times were different. One thing that has stayed the same though is the dependence these farmers have on their family and friends for help and support. In the book, Appalachian Farming Life: Memories and Perspectives on Family Farming in Virginia's New River Valley (LaLone et al. 2003), there are many references to how important family and friends have been historically in the everyday operation of the farm.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, farming was considerably harder than it is today. Back then, cows were milked by hand, cream was skimmed off of the top of it by hand, horses were used to till fields instead of tractors and children were used to cover the seeds and pick the insects off of the crops by hand. Preserving the products was of major importance. Back in the house, wives would be canning the vegetables with boiling water and jars with rubber-ringed lids, drying fruits and seeds for the next season and curing the meats. Curing meat to prevent "skippers" from getting into it could be done with salt or sugar. Other preservation techniques included canning vegetables and over-wintering vegetables. Over-wintering vegetables was a process by which vegetables were stored in a pit for the winter and put hay over it to prevent freezing. Springhouses were also common as a means of prolonging freshness of the goods by keeping them in the cool waters of the stream (LaLone et al., 38-40).

Equipment sharing was a form of reciprocity that many of the farmers employed. This practice was of great importance to farming life in the New River Valley. It was necessary for the survival of the farms to share equipment and labor. This was due to the fact that the required farm equipment necessary to do a job was so expensive, that it was nearly impossible for any farmer to have all of the equipment that he needed. This is an issue that farmers in the New River Valley still face to this day (LaLone et al., 43-45).

Family values and traditions play a major role in farm life. Farmers had a sense of responsibility for their fellow man. This was a sort of an unspoken moral code of ethics that the farmers shared. The Spradlin sisters, Bertha and Eva, recalled that during the Depression, wanderers would come to their farm looking for a place to stay. They remember their father giving the wanderers old blankets and permission to sleep on the hay in the barn (LaLone et al., 113).

Most of the New River Valley farms were family run farms that were run by the nuclear family or extended family collaborations. These family farms employ what anthropologists call a generalized or multiple livelihood strategy. This is when a family molds together a variety of activities into a livelihood strategy that is necessary to fit the family's needs. For example, a majority of the farms in the New River Valley were run in the same fashion. The males would manage the farm daily while the household chores were designated for the women. Many times, the women would work alongside the men in addition to their usual household chores. Children

also pitched in. Boys were responsible for feeding the animals and carrying firewood, coal and grain while girls helped their mothers do the housework (LaLone et al., 46-47).

Many raise their own vegetable gardens in addition to their cash crop in order to supplement their dinner table whereas some do it strictly as a hobby. One thing that every farm had in common was a pig. Everyone had a pig because it could live off of the table scraps and later be slaughtered for food. This was a process that was repeated yearly (LaLone et al., 36-38).

Where the men were responsible for the farming life, the women were responsible for the family life. John Shanklin remembers his mother washing clothes on a washing board and having to carry water for her to do it. Arnold Lafon and his sister Charlotte remember their mother using the old ringer and washer. Charlotte added that on every Monday they washed and then hung the clothes to dry outside. She also remembers that everything had to be ironed. Everything from pillowcases to jeans were ironed with cast iron irons they kept on they stove. They had two so that one would get cold they could switch it out for the hot one. Children had their responsibilities to such as pulling weeds for the pigs, picking apples and the girls were mainly responsible for washing the dishes. Johnny Shankin recalled one job that he had as a child where he was responsible for packing down the silage as they dumped it into the silo (LaLone et al., 113-116).

There are many national and global impacts on farming. The great Depression off the 1930's is a great example. Many farmers lost their land due to bank foreclosures which usually means that that land is lost to that family forever. Dry seasons have serious impacts on both crop and livestock farms. When this happens, farmers are unable to grow produce or feed. Government regulations also prevent farmers from getting more money out of their products because they have to include middlemen such as inspectors before they can sell their product (LaLone et al., 83).

Hunter Hill Farmers Market

The Hunter Hill Farmers Market is a very small farmers market. It consisted of a single awning that ran along the edge of a parking lot on one side and the railroad tracks that went through town on the other. This awning was not very deep but it was about 70 feet long which was more than enough room for the vendors that were selling there at the time I conducted my research.

The Hunter Hill Farmers Market runs from mid-May through the last week of October. It is only open on Saturdays and its hours are from eight o'clock in the morning until one o'clock in the afternoon. Also, the Hunter Hill Farmers Market is free to sell at and is run by one of the vendors. In order to sell at the Hunter Hill Farmers Market, the vendors must each sign in with the coordinator, Betty Grey.

On any given Saturday, one could go down to the Hunter Hill Farmers Market and see the group of people who gather there. When I first started doing my research there, I would listen in on conversations between the customers and the vendors. I got a real sense of community while I was there. All of the vendors knew each other and their customers. It was something that you cannot see at a commercial store nowadays. One specific example that I recall was when I was standing around the vendor who sells peaches and apples. An elderly came up. He knew her and immediately started a conversation with her. He offered to bag some peaches for her and did so while they talked. I was amazed at how impersonal the atmosphere at

the farmers market was. Even if they did not know you, any one of the vendors was more than happy to tell you anything you wanted to know about them. I often found myself engaged in long, drawn-out conversations with vendors who I never had met before.

Fox Chase Farmers Market

The Fox Chase Farmers Market is slightly larger than the Hunter Hill Farmers Market but is in a smaller location. The Fox Chase Farmers Market is also in a parking lot and is a series of awnings between the edge of the parking lot and the sidewalk. The Fox Chase awning is much like the Hunter Hill awning except that it is only about half-a-block long and is broken up into sections attached to brick bases.

The Fox Chase Farmers Market runs all year as opposed to the Hunter Hill Farmers Market. It is also open on Wednesdays and Saturdays except from January through March when they cut back to just Saturdays. Their hours are from eight o'clock in the morning until one o'clock in the afternoon except from November through March when they change their hours to ten o'clock in the morning to two o'clock in the afternoon.

Importance of Family and Friends

Friends and family are a necessary element for the survival of the New River Valley farming life. Through the testimonies in *Appalachian Farming Life*, we saw how important the assistance of family and friends has been throughout the past century. Of the two, family was mainly responsible for the labor while friends were known to lend an assisting tool or hand whenever necessary. The farmers markets are no different in that sense. Many vendors at the farmers markets rely heavily on the help and support of friends and family as well.

James and Marie Wayne

With James and Marie Wayne, we are able to see how a husband and wife will work together as a team to run their farm as well as their station at the farmers market. We are also able to see how they need help from friends in order to get all of their products ready for the market.

James and Marie own and operate a farm called Holy Hills Farms. Their farm is home to twelve goats, numerous dogs, cats, chickens, ducks, and a donkey. At one time, they had a problem. Their goats were producing an overabundance of milk and they had no idea what to do with all of it. They told their friend this so he taught them how to make various products from the excess goats' milk. Since then, they have been selling the various goat's milk products ever since. Now, when they go to the farmers market or to the various craft shows they attend, everyone knows them for their goats' milk products.

In addition to the goats' milk products, James and Marie also sell cards that they made from pictures of their goats. They sell baked goods as well and knitted caps and scarves that you can observe Marie making by hand at the farmers market.

James and Marie also have a friend who has his own buffalo farm and restaurant near the farm. As a favor to him, they help him sell his product by selling it along with their own products. In fact, if you express an interest in it, James will tell you everything he knows about

the benefits of buffalo meat as well as give you a pamphlet on it that has all of the statistics on buffalo meat in writing.

When talking with Marie, she mentioned to me that since their business has grown so fast, she can't keep up with everything anymore. She told me that making the goats' milk products has taken up so much time that she has had to contract outside help from a friend of hers as well as the teenage girl next door. When she hired her friend to help out, she simply gave her some of her recipes and asked her to make them for her since she was too busy. The girl on the other hand, she was hired to wrap the goats' milk products after Marie finishes making them. This is a prime example of how friends and family, working together, get more done and are more successful than they would working separately.

The way that they have divided up the tasks amongst their friends has enabled them to produce more as well as sell a more diverse variety of things. The fact that they also help sell their friend's products benefits them both by increasing their variety of products and therefore increasing their customer base. Also, the fact that they work together enables them to service twice as many guests at a time. This enables them to reduce the possibility of someone losing interest or leaving because the vendor was busy with another customer.

Gary Wallace

Gary Wallace is a good example of someone helping out family and friends. Gary has a regular job during the week, but on the weekends, he helps out his father and brother by selling their peaches and apples for them. In addition to that, he helps out the lady who runs the market by giving her his leftover peaches before he leaves. She then uses these peaches in her jams.

Gary Wallace's family owns one of the oldest apple orchards in Virginia. His family's orchard not only grows apples, but it grows peaches as well. His father and brother own and run the orchard now. Gary does not work on the orchard anymore. He told me that he knew he wanted to get out of the orchard business since he was young and that it was alright because his brother wanted to take over it instead.

Each week, Gary shows up with numerous bushels of apples as well as peaches when they are in season. He picks the peaches and apples up from his family's orchard on Friday night so that he is ready the next morning. The peaches are usually in season until the end of August and they sell very quickly. The apples, on the other hand, come in at varying times during the fall months.

Gary told me of the history of his family's orchard. He told me that it has been in his family for six generations now. The orchard is so old, that it even has its own distinct breed of apple. He also told me about how the family runs the orchard and how when he was a kid, the children had to pick all of the apples until the season was in full swing and then his father would hire immigrant workers to do the picking.

Gary is a perfect example of someone who helps out his family as well as his fellow vendors. By selling his family's apples and peaches, he not only helps out his family but maintain a close relationship with them. He also maintains a close relationship with the vendors by giving them free peaches and apples. And finally, Gary is a well-known and liked person and therefore, selling at the market keeps him to acquaint himself with the customers by engaging in conversations with them while he works.

Betty Grey

Betty Grey is probably the best example of someone who gets by with a little help. She gets assistance wherever she can find it, whether it's from her husband, her nephew or Gary Wallace.

Betty Grey is the coordinator runs the Hunter Hill Farmers Market. She is responsible for making sure that everyone signs in the book. In addition to being the coordinator, Betty is also a vendor and she mostly sells jams and jellies. These jams and jellies come in many flavors including: grape, strawberry, strawberry-rhubarb, rhubarb, blackberry, raspberry, gooseberry, elderberry, green pepper, apple, apple butter, peach and peach blush. In addition to jams and jellies

Betty also sells homemade hot pads and jar covers as well as fried pies.

Betty was a very enjoyable person to talk to. She grows most of the fruits that go into her jams but she informed me that some of them come from other sources. For example, if he has any left, Gary gives Betty some of his leftover peaches. Betty makes her peach and peach blush jams with these and then returns the favor by giving Gary a few jars of the peach jam. Her husband is also a valuable ingredient-acquiring asset to her. He helps her by picking elderberries for her up at Mountain Lake Road.

Betty told me an interesting story about how she gets her gooseberries. Apparently, gooseberry plants are native to the area, but over the past few decades, people have been cutting these plants down. Her husband grew up in a house nearby where there were gooseberry plants everywhere. Now her nephew lives in that house and she has made sure to tell him not to cut down the gooseberry plants. Now, he picks gooseberries for her as a favor.

Betty has also passed on her knowledge of jelly and jam-making to her daughter. Her daughter is a principal at a school in another state. She uses the skills that her mother taught her to make jams and jellies for her teachers each month as a token of her appreciation.

During the course of my research, Betty lost a relative that she was very close to the day before one of the markets. She talked to me a lot about that and told me about how many of her family and friends offered to run the farmers market for her in case she needed some time to grieve.

Without the help of her friends and family, Betty would have a bit of trouble trying to acquire the ingredients necessary to make her jams and jellies. In addition to that, we were able to see that she has a strong family base to fall back on in case anything was to happen.

Robert and Nancy Childress

Robert and Nancy are a good example of a reliance on family in that they both have different jobs yet they both work their farmers market stand together. This shows a diversification of livelihoods so that if one job does not work out, they can always rely on the other for some support.

Robert and Nancy Childress are a retired couple who run their farm, The Red Oak Farm, as a pastime. Nancy also runs the local Salvation Army as well. They sell their produce together at both the Deer County and Hunter Hill Farmers Markets together. Robert served in the army for most of his life and found that when he retired, he was most interested in farming.

