



Going Over Home

A Search for Rural Justice
in an Unsettled Land

Charles D. Thompson

Rural Sociology / Social Justice / Farm Economics

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One man's search for community, equality, and tradition in Appalachia

Author and documentarian Charles Thompson's Going Over Home unpacks our country's agricultural myths while addressing the history of racism and wealth inequality and how it affects our nation's rural places and their people.

Charles D. Thompson, Jr. was born in southwestern Virginia to an extended family of small farmers. Growing up he witnessed the demise of every farm in his family, a history all too familiar to so many Americans.

“Every named place, every piece of land that served as a repository of our stories told to me by relatives, and every farm I had ever played or worked on as a child, was dying,” Thompson said. “Before I had ever been a farm owner I, too, had experienced a farm crisis. I was grieving.”

Over the course of his own life of farming, organizing, teaching, and activism, his family's home places have been his constant inspiration. Their losses have also helped define him, inspiring him to engage with rural struggles elsewhere, from the US coalfields to small coffee farms in Guatemala, fighting for social justice alongside others. In *Going Over Home*, Thompson shares revelations and reflections from his experiences—from hauling cattle with his grandfather to organizing community gardens in the coal camps of eastern Kentucky, from fighting racial disparities of white and Black landownership in the South to recent work with migrant farm workers from Latin America.

“The great challenge before us,” Thompson writes, “whether in Appalachia, the rural South, or any place in the world, is to plant seeds of hope and change in soil that has been soured by anger and division. Our hope lies in embracing rural places as our homes, and treating them as beloved gardens we tend and are inspired by.”

Author Availability: North Carolina, by phone or arrangement.

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Charles D. Thompson, Jr., is the author, editor, and director of more than a dozen books and documentaries focusing on rural life, including his latest film, *Homeplace Under Fire*, concerning the thirty-year history of farm advocacy as supported by Willie Nelson and others. Thompson is the Professor of the Practice of Cultural Anthropology and Documentary Studies at Duke University.

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