

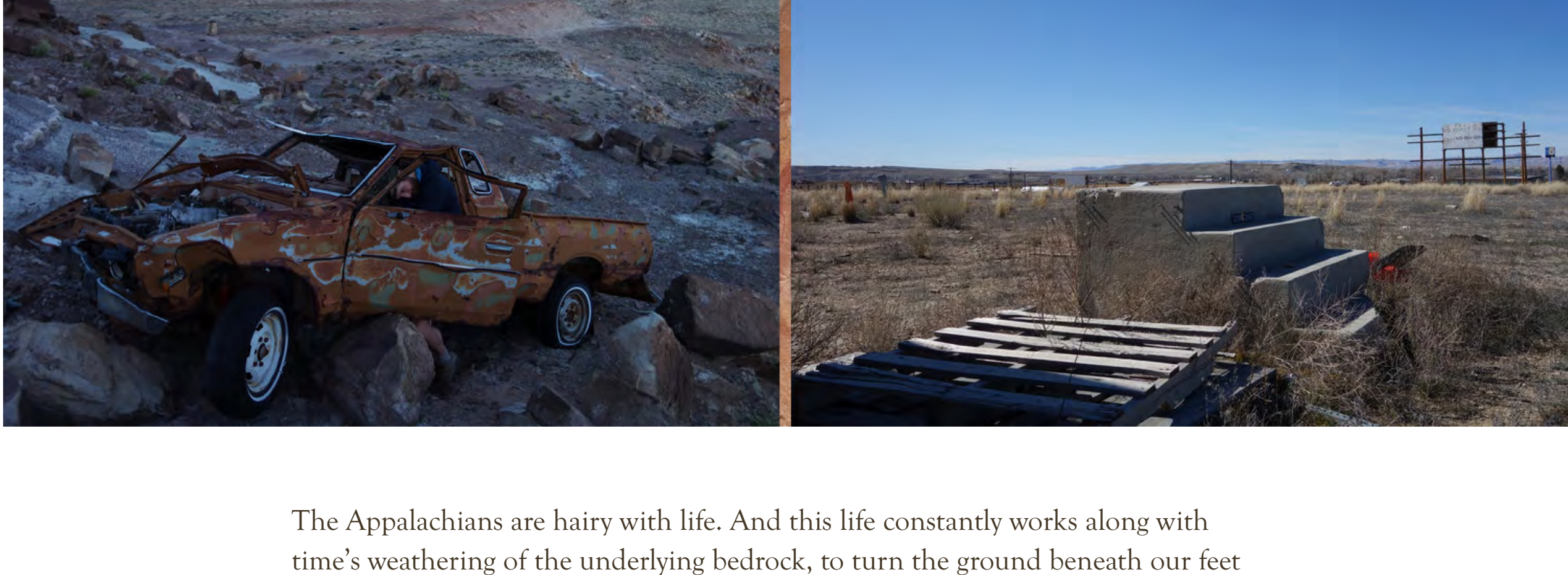
# Walker Tufts

Frontier Fellowship

Frontier Fellow February 2016

[Walker's website](#)

Walker Tufts uses writing, art, and dialogue to explore collaboration, institutional forms, and pedagogy. Walker served as archivist and research librarian at Mildred's Lane, and public liaison for the international collective Spurse. His practice explores institution's capacity for propagation, lifestyle practice, and creative research. He worked as Artistic Director and Manager of Blue Nile Ethiopian Cuisine. Walker holds a MA in Studio Art from James Madison University.



The Appalachians are hairy with life. And this life constantly works along with time's weathering of the underlying bedrock, to turn the ground beneath our feet into soil. Plants & microorganisms blanket this rich matter, binding it with roots, and eventually rotting it richer.



In the desert there is no biological camouflage teeming over the surface and its harder to ignore time, written in clear lines along the horizon.

My first weekend in Green River I went out to watch a cow, strung from a bulldozer's bucket, get slaughtered. We got there a bit late, the cow, already killed and hung had its uppermost two legs stripped of hide. As we watched and chatted, short work was made of the remaining hide. Later research would reveal that the cow's head was regularly made, along with pig's feet, into mock turtle soup. This was on a railroad restaurant menu in Colorado, that likely served similar food to that found in the Palmer House before the advent of the dining car. Once the head and hide were removed, an electric hand saw was used to split the cow lengthwise, along the spine. Now a truck, the bed tarped and canvassed was backed under the cow, once the carcass was in position, the two halves are cut in half, rendering the parts manageable for a strong person, with a bit of manhandling. The meat is aged in big pieces and then carved up into steaks and such because it develops a film as it ages that must be removed for best tasting meat.

Green River exists because it is a fordable point, in the right conditions not a hard swim for a horse or ox. I spent the first couple weeks of my time walking the river's length, and my fordable point was in a molasses cookie recipe from a backburnered project of Jo Anne Chandler's and an eighth grader's essay.

"Along with the narrow gage [sic] railroad came the Chinese. These Chinese worked on the section on the narrow gage [sic] railroad. The little houses built on the south of the railroad tracks form what is known as Chinatown...The first restaurant was owned by a Chinaman. During this time, the Chinese made a lot of liquor."

Lawrence 'Larry' Harris assembled his second place eighth grade history essay from his father's memories in 1935.

South of the tracks and east of the hill once peppered with dugouts is the former site of the Palmer House. Scattered across the sand are bits of patterned and colored glass, fragments of china, mystery materials fused together by fire, and a whole inventory of discarded cans, bottle caps and other stuff. Beneath our feet lie answers to almost endless questions if we only knew to ask them. One of these questions, unanswered in living memory or the myriad papers in the Green River Archives is the name of that first restaurant or the Chinese man who owned it. In the 1880 Census for the area, Blake (Green River's name at the time) is not mentioned and the people listed for this part of Emery County are all white. The 1890 Census was burned to make room on overfull shelves. By the 1900 Census there is one Chinese man and eleven Japanese people in Elgin and Green River and they are all railroad laborers, unlikely to own a restaurant.