Robert and Nancy grow many different fruits and vegetables on their farm, most of which they do not bring with them to the farmers market. They usually have string beans, tomatoes and peppers though every week. They also raise dairy cattle on their farm as well.

When I asked Robert about his farm, he told me that he basically runs it by himself. He said that it, “gives me a reason to get up in the morning.” When I asked about how hard it would be to run a farm all by yourself, he told me that it was extremely difficult and a year-round task. He said that he is responsible for the maintenance of the machines, the milking, feeding, the planting and the harvesting. Robert told me that in the end, he does not make any money off of farming; he just does it because he loves doing it.

Because they do not make any money off of the farming, Nancy’s job at the Salvation Army is an important source of income. Without Nancy, Robert would have a hard time making a living. They also share the same benefits that James and Marie Wayne have, in that, since they sell as a couple, they are able to help twice as many people at once thus increasing their potential sales.

Anita Brooks

Anita and her husband are much like Robert and Nancy. They both have different jobs so that they can fall back on each other if one source of income falls through. In addition to this, Anita depends on her husband’s knowledge of finances to keep her out of financial trouble with the government.

Anita is a vendor at the Fox Chase Farmers Market and she runs Patriot Farm. She sells a variety of things such as: apples, bread, exotic homemade jams and jellies as well as hot pads and aroma sachets. I mentioned to her that she had an interesting selection and she told me that if you want to be successful at the farmers market, you have to have a diverse group of products that cater to those who are looking to buy food as well as to those who are not.

Anita then told me about the downside to selling at the farmers market. She told me that she has not made very much money at all this year. Another thing that she told me that she is also terrible at math as well and therefore has her husband, an agriculture teacher at a local school, do the finances for her.

Once again we see how members of a family are providing some economic security for the other. Also, we see how without her husband’s knowledge of finances, she would most likely have a very hard time reporting her farmers market income to the government and would therefore get herself into some trouble or end up paying more than is necessary.

Conclusion

In conclusion, farmers markets rely heavily on family and friends. Whether it is to help prepare, sell or settle the finances, they play key parts in the preparation, operation and resolution of the vending process. Without friends or family, it would be much more difficult for the vendors to make it in the marketplace. Combined with the history of the area and the market data, it is easy to see how important the relationship between family and friends is to the survival of farming life. These relationships have proven themselves to be the backbone that supports the small-town farmers markets that exist today.

Work Cited

- Jamba, T. Nolan
08-30-2003 Field notes for Farmers Market study, Economic Anthropology class, August 30, 2003. Radford, VA: Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Radford University.
- 09-06-2003 Field notes for Farmers Market study, Economic Anthropology class, September 6, 2003. Radford, VA: Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Radford University.
- 09-13-2003 Field notes for Farmers Market study, Economic Anthropology class, September 13, 2003. Radford, VA: Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Radford University.
- 09-20-2003 Field notes for Farmers Market study, Economic Anthropology class, September 20, 2003. Radford, VA: Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Radford University.
- 09-27-2003 Field notes for Farmers Market study, Economic Anthropology class, September 27, 2003. Radford, VA: Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Radford University.
- 10-04-2003 Field notes for Farmers Market study, Economic Anthropology class, October 4, 2003. Radford, VA: Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Radford University.
- 10-11-2003 Field notes for Farmers Market study, Economic Anthropology class, October 11, 2003. Radford, VA: Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Radford University.
- 10-25-2003 Field notes for Farmers Market study, Economic Anthropology class, October 25, 2003. Radford, VA: Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Radford University.
- 11-12-2003 Field notes for Farmers Market study, Economic Anthropology class, November 12, 2003. Radford, VA: Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Radford University.
- LaLone, Mary B., Peg Wimmer, and Reva K. Spence, eds.
2003 *Appalachian Farming Life: Memories and Perspectives on Family Farming in Virginia's New River Valley*. Radford, VA: Brightside Press.

Chapter 8

A Study of Southwest Virginia Farmers Markets

By Jessica E. Hamby

Farmers markets of Southwest Virginia are adapting to the rapidly changing times. The markets themselves have changed over time and are at different stages of development. The two markets' in study are Rochdale and Matfield, which are in the beginning stages of growth and are independent cities located very close to rural areas. Rochdale opened five years ago and Matfield opened this year. There is also the consideration that the markets are in different environments and cities. These factors alter some circumstances within the market. My main emphasis is the vendors and the production of goods they sell. I will be discussing several elements about the farmers market in this paper, but only in association with production.

I studied Rochdale farmers market for a semester, more or less six weeks of observations on Saturday mornings, usually around 9:30 a.m., with a similar visit to Matfield. These cities are on the small size and very close in distance, about 30 minutes apart. In Rochdale, there were interviews with two people in particular, Ginny and Russell, and an informal interview with Hartley. Participant observations and field notes were the field study approach used. Participant observations are observations all aspects of the market. The individual goes to the place under study and takes note of the environment, conversations, interactions etc. Field notes are what you write down about the observations. Nearly all of the observations come from Rochdale, so a considerable amount of the information is in reference to this city.

Rochdale is a modestly populated city that is located in a large bend of a river. This small-size market contours around an existing parking lot, which is located where a bank once stood. The city built an awning where the vendors have semi-coverage from outside elements. Averages of about eight vendors are present weekly. The amounts of vendors change periodically, especially when an event or holiday happens to fall on a Saturday. For example, during a parade for the local university or when the local university football team had a game, there was a noticeably decrease in customers and vendors. People mill about the parking lot, browsing the stalls that go straight across the length of the parking lot and run parallel with Main Street (Appendix A map 1). This is a favorable setup because any individual coming into the parking lot could capture a panoramic view of the stalls and vendors. There are gaps between the stalls, which to some people could somewhat, send off an individualistic or clique-ish vibe. On nice days, music played in the background; more often than not, it would be country or bluegrass. People stand in front of the band stall mingling with friends and other customers, while children frolicked at their parents' feet. On occasion, a person would be dancing or more on the lines of flat footing to the music. On cloudy days, it is not as active and there is a drastic difference in environment. People bundle up, not wanting to stay out too long, especially during particularly cold mornings, as it can get cold near the river.

I did a one-day observation of Matfield, it closed for the season before further studies could take place. It is a small city in a rural area in a noticeably deserted downtown. This did not affect the population of the customers of the market. It is located in a parking lot but this market is under the awning of an existing historical building, a train station to be exact (Appendix A map 2), giving the market a certain charm and attractive aura. The market was in the shape of an L, as it lined the building; the atmosphere is amiable and there is not much space between the stalls, creating a collective impression. People seemed to be more interactive in this market as they were visiting one another while busily setting up for market. My classmate Becky and I had only been there a minute and a man came up, Bob, and talked to us about the market, products, and his family. He was collaborating with his friend, who was Amish and they had various goods; Bob was more interested in talking to people than selling the goods. It seemed family oriented and there was even a church group present, which could very well fall under a family type organization. Vendors and customers were all talking with each other. The overall atmosphere of the market was friendly and sociable.

Social transactions are an important aspect of the farmers market, especially in cities of rural areas such as Rochdale and Matfield. People come each weekend to catch up with friends; along with this, some have developed relationships with particular vendors. Every observation involved some type of friendly interaction between vendors and consumers, this in comparison with the indifferent behavior in commercial markets, like in a grocery store.

Amidst all of these transactions, there are also economic dealings between people and vendors. I noticed several incidents of people trading produce with each other. In a deal made between two of my informants, Russell traded peaches/apples for Ginny's jam and vice-versa. Another incident of exchange happened while I was doing an interview with Russell. An elderly couple came up to him and offered canned applesauce with which they had made with his apples. He explained to me that customers did this all the time. They would purchase the apples and peaches, make desserts or the like, and give him some in return. He has received morsels such as apple butter and pies, and even on one occasion, peach ice cream.

This type of transaction between Russell and Ginny is a form of generalized reciprocity. Generalized reciprocity is what happens when individuals do not expect anything from one another. They simply just trade off products to each other. Conrad Kottak in *Cultural Anthropology* states this as "someone who gives to another person and expects nothing concrete or immediate in return...not primarily economic transactions but expressions of personal relationships" (Kottak 2002:179). By trading products, Ginny and Russell are displaying a social interaction and bond. Furthermore, Kottak states that the exchange is "based on trust and social ties" (Kottak 2002:180).

The transaction between Russell and Ginny can also be compared to the hxaro exchange, or gift exchange, of the Dobe Ju/'hoansi, a tribe in the Kalahari Desert of South Africa. Holly Peters-Golden declares that during this exchange "one person gives an item to another, and in the future an item is returned. The exact nature of the item—its equivalency in value—is of lesser importance than the consistency of give and take maintained in the relationship between the people involved" (Peters-Golden 2002:106-07). More than just social ties form in these places as stated by Richard B. Lee, "system of gift exchange, called hxaro...mechanism for circulating goods, lubricating social relations, and maintaining ecological balance" (Lee 2003:118-19). Creating ties is also a way of 'ensuring' purchase of goods or ways of obtaining different types of produce. Some of the gift exchange done in the markets is not even reciprocal in nature, it's

just general gift giving with no expectation of a gift back, as one would imagine, friendships are made in the markets.

Social ties are important in the production and marketing of the produce. Sometimes help is necessary or just a tactic to diversify their goods; family members or in some cases, neighbors join forces. Russell's family owns an apple orchard in Chard County in Virginia; it has been a family business for seven generations. His brother and father actually run the business themselves and they sell to a national market, mostly golden and red delicious apples. Russell himself takes a variety of apples, generally ones that are rare, and takes them to sell at the market (Hamby 09-27-2003). Another example of this is a woman selling a variety of crafts. She grows the pumpkins, gourds, and squashes, her mom cuts out the wood pieces, and her sister paints them; all three of the women bake breads, cakes, etc. (Hamby 09-20-2003). One incident of neighborhood help is the Garners and their neighbors. The Garners who sell several different items such as soap and lotion produced from milk. The milk comes from the livestock they own. Pastries, postcards, and knitted items are also for sale, which is where the neighborhood project comes in. While the Garners were at other markets selling their products, a neighborhood woman would manage the stall in Rochdale. One particular case in Matfield is a Methodist Church located in the city. They would meet every Saturday morning and aid in helping with the preparation of food. There were about 10-15 individuals present at the table (Hamby 10-11-2003). By including others in their market strategy, it divvies up the work involved and makes the production of work more efficient. They can turn to others in times of need. Evidence found throughout history and all cultures show that family and neighborhood endeavors are not a recent development. The dependence on family and friends is extremely beneficial as you can allocate certain tasks, assignments, or produce to one and pool it together as a whole.

Collectiveness is a part of what makes the market operate as a whole. Collectiveness happens when individuals work together and help each other out, a group effort. With all of the collectiveness, there is also individualism and the focus on personal interest involved within the market. This is because they are trying to sell their own goods and want people to purchase their own goods. An example of this would be the Kapauku of New Guinea. Peters-Golden states that "all Kapauku economic undertakings are executed primarily because... 'I need,' or 'I want to do it for my own benefit'... this attention to one's own needs, and the attempt to acquire that which will satisfy them, has resulted in individual ownership of all goods, with practically nothing viewed as communal property... upon occasion, two individuals may jointly own a house. When this is this case however, each individual can identify which sheets of bark and planks of wood are his contribution to the building—and hence his own" (Peters-Golden 2002:140-41).

This could perfectly describe the farmers market, as they all practically share the same space but they individually sell their own products. Competition is definitely an issue that factors into all areas of the economy and is unavoidable in the American society. The individuals may be on friendly terms or even friends but there is still some level of contention for the sales of their goods to increase the chances to make a profit. Individuals use marketing strategies and the like.

Along with individualism, comes occupational specialization. Specialization is a line of work that one specifically performs a distinguished task, such as photography, livestock milk products, jams and so on, creating a diversified market. This is almost necessary for individuals to do, for if you have many vendors selling the same things, there is going to be heavy

competition and some people are will be left out of the commodity market. Diversifying your produce 'ensures' that if one does not do as well, you can 'fall back' on another, for if you solely relied on one, you would be increasing the risk factor, as nothing is a sure thing. Risk factors include weather, crop failure, drought, etc.

