

James Still in Interviews, Oral Histories and Memoirs (Contributions to Southern Appalachian Studies)

Ted Olson



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One of the most admired and influential authors to work in and write about Appalachia, James Still excelled in every genre of literature in which he worked, from novels and short stories to poetry, children's books, and folklore. This book is intended to help readers more fully understand and appreciate the many facets of Still's literary voice and vision, collecting transcribed versions of virtually all the interviews and oral histories ever conducted with James Still, along with numerous memoirs in which some of the leading voices in the Appalachian studies movement memorably express their appreciation for Still and his literary legacy. The first section of the book features written transcriptions of Still's formal interviews, most of which are difficult to locate, having been originally published in periodicals with limited distribution. The intended outcome of this section of the book is to compile all such interviews in one chronologically organized, continuous document, so that the reader may detect subtle or marked changes in Still's attitude toward his life, his work, and his increasingly central roles in Appalachian literature and the field of Appalachian studies. The second section of the book presents memoirs which focus on Still's work from personal rather than critical or scholarly perspectives, written by people who knew Still the person as well as Still the author. Featuring previously published though hard-to-find pieces as well as unpublished pieces, this section provides a forum for a range of people to reflect upon Still's influence on their lives or to more generally comment upon the nature of Still's community and regional influences.

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