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Drama

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA
CHAPEL HILL, N. C.

1939-40



FOLK-PLAYS of

The CAROLINA PLAYMAKERS

FREDERICK H. KOCH, *Director*

The Premier Production of

Smoky Mountain Road

A New Folk Comedy

By FRED KOCH, Jr.

Staged and Directed by The Author



THE PLAYMAKERS THEATRE

JULY 11, 12, 13 (Matinee and Night)



The Carolina Playmakers' Twenty-First Anniversary

The Author



THE AUTHOR of *Smoky Mountain Road*, Fred Koch, Jr., wrote the play in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts degree in the Department of Dramatic Art here. He is now Head of the Department of Dramatic Art at the University of Miami in Florida and a visiting professor this summer at the University of North Carolina in the first term and the University of Virginia in the second term.

¶ This comedy of the Great Smokies came out of his experience as a graduate student in Social Science in 1934 when he was dispatched by the Emergency Relief Administration to remote Graham County to investigate the needs of some two hundred mountain families on relief there. During his four-months' stay in Robbinsville, the county seat, he traveled hundreds of miles over rough mountain roads, little more than trails, to tiny neighborhoods: Stecoah, Japan (pronounced Jay-pan), Tuskegee, Welch's Cove, Cable Cove, and Little Snow Bird. In this comedy, as in his former Smoky Mountain comedies, *Wash Carver's Mouse Trap* and *These Doggone Elections*, the young playwright cherishes the homespun ways and wit of the mountain people in their colorful vernacular.

SMOKY MOUNTAIN FOLK

¶ "I BECAME PRETTY WELL acquainted with the mountain people," he writes, "and in return for their patience in answering good naturedly the endless questions called for in the investigation blanks, I listened sympathetically to their woes. I found them, on the whole, the most interesting people I ever met. Their isolation from twentieth century ways made them so—perhaps I should say, left them so. For they are essentially like their pioneer forbears who pushed into the mountain fastnesses more than a hundred years ago. They still cherish the vanishing American frontier. To a 'fur-riner', such as I, their life seemed hard and barren.—Oh, there was plenty of excitement, all right, but it was of the Wild West Show variety. Two of my clients were brutally murdered. The election of county officers was an incredible story of bribery and fraud, showered with drunkenness and fist-fights.

¶ "I came pretty near being arrested once by some enemies of 'the relief' on an incredible charge! I had been sent out to Sweetwater Church to judge a quilt contest! When I arrived I found a 'passel' of women and children huddled around the locked church door unable to get in. Nobody had a key! The nearest deacon lived a good three miles over Tulip Mountain. To make matters worse a big thunderhead which had moved in from over Tipton way began to drizzle out a cold penetrating fall rain. Since I was a member of the Emergency Relief Administration, I met the emergency the best way I knew how. With a screwdriver from my Ford I unscrewed the hasp from the door and after the grateful crowds had 'contested' and gone, I carefully replaced it. The next morning on my arrival at the courthouse I was greeted by the red-nosed sheriff. 'What'n fire you been up to, son? I got a warrant here for your arrest.' I thought the good-natured Irishman was up to his usual practical joke, but his face was cold sober and quite serious. The charge—church-breaking! Obviously I had been 'framed' by some enemies of 'the relief.'

¶ "And once at a square dance I was knocked almost senseless from behind by a drunk who thought I was paying too much attention to his girl. For several days after that attack I lived in mortal fear of being ambushed, for word had got back that he was 'out to get me.'

¶ "But this rough stuff is only a small part of the picture. There were plenty of good times, and I found the people on the whole as happy a lot as one could find anywhere."

The Characters

NOEY BIRCHFIELD.....	Cy Edson
CINDY ("MAW") BIRCHFIELD, his wife.....	Zelda Pemberton
PAP BIRCHFIELD, his father.....	William Chichester
MAZIE BIRCHFIELD, his 18-year-old daughter.....	Jennie Martin
BUCK BIRCHFIELD, his 9-year-old son.....	Sam McCauley
CLIFF TURNER, Mazie's beau.....	Charles Tyner
SHAD BEASLEY, Noey's neighbor.....	Sanford Reece
LUCILE	Edith Furr
SADIE	Florence Busby
DIKE	Robert Wherry, Sr.
BABE	Gladys Meyers
DOCTOR SLATER	Frank Durham
A MOTHER	Katherine Gaston
BOBBY	Robert Wherry, Jr.
MARIE	Carrie Jean Wherry
JANET	Gloria Mae Wherry
SALLY	Dorothy Dashiell

SCENE: Cable Cove, a remote (almost isolated) community in Western North Carolina. Noey Birchfield's combination living-and-dining room.

TIME: Act I: Suppertime on a night in late October.

Act II: Ten o'clock on the morning of the Fourth of July nine months later.

Act III: Eight o'clock the same evening.

MOUNTAIN MUSIC

¶ THE CHATHAM COUNTY RAMBLERS STRING BAND, Boss Hill, Manager. A. G. Wilson, violin. Hyden Clark, banjo. John Robert Sturdivant, guitar. Edwin Norwood, guitar.

