

Jamie Ross

As a producer, writer, interviewer and editor, Jamie Ross has played an integral part in the James Agee Film Project for over twenty-five years. Her talent for sparking new ideas and her ability to raise funds to pursue them have been invaluable assets to our films.

Jamie Ross began her work with the JAFP in 1981 when she edited the fifty-five minute version of AGEE, an academy award nominated feature biography of the writer James Agee. She next assisted with editing and production for [The Electric Valley](#), a history of the Tennessee Valley Authority.

While the director, Ross Spears, was completing the final production of *The Electric Valley*, Jamie Ross began research and fundraising for what was to become [Long Shadows](#), a film on the legacy of the Civil War. *Long Shadows* explores the way the American Civil War has shaped our national story and examines the way it continues to influence many of our ideas about who we are as a people.

As the primary writer, Jamie Ross created the initial script treatment for the production and developed the themes explored throughout the story. From her research and work with scholars such as Eric Foner and Robert Penn Warren, she wrote the film's final script. As associate producer, Jamie Ross raised the funding for the film by forging a network of eleven state humanities committees. Additional funding was provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Upon completing *Long Shadows*, Jamie Ross moved from Charlottesville to New Orleans where she pursued graduate work in English and Media Arts. While there, she also taught at the Louise S. McGehee School and was an active member of The Feminist Literary Circle.

While Ross Spears was completing [To Render a Life](#), he once again approached Jamie Ross to lay the groundwork for a new work, [Tell About the South](#), a three part series on the history of modern Southern Literature. Jamie Ross performed a crucial role in raising the initial funding for the series and also by editing and reviewing scripts as the film progressed. In addition, she directed one of the key film shoots and conducted the interview with author, Pat Conroy.

As he headed toward post-production for *Tell About the South*, Ross Spears approached Jamie Ross with the idea of collaborating on an Appalachian history series which would include the geologic birth of the mountains. The initial idea was to do a traditional social and political history of the region.

Jamie Ross spent the next two years exploring archives and traveling through the mountains gathering information for a new series which would bring the rich and grand story of the Appalachian region to the public. The more she researched, the more she realized that the only way to weave the many threads of the Appalachian story together would be to make the mountains the main character. Ross Spears agreed, and they began what was to become the first environmental history series of any region ever on film—[APPALACHIA: A History of Mountains and People](#).

Jamie Ross has a long and intimate history in the mountains. Her roots in the region go back thousands of years through her Catawba and Miami ancestors. She has hiked hundreds of miles along its peaks, worked for eight years in one of its rural school systems, taught in its community colleges and biked thousands of miles of its back roads. She has brought this passion for the region as well as her many years experience as a researcher and filmmaker to

the making of *APPALACHIA* and the result is as one viewer put it: "pure poetry."

APPALACHIA: A History of Mountains and People is a groundbreaking environmental history of one of the most biologically diverse and most widely misunderstood regions of the world. Narrated by Sissy Spacek, this four part series for PBS explores the compelling story of how landscape shapes human cultures and, in turn, how humans shape the land — the dynamic interaction of natural and human history. *APPALACHIA* provides a window onto the defining question of our age: how to use the land to provide for the needs of today and at the same time preserve it for the future.