Sherpas of Nepal have been going through troubled times as they have put a heavy reliance upon mountaineering and guiding up Mount Everest. When September 11th occurred, their tourism dropped significantly along with the fact of Maoist rebels in the Nepal. Their economy falls and rises with global events and unfortunate incidents. As do the farming economies relying on modern equipment such as GPS (Global Positioning System) and the rise and fall of the market value of their particular product.

Making products that no one else has also gives the consumer the inspiration to buy from a particular vendor, as they would practically not be able to buy it anywhere else. An example of this would be Russell, as said before his family owns an apple orchard. The apples he sells are of the rare kind, apples they have become almost non-existent. He takes great pride in them, he knows the history of each kind of apple he sells, and put signs up about the history. Many people come to buy apples from him because they are so rare to find. They remember when they were little that their grandmother or great-grandmother would use them to cook pies with, such apples as Virginia Beauty or Winesap. It carries a sentimental value not to mention the taste of the apple. These apples are example of what happens when a product becomes prey to a commercial market. Commercial markets want apples that look good and healthy, such as golden and red delicious, they are polished and what not. Russell stated that just because an apple has a 'nice' exterior does not mean it is delicious. I found this true as I fell in love with the particular apple Virginia Beauty. It was yellow and had dark brown speckles on it, nothing like you would find at the market. This particular apple has a sweet, wine flavored taste that no red or golden delicious apple could produce. He said that you cannot go by appearance and most of the apples found at the supermarket are not as good as ones you would find from a farmers market. (Hamby 09-27-2003)

Types of vendors, meaning what type of produce they sell, varied in both Rochdale and Matfield. People sold vegetables that they had grown on a farm or in their backyard garden, this being the most common occurrence, since both markets were located in cities. There were individuals from the city, individuals' who came from other places, sometimes as far as thirty minutes away. More than likely, this was because there were not any markets close to them. Russell noted that Matfield had just opened this year and that some vendors moved there because it was closer to where they lived; this caused Rochdale to lose several vendors.

Other vendors made things from items they have collected free or of little cost. (Hamby 09-27-2003) Ginny makes jellies and jams from berry brambles in her backyard or surrounding area, and gets some apples and peaches (when in season) from Russell. In some cases, she uses canned fruit or juices. She also sells hand-sewn items from cloth and materials she has gathered over the years, using a method called feather stitching, producing a beautiful zigzag pattern. (Hamby 09-27-2003).

Hartley, a good-natured, elderly man who has not been in the city of Rochdale for long, photographs landscape of the surrounding area and of his home state. Along with this though, he sells candles, which he gets from a friend out of state. (Hamby 09-23-2003). There was a lot of produce in these markets and the products varied so there was no real overlapping of the same produce. Matfield has less variety of produce; this was probably because they are a recently

founded market and are in the beginnings of becoming an organized establishment. In addition to this, it was late in the farmers market season.

Productions of goods are on many different levels and accomplished in many different ways. There are instances where people make the goods by the food they produce or food that they collect from their gardens. The kinds of food made in these markets varied so there is not much repetition of products (an example of food in Rochdale and Matfield census are located in Appendix B and C). The ways people make items may pass onto future generations from older generations, which includes old recipes or old recipes with modifications. Focusing primarily on my three informants who have specialized goods, it will demonstrate this. Hartley photographs surrounding landscapes, takes them to a local photo developer, gets a couple enlarged, and puts them in frames. Others he keeps on the small side, on which he puts onto smaller sheets to create postcards. He gets most of his supplies and equipment from a local art and craft supply store. (Hamby 10-04-2003). Ginny makes all of her own goods and she actually gets some recipes off the Internet. She sells jams, jellies, and preserves; each has their own process using juices, pulp and with seeds. When making fried pies you roll out the dough, in which she usually freezes excess dough, for it is easier that way. Pouring apple filling into the center, fold it over, and seal it with a fork. (Hamby 10-04-2003). Garners make such pastries, but they put emphasis on how they use fresh fruit not canned, unlike some other people in the market. Garners mostly work with livestock milk, they have to process the milk, use a special formula for soap and pour it into molds and pour lotions into bottles. They use natural scented oils or herbs, such as bay rum or rosemary to give the soaps a certain smell. (Hamby 09-27-2003). A woman in the market had her mom and sister helping with the products at her stand. Her mom used a miter saw to cut out the shapes of the crafts and her sister used acrylic paint to paint them, they all pitched in with the baked goods. (Hamby 09-27-2003). Others like Russell produced their goods in orchards or gardens in their backyard or on a farm. As one can see, there is a diverse arrangement of local produce goods available. This brings income back into the area, instead of to outside corporations.

Farmers market policies and regulations are mostly ones that deal with health standards. This applies to individuals who sell baked goods, such as Ginny. She explained how she has her kitchen inspected according to regular health standards from the local health department. This is to ensure that her baked goods such as pumpkin butter cook thoroughly and that her cooking environment is safe. There is whole process of pH levels and acidity of the products, if it exceeds a certain amount then the product is unsuitable for sale, which is why Ginny stopped selling pumpkin butter. It is so thick it has to be cooked a certain amount of time before it is considered safe. Jams and jellies go through a heat process that follows the current USDA guidelines. Labels are a requirement for the goods; this is because if someone has an allergic reaction, the vendors are not liable. "All 'produced' items must be manufactured by a licensed commissary in a facility which adheres to all the licensing requirements for the state municipality/state in which it is located; as well as the farmers' market's rules and regulations" (Banks par. 5). In addition to this, special food handling certifications are required in order to produce the goods. Ginny actually uses the same kitchen she cooks her food in to make her products. She is required to keep equipment used for the farmers market goods separate from her personal cooking. One woman stated that she has a trailer put up in the backyard of her house so she would not have to worry about keeping the utensils and equipment separate. However, there is also an inspection of the kitchen for health standards. (Hamby 09-27-2003)

Multiple livelihood strategies are present in Rochdale and Matfield. Granted that majority of the vendors I talked to were either retired or relied solely on the business. The Garners put sole reliance on their business, taking a step further from the farmers market and reached a global audience. In addition to this, they bring their products to a designated place once a month, only if you had pre-ordered the items by mail, telephone, or website. Russell is a journalist for a local paper for Runcorn, so this is not his exclusive income; this is more of a social matter and an interest/hobby. This is the same for others in Rochdale. A number of elderly vendors and retired individuals are present at both markets. They have a small source of income coming from this and they benefit socially as they can talk with customers and others. There are no restrictions on when you have to work or how much you have to produce. This multiple livelihood strategy has been present for a long time. People figured out in order to sustain at least an average or sufficient lifestyle they needed to add variety to their economy and not entirely rely on one crop.

Diversification is the keyword to the strategy of the farmers market and is a remedy or preventive measure against economic disasters. Majority of the vendors have a variety of produce or goods on their table. For example, Hartley did not solely sell photographs; he also sold candles from which he got from a friend out of state. Several vendors had different types of vegetables available.

Aztecs are a great example of diversification. Their main crop was maize (corn) but they would also plant several other crops along with this and planted several different plants into one plot. Each of the crops benefit from each other and put nutrients back into the soil if one happens to deplete the nutrients in the earth. Such strategies increase overall production for the individual and increase their profit or 'secure' their crops. Individuals of these markets may not do this with their gardens, but they do incorporate additional items such as wooden, painted, or sewn crafts with their sales to expand their range of customers.

In an article by Catharina Japikse about the Irish Potato Famine, it said during the potato famine of the early to mid 19th century, when they were going through rough times and relied heavily on a specific type of potato, a fungus brought from America with the assistance of warm weather caused majority of the crops to rot, leaving with them with nothing. They could not afford anything else other than potatoes. Reports say that Ireland had two million acres of potatoes before the famine. After the famine, it was three hundred thousand acres. Thus, the potato famine is a prime example why it is extremely risky to plant a single crop without any variation. There is also the need to ensure that natural resources will not deplete, so a certain method is applied, such as slash and burn or rotating of crops. I did not find any of these methods used by the farmers or vendors and no famines or diseases have plagued the farmers' crops. It is an example of what devastation could happen when you do not diversify crops.

Marketing of products ranged from setting up the stall or newspaper advertisement of the Rochdale farmers market on Saturday to the actual advertisement on a website. Several vendors have made business cards with their name, telephone number, and in some cases, website addresses. Garners actually have taken the step further into the main market, they had someone develop a website, in which it explains their products and people are able to order products from it. The Garners stated that they were getting orders from different continents, for example Brazil. They are developing ways to merchandize their products on a national and international level. (Hamby 09-27-2003).

I actually saw a farmers market online where individuals paid fifty dollars for six months to put their products up for sale online so their products would be available to people worldwide. Some individuals such as small-community farmers', struggle with selling because of large producing corporation farms and factories that sell to most of the commercial markets. Supermarkets today are carrying local and organic produce such as a local market in Rochdale. The organically grown merchandise is expensive, therefore does not sell as much. This is an example of how the world is becoming more globalized and mechanized. I was doing some research online and even found a book called "The New Farmers Market" by Vance Corum, Marcie Rosenzweig and Eric Gibson. It gives individuals standard requirements, payments, and strategies used to optimize one's farmers market experience. It is also about farmers market in general. This of course is nowhere close to actually observing market places, their prices, and the interactions between the people.

