

Roots & Hollers, 2011

A documentary by Thomas Gorman & Patrick Kollman

Abstract:

Roots & Hollers uncovers the wild American ginseng trade, revealing a unique intersection between Asia and rural America. Legendary in Asia for its healing powers, ginseng helps sustain the livelihoods of thousands in Appalachia. A single root can sell for thousands of dollars at auction. Shot on-location in the mountains of Kentucky and West Virginia, this student documentary follows two Kentuckians as they continue the "sang" tradition handed down from their grandfathers. The men hope to crack the lucrative Asian market, selling directly to a Korean ginseng buyer. Through stories from ginseng diggers and dealers the audience will understand the growing threats facing ginseng culture as strip-mining and suburbanization permanently alters the Appalachian ecosystem.

Master's Project Source List

Books:

Johannsen, Kristin. 2006. *Ginseng Dreams: The Secret World of America's Most Valuable Plant*. The University Press of Kentucky.

Symons, Van Jay. 1981. *Ch'ing Ginseng Management: Ch'ing Monopolies in Microcosm*. Arizona State University.

Taylor, David. 2006. *Ginseng, the Divine Root*. Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill.

Articles:

Bilger, Burkhard. "Wild Sang". *The New Yorker*, July 15, 2002.

Hufford, Mary, 2004 "Knowing Ginseng: The Social Life of an Appalachian Root." *Cahiers de Litterature Orale*. 53-54: 265-92.

Ibid., 2003 "Reclaiming the Commons: Narratives of Progress, Preservation, and Ginseng." *Culture, Environment, and Conservation in the Appalachian South*, ed. Benita J. Howell. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Kim, Seonmin, 2006. "Borders and Crossings: Trade, Diplomacy and Ginseng between Qing China and Choson Korea." Dissertation (Ph.D) Duke University.

Robbins, Christopher, 1998. "American Ginseng: The Root of North America's Medicinal Herb Trade." TRAFFIC North America, Washington DC.

Interviews:

Robin Black, West Virginia Division of Forestry, Charleston, WV

Norse Bowlen, ginseng digger, Wise, VA

Terry Cable, ginseng digger, Jenkins, KY

Michael Chung, ginseng dealer, San Francisco, CA

Burk Chung, ginseng dealer, San Francisco, CA

Randy Halstead, ginseng dealer, Charleston, WV

Kenzie Ison, ginseng dealer, Slemp, KY

Tony Ison, ginseng dealer, Slemp, KY

James McGraw, Professor of Biology, West Virginia University,
Morgantown, WV

Jeremy Tackett, ginseng digger, Jenkins, KY

David Taylor, author, Washington, DC

Archival Sources

Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, University of California
at Berkeley

Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University

David Rumsey Map Collection, www.davidrumsey.com