

“Returning Forest Darlings”

Gay Liberationist Sanctuary in the Southeastern Network, 1973–80

Jason Ezell

Carl Wittman opened his 1970 gay liberationist manifesto “Refugees from Amerika” with a stark statement on what it meant for a US city to serve as a gay sanctuary in the months following the Stonewall riots: “San Francisco is a refugee camp for homosexuals. We have fled here from every part of the nation, and like refugees elsewhere, we came here, not because it is so great here, but because it was so bad there. By the tens of thousands, we fled small towns.”¹ By framing homosexuals as refugees, Wittman implied that the city line was equivalent to a national border and that San Francisco’s gay residents were hardly full citizens in their new city. He stressed that the city was no “free territory” but rather a gay “ghetto,” fully controlled by the police, lawmakers, and business owners who constrained the lives of the homosexuals who sheltered there. As a former East Coast activist involved with the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and with southern civil rights work, the newly out Wittman was acutely aware of the tenuous relationship between living within US borders and accessing safety within its system.

By 1973, many considered gay liberation dead. Most cities’ Gay Liberation Front (GLF) chapters had folded, and the culture’s audacious style—men, often bearded, in dresses—was being replaced by the hypermasculine “clone” look.² By 1974, Wittman had left the city behind. Traveling from North Carolina to rural Oregon with his partner Allan Troxler, the two stopped in Iowa. There they joined other

Radical History Review

Issue 135 (October 2019) DOI 10.1215/01636545-7607833

© 2019 by MARHO: The Radical Historians’ Organization, Inc.

gay liberationists to found *RFD*, a journal “for country faggots everywhere.”³ Proposed by Stewart Scofield at the 1974 Iowa Midwest Gay Pride following *Mother Earth News*’s refusal to publish an announcement for a gay rural collective, *RFD* professed a back-to-the-land variant of gay liberation.⁴ It answered many readers’ frustrations with feelings of containment in urban gay ghettos and sustained their identification with the free-love ethos and androgynous stylings of the hippie counterculture.⁵ It also connected gay liberationists who were painfully isolated in rural spaces, including largely straight collectives. Troxler shared his own experiences of such in the very first issue.⁶ Wittman’s *RFD* writings not only expressed his sustained gay liberationist political values but also his spiritual projects, like conceiving a gay tarot.⁷ *RFD* quickly won a committed, if dispersed, readership.

In 1980, a decade after the publication of “Refugees from Amerika,” Milo Pyne published a manifesto of his own. Appearing in *RFD*, Pyne’s piece called for a renewal of gay liberationist political values and stated the urgent need for *sanctuaries*. On the latter subject, he wrote, “We will increasingly need space to exercise our emotional, physical, and psychic beings. We also need access to land!”⁸ Pyne recalls (interview, July 1, 2016) initial attempts to address such urgency earlier that spring, leading a collective project to repurpose the Appalachian farm where he lived as one of these gay liberationist sites, naming it Short Mountain Sanctuary.⁹ Anthropologist Scott Lauria Morgensen has suggested that Short Mountain Sanctuary may have roots in “histories of radical southern and rural gay collectivism” but that it, like other, similar gay back-to-the-land initiatives, must be considered within colonial frames.¹⁰ While I agree with Morgensen, I here situate Short Mountain within a different context; whereas he stresses the site’s role within a developing Radical Faerie culture, I show how its early history can be understood in relation to US sanctuary movements.

In the following, I define this form of sanctuary as part of the culture of back-to-the-land gay liberation that endured in the Southeast, linking its concerns to a wider US sanctuary history. Because Wittman cast homosexuals as refugees seeking protection in a city, comparisons with the current sanctuary city movement suggest useful interpretive lenses. A. Naomi Paik shows how the latter movement has roots both in religious traditions providing short-term refuge to those the state deems criminals, and in political traditions of local movements and offices frustrating the inhumane enforcement of federal laws.¹¹ Both traditions involve invoking a different scope of authority against that of the state—religious authority as superior to governmental authority, or local/popular authority as exerting independence of national authority. These are strategies of liberation that often depend on setting different forms and scopes of control against one another. Further, Paik cautions the current sanctuary movement about “the contradictions of looking to the state to address the problem the state itself creates,” pointing out the need to disentangle from state infrastructures—especially information networks—and to form alliances across the diverse populations in need of sanctuary.¹²

Gay liberationists were fundamentally critical of the system, making their sanctuary practices a case study for movement efforts that look *away* from the state. I argue that the back-to-the-land gay liberationism that emerged around the circulation of *RFD*, rather than engaging institutional authority, drew upon religious and political modes of resistance that relied on decentralized organization, obscurantist networking practices, and politically strategic affect to defy state surveillance. Its orientation was geared, however, toward the rural rather than the urban. With its back-to-the-land ethos, it looked to the rural as a vantage to counter the policing and economic dependency experienced in the gay ghetto, and leveraged wilderness to imagine space at the edges of state control. Access to the rural, then, figured centrally as these gay liberationists' means to exceed the city, confound state intelligence, and improvise sanctuary at the domestic peripheries of police reach.

To trace sanctuary practices within this movement, I first show how southeastern gay liberationists were embedded in the *RFD* network from its very beginning—especially in Appalachia—connected by rural sanctuary practices of collective defense and what they called “faggot spirituality.” Second, I describe the experiences of terror in the late 1970s that made sanctuary an exigency before tracing how, in 1978 and 1979, gatherings at Running Water Farm in North Carolina led to the realization of a Southeastern Network of rural and urban collectives that took up the editorial reins of *RFD* and improvised regional forms of earlier sanctuary practices. Finally, I show how Short Mountain Sanctuary emerged from this Southeastern Network, mobilizing for sanctuary at the edges of the state—in terms of rural orientations, regional geopolitical scales, and politically crucial affective registers.

“Only Raising Flowers”: The Mountain South, Rural Collective Defense, and Faggot Spirituality

Milo Pyne, inspired by his rural experiences with gay liberationists in the Vencermos Brigades, which collaborated with revolutionary Cuba, moved to Short Mountain in Tennessee in 1973. He went with a lover named Peter and several men and women from the rural North Carolina Tick Creek Collective after that group's house burned down.¹³ Pyne was at the 1974 Midwest Gay Pride where Scofield proposed *RFD*, and he recalls (interview, July 1, 2016) collaborating with fellow native North Carolinian Troxler on the serial, contributing an illustration to the Fall 1975 issue. John Harris (later Gabby Haze) and his lesbian wife, Merrill Mushroom, lived very close to Short Mountain, at Dry Creek, with their adoptive children. Gay liberationist Harris met Pyne when he struck up a conversation about *RFD*.¹⁴

The mountain South figured prominently in the wider back-to-the-land movement, which also included gay liberationists, from early on. Historian John Alexander Williams has described 1970s Appalachia as a unique magnet for poverty warriors, civil rights activist veterans, counterculturists, and politicized locals.¹⁵ The countercultural element around Short Mountain was particularly strong. Nearby

was The Farm, the Tennessee intentional community founded in 1971 by Stephen Gaskin and about three hundred fellow hippies from San Francisco.¹⁶ As Harris commented on the area, “Some of it was gay, most of it was straight—all of it was drug related at some level. We wondered, Is it going on everywhere? Is there madness happening in every little nook and cranny or are we sort of this special place?”¹⁷ Given how concentrated the counterculture was in Appalachia, such nonconformist rural pockets were a new, but not altogether rare, phenomenon in the region.

In fact, as cultural historian Scott Herring has pointed out, by 1976, *RFD* readers in other places like Massachusetts began to self-consciously adopt a “lovely hillbillies” aesthetic to differentiate themselves from the dominant stylistics of urban gay cultures.¹⁸ For those who dreamed of leaving the gay ghetto, this new aesthetic suggested a mountain South setting. They did not envision mere bucolic escape, though. As Herring has further shown, *RFD* was heavily influenced by lesbian publications like *Country Women* and the rural collectives they represented; he further maintains that these cultures “do not fall under the rubric of a conventional and racist ‘white flight’ from the city since they are literally ‘flights’ from racially normative metropolitan gay culture,” implying further that these rural dwellers hoped the country would facilitate their activism.¹⁹

Part of the lesbian feminist activism of the time was what Emily Hobson has called “collective defense.” She uses this term to refer to how radical lesbian collective households adapted black liberationist strategies to lend “support for armed resistance and the underground. . . . They also lived collective defense through their shared households, which sheltered both political fugitives . . . and more ordinary women escaping domestic violence.”²⁰ As a means of both supporting the underground by providing safe passage for fugitives and of protecting women from violence in their homes, collective defense was a practice of sanctuary.

