

Ways With Words

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Burgess

Winzenried

Morrison

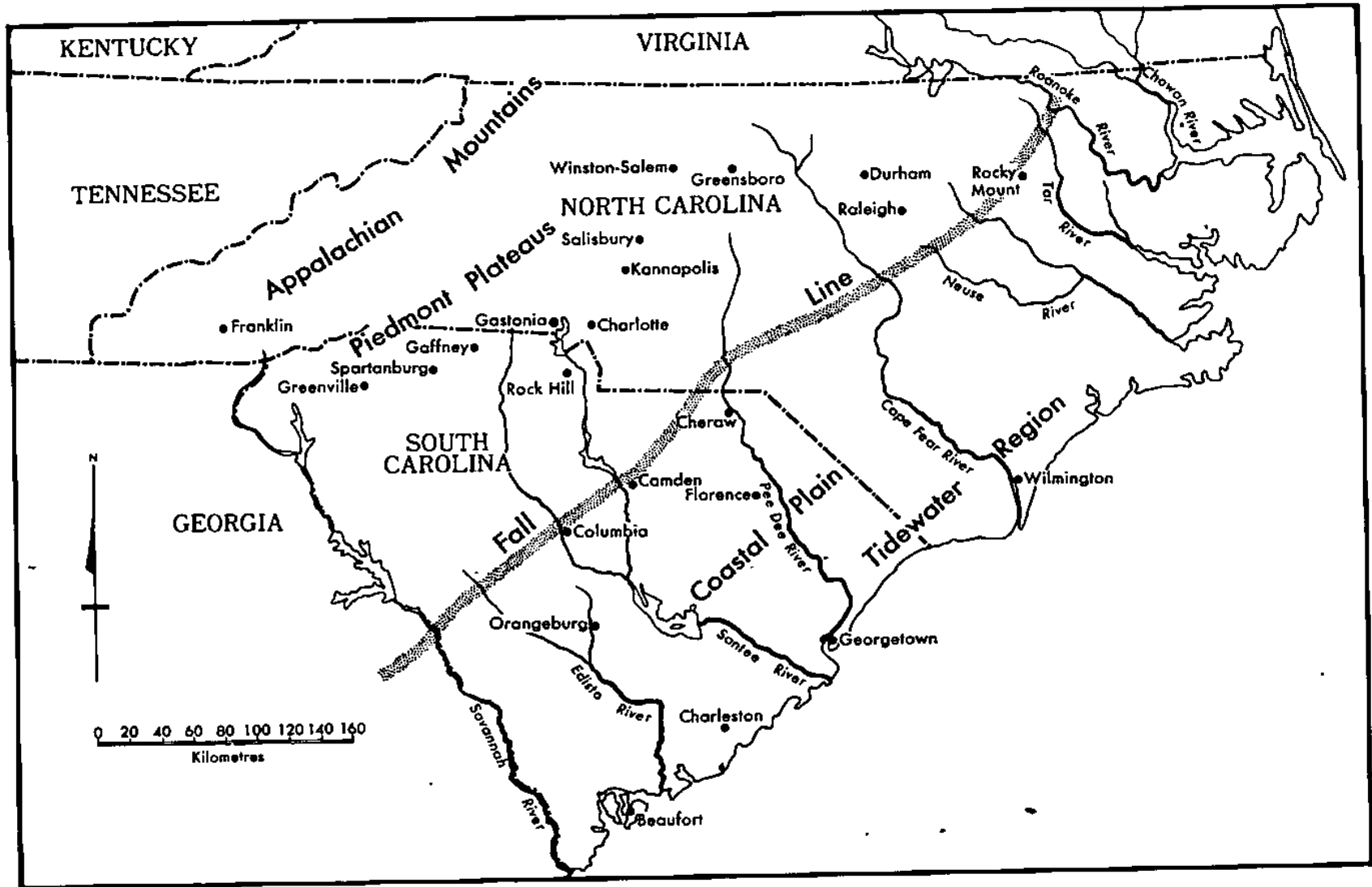
Verdini

Setting the Stage

The History of the Mill

- Before the Civil war Piedmont area citizens focused on agriculture and farming rather than manufacturing
- 1880's The Cotton-Mill Campaign
- By 1930s more than 200 textile mills
- The change of the 40s and 50's
- Early conflict between the mainstream and the local

The Piedmont Carolinas



Map 1. The Piedmont Carolinas

Racial Breakdown

- Piedmont settled by individuals of a mix of German, English, Welsh, Scottish, French Huguenot, and Scotch-Irish descent
- African Americans around the 1920's inextricably tied to land because of tenant farming or small land ownership and farming
 - o Shift work and separate communities
- Civil Rights Movement and Desegregation

