Cultural Memory and Heirloom Seeds: The Foundation of Local Food Systems

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“The genetic variation existing among the species, breeds, cultivars and individuals of animal, plant, and microbial species that have been domesticated, often including their immediate wild relatives.”

(Heywood 1995:6)
Traditional Hopi Farmer Dan Evehema
Vavilov's Eight Centers of Crop Origin
Red Ripper Crowder Peas
Leather Britches
Earnie Bradford & Gary Paul Nabhan
“The modern farm is all about production and how much we can make and how fast we can get it there. It ain’t about feeding the people. It’s about how fast I can fatten my pocket book up...It’s all about how fast we can grow it, how many steroids can we get in it or you know, how much ammonium nitrate it can take. It’s ridiculous.
...He just gardens. One of those fellers who still believes in the old ways, you know. And he come down through a family that done that. I mean, he’s second cousin to us, his daddy and our grandma was brother and sister and that’s all they ever done—they saved those seeds. I mean I don’t care what it was they saved those seeds, they didn’t believe in going over there and buying those seeds and they would trade seeds, you know, part of them lived down on the creek, she lived over here and another one lived down on the creek and you start getting that [a particular variety] wasn’t producing good and they’d just trade seeds amongst each other, raise it a year or two, go get it back, kept it going. He hasn’t got nothing we ain’t got because we’re all in the same family.”