Although Hobson anchors her history in the Bay Area, Appalachia also figured importantly in networks of collective defense. Both Hobson and James T. Sears tell how radical Susan Saxe, hunted by the FBI for her part in stealing sensitive federal wartime documents and for robbing a bank to secure finances for the Black Panthers, took refuge in a network of lesbian collective households, including a pivotal one in Lexington, Kentucky. Saxe’s ultimate capture led to the 1975 sentencing of the “Lexington 6.” Further south, in Atlanta, in 1973, the FBI arrested former Weather Underground member and cofounder of the Atlanta Lesbian Feminist Alliance (ALFA) Vicki Gabriner for passport fraud while she was staying in a lesbian collective household.²¹ Gabriner, like Pyne, had been part of the Venceremos Brigades, and Pyne shares (interview, July 1, 2016) that his own Tick Creek collective had served as a way station for radicals and activists traveling between Atlanta and DC. The FBI also kept a watch on Pyne. Sears records how the FBI opened a file on him in 1970, but nearly five years later, in January 1975, they finally closed his case,

frustrated that they could find no evidence of subversive activity and concluding that the radicals at Short Mountain were "only raising flowers and various herbs."²²

I contend that this FBI frustration with rural surveillance reveals a back-to-the-land variation on the sanctuary strategy of collective defense. Urban surveillance strategies couldn't simply be reproduced in rural spaces. Strangers stood out in town and around the farm. Radical lesbian feminists and gay liberationists knew this. While Herring argues that the rural networks represented in *Country Women* and *RFD* were flights from urban racial normativity, I add that they were also flights from the FBI's urban surveillance of collective households described by Hobson. Further, I propose that the rustic production design that Herring finds in *RFD* and *Country Women* wasn't only part of an anti-urban aesthetic but also a complementary strategy to frustrate FBI officials tasked with quickly reviewing gay liberationist serials for sensitive information. The crude typography, unfinished sentences, purposeful misspellings, random punctuation, strikethroughs, poetic language, and portmanteau coinages that Herring analyzes would have befuddled agents sent after sensitive facts. Perhaps this is one reason why historian Douglas M. Charles didn't find *RFD* listed among the gay liberationist publications that the FBI kept an eye on. Charles does specifically comment on how the bureau found gay liberation, with its anarchistic and decentralized organizational forms, much more challenging to track than traditionally structured gay activist groups.²³ Back-to-the-land gay liberationists mobilized rural locations and obscurantist print practices to frustrate state surveillance and to expand on the sanctuary work of urban collective defense.

In the Ozarks, in Fayetteville, Arkansas, a gay liberationist collective that would call themselves the Arkansas Sissies also participated in collective defense. Formed in the winter of 1975–76, the group was enmeshed in an Ozark women's socialist feminist network whose members, as Allyn Lord and Anna M. Zajicek have shown, were significantly influenced by their positive civil rights activist experiences. Nearly half of the participants Lord and Zajicek interviewed voluntarily identified as lesbian, bisexual, or transgender.²⁴ The Arkansas Sissies of Mulberry House temporarily shared their lodgings with lesbians Trella Laughlin and Patricia Jackson, former Weather Underground members and future founders of the rural women's community Yellowhammer.²⁵ Once Laughlin and Jackson moved to the country, according to Arkansas Sissie Dimid Hayes (interview, August 3–4, 2016), Mulberry House served as a safe way station for women—several of whom were women of color—as they made their way through rural Arkansas to Yellowhammer. As another form of collective defense, Mulberry House also made plans to house a gay prisoner upon his release.²⁶

On Labor Day weekend 1976, the Arkansas Sissies traveled to the Faggots and Class Struggle Conference in Oregon, a rural event documented in the pages of *RFD*. This event reflected the concerns of rural collective defense in that its

location was partly chosen to elude state surveillance, as seen in the fact that, despite its site in rural Wolf Creek, a strict security practice was put in place to prevent FBI infiltration.²⁷

Hobson references the faggot political culture of the Bay Area but doesn't mention its spiritual components.²⁸ Inspired by new Bay Area feminist witchcraft movements, many gay liberationist men rallied around the figure of the witch as a way to embody a feminist defiance of the patriarchy in its global capitalist form. Gay men didn't always call themselves witches, however, but instead reclaimed the epithets *faggot* and *fairy*, in the spirit of Arthur Evans's *Witchcraft and the Gay Counterculture*, highlighting homosexuals' history of persecution within and opposition to the rise of industrial capitalism. Evans argued that the emergence of that economic regime depended on sexual and gender conformity within the nuclear family, on the professionalization of healing practices, on the religious authority of the church, and on the centralization of political economic power in the city.²⁹ Evans, who moved to San Francisco in 1974 from rural Washington State, began teaching these ideas in a "Faery Circle" that met in his Haight-Ashbury apartment. He advocated the worldwide collectivization of women, homosexuals, the poor, the indigent, and people of color under a new form of revolutionary socialism that practiced "magic" ("group song, dance, sex, and ecstasy [*sic*]") to reengage each other and the exploited natural world, to "hold themselves together and function in perfect order without prisons, mental hospitals, universities, or the institution of the state."³⁰ He further argued that these collectives should be prepared to use violent means themselves to resist violent attack.

Evans held that the "most favorable spot for such collective work is the countryside"; however, he recognized that not everyone could escape the city, so he recommended that rural and urban collectives network.³¹ This rurally oriented spiritual-political perspective resonated with the Oregon editors of *RFD*. In the Winter 1976 issue of the magazine, they referred to themselves as mostly "faggots," defined in Evans's terms above, and documented the rural Faggots and Class Struggle Conference, including one of the event's magical rituals.³² Roughly equating covens with collectives, Evans's faggot spirituality lent a spiritual component to the sanctuary practices of collective defense, one which was—in true liberationist form—not invested in religion as a formal institution. Its underground was not furnished by church or state but rather by a network of small, dispersed rural and urban collectives.

I argue that Evans's faggot magic and ritual should be understood as an extension of the gay liberationist antipsychiatry movement, which, as Abram J. Lewis has shown, led to many lesbian feminists and gay liberationists embracing spiritual approaches to well-being rather than purely rational ones.³³ Faggot spirituality was fundamentally political—not an individualistic, self-help form of New Age practice. In fact, magic and ritual, according to Evans, helped various

liberationists bond in the alliances necessary to collectivize widely and to withdraw from the state and its institutions. And, as Bay Area Reclaiming Witchcraft founder Starhawk would later write, magic and ritual were also an affective means of conserving the revolutionary energy necessary to sustain a movement.³⁴ This aspect interested gay liberationists, who were told that their revolution was exhausted. Consonant with other US sanctuary histories, faggot witchcraft posed a spiritual authority that was both considered higher than government authority and intended as an alternative to other oppressive social institutions. Attendees like the Arkansas Sissies took these faggot spiritual practices home to their own networks.

The year 1976 was important for back-to-the-land gay liberation, especially in the Southeast. By that year, the rest of Pyne's Short Mountain collective had left the farm, prompting him to post an ad in *RFD*: "Flying South for the Winter? Solitary faggot needs winter guests. The other (non-gay) members of our group have left me with the goats and cow, on a beautiful middle-Tennessee mountain. Come and visit if you're passin' thru."³⁵ Fellow gay liberationist, Miami-born Mikel Wilson, had in 1973 bought a tiny, remote Appalachian farm of his own that was perched on the side of North Carolina's Roan Mountain. He remembers (interview, February 22, 2016) naming it Running Water Farm for the continuous flow of mountain water he routed into the kitchen sink with a black plastic pipe. Wilson read Pyne's ad in *RFD* and went to visit Short Mountain in February 1977; the two discussed how they might turn their Appalachian farms to the specific support of the gay community. In a little over a year, Running Water would host a gay liberationist men's gathering, with attendees who were well versed in the political and spiritual sanctuary practices of rural collective defense and faggot spirituality. They started to materialize a southeastern version of Evans's network, a regional underground.

Gathering the Southeastern Network: Regional Terror, Running Water, and Sissie Collectivism

In early 1976, there was really no particular rural site that served this committed function of sanctuary for a large-scale network of back-to-the-land gay liberationists. Arguably, the rural Wolf Creek, Oregon, site of the 1976 Faggots and Class Struggle Conference emerged as a West Coast example of such in that year. In the Southeast, Mikel Wilson's Running Water Farm took on that role in June 1978. Over the course of 1977, the need for lesbian and gay refuge had grown more acute as terror spiked in the wake of the Florida Save Our Children campaign.