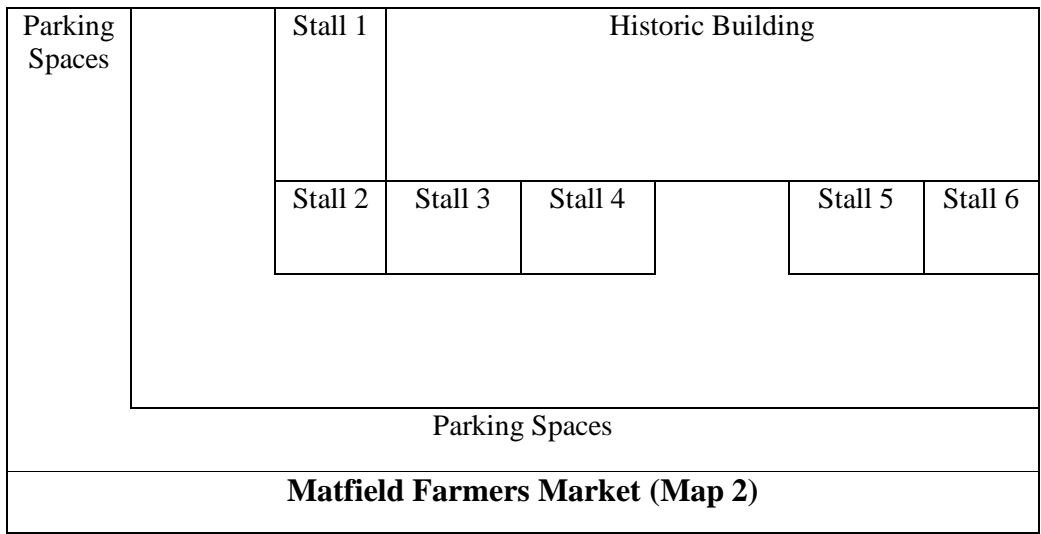
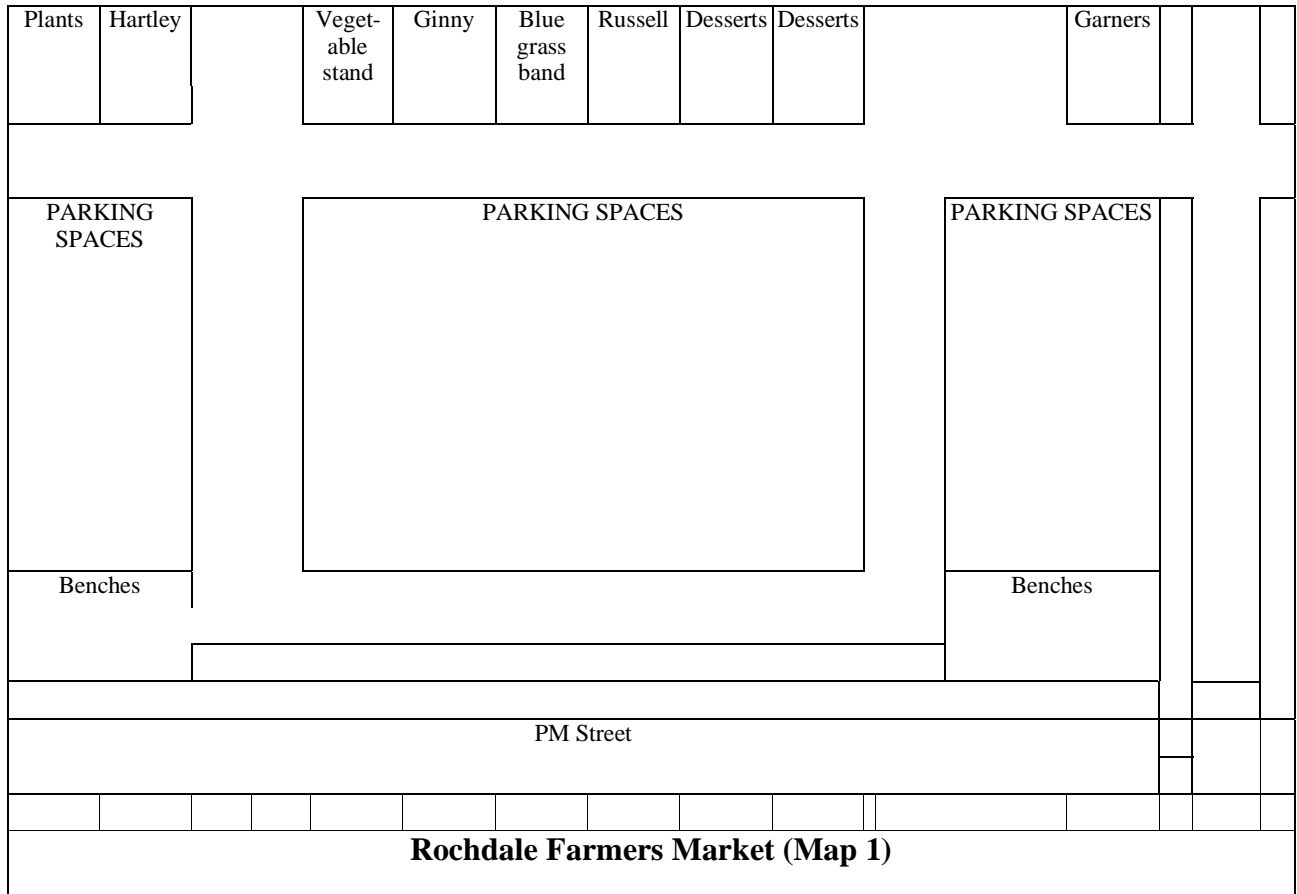
Markets and the economy are becoming increasingly globalized and 'modernized'. This is due to the changing economy around them, especially in the southwestern Virginia area with the newly developed road systems and businesses appearing all over. In turn, decreasing the farmland and turning the area into a monopolized region. Large corporations have the privilege of accumulating the income made from businesses in this area, relocating it to outside places. However, the small farm or city communities have surprisingly kept some of their traditions and incorporated them with new ones.

An example that comes to mind is the Sherpas of Nepal, a Buddhist colony who reside in the lands of Mount Everest. These people have modern conveniences such as indoor plumbing, electricity, movie theatres, and pool halls. This is mainly due because of the trekking to Mount Everest's peak; in fact, the Sherpas did not climb Everest before the Western society came in, the Sherpas believed it was the place of the Gods. The Sherpas have taken advantage of the Westerners and have invested into advertising of mountaineering. Not all of their traditions have been lost, they refuse the construction of roads and they walk everywhere. They believe if automobiles become part of the lifestyle and economy, a connection to the land will be lost. All these modern techniques and ways are in their society and they are still able to maintain their identity, using these modern techniques to their advantage.

This is how I look at the Appalachian community; they will keep their identity as Appalachians and some of their traditions while using the modern techniques in order to keep up with the times, as seen in the markets of Rochdale and Matfield. Various modes of production among the vendors is evident, primarily the growing of produce in backyard gardens and several large crop-producing farms. With the occasional individual who produces specialized products that cannot be easily found in markets or at least not as expensive as the markets. Social aspects among members of the farmers market completely differ from the ones found in commercial markets. Many individuals are there for social reasons, as many retired people sell goods at these markets. Primarily because it gives them something to do and it gives them a chance to socialize, all the while making a profit from it. Yet others sell at the markets because they purely enjoy the whole atmosphere such as Russell, it is more of a hobby for him more than anything. Overall, the farmers market is a sub-culture, which is a culture within a culture. Which means, not all markets are going to be like Rochdale or Matfield; it depends essentially on the size of the market and city, type of produce available, the local development, weather patterns, among others.

As I expect, 'globalization' will continue and eventually, the traditions of the past will be no longer. A mere trace of what used to be. I have lived in this area for sixteen years; there is a vast difference between then and now. I vaguely remember what Colchester, a local city about 15 minutes from Rochdale, used to look like before all of the 'modernization'. In other terms, the community is evolving swiftly. Colchester was a rural area, with large open fields, cow pastures and barns. Now Colchester is a thriving commercial area that is quickly growing as the farmland quickly decreases, leaving small patches of what is left of the farmland. This transformation is so fast that there have been problems with traffic and development. These businesses thrust Colchester into modern technological times before they have even adapted to the first changes. Intrusion of large corporations and recent developments of local universities have increased the rapid development of the commercial economy of the area.

I would say a majority of people would not even recognize this place if they had not been here in awhile. An individual stated that no human society is untouched by the industrialized world, that at least a part of a society has a part of a modern contact within its society. The obvious route is a globalized economy operating under one. Some individuals in this world will not go peacefully, but I suspect one day that the outcome is inevitable, especially with such powerful and wealthy nations who hold weapons of mass destruction and can sway opinions by force. Force is generally the way that individuals change so rapidly. Hence, the industrialization progresses continually, resulting in the ever-changing adaptation individuals go through in order to keep up with the rapidly changing global economy.



Appendix B Detailed Census of Rochdale

Stall #	Vendor's Gender	Vendor's Age	Types and Quantity of Food
1	Male	70's	200 pictures in a box 84 pictures in the metal revolving rack 14 candles 4 framed pictures
2	Male	50's	50 cherry tomatoes 50 Roma tomatoes 20 tomatillos 80 green beans (2 pints) 1 cucumber
3	Female (assisted by male)	30's (assistant: 10-12)	200 corn in bags 20 corn on table
4	Female	mid-50's	120 green beans (3 pints) 80 hot peppers 40 yellow cherry tomatoes 40 green peppers 40 potatoes: 30 in a bin, 10 on table 30 cucumbers 20 red tomatoes 15 summer squash 6 muffins
5	Female	70's	68 Jams/Jellies/Preserves in Boxes 40 hot pads 15 jar caps 8 microwave hot pads 7 coupon keepers/purse organizers 5 fried apple pies 4 Damson plum jams 4 framed drawings of outhouses 4 dammit dolls 3 blueberry jams 3 peach preserves 3 pepper jelly 3 grape jelly 2 Strawberry Rhubarb jams 2 black raspberry jams 2 currant jelly 2 peach blush jelly 2 farmers market bags 1 apple butter 1 blueberry jelly 1 gooseberry jelly

6	Male	mid-30's to 40's	Apples: 120 Stayman 80 York Imperial 60 apples in a box in the back 40 Buckingham 40 golden delicious 40 magnum brown 40 red delicious 40 winesap 20 grimes golden
7	Female	mid-30's to 40's	20 baby boo munchkins (pumpkins) 6 cookies in a jar 5 pump-ke-mon (pumpkins) 2 slices of applesauce cake 2 small loaves of banana spice cake 1 pan of honey wheat rolls 1 loaf of bread 8 pieces of painted craft: 4 painted signs on skewers 3 pumpkin crafts 2 hay stacks 2 treat holders
8	Female (usually Male and Female)	40's (Male and Female in their mid-50's)	16 Peanut Butter cookies 8 small pieces of fresh apple cake 6 bags of buffalo jerky 5 small pieces of cocoa pound cake 5 slices of applesauce bread 5 slices of pumpkin bread 4 loaves of sweet sourdough bread 3 small cherry pies 3 loaves of cuban bread 3 bags of oatmeal raisin cookies 2 small apple pies 2 small loaves of spicy pineapple zucchini bread 2 bags of walnut cinnamon granola 2 slices of carrot cake 1 cocoa pound cake 1 million dollar pound cake 1 bag of Russian teacakes

Appendix C General Census of Matfield

Stall #	Vendor's Gender	Vendor's Age	Types and Quantity of Food
1	2 Males	50's	honey, squash, gourds, apple cider, home made candy, fudge, cabbage, various other produce
2	Male	60's	various kinds of potatoes
3	~ 5 males and 5 females (church group)	ranging from 13-60's	bird houses, pies, cakes, desserts, biscuits (with bacon or ham)
4	Female	30's	various desserts
5	Female	30's	various crafts
6	2 female and 1 male (mother talking to the neighboring vendor)	~ 5-6 years old mid-30's	various desserts and baked goods

Work Cited

Hamby, Jessica

9/20/03 Field notes and Interview for Farmers Market study, Economic Anthropology class, September 20, 2003. Radford, VA: Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Radford University.

9/27/03 Interviews for Farmers Market study, Economic Anthropology class, September 27, 2003. Radford, VA: Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Radford University.

10/04/03 Field notes and Interview for Farmers Market study, Economic Anthropology class, October 04, 2003. Radford, VA: Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Radford University.

Kottak, Conrad Phillip

2002 Cultural Anthropology. 9th edition. McGraw-Hill.

Lee, Richard B

2003 The Dobe Ju/'hoansi. 3rd edition. Thomas Learning, Inc.

Peters-Golden, Holly

2002 Culture Sketches: Case Studies in Anthropology. 3rd edition. McGraw-Hill.

Chapter 9

Cultural Themes and Gender in Farmers Markets

By Becky L. Minter

Farmers markets in the Appalachian region are more than what meets the eye. There are several themes that show through their different kinds of strategies and the culture that is embedded in this complex yet simple system. Through the research conducted by the Economic Anthropology class, taught by Dr. LaLone, we discovered many themes. The themes that I found to stand out were marketing strategies, socializing, vendors helping vendors, seasonal, family, deals, competition, risk factors, and multiple livelihood strategies. Out of all these themes, one stood out more than the rest, gender.

I found marketing strategies in many of the markets. Strategies are the different ways to bring out what they are selling and how they go about selling them. I found socializing immediately as I visited a farmers market for the first time. The vendors that are at the farmers markets are there to sell their produce/products. They are also there to catch up on gossip or carry on friendly conversations with the customers who stop by to make purchases. It is a time to make a little money and also to catch up with everyone; see how everything is going. Even though vendors are trying to sell their products/produce, they also will lend a helping hand to other vendors that are around them. Seasonal refers to the different changes of the weather and how it affects the market. I found family as a strong theme. I met vendors that took part in the market as a big family project and others come to markets as a family. If the whole family did not come to help out at the market, they help out with the farm.

Deals and competitions refer to the fact that vendors do give deals to regular customers and there is competition between the vendors. Most try to make their tables presentable and put something out there to catch your attention. That way you will go to their table and not the one next to them that might be selling the same thing. This goes along with marketing strategies. They try to use different strategies to get your attention. I found that there are many risk factors involved with the farmers markets. Some use what they make at the farmers markets as their main income. There are a lot of risks, especially for the vendors that sell produce. They have to worry about pests, diseases and the weather that can affect their garden. Multiple livelihood strategies refer to the fact that some vendors use the farmers markets to make a little extra money on the side. They will have another job as well as selling at the farmers markets.

For me, gender stood out the most when I did my research on the farmers markets. Males and females have many different characteristics and values. The different characteristics came out when I was observing. Males and females deal with certain situations and areas differently, especially in a market setting. They have certain roles that they take over.

