

# Old Cove Press



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*For Immediate Release*

***Ancient Creek* by Kentucky Author Gurney Norman  
Released by Old Cove Press**

**Lexington, Kentucky - February 2013** - Old Cove Press is pleased to announce the publication of *Ancient Creek: A Folktale* by Kentucky author Gurney Norman. Recorded as a spoken-word album by Appalshop in 1975, the story appears in book form for the first time. The book features Norman's 70-page folktale and essays about *Ancient Creek* by authors Annalucia Accardo, Dee Davis, Kevin I. Eyster and Jim Wayne Miller. A digitally remastered CD of the 1975 reading is being released by Appalshop's June Appal Recordings concurrently with the book. The book and CD feature cover art by Kentucky artist Pam Oldfield Meade.

Norman's novella-length folktale tells the story of resistance among "the folks" against an evil King. The tale describes a mythic "hill domain" that has been exploited by the forces of a colonizing empire. The hero Jack, familiar from the Jack tale tradition, is the fugitive leader of the people's revolt and the nemesis of the King. Wounded survivors of the revolution find solace and healing on Ancient Creek where old Aunt Haze is the guiding spirit. Told in mock-heroic language, *Ancient Creek* employs satire, comic irony, regional speech and "the voice of a storyteller" as it moves toward its hopeful conclusion.

"*Ancient Creek* is an idea as well as a physical place in the Hill Domain that has not been spoiled by humans," says Norman. "It is so pure, so far back in the mountains, it does not appear on the King's maps. Ancient Creek refers to the 'old stream'. It's an actual stream but also a river of words, a stream of consciousness that bears the old legends and lore and the old wisdom. There are forces in the world that want to destroy that river, to destroy all native and natural life, bring it under control for whatever profit that may be in it. That is what the resistance is about."

*-continued-*

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Gurney Norman is Associate Professor of English and Director of Creative Writing at the University of Kentucky. He is the author of the folktale *Ancient Creek*, the novel *Divine Right's Trip*, and *Kinfolks*, a collection of short stories. He is co-editor of *Back Talk: Confronting Appalachian Stereotypes* and *An American Vein: Critical Readings in Appalachian Literature*. Norman is widely recognized for his writing, teaching and cultural work in the Appalachian region. He was appointed Kentucky Poet Laureate (2009-2010). In 2011, he was awarded a Doctor of Humane Letters by Berea College.

Born in Grundy, Virginia, in 1937, Norman lived much of his childhood in Letcher and Perry counties in eastern Kentucky, and in Lee County in southwest Virginia. He attended the University of Kentucky where he majored in Journalism and English. He began his professional writing career as a reporter for the *Hazard Herald* newspaper. After studying Creative Writing at Stanford University in 1960-61, he lived in California for several years before returning to Kentucky to join the University of Kentucky faculty as an English professor, a position he has held for 33 years.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Norman wrote and narrated three documentaries for Kentucky Educational Television on Kentucky history, landscape and culture. "Time on the River" explores the Kentucky River Valley. "From This Valley" examines the literary and cultural heritage of the Big Sandy River Valley. "Wilderness Road" retraces Daniel Boone's route through Cumberland Gap into Kentucky in 1775.

In 1990, Appalshop produced a dramatic film based on his story "Fat Monroe." Directed by Andrew Garrison, the production starred Ned Beatty and was featured at the 1990 New York Film Festival. Garrison completed two other films based on Norman's work, "Maxine" and "Night Ride," which were featured at the Sundance Film Festival in 1994. In addition to his writing, editing and teaching at the University of Kentucky, Norman carries on an active service role in Kentucky and surrounding states as an advisor to community-based arts groups. He is a frequent presenter at colleges and universities and educational conferences. He enjoys visiting small rural schools where Kentucky literature and culture are under discussion.

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