Spokesperson Anita Bryant used her media presence in the first half of that year to stoke national homophobic fear over the prospect of homosexuals recruiting the nation's vulnerable children to their perverse lifestyle. In June, when the Save Our Children campaign succeeded by overturning Miami-Dade County's ordinance to prohibit discrimination against homosexuals, many accused Bryant of emboldening homophobic violence. For example, just two weeks after the Miami poll was closed,

gay San Francisco gardener Robert Hillsborough was murdered at knifepoint, while one assailant allegedly shouted “Here’s one for Anita!” Hillsborough’s mother attempted to sue Bryant as responsible for her son’s death.³⁶ Around the same time, New Orleans activists implored city officials to cancel Bryant’s Crescent City show because they regarded a rash of local gay suicides as stemming from fear following Bryant’s successful campaign.³⁷ Other cities followed Miami’s lead and overturned their laws protecting homosexuals from discrimination. State Senator John Briggs in California began building on Bryant’s success to launch his Proposition 6, designed to prohibit openly homosexual teachers from working in public schools. Lesbians and gay men fearfully watched the Moral Majority and the New Right rise from their stages in the political theaters of Florida and California.

In 1978, those gay liberationists embedded in southeastern back-to-the-land contexts began to question the sociopolitical orientation of West Coast *RFD* editors, articulating their own regional perspective in the process. For example, in the Spring 1978 *RFD*, the Arkansas Sissies complained of the magazine’s not featuring people of color and wondered whether the increasingly San Francisco-oriented editors were concerned with regions like the Southeast, where white supremacists not only continued to perpetrate violence against people of color but also began to physically attack lesbians and gay men in public spaces.³⁸ In the next issue, Huntsville, Alabama, bookstore owner Clarence Englebert (later known as Clear) asked the editors to put the word *country* back in the magazine’s tagline, implying that *RFD* had shifted to an urban focus that obscured the role of the rural in the publication’s culture.³⁹ In the Fall 1978 issue, Cathy Gross (later Cathy Hope) critiqued the summer *RFD* women’s issue for only engaging feminism and women in superficial ways and missing the crucial opportunity to link rural lesbians with gay men within a more thoroughly feminist editorial context.⁴⁰ Gross’s letter would inspire the region’s “sissies.”⁴¹

Historian of the US Right Gillian Frank has shown how the political strategists behind Anita Bryant’s campaign were also active in movements against school desegregation and the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA).⁴² These southeastern letters to *RFD* editors not only reflected a concern with the increasingly urban, white, male perspective of gay liberation; they also hailed from a region where homophobia was often expressed within the framework of a white supremacy and patriarchy applied through both formal political processes and direct violence. This awareness would inflect the region’s future sanctuary practices.

Atlanta hosted the 1978 Southeastern Conference for Lesbians and Gay Men. The site choice was controversial because Georgia had not ratified the ERA. Feminists were concerned about minimizing expenditure in the local economy while still hosting the conference in the state. Cathy Gross, having relocated to Atlanta from Appalachian southwest Virginia in March 1977, helped to organize

the conference along with her future roommate Franklin Abbott, a young mental health professional who had attended the first two regional conferences in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. During the planning process, Abbott recalls (interview, December 14, 2015) that he voted with lesbian organizers in favor of some women-only conference sessions that focused, for example, on women's sexuality; angry gay men—outvoted—walked out of the planning session. This reflected a longer tension between the two groups.⁴³ For example, Saralyn Chesnut and Amanda Gable detail how, in 1972, the Atlanta Lesbian Feminist Alliance (ALFA) formed as a separate entity from the Georgia GLF, mostly over gay men's monopolizing decision-making for that year's Gay Pride Parade.⁴⁴ This friction persisted, even six years later, in planning for the Atlanta conference. This unfortunate friction agitated emotions surrounding the southern anti-ERA sentiments Frank describes; it would, however, ultimately also galvanize regional sanctuary practitioners.

The conference brought far-flung back-to-the-land gay liberationists—many of whom had previously only "met" each other through the pages of *RFD*—into a shared political space for the first time. What's more, many of these gay liberationists presented at the conference. Mikel Wilson gave a talk called "Rural Gays." Franklin Abbott delivered "Gay & Angry / Gay & Sad: The Psychological Realities of Oppression." Dimid Hayes, formerly of the Arkansas Sissies and having recently relocated to New Orleans to help form the Louisiana Sissies in Struggle (LaSIS), gave a session titled "Sissie/Queer/Effemist/Boy Love: The Cutting Edge of the Gay Male Movement." Faygele Ben Miriam, an audacious gay liberationist activist who had met the Arkansas Sissies at the 1976 Faggots and Class Struggle Conference, had recently relocated to Effland, North Carolina, with his activist mother. In true faggot spirit, he presented on "Armed Struggle and Violence."⁴⁵

On Sunday, April 2, during a closing feedback session, lesbian feminists confronted gay male conference leadership with how they had continually hogged microphone time and presentation space. After charging the men with working on their sexism, the women walked out of the session. Most of the men soon followed. However, a small knot of men remained, many of whom were back-to-the-land gay liberationists who had been profoundly shaped by lesbian feminism. Mikel Wilson offered Running Water for a summer solstice event for the men to work on the issues highlighted by lesbian feminist critique.⁴⁶

There were several important ways that the first two 1978 Running Water gatherings continued the back-to-the-land gay liberationist sanctuary practices outlined earlier. First, faggot witchcraft spirituality was part of the experience. Ben Miriam and Hayes had both been at the 1976 Faggots and Class Struggle Conference and also attended the early Running Water gatherings. Hayes recalls (interview, August 3–4, 2016) that Charlie Murphy, who would record the US feminist witchcraft anthem "Burning Times," also attended, performing music from

the porch of the farmhouse. Englebert remembers (interview, February 28, 2016) participating in a spiral dance, a ritual central to the Bay Area's Reclaiming Witchcraft tradition. Second, the emphatic use of the term *gathering*, rather than *conference*, the word that was used in Oregon, captured the decentralized, informal structure of the event. Third, the collective household necessary for collective defense and rural-urban networking was held to be important. Reflective of this value, at the very first gathering, Wilson proposed that his farm should be collectivized. Fourth, the culture's primary print platform, *RFD*, migrated to the region with Ben Miriam, from Washington. He'd been tasked with saving the struggling serial, and at the first Running Water gathering, attendees agreed to share editorial and publishing responsibility for the magazine.

In their first year, the Running Water gatherings promised the kind of refuge inspired by Evans's rural-urban faggot collectivization, by lesbian feminist collective defense, and by *RFD*'s critically rustic print practices. This was especially true when the events reflected a recognizably sissie vision. The Arkansas Sissies, and their hived-off collective LaSIS, chose to embrace a *sissie* subjectivity, rather than an overtly faggot one, for several important reasons. The Arkansas Sissies had thought of themselves as *sissies* before attending the 1976 Faggots and Class Struggle Conference, as a way to reflect their genderqueer style and socialist feminist politics learned from the Ozark lesbian collectivist network in which they were originally embedded. Sissie Michael Oglesby wrote a critique of the Oregon conference from a working-class perspective that reflected this regional socialist feminist bent.⁴⁷ Further, when Bay Area gay liberationists of color critiqued the Faggots and Class Struggle Conference for both excluding women and rallying around a faggot figure that drew exclusively on white European experiences of colonialism, the southeastern Sissies agreed.⁴⁸ They preferred *sissie* because it didn't seem to carry the implicitly white associations that *faggot* or *fairy*, drawn from European folklore and history, did, and it seemed all the more important to turn from such associations, given the ubiquitous white supremacy of the Jim Crow region where they lived, and given the civil rights experience of the Ozark socialist feminists within their network. Expressing a commitment to cross-racial and cross-gender alliance in their sissie subjectivity, they simultaneously clarified who should make up their southeastern sanctuary networks.