This paper is based on research taken from four different farmers markets that are all from different parts of Southwest Virginia. Pseudonyms were used instead of actual names. They are mentioned as Markets "A-D". Of the four markets, I especially focused my research on Market "A." Market "A" is located in a college town, where I spent six weeks of research. This

market came to be after a bank was torn down in 1998. The area was soon turned into a parking lot and on Saturday mornings a farmers market. The vendors started selling under tents, until later an awning was built for shelter from the weather. During the peak months there were fifteen vendors present in the mornings. When the growing season starts to end, the market averages around seven to eight vendors. There was no certain person that was in charge of the market and they did not have to rent a spot (Minter 09-27-2003, 10-04-2003).

There are around four different types of vendors. There are the resellers/middlemen, food producers, craft merchants, and product modifiers. Resellers/middlemen are the vendors who get or purchase their products from others and then sell the products at the markets. There were two resellers/middlemen at Market "A". One was Mr. Bridges who sold candles and photographs. He got the candles from a city close by and then brought them over to the market to sell along with his pictures. The other was Lawrence Farm sold buffalo which he had purchased from a different farm.

Food producers are the vendors who grow their own produce from their personal gardens. There were many food producers at Market "A". The majority had their own personal gardens and then brought what they grew to sell. One food producer was Todd Baker, who sold many different types of apples. His family grew the apples on their land (Minter 09-20-2003).

There are some vendors that focus more on selling crafts, rather than food. These are known as craft merchants. Melinda Smith, a craft merchant, sold many different crafts. She sold coupon holders, "dammit" dolls, little cloth jar caps, screen printed shirts and bags, and other interesting crafts. She had a variety of crafts that she herself made. Smith also sold a variety of jellies that she made (Minter 09-20-2003).

Product modifiers are just like the name. They change/alter the products and then put them out to sell. They may add on to the product or break it apart.

A farmers market has many different types of food being sold. Therefore, there are many policies for the public's and vendors' safety. One is that everything has to be labeled with a list of what it all contains, ingredients wise. When walking by several of the vendors' tables, all the baked goods and filled jars had labels on them with a list of ingredients that were included. Melinda Smith talked about how she has to get two kinds of her jelly inspected to be able to sell them. They are pumpkin butter and pepper jelly because of their acidity. They have to see precisely how she makes it and what she uses. Inspectors also inspect the vendors' kitchens where they cook and make the food that they sell at the markets every year (Minter 10-04-2003).

Each of the four farmers markets had a different structure to it. Market "A" was under an awning in a parking lot. They usually had the tables side by side in a straight line, with about a foot or two away from each other. Market "B" was also located near a college and was set on the edge of a parking lot. Vendors pulled their vehicles up right to their table. This made it easier for them when they needed to restock or when they needed to tear down their displays for the day. Market "C" is located in a larger city where there are many vendors and tables. They have a designated area and are lined up on the sidewalk between the streets. Market "D" is located in a smaller area similar to Market "A". They also had a shelter and the tables were arranged in a big "L" shape.

One of the themes that I found is the different types of marketing strategies of the farmers markets. By marketing strategies, I mean ways in which the vendors managed and planned on how to attract customers and sell their items. At Market "A", Mr. Bridges tries to sell his

candles by sticking them under people's noses and telling them to smell. When they get the sweet whiff of the scented candle, they soon start smelling the many others. This is a strategy because he directly brings the candles to the customer to lure them in by their scent (Minter 08-30-2003).

The Lawrence Farm vendor, who sells goat soaps, does the same thing as Mr. Bridges. He also sells buffalo meat, a variety of baked goods and eggs. For the buffalo meat, he has samples of the meat for people to try. Once they try the sample, they get hooked and want to buy some. The Lawrence Farm also has a special system where people can pre-order items through email. Through experience of pre-ordering eggs through the email, it is an efficient and quick system. It also guarantees that what you want will be there. Even though they are emails, they are still full of pleasantness. They use the technology, but they do not lose their friendly culture and being down to earth. They personalize the emails by mentioning different people in the email, making jokes, and telling what other things are going on at the market. They always end the email with God Bless (Minter 08-30-2003, 09-06-2003).

Another strategy is how Todd Baker sells and markets his apples. He sends his apples all over the country as well as selling at the farmers market. He also gives people samples of apples and mentioned that people that walk around eating an apple is definitely good advertisement. One vendor, who sold peppers and was only at Market "A" for one week, mentioned that she wanted to open up a store in an abandon gas station back home and sell her produce there. Her goal is to expand into a bigger store and become more stationary. These are strategies because Todd Baker has managed not only to sell his apples in one place, but all over. The vendor that sold peppers wants to open a bigger shop to attract more people and be able to sell more peppers (Minter 09-27-2003, 10-04-2003).

At Market "C", their marketing strategy was a little different since it was quite larger than the rest. There were a lot of sales and marked down prices. This makes people think that they are getting a bargain and sometimes they really are not. It is definitely a good selling strategy. They also had elaborate tables and decorations; more than the other markets. This was because there were so many vendors that they needed to be creative to catch everyone's attention to come to their table. Each vendor has to have a good strategy on how to be attractive and make people want to come to their table. At Market "D", they used a totally different strategy from the rest. Vendors would come up to the people while they were walking around and strike up a conversation with them. Then they would tell them that they needed to come to the vendor's table. Their strategy was definitely being more direct. Also, the vendors would joke around a lot with the customers (Minter 10-11-2003, 10-25-2003).

Through all of these strategies and trying to make sells, the vendors' enjoyment definitely were shown through. I could tell by the way the vendors acted when buyers were walking up and just watching them interact with others that they truly enjoyed what they were doing. As mentioned earlier, during the peak season there were more vendors present. After a couple of weeks, I could definitely tell who the regulars were and who really enjoyed being there at Market "A." The relationships with the customers were personal. Some came to the markets and purchased food/crafts just because of the relationship between each other. Even when Market "D" opened up making it closer for some people to go there than go to Market "A." People would still drive the few extra miles to come to Market "A" because of the close relationships (Minter 08-30-2003, 09-06-2003, 09-27-2003).

Vendors and the buyers would also come for the social venues and enjoyment at all four markets. People would come just to talk and carry on conversations with all that had gone on through the week. Women would gossip and men would come along with the women and hang around talking. At Market "A", the vendors were friendly to strangers and were definitely friendly to potential buyers that walked up to their tables. When walking up to one of the vendor's tables browsing around, I overheard two of the vendors sharing experiences. They were talking about their college experiences and how one wanted to go back. The other was quite surprised at the news. Vendors and customers were extremely friendly about giving out information on different topics. Such as when I was looking at the pictures that Mr. Bridges had taken. While I was looking at them, another random person walked up and started telling me about the picture and his opinion about it. Mr. Bridges also sat and talked to one certain man for a straight two hours. Later, when walking up to him, he mentioned that he loved it when that man stopped by to talk. The guy was an oil painter and they sat and talked about photography and oil paintings, while sharing their different experiences. One experience that I found interesting was when my family met down at Market "A." While we were all down there kidding around with each other, all the vendors were right there along with us kidding around and laughing even though they really did not know us at all. It created a great atmosphere and nothing felt awkward about it at all. It was like everyone knew each other, but in reality that was not so (Minter 08-30-2003, 09-06-2003, 09-27-2003).

Not only are vendors friendly to the buyers, but they also lend a helping hand to the other vendors around them as well. While at Market "A" during the second week of research, I witnessed an example of this in action. When seeing that a dog had gotten loose from its owner, one of the vendors grabbed the leash and went looking for the owner, leaving his table unattended. The vendor beside of him took over his table, watching it without the other vendor even asking him. Another interesting thing was the fact that other vendors knew more about the others' produce/products than their own. An example was when I was asking a lady vendor selling bushels of corn different questions concerning what she was selling. The vendor beside of her knew more about what she was selling than she did. He knew about how much corn she had and how much she had sold that day. She did not seem surprised about this at all when the man started answering my questions. She just stood back and laughed adding in little details ever now and then. All the vendors definitely keep their eyes on each other, whether it is to lend a helping hand or to keep up with how much they are selling (Minter 09-06-2003, 09-16-2003).

Several of the vendors have multiple livelihood strategies. Multiple livelihood strategies are strategies where people perform many different kinds of work/jobs during a period of time. Some times it is even hard to tell which job is their main job and which is their sideline job. This is because selling their crops from their garden does not last year round. So, if they are not retired then they need to have another job on the side for support. At Market "A," the Atthowe Farm vendor has two different jobs for financial support. She works her garden over the summer and Saturday mornings in the fall she sells at the market. During the non-growing season, she is an eighth grade teacher for special Ed. The Lawrence Farm mentioned that all the bake goods that they sell are mostly a neighborhood and mother/daughter project. They said it is definitely a way for the daughters and mothers to bond while at the same time teaching their daughters how to cook. It is also just an extra little thing on the side that makes a little money (Minter 10-04-2003).

Family is certainly an important part of the farmers markets. There are many vendors who have had their farm or certain crops in their generation for a long time. Others may consider the farmers markets a family business, where they all help out. Family is an important value to the vendors and it is shown through the conversations and many other ways. At Market "A," Mr. Bridges mentioned that he lives with his daughter, who has been a teacher in one of the near by schools for twenty-seven years. He had come down here after he retired and does not doing anything but this. He said that he loved taking pictures and doing what he enjoyed. He has been taking pictures for over 40 years. After he retired he said that he decided that why not try to do something that he loves to do and make a little money on the side while doing it. He also enjoyed being able to be with his daughter. For Todd Baker, the apple orchard has been in the family for 6 generations. His father and brother run the orchard and Todd sells some of them at the market. The rest of the apples are sent all over the states to different stores (Minter 09-06-2003, 09-27-2003).

The different seasons play an important part in the farmers markets. When crops start coming in during their good season they come in abundantly. One vendor at Market "A" said that when corn was in season, he would eat around one or two ears of corn every night. Then he mentioned that when corn would come in heavily, his grandmother would mix it in with peas and potatoes. He seemed surprised when I told him that I still had corn left from a week ago when I bought some from him. He laughed and said I must not be a big corn eater and I agreed with him. When the weather starts getting cold the crops slowly stop coming in and the market starts to dwindle down. After the early frost there were not many vendors left with crops. Melinda Smith said that she did not have many berries left to make her jam because of the frost. The frost had killed many crops and was making the market die down fast. Another vendor said that after the extreme cold front hit, her garden was looking sick (Minter 09-16-2003, 10-04-2003).

There are many risk factors when concerning the farmers markets. There is the weather that provides a major risk. If there is a bad season or drought there will not be as many crops if any. There also may be an early frost that may kill all the crops. The crops could get diseased or eaten by pests. Many things can go wrong and affect the vendors. One vendor from Market "A" said that she did not get many crops this season. She only got half of what she planted and she did not know why. This can be a major problem if vendors are entirely dependent on their crops and what they sell (Minter 10-04-2003).

In the farmers markets, there are a lot of deals and trades that go on especially with people that they have close relationships with the vendors. An example is when Mr. Bridges' daughter went over to the vendor that was selling corn and got a deal. She did not want a whole lot of corn and mentioned that she had to go back and bring the vendor the pickles that she forgot to bring her. The vendor then said that it was no problem and they would work something out. Todd Baker is another example. Baker traded a woman some apples for applesauce that she had made for him with the apples she had gotten from him in the past. Baker also gave away free apples here and there; not being concerned with the exact amount. He would tell people to go ahead and fit a couple more in the bag because it looked like it would fit. Then he told them not to worry about the extras. He said that it is always good to give a few extras because it shows that you are friendly and not stingy. It also pretty much insures the fact that the people will come back later for more (Minter 09-16-2003, 09-27-2003, 10-04-2003).

A lot of vendors would go to other markets as well as the farmers markets. The Lawrence farm went to a Craft Fair and was not there to set up their table for a couple of weeks.

However, they had someone come help hand out the email orders that they had received during that week. Melinda Smith attends many craft shows/flea markets and makes a considerable amount of profit (Minter 09-16-2003, 09-20-2003).

One theme that stood out and caught my eye during my research was gender. There are many differences when it comes to males and females. Males tend not to be as sociable compared to a female. They will go to a store, buy what they need, and then leave. A female will go to a store, browse around, may see a few people that she knows, talk, and buy some things. Then she will leave. One key thing is that some females are in to shopping and most males are not. That is the biggest thing when it comes to the farmers markets.