This sentence from Larry Harris' essay is the only record of this restaurant we could find in the Green River Archives. This first restaurant is remembered only in a single sentence, at least as the first restaurant. Other sentences mention a time when the town had a single restaurant. This restaurant, without a name, or an owner, highlights how easily history is lost to us. Generally we have better memories of businesses, especially once taxes and licenses are imposed. What we have very little evidence of is the daily lives of the people living in Green River.



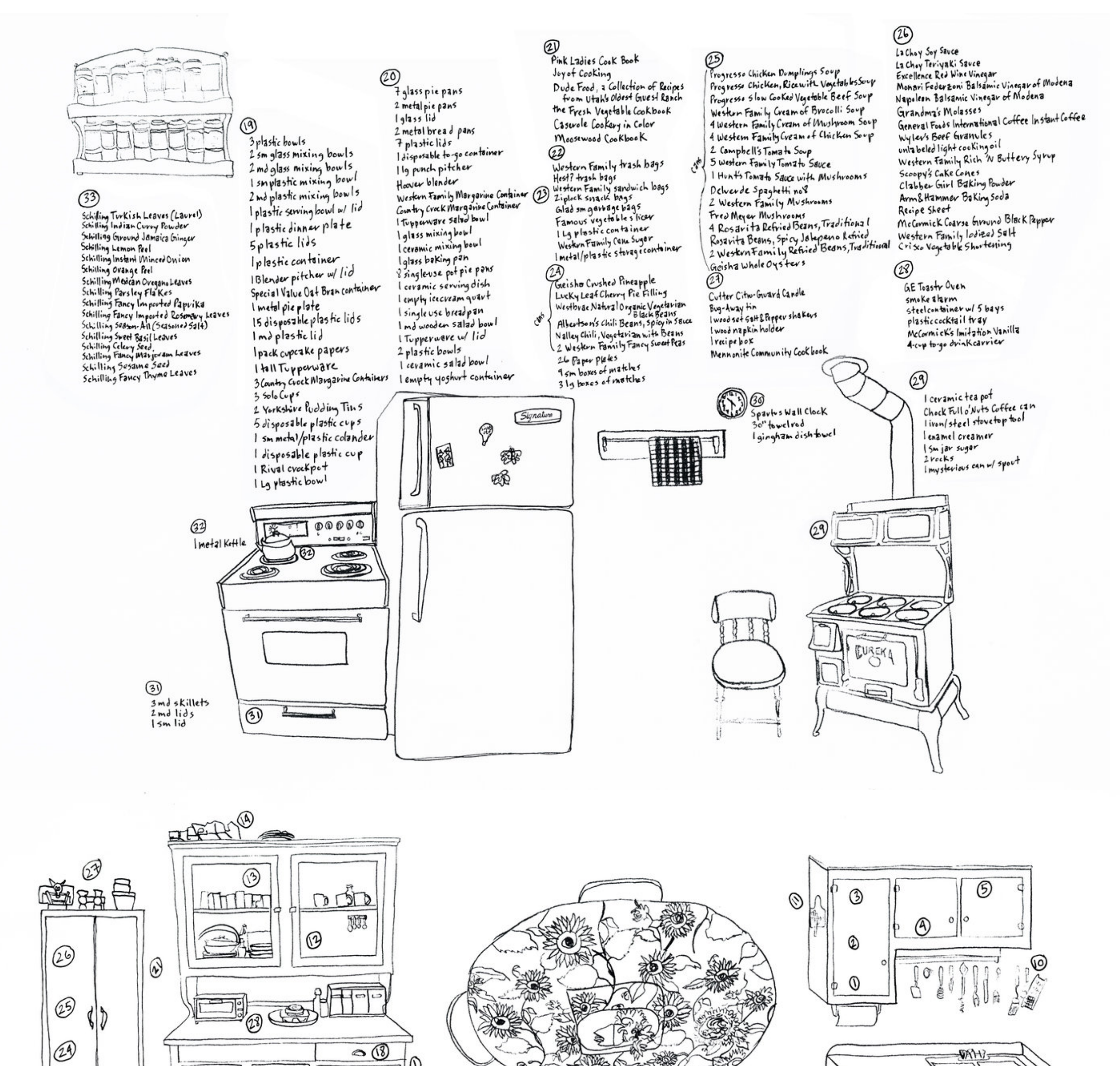
In 1909, a couple decades after that first restaurant likely closed, Alvaro D. Beebe and Sarah Ann Hossler Beebe moved to Green River. We know little about Sarah's kitchen or the time she spent in it, but we do have her recipe for molasses cookies. Sarah taught Effie May Beebe Hastings how to make these cookies, and Effie May taught Gladys May who still makes them to this day. Effie May and her husband Howard J. Hastings bought Effie's parent's ranch in 1927. The ranch is still in use, but the house has been nearly unoccupied since Howard and Effie passed away in 1980.



While I was in Green River I inventoried the contents of this historic kitchen. I interviewed Gladys May who told me that Effie Beebe had used the wood stove in the kitchen right up until 1980 (the ranch didn't have electricity until 1941). Gladys believes the electric stove was added by a relative who lived in the house briefly.



Jo Anne and I cleaned the house a bit and noticed a leak in the south-facing roof. I worked with Epicenter and student volunteers from California College of the Arts to replace it.



We've lost the history of the first restaurant, but at least we can eat molasses cookies.