Following the first June 1978 Running Water gathering, Hayes wrote "A Letter of Action" from the New Orleans French Quarter, over a chicory coffee, and mailed it to gathering attendees. He expressed an urgency provoked by social changes "accompanied by a chaos of . . . new proportions" and a revolutionary process moving "at a greater speed than any of us cn [*sic*] be/are aware of."⁴⁹ He cited spiking fear around increased queer-bashing, striking postal workers, and Bryant's inspiring both a modern "witch hunt" and a New Right. In response to this terror, Hayes advocated collectivizing rural sites as healing spaces, as battery boosts for revolutionary energy and vision, and as refuges "needed to harbor sisters and

brothers from destructive forces in the cities." Although the 1978 gatherings were attended by gay liberationist men (and a few children, including John Harris's), Hayes urged attendees to "examine the politics" inherent in thinking of the rural space as owned by young, white gay men. He called for them to actively include other "revolutionary forces" in the region—women, the young and old, transgender people, the working class, and especially, given the racist dynamics of the Southeast, people of color. For Hayes, access to such rural space was too dear to be hoarded by those with advantage.

In the Winter 1978 *RFD*, Hayes wrote the apocalyptic "Poem One, 10/18/1978." In it, Hayes made clear his disaffection with the state. The poem confused chronology, declaring the Orwellian, totalitarian 1984 already arrived and the 1976 "Buy—centennial" as the year the liberationist "1970s fell over dead."⁵⁰ Although "Poem One" took as a given that democracy under global capitalism was a sham, Hayes closed with a note of revolutionary threat: "(TO KNOW WHAT WE KNOW AND NOT TELL THEM IS A TERRORIST WEAPON)." In the same issue, fellow LaSIS member Robert Reich, known in the network as Stacy Brotherlover, endorsed Hayes's rural collectivist vision but expressed its political scale and form like Arthur Evans, calling for regional "Sissie Networking" of rural and urban "anarcho-effemist" collectives. The network would allow members to move between houses in order to contribute to different political projects and to minimize waged dependency on any single local economy.⁵¹ Short Mountain's Milo Pyne, who traveled with Englebert to New Orleans to help with this *RFD* issue, contributed a map of the Sissie Network. In true "anarcho-effemist" form, it pictured just the southeastern region, with no political borders and no names of states, only dots for known sissie collectives and lines for rivers. Tellingly, the names for the saltwater areas surrounding the region were written in Spanish, evoking Pyne's—and US gay liberation's—Cuban *Venceremos* history and suggesting the Sissie Network's understanding of region and the rural through a transnational lens.⁵² For the sissies, collectivism constantly had to imagine ways to skirt the closets posed by state borders. A regional scale not only included both rural and urban collectives but suggested ways that subnational and international borders might be straddled. They were mapping a complex, regional underground in counterpoint to the state.

More tragedy would addle this sissie momentum, though. In the time between writing and publishing the Winter 1978 *RFD*, Harvey Milk was assassinated in San Francisco. The news hit the network hard. The winter was a bleak one. The tiny, mountainous Running Water was almost impossible to reach in winter. To fill the void after the two earlier 1978 gatherings, in February 1979 both New Orleans and Atlanta hosted urban events. Wilson moved to Atlanta that winter, forming a cultural link between Running Water and the Georgia capital. In the Spring 1979 *RFD*, Wilson despaired over the fate of the Appalachian farm but resolved to return, to grow it as the "Running Water Healing Center."⁵³

The healing function loomed large for the Atlanta–Running Water axis. Following the murder of Milk, it seemed the times demanded it. Also, in Atlanta, gay liberation fixed on psychological concerns early. Formed in 1971, the Georgia GLF wrote in its statement of purpose that “the term [*gay ghetto*] applies to gay people in a psychological rather than a physical sense.”⁵⁴ In Atlanta, the gay male leadership from which ALFA splintered included vocal representation by gay religious groups: Catholic Dignity, Episcopal Integrity, and Lutherans Concerned. This phenomenon lent the culture a pastoral air. Franklin Abbott, central to Atlanta gatherings, shares (interview, December 14, 2015) that he was a mental health professional and had worked with Atlanta lesbian therapist Jane Gavin to establish a gay center and helpline named Tempo.

In the Spring 1979 *RFD*, published from Atlanta, Abbott reflected on the winter gathering in his city: “The city-country analysis that gaymen in the Southeast are developing appears to recognize the need for balancing the formal and the spacious. The country focus, the space and anarchy of the Running Water experiences, and the deliberate setting aside of space by urban gaymen’s support circles were all essential in the unfolding of the Atlanta weekend.”⁵⁵ Drawing upon Buddhism and Taoism, Abbott contended that “in quietly being together, we were healing ourselves and healing each other. The dis-ease we often feel from isolation / competition / imbalance was reduced, leaving us space to explore new possibilities of being together.” In Abbott’s case, this therapeutic focus did not mean abandonment of radical political action. He ended a poem commemorating the first Running Water gathering by claiming that the experience had rendered him “a better lover / my gentleness refined, aligned / and dangerous.”⁵⁶ However, Abbott considers (interview, December 14, 2015) his own contribution to the network to be a poetic, vision-based, and therapeutic one, while he lauded LaSIS for giving the regional movement a radical political practice.

Through their *RFD* editorial collaborations, New Orleans’s LaSIS and Tennessee’s Short Mountain formed another axis in the network. When Short Mountain took the magazine’s editorial reins for the Summer 1979 issue, an even more firmly regional gay liberationist political perspective emerged. For one, the issue’s two main feature articles were by women. Even though, given the culture’s deep debts to lesbian feminism, this move shouldn’t have seemed radical, Running Water gatherings—formed out of a charge from lesbian feminists for gay men to pursue separate space to work on their sexism—had so far included only men and their children. Also, since the unfocused Summer 1977 women’s issue, which Cathy Gross had critiqued, there had been little effort to prioritize women’s voices in *RFD*.

Short Mountain’s Summer 1979 issue featured June Boyd writing about her experiences as an incarcerated black woman within a prison system that functioned as part of a white supremacist state, and anarcho-lesbian feminist Kathy Fire

critiquing the nuclear power industry.⁵⁷ Although Boyd was incarcerated in Muncie, Indiana, her piece complemented the *RFD* series "Brothers behind Bars," which networked imprisoned and free gay liberationists, and by foregrounding prison writing, Boyd implicitly invited readers to map prisons to stress the fact that many *RFD* readers were, in fact, in prisons in the Southeast—in, for example, Memphis, Atlanta, and Appalachian Tennessee. The Short Mountain editors annotated Fire's article with the comment, "Our layout headquarters is in a little old log cabin up in a beautiful holler. We have electricity here, a necessity for a typewriter of this kind. We burn precious few watts, but we are tied in to TVA's nuclear expansion program nonetheless. We are in the heart of an area destined for development, exploitation, and internal colonialism." The text was accompanied by a map of the Southeast with a big inverted triangle bearing a caption: "The biggest power project ever undertaken in America is centered in Middle Tennessee's 'Electric Triangle.'"⁵⁸ This issue stressed ways by which the state made the region an instrument of domination and exploitation.

This editorial shift conceived the rural differently: from a space with the capacity to frustrate urban-based state surveillance to a geography uniquely exploited within the political economy via state-funded enterprises like the prison and energy industries. Importantly, the Short Mountain editors' invoking "internal colonialism" further defined their political view as informed, whether directly or indirectly, by black liberation. Hobson has shown how Bay Area gay liberation and lesbian feminism learned from the Black Panthers' concept of internal colonialism.⁵⁹ Also, in 1978, Appalachian studies groundbreaker Helen Matthews Lewis had published her analysis of Appalachia as subject to internal colonialism, her own theories influenced by her reading of Frantz Fanon.⁶⁰ This Summer 1979 issue of *RFD* focused its back-to-the-land gay liberationist critique more firmly in the Southeast than it had previously. The editors refined their concept of sanctuary to one taking an active political interest in the rural places where sanctuary was performed.

The two axes in the Southeastern Network took on different roles over the course of that summer. Ben Miriam reported that, at the June 1979 gathering, it was decided, after much debate, that Running Water would be a "specifically faggot space; children welcome."⁶¹ Although this decision reflected a continued commitment on the part of gay male attendees to take space and time to work on their sexism, it also coincided with Short Mountain editors' decision to centralize lesbian feminist voices in *RFD*. Hayes's argument in his "Letter to Action," to actively include women (and others) in the sanctuary provided by Running Water, was therefore not realized at the time. A New Orleans sanctuary would be difficult to pull off. Into the summer of 1979, the sissies there contended with police harassment, as they were arrested multiple times on manufactured charges of nudity in

view of a public school.⁶² The network needed another rural space for sanctuary of the kind Hayes described, but this need became harder to articulate as a national gay rights movement emerged in the wake of Milk's death.