The Townspeople

- “Old timers vs. new comers,” old timers not opposed to change
- Desire for education for their children and good schools
- Mothers typically quit their jobs and do not return until kids are in kindergarten
- The townspeople gather their culture from mainstream media and ideas
- Disconnect between townspeople and Roadville/Trackton residents (micro vs. macro)

Roadville

- Conflict of “Old Timers” and “Young Folks”
 - Generational relationship with the mills
- Gender, schools, and sex-segregated activities
- Living standard
- Complex attitudes of adults and children towards school and education
- Conflict of the local community and the town

Early Community Life

- Everyone prepares for the baby's arrival - baby has their own space, own toys
- The child is kept to a schedule and interacts with a lesser degree of the community
- The child goes by their given name or a related nick name
- Adults and older children give feedback to the child about noises and ask for clarification
 - As the child gets older, adults correct simple phrases into polite or more complicated ones
 - Corrections based on the answers adults expect to get

Oral Traditions

- “Stories”
 - What they are: “stories recount an actual event either witnessed by others or previously told in the presence of others” (149)
 - What it means: “In telling a story, an individual shows that he belongs to the group: he knows about either himself or the subject of the story, and he understands the norms which were broken by the story’s central character” (150-151)
 - The elements of a good story
 - Gendered “Story” Topics
 - Children’s Stories
 - In the community
 - In school

Literature Traditions

- Note taking a common form of writing
- Letter writing another, more uncommon, form of writing tradition
 - Conversation written down
- Gender differences: Men rarely write, women do the majority of writing
- Reading disconnect: Reading is highly encouraged, but rarely followed through on
- General dislike of reading aloud

Trackton

- The Respectables and the No-Counts
- Gender
 - Familial relations and the line of allegiance
- The common attitude is that Trackton is a transitory place; the majority of the people in the community
- Believe that their stay in Trackton is temporary
- The conflict of the town and local community
- Attitudes toward school and education


Early Community Life

- The baby is integrated into community life as is
- A single child may go by up to 8 names and nick names
- Young boys are expected to challenge behaviors when teased or mocked by adults, older men
- Young girls watch this but do not 'perform'
- Phrases will get repeated and then used to mean a variety of different emotions and feelings
 - More value on tone and nonverbal body language

Oral Traditions

- “Talkin Junk”
- Jealousies and rivalries
- Children “Talkin Junk”
 - “performance” of stories
 - ritualized insults
- Boys
 - Verses and two-line insults
- Girls
 - Playsongs

Literature Traditions

- Reading is a public, social tradition
 - Reading alone is frowned upon
- Reading literature is an interpretive process
- “Read to learn” before “learn to read” 
- Reading for confirmation
- Trackton towns members write mainly for memory purposes
- More gender differences: men still don't write, women do
- Church incorporates expressive forms of literature tradition

Educational Impact

- Teachers use of “meta learning”
- Using ethnography to help different teaching methods in the classroom
- Addressing learning deficiencies for students who fall behind
- Written during a culture shift - what is the impact of this?
- Changes how teachers can be more effective in the classroom

Evaluations by Teachers

Black

White

SOCIAL BEHAVIORS

“verbally & physically aggressive”

“quiet, laconic”

“disrespectful”

“respectful”

“never says he’s sorry”

“know how to let me know they’re sorry even if they don’t always say so”

“girls are more aggressive than boys – especially by 5th grade [ages 11–12]; they’re even sexually aggressive toward the boys at that age!”

“girls are always willing to step back and let boys speak out, take turns first, etc.”

“leaders shift all the time; respect for their classmates never seems to be based on something I can identify”

“neither boys nor girls want to step out and take the initiative on anything”

“has no respect for private property; thinks anything in the class ‘belongs’ to him”

“often shy about sharing; wants ‘one of her own’”

Scholarly Discussion

- Shuman points out and commends Heath for being able to properly assess the communication differences, and is non-evaluative in her book (498).
- Battistelli discusses how *Ways With Words* acts as spring board for the discussion of how rural students may need a different style of teaching to benefit them in the most impactful way (1-2).

Assumptions!

- Assumption 1: You can divide learning through racial differences - that is disproved. It's not just the location, it's a host of factors
- Assumption 2: Students from Trackton would have a difficult time adjusting to the structure and static meaning of words within a classroom. However, Roadville students also exhibit difficulty adjusting to classical teaching structures
- Assumption 3: Current readers may assume classical education is the best way to teach students

Works Cited

Shuman, Amy. Rev. of *Ways with Words: Language, Life and Work in Communities and Classrooms*. JSTOR. Sept. 1984: 498. Print.

Battistelli, Paula W. "Examining Rurality in Composition, Rhetoric, and Literacy Fields." *Enculturation*. George Mason, n.d. Web. 12 Nov. 2013.