

My memoir consists of two recorded oral history interviews, both available on the net:

<https://kentuckyoralhistory.org/ark:/16417/xt7dr785kg0d> [1991]

<https://nunncenter.net/legaciesofappalshop/items/show/5> [2015]

The Interview Summary of the first says:

Richard Kirby was born in Washington, D.C. and feels that he grew up “between worlds.” He explains that his father served in the navy during World War Two, and although the family eventually settled in New York City, his extended family lived in rural Kentucky. Kirby recalls visiting his grandparents in Cynthiana, Kentucky during the summer and on holidays.

Kirby attended Yale and graduated with a degree in architecture. After hearing about the War on Poverty on the news, he went to Letcher County with a group of students to do design and planning work. He explains that in 1967 he was hired by the Conservation Association to find out about strip mining in the area. Then in 1968 he became an Appalachian Volunteer (AV) based in Whitesburg, Kentucky and he describes his work which included researching broad form deeds in the region. Later Kirby went to law school, only to return to eastern Kentucky to help organize the Mountain Legal Rights Association.

Although Kirby was only employed by the Appalachian Volunteers for one summer, he provides insights into the atmosphere of the region through his involvement with the Mountain Legal Rights Association, his career as a traveling folk musician, and his eventual commitment to live and work in the region. Kirby describes the involvement of the AVs in anti-war protests and anti-strip mining activities. He discusses how interests of the communities came into conflict with the interests of the organizers, and he talks about the influence of Highlander and the growing regional consciousness of the 1960s.

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And here is the Table of Contents for the second:

00:00:00 - Introduction / Education

00:12:13 - Musical background

00:28:31 - Culture clash between Kentucky and New York / Beginning to focus on music

00:48:18 - Relationship with Harry Caudill

00:54:13 - Media and the "War on Poverty" / Activism and moving away from law

01:09:29 - First album and black lung activism

01:23:07 - Appalshop, Inc.

01:39:01 - The Addie Graham recording

01:51:19 - "Our Own Music" and cultural extraction

02:18:24 - Explaining Appalshop