Fairy Tales: Placing Sanctuary in 1980, and Beyond

Two relevant national events occurred in the second half of 1979. One took place over Labor Day weekend: the first Spiritual Conference for Radical Fairies held in Benson, Arizona, at a rural spiritual retreat called Desert Sanctuary.⁶³ The event was organized by West Coast gay liberationist leaders interested in connecting spirituality to their politics, among them Harry Hay, the cofounder of the Mattachine Society, founded in 1950. The conference shared commonalities with both the Faggots and Class Struggle Conference and the Running Water Farm gatherings in that all three concerned themselves with the intersections of gay liberation, political spirituality, and rural events. Unlike Running Water, the Arizona event drew over two hundred attendees from all over the nation, in part driven there by fears stemming from the recent assassination of Milk and from the upcoming election in 1980. Several from the Southeastern Network attended, inspired by the numbers and comparable liberationist vision. In fact, the LaSIS-Short Mountain editors of *RFD*, back in New Orleans that fall, devoted most of the magazine's pages to documenting the desert event. Their editorial note proclaimed that *RFD* was "now a fairy journal" and referred to the "fairies of LaSIS."⁶⁴ However, the editors also riffed on the *RFD* acronym, naming the issue "Returning Forest Darlings," thereby emphasizing that the issue also marked a return from the desert to the work of the Southeastern Network.

The second event was the October 1979 March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights. Ben Miriam, who attended a Philadelphia planning conference for the march, reported that several "felt the conference to be dominated by the New York/San Francisco axis" and "felt it necessary to help form a hinterlands caucus, representing not only rural and small town folk, but even those from big cities other than N.Y. and S.F."⁶⁵ *RFD* published a letter from "19 Lesbians and Gay Men from Tennessee," which, among other critiques, recommended rescheduling the march for 1980, implying the event should be framed less as a ten-year Stonewall anniversary than as an intervention on the 1980 presidential elections.⁶⁶ LaSIS attended the event, but Sears tells us that a Phillip Pendleton marched with the sissies and commented, "No one I knew went to lobby Congress the next day. Our goal was to overthrow the government, not enter into dialogue with it!"⁶⁷ The Southeastern Network's response to the national march indicated that they hewed both to the rural and anti-state components of their sanctuary practice even as the national gay rights movement amplified; however, they also saw a place for themselves in the larger gay liberationist scale which the Radical Fairy conference suggested. It was within this context that formal regional sanctuary practice emerged.

At the 1979 Southeastern Conference for Lesbians and Gay Men in Chapel Hill, Milo Pyne announced the Short Mountain Reinhabitation project, to begin in the spring of 1980. Among the seven who answered his call and came to work on the project were Cathy Gross and Dimid Hayes. With a lesbian feminist resident, Gross and Hayes remember (interview, August 5, 2018), the eight jokingly referred to themselves as "Snow White and the Seven Dwarves" and worked to ready the Short Mountain farm as a place for residence and gathering. Back in New Orleans, with the help of Stacy Brotherlover's accounting background, LaSIS took on fundraising and bookkeeping duties for the project, making Short Mountain the first step toward realizing the sissie networking that they had written of nearly two years before. Looking back, Gross and Hayes remember naturally coming to associate the word *sanctuary* with what they were doing. They held their first gathering on May Day 1980. When several women critiqued the phallic maypole at the heart of the ritual, Gross improvised by linking arms with fellow resident Crazy Owl, replacing the symbolic phallus with the literal bodies of a lesbian feminist and a gay liberationist who had together labored to build the sanctuary. Although Gross and Hayes stayed at Short Mountain for less than six months, their brief residence reflected the sissie practice of serial commitment to collective projects and to circulation within the underground.

In the Fall 1980 issue of *RFD*, Milo Pyne published his "A Faeryist Not-Manifesto." Appearing a decade after Wittman's "Refugees from Amerika," it called for a revival of gay liberationist politics and stated the urgent need for sanctuaries. Like Wittman, Pyne emphasized the importance of alliance with the liberation movements of women and people of color. As examples of such support, he referenced regional gay liberationists' participation in the anti-Klan rallies following the 1979 Greensboro Massacre, carrying signs reading "QUEERS AGAINST RACISM," and he urged extending the work of the "dyke affinity group" called the Spiderworts, who were arrested for occupying the Virginia North Anna nuclear plant. Pyne worried that the national gay rights movement was forgetting the wider and longer-term goals of liberation, which dedicated itself to the overturning of colonialism in all its forms, internal and international.

I argue, though, that Pyne's manifesto registered a twist on the regional concept of sanctuary that preceded it. The first aspect of that twist involved the affective and strategic dimensions of what it might mean to associate sanctuary with a fairy subjectivity, rather than a faggot or sissie one alone. Clearly, the 1979 Arizona conference prompted southeastern gay liberationists to try the word on; however, I read Pyne's use of the word "faeryist" in the title to signal both a place within the wider Radical Faerie culture anchored in the West as well as a regional uniqueness rooted in sissie interpretations. In his manifesto, Pyne invoked sanctuary in the terms of the fairy tale, associating both with wild environments: "We must create sanctuaries for ourselves, for the elves and gnomes, for the trees and flowers, birds, salamanders,

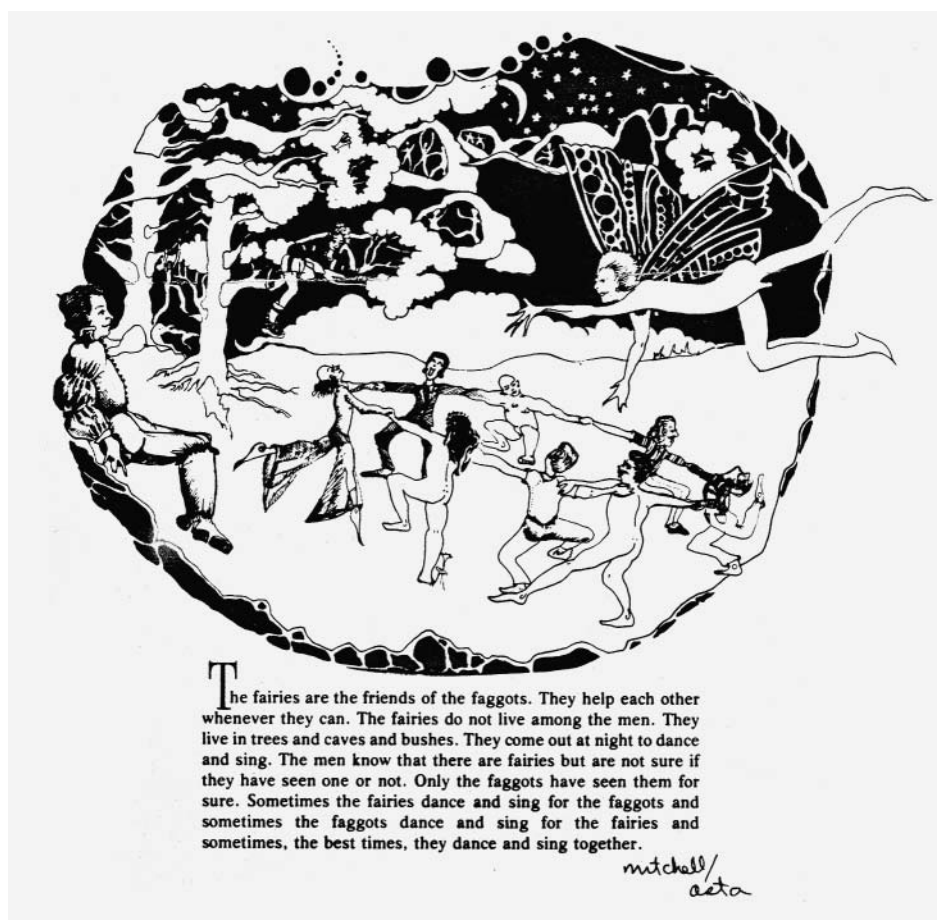


Figure 1. Organizers of the summer 1979 Running Water Farm gathering illustrated their circulated mailing list with an excerpt from Mitchell and Asta's *Faggots & Their Friends between Revolutions*, articulating a relationship between the work of rural sanctuary and liberationist militancy. Running Water Farm mailing list (June 15–17, 1979). Conference—Radical Faeries—"Gatherings" at Running Water, 1979–1981 (Box 1, Folder 6), Gay Spirit Visions records, W127, Archives for Research on Women and Gender, Special Collections and Archives, Georgia State University, Atlanta.

frogs and little furry critters. If the planet dies, we will bear witness and sing the death song. If a species is extinguished, we will avenge it by our love. We must develop and perform ceremonies to strengthen Gaia and confound her enemies—put a hex on TVA."⁶⁸ He sounded an ecofeminist and bioregional conservationist note, joining it to Evans's faggot witchcraft. What is also noteworthy, though, is how Pyne conceived magic as a means not only of forming bonds with nature and fellow liberationists, as Evans understood its function, but also to *confound* the state (in this case, the Tennessee Valley Authority, or TVA).