At Market "A," during my third week of research, gender began to pop out at me when it was noticeable that the males seemed to be standing around socializing and the females were the ones buying. The next week, while observing, there were eighteen females, seven couples, four families, and four males that came alone. Even if females were in couples or not in couples, they did most of the shopping and buying. The males walked around and conversed with random people usually holding a drink in one hand. The males would try to help the females at times, but would wander off again. The four males that were alone came over and bought what they needed quick and efficiently. Usually the females would stay and talk to the vendors, asking how they made certain things and carrying on polite conversations. Males, however, would not do that. If they did carry on a conversation it was short and quick (Minter 09-16-2003, 09-20-2003).

During the fifth week of research, there were five females and four couples. Every woman made the money transaction and did the shopping. The males were just there to hold the bags. I could see them walking around a few steps behind their wives/girlfriends, holding the bags while the females went to buy more things. There is no doubt that in a situation of a farmers market, the females take care of the business, it is especially noticeable in couples. Females are more sociable than males. Through my research it seems that females are more comfortable in these types of situations because they are socialized to be friendly and sociable (Minter 09-27-2003).

Through the interviews, Todd Baker mentioned that he could not really say that a majority were females rather than males. However, Todd did say that there may be a bit more females than males. He did mention that he sees a lot of couples. Melinda Smith gets more females than males and a lot of couples. She came out and told me that when in couples, though, the females make the purchases. While observing at the sixth week of research, there were ten females, three couples, and four grandmothers with their grandchildren present at the market. There were only three males that came alone and made purchases. Through all of my interviews, I concluded that they do get more females than males (Minter 09-27-2003, 10-04-2003).

Another area of gender is how the vendors interact differently with males and females. This topic first jumped out at me when I observed Mr. Bridges for the first time. When I walked up he was extremely friendly and was eager for me to smell his candles. He made a direct approach. When a male came up to his table, however, Mr. Bridges made no attempt to approach him and try to make a sell. The male stayed around and looked at his photography and not once did Mr. Bridges approach or speak to him. Later, when the male walked away, Mr. Bridges mentioned that he gets most of his sales from women. Mr. Bridges most have known that if the male wanted something, he would have come right up and bought something and then

left, instead of sticking around. Women like to shop around, so Mr. Bridges needs to try to lure them in (Minter 09-06-2003).

At Market "C," there was a good amount of males and females. There was a bigger amount of males, I believe, because the farmers market was larger than the rest. The males were able to blend in and not have to carry on a conversation if they did not want to. However, females still made most of the money transactions. There were about an equal amount of males and females at Market "D." Again, however, the females were the ones making the purchases (Minter 10-11-2003, 10-25-2003).

Concerning how many males and females are vendors; there was not a big difference when it came to that from all four farmers market. The majority of the vendors that sold crafts were females. There were an equal amount of male and female vendors that sold produce and baked goods. Mainly there is just a difference of how the vendors take to the different genders.

Through my research, I believe that females are more abundant at farmers markets and take part in the transactions because they were socialized that way from our society. Our society pushes the fact that females are the ones that are supposed to shop and buy. Males are supposed to supply the money and work. Also, not speaking for all females, but the majority of them are usually the ones who do the cooking. Farmers markets provide a variety of produce and baked goods. This is another major reason for the abundance of females than males. The females are more interested in the food because that is what they deal with most of the time. They will stay and learn how to make something and learn different cooking tips. If we were on a car lot, it would be different. Males tend to be more interested in cars and would take over in that area. This is especially pushed through the media and other forms of sources. Whether magazines, advertisements, TV programs, or news, they all contribute to the socialization of males and females. That is how our society works and it affects many different areas, including farmers markets.

By researching these four farmers markets, the themes marketing strategies, socializing, vendors helping vendors, seasonal, family, deals, competition, risk factors, and multiple livelihood strategies were found. Gender was without a doubt the strongest theme that seemed to pop out at me. Males and females have many different roles when it comes to markets. Next time you drive by a farmers market, you will know that there is so much more the vendors have to offer other than just produce/products. There is a culture that is embedded in all these themes that shine through.

Work Cited

Minter, Becky

- 08-30-2000 Field notes for Farmers Market study, Economic Anthropology class, August 30, 2003. Radford, VA: Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Radford University.
- 09-06-2003 Field notes for Farmers Market study, Economic Anthropology class, September 9, 2003. Radford, VA: Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Radford University.
- 09-16-2003 Field notes for Farmers Market study, Economic Anthropology class, September 16, 2003. Radford, VA: Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Radford University.
- 09-20-2003 Field notes for Farmers Market study, Economic Anthropology class, September 20, 2003. Radford, VA: Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Radford University.
- 09-27-2003 Field notes for Farmers Market study, Economic Anthropology class, September 27, 2003. Radford, VA: Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Radford University.
- 10-04-2003 Field notes for Farmers Market study, Economic Anthropology class, October 4, 2003. Radford, VA: Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Radford University.
- 10-11-2003 Field notes for Farmers Market study, Economic Anthropology class, October 11, 2003. Radford, VA: Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Radford University.
- 10-25-2003 Field notes for Farmers Market study, Economic Anthropology class, October 25, 2003. Radford, VA: Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Radford University.

Chapter 10

Farmers Markets in Southwest Virginia

By Joshua R. Spencer

For the past semester I have been conducting a study on different farmers markets. This study has mainly focused on the people who work them, how they are set up, what is sold, how different transactions are made and whether or not these people are doing this for the social aspect or doing this as a main livelihood strategy. This paper will focus on two different markets located in the Southwest Virginia area. It will produce a comparison on these two markets focusing mainly on the business aspect concerning location, pricing strategies, and what products are offered to the consumer. The two different markets will be referred to as Market One and Market Two.

Market One was the first market that was attended. On Saturday morning starting around 7:30 in the morning and ending around noon you can gather in what you could call the “Farmers Market Square” and buy your favorite produce, converse with the locals, and sometimes if you are lucky get to enjoy the sweet sounds of bluegrass music. This market on a weekly basis consists of around twelve vendors, six male vendors and six female vendors. Some are husband and wife teams. The age category of the vendors was anywhere from thirty, being the youngest and eight-five, being the oldest. Market One is located in the middle of the town right off of Main Street. It is surrounded by many local businesses and a university is near the area as well.

The set up of the market is fairly simple. It is in a vacant parking lot, and the town has built a long structure that extends from one end of the parking lot to the other. The building provides shelter from rain, sun, etc. The vendors line up underneath the building and set the products that were being sold on fold-up tables or some even lay them on the ground on a blanket. There is no real order in which the vendors set their products up. What I mean is that it is mixed up. The produce is not separate from the baked goods, and the flowers are not separate from the crafts; it is all mixed up. One vendor has corn, apples, peppers, and green beans, and the man beside him is selling photographs and candles.

It was rather amazing to experience the laid-back atmosphere that Market One produced. Most everyone I came in contact with was more than friendly, and generally just watching people, you could tell that they were really enjoying themselves. In one instance there was a bluegrass band playing and I observed a man in his late forties pick up what was assumed to be his grandbaby and start dancing around with it. Another thing that I am interested in is how some of the vendors got into selling at a farmers market. One lady that was interviewed sold microwave pads, jams and “hot pads.” The conversation with this lady lasted for quite a while. She told me a lot about herself, which was really surprising because she went into a lot of personal details. She stated that she lost both of her parents in 1985; they died seven weeks apart. Her brother-in-law passed away the previous night and it was hard to believe that she was here selling instead of being with her family. This is an example of establishing fieldwork rapport. After spending time with her, I learned a lot about her, including some of the marketplace

information that I sought. I found out that she got the idea to make and sell these different items from her daughter who had emailed her about it one day. Another interesting observation is that this lady did not just sell at Market One she stated that she was going the following week to a flea market which is located in a different town not far from the one we were in. I think this is a great example of someone who has a strategy about how they sell and when they sell it. It looks like this lady is looking for where the better market is going to be and that is where she goes. If she can't find anything better she uses Market One as some sort of backup place to sell her products.

Thus far in thinking about the information that had been received I had considered Market One to be mainly a place of social interaction between the vendors and the consumers. A place where people could gather and have a good time, talk about the local gossip, and pick up a few things. There was no real involvement of people who were actually trying to make a living with this. That was until an interview/conversation took place with a husband and wife team of sellers. These vendors sold quite a few items but the two main items that were sold were soap and buffalo meat. What drew attention to these vendors was the fact that the previous week I had purchased a bar of goat soap from them and the moment I walked to their stand the wife immediately remembered who I was and ask me how I liked their product. I work in retail in a jewelry department as a part-time job and when someone makes a purchase from you, you try and remember them and what they bought. This is called building you clientele, you are trying to get these people to want to come back to you and buy more of your product. For this lady it worked because I remember buying a different bar of soap and some of her baked goods as well. Another thing that set up the idea that these people are really doing this for the money was the fact that they accepted credit cards, which at this point in my research of Market One was very uncommon. Talking to these two people I found out that they actually made the soap they sold. Including raising the goats, she told me they had about twenty goats and on top of raising goats, making soap, baking goods, and selling them at Market One her and her husband had part-time jobs. They told me they were retired and when the man heard his wife telling me this he laughed and said, "we are not really retired just tired" which sounded like the truth to me. I think this is a perfect example of people who are practicing having multiple livelihood strategies. The thing that really shows that these two people are serious about what they do is the fact that they told me that even though Market One basically shuts down in November they are still planning on selling two weekends out of the month during the winter.

Market Two was a very interesting place to visit. It was set up like a regular store but it held the title of a farmers market. There was a display of flowers around the building and a small wooden porch had been built with steps that lead to the door. I went in and was semi shocked as I looked around. To the left there was a cash register and a counter. As I walked around I saw almost the same products that were at Market One and also a lot more. They were selling everything from college banners (Virginia Tech and James Madison), fresh produce, all kinds of crafts, fresh jams, and herbal supplements. There was a lady standing behind the counter and she asked how I was. I told her that I was from a university showing her my college I.D. and told her what I was doing and why I was here. She was more than willing to talk to me. I found out that she co-owned the "store" with her brother she ran the store most of the time and he was responsible for finding the products that they sell. The fact that they do not grow their produce or make the jams themselves was a detail that surprised me greatly. One thing that I asked her was why they did not do any real advertising. The only thing that I saw when I was there was the sign

that said Farmer's Market and a small sign underneath that read GRAND OPENING. She told me that there were rules by the town that would not allow them to advertise as much as she would have liked to. Unfortunately she would not go into any greater detail on these rules only to tell me that the following week she was asked to take down her grand opening sign.

The setup of the store was really amazing. What her and her brother had done with such small space was mind blowing. When you walk in, to the left was the register, and to the right, which led all the way around the store, was a wall of shelves. On these shelves starting at the beginning where bags of assorted candy, jams, different types of herbal tea, fresh ground coffee, canned goods (green beans, chilies, corn, etc...). In the middle of the store was a display of fresh produce. They had green beans, apples, oranges, pineapples, and pumpkins. Along with corn, peppers and next to all the produce were other canned items like green pepper jelly, homemade salsa. I thought this was an excellent marketing strategy. They even had an electric cooler with cold drinks inside. When you got up to the register there were all kinds of samples of the jams, salsa, and candy that they welcomed you to try. I asked her if this was all she did or if she had another job and she told me that this store was her life. You could tell that they really took pride in what they, did the products looked immaculate and the store really was beautiful. I thought to myself how nice is it, to be able to go into an air-conditioned place and get the same products you can at Market One. However in this market you do not have to worry about going to the different vendors. Being this market really gives the customer the laid back familiarity of being at a grocery store, which some people do prefer.

There are the two main markets that I have studied you have an idea of what each one sells and their basic layout. These markets have many similarities and many differences and that will be the focus of the rest of this paper. It is hard to believe that such very different markets can share some of the same similarities as these two do. Looking at the products is one thing that these two markets have in common. While researching Market Two first stepping in the door was a little bit of a shock. The products were very similar to those that were found at Market One but what really was surprising was the way it was set up. When thinking back to Market One there really was not a certain way that anyone was setting up his or her merchandise. However it seemed natural that most of the vegetable products, and plants were close to each other, then you had fruits, and the arts and crafts part which was on the very end of Market One. Market Two was set up about the same way, vegetables together, then baked goods and next arts and crafts. The point that is trying to be made is that you have one outdoor market with multiple vendors setting up their products the same as a market that is similar to a store and ran by one person.