FOR THIS PRODUCTION

¶ Assistant to the Director: Lena Mae Scott. Stage Manager: Margaret Haygood; Assistant, Terrell Everett. Lighting: Wayne Bowman; Assistant, Mary Wilburn. Sound: Judith Horn and Bob Kohl. Properties: Mary Stine and Hilda Heatwole. Make-Up: Velma Carpenter and Anna Bell Dennis. Costuming: Jennie Martin. Technicians: Mary Gillis, Elsie Nunn, Evelyn VanLandingham, Wynette Phillips, Mary Shaw.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

¶ The setting designed by the author and executed by members of the summer course in Staging Methods.

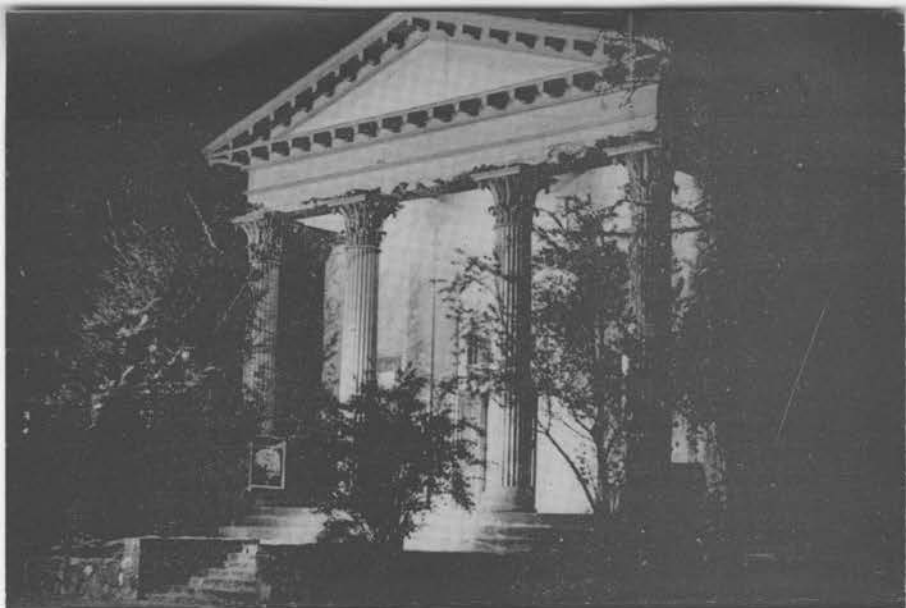
¶ We wish to thank H. E. Thompson, George Bason, The Intimate Bookshop, and Rogers Furniture Company, 318 Chapel Hill Street, Durham, North Carolina for the loan of properties and furniture.

¶ The poster and playbill designs by Robert Alan Koch.

¶ The giant fan installed for your comfort by Nicholson, Inc. of Durham.

THE PLAYMAKERS STAFF

Paul Green.....	Playwright and Literary Adviser
Samuel Selden.....	Associate Director
Elmer Hall.....	Technical Director
John W. Parker.....	Assistant Director and Business Manager
Earl Wynn.....	Assistant Director
Ora Mae Davis.....	Director of Costuming
Irene Smart.....	Assistant Director of Costuming
Wooten-Moulton.....	Photographers



The home of The Carolina Playmakers. The first theatre building in America to be dedicated to the making of its own native drama.

CABLE COVE

❑ Of the Cable Cove folk the playwright says: "One of my pleasantest memories is Cable Cove, where I spent many interesting days and nights. To get back into 'the Cable Cove' you had to leave your car way down the river at Tuskegee and climb two steep miles to Red Hog Gap, where you could see the tiny neighborhood of farmsteads scattered among the patchwork fields several miles below. The cove snugs in a pocket of high mountains, one side of the horseshoe opening onto the Little Tennessee River. All the needs of the dozen families back there must be sledded or toted in over the Red Hog or Yaller Crick gap trails.

❑ "Noey Birchfield, the leader of the little community, had the finest home, so when I went over the mountain, I always stayed with him. Noey always talked about getting the CCC boys to build one of their 'scenery roads' back into the cove and asked me to use my influence to that end.

❑ "The Aluminum Company of America, which owns two huge power lakes in Graham County, was trying to buy up land for a third lake. This third lake would have shut away the folks of Cable Cove even further from the outside world, but the money the power company offered for their land glittered brightly. I often wondered what would happen if the folks I lived with back in Cable Cove really got their road and the longed-for 'blessings' of civilization. And so the play—*Smoky Mountain Road*."



❑ MAZIE: You know Grandpap, it's a funny thing . . . how happy Pa was workin' to git the road an' dreamin' about the time it'd git here. An' now it's here an' he ain't happy at all. . . .

❑ GRANDPAP: It's all accordin' to what ye dream, child. Now Noey never could see that nothin' but good 'u'd come o' this road. He never onc't stopp'd to think about the noise an' the dust an' the trash that 'u'd come 'long with it. That sled trail over the mountain was awful unhandy. It was rough an' slow. 'Twarn't smooth an' easy like the road. But it was peaceful an' sure.—From Act II of *Smoky Mountain Road*.