Rural means of confusing the state had been a part of back-to-the-land gay liberation's strategy for years, but doing so in the register of the fairy tale was rather new. Short Mountain Sanctuary residents' ironically identifying with the Snow White story fit that pattern. An announcement for the summer 1979 Running Water gathering included an image and quote (fig. 1) from *The Faggots & Their Friends between Revolutions* (1977) by Larry Mitchell (author) and Ned Asta (illustrator), portraying a circle of dancers in a forest clearing, with a winged figure flying above; the quote read, "The fairies are the friends of the faggots. They help each other whenever they can. The fairies do not live among the men. They live in trees and caves and bushes."⁶⁹ Associating fairies with remote, mysterious wilderness uniquely positioned them to provide sanctuary to their faggot friends engaged on the front lines of the revolution. LaSIS furthered this complementarity between the militant faggot and the sanctuarian fairy and wrote in the Summer 1981 *RFD* that "fairies can vanish into the woodwork of corporate paneling or forest trees, leaving hets to figure it out for themselves. Of course Fairies always have to be ready to step in whenever hets begin to endanger our Mother, the Earth."⁷⁰ The early southeastern sense of the fairy role was of rural gay liberationists practiced at strategies of confusion, obscurantism, and evasion and situated in the wilderness as keepers of sanctuary for faggot revolutionaries.

A second aspect of the Short Mountain twist on sanctuary involved how Pyne thought of gay liberation in relation to land movements. At the Labor Day 1980 Radical Faerie gathering in Colorado, when Harry Hay urged the attendees to join in establishing rural gay land trusts, someone from Short Mountain shouted that this work was already under way in Tennessee.⁷¹ In his manifesto, Pyne called on gay liberationists to support anticolonial sovereignty movements, specifically mentioning Puerto Rico, US indigenous land movements, Chicana territories at the Mexican border, and New Afrika. Such support begs the question as to what degree those in the Southeastern Network imagined their own sanctuaries as parallel autonomous territories to the US state.⁷² I further wonder whether the work of rural *reinhabitation* meant the advent of a more concentrated focus on the *dwelling* of sanctuary stewards, a focus which risked losing sight of highly mobile revolutionaries' need for sanctuary as they circulated through the rural-urban underground.

Certainly, the Southeastern Network didn't achieve all its loftiest goals in terms of sanctuary. For example, Clear Englebert admitted as early as fall 1981 his own "cautionary feelings about the gatherings" due to his sense that their largely white, male culture did not fully interrogate its racism and sexism.⁷³ Women, such as Gross, were crucial to Short Mountain's formation; in the following years, they remained important to the sanctuary, but their numbers within the culture were relatively small. It also remains unclear how well gathering organizers actively facilitated access to their rural sanctuaries for those who understandably saw its

backroads as dangerous routes. For example, Douglas Caulkins mentions an attendee at a 1991 Gay Spirit Visions event (a rural North Carolina gathering culture that succeeded Running Water's) whose black friend grew fearful as they wound deeper into the rural landscape that hosted the event.⁷⁴ Planners' vision to the contrary, sanctuary wasn't always evenly accessible.

However, the emergence of Tennessee's Short Mountain Sanctuary from back-to-the-land gay liberationism and southeastern sissie networking signals for historians of sanctuary movements the importance of exploring the tensions between sanctuary as both political practice and place, as short-term tactic (refuge) and longer-term vision (sovereignty). In asking serious questions about the relationship between faggots, sissies, and fairies, these regional gay liberationists worked to theorize the different necessary roles in a sanctuary movement that sought to look away from the capital.

What the Southeastern Network improvised echoed the concerns of A. Naomi Paik for contemporary sanctuary movements in terms of urging them to turn away from the neoliberal state, to withdraw from its infrastructure, and to form alliances across the varied subjectivities in need of refuge. They also drew on a combination of political and spiritual resources, which, as Paik shows, is also typical of the contemporary sanctuary movement. And they continued to address Wittman's concerns with the compromised citizenship lesbians and gay men held, especially when fixed in urban gay "ghettos."

By the summer of 1979, the Southeastern Network had envisioned a sanctuary practice rooted in rural collective defense and in a regional sissie variation on the rural-urban networking of faggot spirituality. Hayes's "A Letter to Action" and Brotherlover's "Sissie Networking" posed the rural-urban network clustered around Running Water gatherings as the circulation system for an underground that could provide refuge for diverse groups in urgent need of sanctuary during the ascendance of the New Right, but which could also nominally mitigate dependence on the state and local economies. This sanctuary format also redefined the collective—away from a model of permanent commitment and more toward that of a serial group marriage by which liberationists changed collectives based on the projects they wanted to complete in a season's stay.

Pyne's map of southeastern sissie networking erased state borders both to prioritize the natural environment and to imagine regional sanctuary transnationally. In the Southeast, this meant turning away from urban centers elsewhere in the country to orient toward a "deeper south," toward the Caribbean and the Vencermos experiences in Cuba, which had already inspired and threatened their gay liberationist revolutionary spirit.⁷⁵ Part of this deeper south commitment meant confronting the white supremacist and patriarchal forces sewn into the formal political and social structures of the US Southeast. For Short Mountain, it also meant contending with the internal colonialism that targeted the region's rural areas in the forms of state-backed prison and energy industries, especially in Appalachia. And

later, at Short Mountain Sanctuary, its response to internal colonialism included an ecofeminist protection of, and identification with, wilderness, expressed by the trying on of fairy subjectivity.

Finally, the early Running Water gatherings foregrounded the affective elements crucial for collectivizing, for networking sites and alliances, and for sustaining revolutionary energy. Born of a lesbian feminist charge for gay liberationist men to work on their sexism, the gatherings featured men's practice with care labor—with listening, ceding space, lending support, and providing childcare. In their practice of spiritual ritual, as defined by West Coast witchcraft traditions, they forged bonds, celebrated sexuality, and maintained political fire. Such practices echo gay Venceremos veteran Allen Young's claim that gay liberation might offer something unique to revolution: ways of "dealing with the politics of personal relations, and as such [be] the path of personal fulfillment and joy."⁷⁶ Within this context, we can also understand how the erotic enabled alliance and therefore, as Abbott poetically asserted, how being a better lover made one both gentle *and* dangerous. Such convictions reflected lesbian feminist thought of the time, particularly Audre Lorde's theory of the erotic, first presented at a conference on women's history in 1978.⁷⁷

These were the components of their planned system of sanctuary built on the principles of lesbian feminist collective defense and faggot spirituality—but oriented rurally, calibrated to a regional scale, and attuned to affective concerns. If, for many of these gay liberationists, their early 1970s Venceremos Brigade experiences shaped their sense of revolution, it is telling, then, to recognize that, roughly ten years later, they applied their sanctuary practice to the aid of gay Cuban refugees detained during the 1980 Mariel boatlifts. An update appeared in the same Fall 1980 issue as Pyne's manifesto, asking readers to shelter any of the roughly six hundred lesbian and gay Cuban refugees—many surely with interests in and skills for rural living—who were detained at the Fort Chaffee military base in rural Arkansas.⁷⁸ Although I can't say how many of these lesbian and gay Marielitos might have entered the southeastern sissie network and found homes in its forests or hills, I can say that the suggestion itself rested on a decade's practice of regional back-to-the-land, gay liberationist sanctuary.

Jason Ezell is an assistant professor and the instruction and research coordinator at Loyola University New Orleans's Monroe Library. His research focuses on LGBTQ+ cultural and political history, critical rural studies, and affect.

Notes

1. Wittman, "Refugees from Amerika."
2. Luther Hillman, *Dressing for the Culture Wars*; Stryker, *Transgender History*.
3. Sears, *Rebels, Rubyfruit, and Rhinestones*; the magazine's quoted dedication is from the cover of *RFD* 3 (Spring 1975).
4. Sears, *Rebels, Rubyfruit, and Rhinestones*, 146.
5. Stryker, *Transgender History*.