Location is something that can make or break a market if you are looking at it as a whole. An example is a market that I attended only once. Just for reference it will be called Market Three. This market didn't have a lot going for it because of its location. Hardly anyone really knew that it existed. The location of this market was in a rural area in a church parking lot. Most of the people were just there for the conversation. Now seeing that, and looking first at Market One, the location of this market is ingenious. First, it is set up in the middle a town on Main Street surrounded by all the local business. Here people can see that there is something going on and probably will end up stopping and spending a few bucks. This is an excellent place for a market to be setup. Market Two is set up in an ideal location. You can find it right off the interstate, beside a gas station and fast food restaurant it is obvious that people will be going in and out of that area. What will attract these people to stop there is the fact that it is something

different. A Farmers Market, setup like a store very is tempting to go in and see what it's all about. Both markets are setup similar and their location is perfect for the needs of the vendors that sell there.

One similarity that both Market One and Market Two had was the types of products that are offered. We already have a good idea of the products that both markets offer, however an interesting thing to look at is why they sell these certain items. Market One has multiple vendors selling different merchandise however when looking at Market Two we see that only two people run it but when looking over its inventory we basically see the same types of merchandise that we see at Market One. The question to be asked is, where did these people get their ideas? Did they do their research before they opened

up their store/market? Most likely, plus in talking to them the information they gave me was that they did not make or grow hardly anything that was sold. It came from local farmers, which makes sense because it would be almost impossible for two people to do everything themselves plus keep up the business aspect of the store that they run by themselves. So they buy their products from the local farmers, and then sell what they have bought for profit.

This brings up a difference in these two markets and a very visible difference at that. Looking at Market One, yes you do have rules and regulations and yes the vendors who sell at Market One most likely pay some kind of rent on the space they sell in. However, what happens if you own your own store yet it is classified as a Market? Regular stores have rules and regulations plus you have to look at your property tax, sales tax, the cost of buying the proper equipment to run the store, and when running your own business there is a lot of paper work involved. Something else to look at is the fact that Market Two has bills to pay. For example the drinks that are sold in the cooler, Coke, Mr. Pibb, Sprite, etc... rules prevent a person from going to the store and buying a twelve pack to sell the drinks individually. You have to pay the company that makes the product then you can sell it for a profit. Other expenses Market Two has includes an electricity bill, and a water/ sewage bill, which adds to the expense. A way that these bills are paid includes some products that are not offered at Market One. Things like Herbal supplements, college athletic teams apparel and a variety of different crafts. Market One with the exception of sales tax (which they have already added into the price that you see on the product) really doesn't have to worry about things like the electric bill, or the water or sewage bill. So yes, there are some similarities two both markets but there are huge differences as well.

Farmers markets are some peoples' way of life, and for others just a way to be around other people enjoying the social aspect and maybe just the idea of having something to do. We have seen that though Farmers Markets may be different, the same ideas go into the way they are set up. The experience of researching these two markets was an experience in its own. Meeting and talking to people, finding out why they do this, and if the participate in other multiple livelihood strategies to make a living. Seeing the business side of the market and experiencing the social side is something you should see and feel on your own. There are differences and then also similarities, but each of these markets were unique in their own way.

Chapter 11

The Little Farmers Market That Could

By Kirstin D. Sawicki

The farmers market I studied is located in a small town in Southwestern Virginia right on the border of West Virginia. This small town has only two stoplights, but the people here are very friendly and very welcoming to new comers. The main vendor I dealt with, I call "Jimmy." I first noticed Jimmy's Market on the way to Radford University at the beginning of fall semester in 2003. It was a lovely creation of lots of colorful fruits and vegetables, hanging baskets of flowers and slightly tacky lawn ornaments of animals and kissing Dutch children made out of concrete as well as painted plaster, there were also plastic pinwheels. Each time I drove by I noticed someone was there making a purchase or chatting with the large man with the woolly sideburns whom I assumed was the owner. I drove by this market four days a week and when I learned that my professor at Radford University had decided our semester project was to be on farmers markets I was delighted to have one so close by. I decided to focus on the marketplace as a center for social gatherings and information. Some of my information was based on eavesdropping but I also spoke to Jimmy the owner, to confirm my ideas and to make sure I was on the right track. I didn't however, tell him I had eavesdropped and I didn't ask about conversations I had overheard. I compared my findings of a small market like that of Jimmy's with a medium size market like that of one located in a college town twenty five minutes away to see what the differences were. I also will discuss the concept of bartering and multiple livelihood strategies that Jimmy took on to ensure his families financial and nutritional well being.

Physical Description

The market is located in a gravel lot right next to a major road that is maintained by the state. The market is next to a strip of four little businesses, including a hair salon and an insurance company. The market consists of three sections, Jimmy's market so named by me, as there is no official name for this market, consists of a small building with a large awning so that buyers are protected from the rain and other weather. The awning extends in either direction to the left and right of the main building which can be described as a prefabricated shack approximately 12 feet long by 10 feet wide. It is small, but not shabby. There is an opening in the front where Jimmy has his cash register and calculator, this area is for making your purchases and the counter is covered in green astro-turf. Under the left awning, which is twice as long as the right side, hung the beautiful hanging baskets filled with fuchsias and marigolds and petunias. Along the back wall were pots of mums on shelves extending up to the ceiling. At the right of the shack were large wooden barrels which contained potatoes and green beans. In front of the building on either side of the window where you came to pay for your purchases were shelves that held homemade jam on one side and diabetic homemade jam on the other side, this jam simply had no sugar added. They came in flavors like strawberry rhubarb and blackberry. In front of the two shelves and check out area, further toward the parking lot from the counter were

two large tables that held baskets of apples (three different kinds), tomatoes (red and yellow), green peppers, vacuum sealed side meat, squash, cucumbers, cabbage, vacuum sealed cheeses, pinto beans as well as two other types of beans, bananas, nectarines, oranges, and peaches. Under the two tables were boxes, some were empty some had still more produce in them. The entire area was marked off by two-by-fours and cinder blocks that made a make shift fence and within the fence on the right-hand side in front of the barrels were the lawn ornaments. The pinwheels were located all over the lot, wherever they could be placed. These were for sale, also but seemed to be used as more of an attention-getting device. (Sawicki 09-13-2003)

Types of Customers

The market seemed to attract older people the most, but there were also other non-local people passing through on the main road that stopped to pick up food on their way to wherever they were going, there were several hikers from the Appalachian trail that came by and a few middle age people too. I rarely saw any young (teenage or early twenties) people, but the very young were accompanied by their parents or on one occasion they came as a class with a school bus and a teacher as well!

The Marketplace as a Social Venue

I found that the interactions at Jimmy's market were based almost strictly on local news and information about local residents and politics. The range of topics varied from gossip, local news, high school sports, who died, who moved, who had a baby, local fishing holes, who was sick, and the upcoming deer hunting season. The only topics that were brought up that had any dwelling outside the town were the weather that was heading our way. This is not to say that the people Jimmy spoke with, were in any way ignorant of the outside world, but perhaps this is telling, in that *this showed what was important to them*, was their town and their community. I found that after multiple visits and talking to Jimmy, that the information exchange was a way of bonding the community and also of providing information to the elderly who didn't get out of the house as much. Quite a few of them only came out for groceries and church. This was a way for them to feel connected to the heartbeat of the town, even if it was only to find out who was selling their house. At one point I asked Jimmy about this theory and he gave me his impression "He confirmed that it was a great place to pick up the local "goings-on" and gossip as well as fishing and hunting tales and sports scores. He joked that his wife badgers him nightly for the information that was passed his way during the day by his customers. He says she's always interested in the "girly news," who's dating who and what so and so is doing this weekend. He said it was a good way to get the pulse on the town and the town folk. People from the mayor's office stop by and let him know what's going to be changing in the future, "if we got that grant for the downtown revitalization and such." The older folks stop by and pass on the news they heard at the barber shop or at church on Sunday. Including who's moving into Pearisburg and who's moving out or who passed away or who got a new job. "You can get a wealth of information and a sack of potatoes and some apples all in one trip." I asked if the topics change seasonally like the produce. He said "sure, when it's hunting season or football season down at the (high) school that's all you hear, I've already been told the score to last night's game eight times and I was THERE!" He said the gossip you hear year round, but the sports and the

activities like hunting and fishing change with the season. He also mentioned some of the older folks don't get out as much so when they do this is the place they come to feel connected to the town and the place where they grew up. The marketplace was also used as an education center for a second grade class from the local elementary school "This week at the Market, Jimmy was busy interacting with a group of elementary kids that came by for a visit. The teacher, I found out, was interested in teaching her students about what happens to food once it leaves the farm, and since vegetables were the least violent food that LEAVES the farm she brought them to the Market. I asked her why she didn't take them to the grocery store and she replied "that it was so impersonal there, and this seemed more real." I got there as the kids were almost ready to leave. They were the most pleased about the pumpkins and a great conversation was abuzz about who was getting their pumpkin and when. He gave them each an apple before they left and he told me he had enough to spare. (Sawicki 10-13-2003)

The topics of conversation often varied depending on the sex of the speaker. The women often spoke more of the gossipy topics, like who had recently been admitted to the hospital and whose granddaughter was about to have their first baby, or who ran off with the ex-husband of another woman. In one day of observation, when the teacher brought her class of small children to visit the market I over heard the teacher discussing her family issues. "The teacher slipped over to Jimmy and asked him about his wife and family. He replied that they were fine and how were her family and it was as if the "Days of Our Lives" started. Her sister ran off with a man who just got out of jail, and her parents are in a right state about it. Her brother got injured down on the farm and the apples he was going to bring Jimmy will be a day later than expected because they need to borrow the neighbor's truck to haul them over. (She talked nonstop, Jimmy couldn't have gotten a word in edgewise if he'd wanted to) her aunt's house caught fire, but what did she expect always leaving something on. Her grandmother is in the hospital again for her illness. The church board is trying to overrule her on when to have the Christmas pageant, and finally one of her students comes to class some days with marks on him, at this point she discreetly pointed to a little boy and Jimmy made a face of disappointment and frowned, "that's Buck's boy, I'll talk to him." This really threw me for a loop, I couldn't ask how he knew Buck but it seemed that this teacher had told him because she believed he could help her in this situation. (Sawicki 10-27-2003) another example of these women sharing gossip with Jimmy is... "There is a small toddler with his mother walking around hugging all the pumpkins, while the mother chats with Jimmy the owner of the stall. She's talking about the "hullabaloo" at the town meeting the other night, as how to disburse funds from a government grant the town received. She calls to her toddler as he toddles off in another direction, his name is Jimmy too. She asks him if he's found a pumpkin he likes and from his runny nose and tightly bundled coat he smiles and points to the nearest one. She takes the pumpkin the toddler chose to the astro-turf counter to pay. (Sawicki 10-13-2003)

