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PASS THE WORD
A PROJECT OF THE KENTUCKY ORAL HISTORY COMMISSION

**CIVIL WAR TO CIVIL RIGHTS:
JAMES STILL (WRITER, EDUCATOR)**



Photo courtesy of the Hindman Settlement School.

KNOTT COUNTY — James Still was a novelist, poet and folklorist, who spent most of his life in Knott County, Ky. Born in Alabama, educated in Tennessee and a World War II veteran, Still drew from his life experiences in his writing.

His most famous novel, "River of Earth," depicts change in Appalachian coal country as the Banbridge family attempts to survive on the land and in the mines.

The themes of "River of Earth" include family life, social change and pride as Still

weaves together narrative and social justice lessons. Still's novel won the Southern Author's Award in 1940 and continues to be a classic of Kentucky literature.

Still wrote poetry collections, a children's book and taught literature at Morehead State University. He was also a volunteer librarian at the Hindman Settlement School and a leader of the Morehead Writers Workshop. Still died in 2001 at his home along Dead Mare Branch at the age of 94.

The Kentucky Oral History Commission (KOHC), administered by the Kentucky Historical Society, is dedicated to supporting documentation of Kentucky's rich history along with the issues confronting its people. Pass the Word (passtheword.khs.gov) is an online database from the KOHC that facilitates discovery of more than 30,000 oral history interviews from Kentuckians in all 120 counties, located in more than 100 repositories across Kentucky.

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