6. Troxler, "A Rejection."
7. Wittman, "Towards a Gay Tarot."
8. Pyne, "A Faeryist Not-Man-ifesto," 58.
9. Primary research such as this and other oral history interviews come from my dissertation, "Between F* Words."
10. Morgensen, "Arrival at Home," 72.
11. Paik, "Abolitionist Futures."
12. Paik, "Abolitionist Futures," 19.
13. Lekus, "Queer Harvests"; Sears, *Rebels, Rubyfruit, and Rhinestones*.
14. Sears, *Rebels, Rubyfruit, and Rhinestones*.
15. Williams, *Appalachia: A History*.
16. "The Beginning."
17. Sears, *Rebels, Rubyfruit, and Rhinestones*, 144.
18. Herring, *Another Country*, 90.
19. Herring, *Another Country*, 88.
20. Hobson, *Lavender and Red*, 43.
21. Sears, *Rebels, Rubyfruit, and Rhinestones*, 196.
22. Quoted in Sears, *Rebels, Rubyfruit, and Rhinestones*, 348.
23. Charles, *Hoover's War on Gays*.
24. Lord and Zajicek, *The History of the Contemporary Grassroots Women's Movement*. This link between civil rights experience and sexual identity may reflect what historian John Howard argued in *Men Like That*, namely that the conservative coding of civil rights activists as perverse resulted in a heightened politicization of sexual identity in the Southeast.
25. Lord and Zajicek, *The History of the Contemporary Grassroots Women's Movement*; Stephen Vider discusses Mulberry House in his overview of gay liberationist collective households, "The Ultimate Extension of Gay Community."
26. Williams, personal journal.
27. "Sum-Up," 9–10.
28. Hobson, *Lavender and Red*, 74–75.
29. Evans, *Witchcraft and the Gay Counterculture*.
30. Evans, *Witchcraft and the Gay Counterculture*, 148–49. Evans joined a wider set of politicized witchcraft traditions in the 1970s Bay Area, which included Starhawk's ecofeminist *Reclaiming Witchcraft*. Starhawk was trained in the Anderson Feri tradition of witchcraft, which, by its emphasis on feminist ecstasy rather than feminine fertility, was attractive to those with nonconforming sexualities.
31. Evans, *Witchcraft and the Gay Counterculture*, 148.
32. "RFD Collective Statement," 4; Elliot, "Bread & Roses Revisited," 7.
33. Lewis, "We Are Certain of Our Own Insanity."
34. Starhawk, *The Spiral Dance*.
35. Pyne, "Flying South for the Winter?," 44.
36. Clendinen and Nagourney, *Out for Good*.
37. Bryant, "Playboy Interview."
38. Arkansas Sissies, letter to the editors, 4. This letter cited KKK attacks on lesbian and gay bars. The Arkansas Sissies also attended a rally for Dessie Woods, a black Georgia woman jailed for killing her would-be rapist, according to Dennis Williams's personal journal, 1977–78.
39. Englebert, letter to the editor.

40. Gross, letter to the editor.
41. Gross's letter is cited in several of the sissie statements in "Sissie."
42. Frank, "The Civil Rights of Parents."
43. For more on Georgia's role in regional lesbian and gay activist organizing, see Sears, *Rebels, Rubyfruit, and Rhinestones*.
44. Chesnut and Gable, "Women Ran It."
45. Third Southeastern Conference for Lesbians and Gay Men, conference pamphlet.
46. Adding a religious tenor to this offer, Abbott describes Wilson as "one of the wild creatures who had come down to the conference." "Mikel was a weaver. He wove all his own clothes. He had a long beard. He wore a tunic that he had woven out of rough wool and carried a staff, and looked like an Old Testament prophet." Franklin Abbott, interview.
47. Oglesby, "A Critique of the Conference."
48. Williams, personal journal.
49. Hayes, "A Letter of Action."
50. Hayes, "Poem One."
51. Brotherlover, "Sissie Networking." For more on effeminism, see Dansky, Knoebel, and Pitchford, "The Effeminit Manifesto."
52. Lekus argues in "Queer Harvests" that such decentralized, often rural gay collectives were the most immediate manifestation of gay liberationist Venceremos experiences in the United States. In the 1980s, Pyne, and others in the network and in *RFD*, engaged with Central American culture and politics in ways which support Hobson's argument in *Lavender and Red* for a longer gay liberation committed to transnational political activity, especially in Central America.
53. Wilson, "A Dreamer's Reality."
54. Cutler, "Statement of Purpose of the Georgia GLF."
55. Abbott, "Space for Support." The portmanteau term *gaymen* was used in the region to sometimes refer to gay men of a liberal rather than liberationist political bent and other times as a word for male gay liberationists who did not identify as sissies.
56. Abbott, "Ascent, Lament, and Admonition."
57. Boyd, "June Boyd: A Black Strong Woman"; Fire, "Nuclear Realities, Part One."
58. *RFD* editorial comment.
59. Hobson, *Lavender and Red*.
60. Lewis, Johnson, and Askins, *Colonialism in America*; and Lewis, *Helen Matthews Lewis*.
61. Running Water Farm Gathering flier (for September 21–23, 1979).
62. "LaSIS Update."
63. For a description of the event, see Timmons, *The Trouble with Harry Hay*.
64. *RFD* editorial note.
65. Ben Miriam, *RFD* National March update.
66. "19 Lesbians and Gay Men from Tennessee," 3.
67. Sears, *Rebels, Rubyfruit, and Rhinestones*, 306.
68. Pyne, "A Faeryist Not-Man-ifesto," 5.
69. Mitchell and Asta, *The Faggots & Their Friends*; Running Water Farm mailing list.
70. LaSIS, "On the Question of Names," 16.
71. Timmons, *The Trouble with Harry Hay*, 275.
72. Morgensen has called critical attention to how Radical Faerie sanctuaries risk a queer reproduction of settler colonialism in "Arrival at Home" and *Spaces between Us*.
73. Englebert, "Profiles and Interviews."

74. Caulkins, "Running Water Farm."
75. This places this southeastern back-to-the-land gay liberationist history in dialogue with other such transnational LGBT+ histories focused on the Caribbean and Central America, such as those of Hobson, Lekus, and Julio Capo Jr.'s *Welcome to Fairyland*. The phrase "deeper south" comes from Lekus's essay on the gay Cuban Venceremos experience.
76. Young, "The Cuban Revolution and Gay Liberation," 207. For another view on how black liberation offered such tools to gay liberation, see Ongiri, "Prisoner of Love."
77. Lorde, "The Uses of the Erotic."
78. "Sponsoring Cuban Refugees Update"; I learned of these Fort Chaffee refugees' difficult experiences from Edwin Unzalu's undergraduate thesis, "The Cuban Exodus of 1980."

References

- Abbott, Franklin. "Ascent, Lament, and Admonition." In *Mortal Love: Selected Poems*. Liberty, TN: RFD Press, 1999.
- Abbott, Franklin. Interview by Wesley Chenault, Atlanta, GA, September 30, 2011. Social Change Collection. Special Collections and Archives, Georgia State University, Atlanta.
- Abbott, Franklin. "Space for Support." *RFD* 19 (Spring 1979): 7.
- Arkansas Sissies. Letter to the editor. *RFD* 15 (Spring 1978): 4.
- "The Beginning." *The Farm Community*, November 14, 2018. <http://thefarmcommunity.com/the-beginning/>.
- Ben Miriam, Faygele. *RFD National March Update*. *RFD* 19 (Spring 1979): 4.
- Boyd, June. "June Boyd: A Black Strong Woman." *RFD* 20 (Summer 1979): 4.
- Brotherlover, Stacy (Robert Reich). "Sissie Networking." *RFD* 18 (Winter 1978): 20.
- Bryant, Anita. "Playboy Interview." Interviewed by Ken Kelley. *Playboy*, May 1978, 73–96.
- Capo, Julio, Jr. *Welcome to Fairyland: Queer Miami before 1940*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017.
- Caulkins, Douglas B. "Running Water Farm." 2010 GSV Letters and Magazine Articles, Gay Spirit Visions Records, Archives for Research on Women and Gender, Special Collections and Archives, Georgia State University, Atlanta.
- Charles, Douglas M. *Hoover's War on Gays: Exposing the FBI's 'Sex Deviates' Program*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2015.
- Chesnut, Saralyn, and Amanda C. Gable. "'Women Ran It': Charis Books and More and Atlanta's Lesbian-Feminist Community, 1971–1981." In *Carryin' On in the Lesbian and Gay South*, edited by John Howard, 241–84. New York: New York University Press, 1997.
- Clendinen, Dudley, and Adam Nagourney. *Out for Good: The Struggle to Build a Gay Rights Movement in America*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1999.
- Cutler, William. "Statement of Purpose of the Georgia GLF." *Gay Good Times*, newspaper clipping, March 8, 1971. Atlanta Lesbian Feminist Alliance Papers, Box 15, Gay Liberation Front, Folder 36, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book and Manuscript Collection, Duke University.
- Dansky, Steven, John Knoebel, and Kenneth Pitchford. "The Effemist Manifesto." In *We Are Everywhere: A Historical Sourcebook for Gay and Lesbian Politics*, edited by Mark Blasius and Shane Phelan, 435–38. New York: Routledge, 1997.
- Elliot, Jai D. "Bread & Roses Revisited." *RFD* 10 (Winter 1976): 7.
- Englebert, Clarence (Clear). Letter to the editor. *RFD* 16 (Summer 1978): 3.