Whereas the men tended to talk more about the local fishing holes and the size of the fish they had heard were caught there, or the local sheriff's election that had seven candidates running at the same time, or the chances of the local high school making it to state finals this year. For example "An elderly man approached while I was looking at pumpkins and spoke to Jimmy, the gentleman that runs the produce stall. They opened up conversation by greeting each other by name and the elderly man whose name I think is Hank asked if Jim saw the game at the Giles County High School earlier in the week and from there they proceeded onto the sheriff's elections. The sheriff who is currently in charge is under investigation and his son is running to

take his place but so are lots of other people and it got difficult to keep all the names' straight, there's an Altizer, Falls (that's the sheriff's son), Millirons, McCrosky and Sadler. (These are the ones I could remember.) Apparently all of these men grew up in Giles County and the conversations moved over the subjects of these men's families and careers and highs and lows, even their high school sports experiences. (Sawicki 10-05-2003) on another occasion I asked Jimmy myself about the local events "I asked about any new local events going on that people were talking about, he replied that the sheriff's candidates had another election campaign night at the town hall on the seventh of October and that with all seven candidates and their followers it was hard to fit everyone in the town hall, he then gave me his predictions as to who will be coming in first place, he believes it will be Altizer (incidentally he was right). He asked if I had a favorite and I told him Millirons, because we used to work together at Virginia Tech police Department, he told me that all but one candidate was from the next town over, which is where Jimmy is from too. He asked about my neighbor's house that should be going up on the market soon because the lady that lived there passed away earlier in the year and her children have been trying to get it ready for sale. I asked him how he knew about that and he simply smiled and said "word gets around." I was very tempted to ask what was the word on the street when my husband and I moved to town (as outsiders) but I refrained. We then talked about how many police officers lived in Giles County. He also seemed to know that my husband is a cop, but like he said I guess word gets around. I paid for my apples and pretended to be interested in some mums when a customer walked up to chat with Jimmy. It was an older man, someone I haven't seen before and he was dressed very nicely. He told Jimmy he was here to pick up some fruit for his wife on his lunch break. They seemed to know one another in some way and then it became clear when Jimmy asked when he would get the bill for his car insurance and the man replied it would be due by December fourth. I left at that point. (Sawicki 10-27-2003)

Sometimes the men and women interacted in common conversation. "Shortly after an elderly lady joined them and she spoke of someone all three knew in the community and how this person hadn't been to church on the previous Sunday. The elderly lady went to the woman's house to find that she had been taken to the hospital by her family. The women remarked that her grandson was on the rescue squad and had the EMS been called she would have heard about it from her grandson but since the woman's family took her to the hospital she didn't know about it sooner. She went on about the woman's condition, and how she would pray for her. The elderly man then purchased some chrysanthemums and said he would stop by the hospital and give them to her. The vendor (Jimmy) asked that his condolences on her illness be passed along. (Sawicki 10-05-2003)

I noticed that Jimmy, tends to treat the elderly with more attention than any other customer type, in week four of my field notes I saw a good example of this "I do notice however that when the elderly women come to the market, that he comes out from behind the counter, offers them a bag for their produce and offers to keep their purchases at the front counter until they are done shopping. He makes small talk with them, mostly almost flirtatious, big grins, seems very comfortable with them. And yet these are the customers, who inspect every little aspect of the food they buy, they smell, pinch and grope the purchases and will not be talked into purchasing anything they did not come there for to buy originally. When the elderly men come to the market, it's not so much to buy as it is to socialize. I think they just like the company and Jimmy seems happy to accommodate them. (Sawicki 09-29-2003)

The importance of market places as places to obtain information has been around for hundreds and hundreds of years. It was even recorded as far back as the Aztecs. I also have come to the conclusion that people buy from farmers' markets in this region often because it reminds them of a simpler time when there were no Walmarts and huge grocery stores. At the farmer's market they get the individual contact from the vendor, something that has been lost in today's society. Often the food they sell is comparable to what you can find in the grocery stores but buying it at the market, you know that you are keeping your money local and the food is locally grown too.

Bartering and Reciprocity

Bartering is another aspect of the social venue of the marketplace. Bartering is defined as "to exchange one commodity for another. (Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary 1987: 983) It can also be seen as balanced reciprocity which is defined as "giving that clearly carries the obligation of an eventual and roughly equal return." (Bates 2001:58) Jimmy was laid off a factory job and took the risk of starting up a farmer's market because he believed his connections with the local farmers could ensure a successful business and a livelihood that would feed his family. He used the system of bartering/ balanced reciprocity to ensure social relations with the people he obtained his produce with. For example he traded his physical labor for apples from an orchard in a neighboring town. He obtained bananas from a trucker that passed through in exchange for diabetic jam. The trucker's wife is diabetic and loves homemade jam. Jimmy also hunts in deer season, something I will discuss further later in this paper, and in exchange for fruits, vegetables and sometimes a Christmas tree or wreath a local man in the next town over, processes the meat and skin for him. In this case the fruit, vegetables and Christmas items are not given at the moment the processed skin and meat is given but the knowledge that the exchange will happen is there. These are all ways that Jimmy can cut down on overall cost of having to buy produce he sells or buy food his family eats in the harder months like January and February, when he is not sure what is going to do for work. This type of action is seen all over the world in other cultures. For example hunter and gatherer societies like the !Kung Bushmen of the Kalahari, will make a giraffe kill and share the meat with extended family and neighboring groups knowing that at sometime in the near future others will do the same for them. In Appalachia in the thirties and forties communities would have hog killing parties very similar to the giraffe kills in the Kalahari by the !Kung Bushmen, they would share the meat with the community like the Bushmen did. Horticulturalists like the Western Pueblo shared food with other families in the village so as to ensure that no one would go hungry. Knowing that the favor would be returned in times of need. Closer to home though people in Appalachia have been bartering and using balanced reciprocity for more than a hundred years. For example in Appalachian Farming Life: Memories and perspectives on farming life in Virginia's New River Valley, "We used each others equipment, each others labor... my neighbors will come over and help me and I have some equipment... I've got one neighbor, over on the edge of Giles County... he does a lot of things for me, fencing, like both of us will drive the posts, things that it takes two and then things that one person can do, he comes back and does them, then if he has calves that need to be hauled or something, I'll help him haul them." (Shorter in LaLone, Wimmer and Spence 2003:45) Mary LaLone gives another example in her paper "Adapting Household Survival Strategies to Deal With Globalization and Modernity." As she says, "A common pattern

in the NRV is for households within large extended families to own farmland in adjacent or nearby locations, and to pool their labor and equipment between their farms. Some farmers enter into sharing arrangements with their neighbors in which each household purchases some of the equipment needed by all, and then that family provides that equipment and services as needed for the neighbors while the neighbors provide other equipment and complementary services for them.” (LaLone 2003: 9) We see that another strategy was to swap with other households for items you may have had in excess but didn’t have any of another, or the cooperative labor and gift-giving of the hog kill parties and wheeling and dealing by helping out your neighbors with a favor that would also benefit you. In another LaLone paper about flea markets called “Making a Buck” reciprocity is also seen. Another vendor may watch your stall while you are out or may point an interested buyer your way knowing the same favor would be returned if they needed it from you. (LaLone et al. 1993)

Multiple Livelihood Strategies

Bartering and balanced reciprocities are key ingredients to making a livelihood like a Farmer’s Market work. But they are not the only ones. Throughout the world and locally, multiple livelihood strategies are used to ensure survival in times of need and uncertainty. Jimmy used deer hunting in the fall to supplement his families’ food supply, I found out about this “when I saw Jimmy’s daughter at the market I asked where her dad was and she told me that he was hunting (bow season had just started) and I found out that he used deer meat to help his family through the more unsure months of winter, I was stunned by the direct correlation to what we had been learning about in class and how this was his strategy for assuring his family wouldn’t go hungry, I felt like he was a “great family man” for thinking ahead. It again showed me the honor and pride that Appalachian people have, he could have gone to the unemployment office and gotten a handout for the time he was unemployed but instead he chose to live off the land. He also bartered with locals and neighbors to have the deer he culled processed. His daughter made mention of how he doesn’t bother going for the biggest antlers just the biggest meat amount. (Sawicki 11-04-2003) As I mentioned before this is a strategy used all over the world and for good reason, it works! For example the Eastern Pueblo Native Americans farmed but also raised turkeys and supplemented with some hunting and gathering to ensure that their diet would be diverse but also in case of crop damage they would still have food to eat. The Batak of the Philippines have several different plots for gardening to ensure that if one plot fails they will have other plots to fall back on. Hunters and gatherers like the !Kung Bushmen mentioned before exploit the different foods in their environment to ensure that they have a constant food supply, they do not over eat or over exploit one resource knowing that it will not be there later when they may need it. They, like Jimmy have a vast knowledge of their land and use that knowledge of the land to live off of it. Another example is the Machiguenga people of the Amazon who have small gardening plots but continue to hunt and gather and fish to ensure survival if their gardens fail for some reason. Jimmy knew that he would have little to nothing to sell in the winter months of January and February and knew that one or two deer, once processed, could be kept in a deep freezer and cooked when needed. His wife works as a nurse at the local hospital and her income could be used to pay for the mortgage and utilities but if he couldn’t find work or money was tight, the deer meat would come in handy to ensure his family had food. The people in this area have been using the land for a long time to help them out in

times of hardship. In Economic Survival Strategies in Appalachia's Coal Camps by Mary LaLone, we see that gardening small, scattered plots was a strategy to add to the diet of those families and communities that couldn't always afford to go to the store and buy their food. The children would collect coal from slate dumps for the cooking and heating of their homes. Some people raised animals like pigs, chickens and the occasional cow, by doing this they were provided with milk, yogurt, cheese, butter, eggs, meat and soap. They also cured the meat so it would stay good longer. As discussed in Appalachian Farming Life: Memories and Perspectives on Family Farming in Virginia's New River Valley, families may work outside the farm in order to ensure the farm's success. Sometimes the main job or employment you have, whether it is farming, running a farmer's market or a stall at a flea market, doesn't always supply enough money to ensure your family will be taken care of. Knowing how to live off the land is vital in times of need. You may also take on a job outside of the main employment you have to supplement your income. For example a friend of mine who runs a bar downtown in a college town, also sells football tickets on the side and delivers papers twice a week to ensure that when the college is out of session for the holidays or the summer and business is slow that he maintains a similar amount of monthly income.

Concluding Remarks

The bartering/ reciprocity, social venue and multiple livelihood are only three of many traits of survival seen around the world but they were the three strongest themes I found at Jimmy's Market. It may seem that the social venue of the marketplace, the bartering and reciprocity and the multiple livelihood strategy are scattered and have little to do with one another but this isn't the case. All three of these aspects are linked together with a metaphorical chain. This chain is common in many cultures, like that of the !Kung Bushmen, the people of Appalachia, the Inuit, Pueblo Native Americans, the Trobriand Islanders, the list goes on. These are ways to survive and ensure that your community members and family survive as well. This is a survival adaptation that continues today, and is seen all over the world. It has continued to be used for hundreds of years because it is a proven method that works again and again.

Work Cited

Bates, Daniel

- 2001 Human Adaptive Strategies: Ecology, Culture and Politics. 2nd ed. Boston, Allyn and Bacon.

LaLone, Mary B.

- 1996 Economic Survival Strategies in Appalachia's Coal Camps. *Journal of Appalachian Studies* 2(1):53-68

LaLone, Mary B.

- 2003 Adapting Appalachian Household Survival Strategies to Deal With Globalization and Modernity. Paper presented at the American Anthropological Association conference, November 2003.

LaLone, Mary B., Liz Godoy, Diane Halsall, and Deanna Matthews

- 1993 Making a Buck: Social and Economic Adaptations in an Appalachian Flea Market. Paper presented at the Appalachian Studies Association conference, March 1993.

LaLone, Mary B., Peg Wimmer, and Reva K. Spence, eds.

- 2003 *Appalachian Farming Life: Memories and Perspectives on Family Farming in Virginia's New River Valley*. Radford, VA: Brightside Press.

Plattner, Stuart

- 1989 *Economic Anthropology*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Sawicki, Kirstin

- 09-08-2003 Field notes for farmers market study, Economic Anthropology class, September 08, 2003. Radford VA: Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Radford University.

- 09-13-2003 Field notes for farmers market study, Economic Anthropology class, September 13, 2003. Radford VA: Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Radford University.

- 09-21-2003 Field notes for farmers market study, Economic Anthropology class, September 21, 2003. Radford VA: Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Radford University.

- 09-29-2003 Field notes for farmers market study, Economic Anthropology class, September 29, 2003. Radford VA: Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Radford University.

10-05-2003 Field notes for farmers market study, Economic Anthropology class, October 5, 2003. Radford VA: Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Radford University.

10-13-2003 Field notes for farmers market study, Economic Anthropology class, October 13, 2003. Radford VA: Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Radford University.

10-27-2003 Field notes for farmers market study, Economic Anthropology class, October 27, 2003. Radford VA: Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Radford University.

11-04-2003 Field notes for farmers market study, Economic Anthropology class, November 4, 2003. Radford VA: Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Radford University.

Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary

1987 Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary. Merriam- Webster, Inc.