- Englebert, Clarence (Clear). "Profiles and Interviews: A Visit with Clear Englebert in S.E. Tennessee." *RFD* 28 (Fall 1981): 50–52.
- Evans, Arthur. *Witchcraft and the Gay Counterculture*. Boston: Fag Rag Books, 1978.
- Ezell, Samuel Jason. "Between F* Words: Rural & Gay Liberationist Refrains in the Southeast, 1970–1981." PhD diss., University of Maryland, College Park, 2017.
- Frank, Gillian. "'The Civil Rights of Parents': Race and Conservative Politics in Anita Bryant's Campaign against Gay Rights in 1970s Florida." *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 22, no. 1 (2013): 126–60.
- Gross, Cathy (Hope). Letter to the editor. *RFD* 17 (Fall 1978): 10.
- Hayes, Dimid. "A Letter of Action" (unpublished). Personal collection of Dimid Hayes.
- Hayes, Dimid. "Poem One, 10/18/1978." *RFD* 18 (Winter 1978): 7.
- Herring, Scott. *Another Country: Queer Anti-Urbanism*. New York: New York University Press, 2010.
- Hobson, Emily K. *Lavender and Red: Liberation and Solidarity in the Gay and Lesbian Left*. Oakland: University of California Press, 2016.
- Howard, John. *Men Like That: A Southern Queer History*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999.
- LaSIS. "On the Question of Names." *RFD* 27 (Summer 1981): 14–16.
- "LaSIS Update." *RFD* 20 (Summer 1979): 3.
- Lekus, Ian. "Queer Harvests: Homosexuality, the U.S. New Left, and the Venceremos Brigades to Cuba." *Radical History Review* 89 (2004): 57–91.
- Lewis, Abram J. "'We Are Certain of Our Own Insanity': Antipsychiatry and the Gay Liberation Movement, 1968–1980." *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 25, no. 1 (2016): 83–113.
- Lewis, Helen Matthews. *Helen Matthews Lewis: Living Social Justice in Appalachia*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2012.
- Lewis, Helen Matthews, Linda Johnson, and Donald Askins. *Colonialism in Modern America: The Appalachian Case*. Boone, NC: Appalachian Consortium Press, 1978.
- Lord, Allyn, and Anna M. Zajicek. *The History of the Contemporary Grassroots Women's Movement in Northwest Arkansas, 1970–2000*. Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2000.
- Lorde, Audre. "Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power." In *Sister Outsider*, 53–59. Freedom, CA: Crossing Press, 1984.
- Luther Hillman, Betty. *Dressing for the Culture Wars: Style and the Politics of Self-Presentation in the 1960s and 1970s*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2015.
- Mitchell, Larry, and Ned Asta. *The Faggots & Their Friends between Revolutions*. New York: Calamus Books, 1977.
- Morgensen, Scott Lauria. "Arrival at Home: Radical Faerie Configurations of Sexuality and Place." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 15, no. 1 (2009): 67–96.
- Morgensen, Scott Lauria. *Spaces between Us: Queer Settler Colonialism and Indigenous Decolonization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011.
- "19 Lesbians and Gay Men from Tennessee" (letter). *RFD* 20 (Summer 1979): 3.
- Oglesby, Michael. "A Critique of the Conference." *RFD* 10 (Winter 1976): 18–19.
- Ongiri, Amy Abugo. "Prisoner of Love: Affiliation, Sexuality, and the Black Panther Party." *Journal of African American History* 94, no. 1 (2009): 69–86.
- Paik, A. Naomi. "Abolitionist Futures and the U.S. Sanctuary Movement." *Race and Class* 59, no. 2 (2017): 3–25. doi.org/10.1177/0306396817717858.
- Pyne, Milo. "A Faeryist Not-Man-ifesto." *RFD* 25 (Fall/Winter 1980): 56–58.

- Pyne, Milo. "Flying South for the Winter?" *RFD* 10 (Winter 1976): 44.
- "RFD Collective Statement." *RFD* 10 (Winter 1976): 4.
- RFD* editorial comment. *RFD* 20 (Summer 1979): 16.
- RFD* editorial note. *RFD* 22 (Winter 1979): inside cover.
- Running Water Farm Gathering flier (for September 21–23, 1979). Conference—Radical Faeries—"Gatherings" at Running Water, 1979–1981 (Box 1, Folder 6), Gay Spirit Visions records, W127, Archives for Research on Women and Gender, Special Collections and Archives, Georgia State University, Atlanta.
- Running Water Farm mailing list (June 15–17, 1979). Conference—Radical Faeries—"Gatherings" at Running Water, 1979–1981 (Box 1, Folder 6), Gay Spirit Visions records, W127, Archives for Research on Women and Gender, Special Collections and Archives, Georgia State University, Atlanta.
- Sears, James T. *Rebels, Rubyfruit, and Rhinestones: Queering Space in the Stonewall South*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2001.
- "Sissie." *RFD* 18 (Winter 1978): 4–5.
- "Sponsoring Cuban Refugees Update." *RFD* 25 (Fall/Winter 1980): 5.
- Starhawk. *The Spiral Dance: A Rebirth of the Ancient Religion of the Great Goddess*. New York: Harper, 1979.
- Stryker, Susan. *Transgender History*. Berkeley, CA: Seal Press, 2008.
- "Sum-Up." *Morning Due: A Journal of Men against Sexism* 2, no. 6 (1976): 4–10. Special issue: A Conference Report: Faggots and Class Struggle. <https://itwascuriosity.files.wordpress.com/2012/12/conference-report-faggots-and-class-struggle.pdf>.
- Third Southeastern Conference for Lesbians and Gay Men, conference pamphlet. Atlanta Lesbian Feminist Alliance Papers Box 16, Southeast Gay Coalition, Folder 3, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Duke University.
- Timmons, Stuart. *The Trouble with Harry Hay: Founder of the Modern Gay Movement*. New York: Allyson Books, 1990.
- Troxler, Allan. "A Rejection." *RFD* 1 (Fall 1974): 15.
- Unzalu, Edwin. "The Cuban Exodus of 1980: The Stories and News Coverage of the Undesirables." Undergraduate honors thesis, Loyola University New Orleans, 2017. <http://www.louisianadigitalibrary.org/islandora/object/loyno-etcd%3A243>.
- Vider, Stephen. "'The Ultimate Extension of Gay Community': Communal Living and Gay Liberation in the 1970s." *Gender and History* 27, no. 3 (2015): 865–81.
- Williams, Dennis (Melba'son). Personal journal, 1977–78 (unpublished), personal collection of Dimid Hayes.
- Williams, John Alexander. *Appalachia: A History*. New edition. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002.
- Wilson, Mikel. "A Dreamer's Reality." *RFD* 19 (Spring 1979): 5.
- Wittman, Carl. "Refugees from Amerika: A Gay Manifesto." *History Is a Weapon*, November 14, 2018. www.historyisaweapon.com/defcon1/wittmanmanifesto.html.
- Wittman, Carl. "Towards a Gay Tarot." *RFD* 2 (Winter 1974): 32–37.
- Young, Allen. "The Cuban Revolution and Gay Liberation." In *Out of the Closets: Voices of Gay Liberation*, edited by Karla Jay and Allen Young, 206–7. 20th anniversary ed. New York: New York University Press, 1992.