

Call for Proposals

Roots and Branches: Migrations to the Lower Ohio and Mississippi Valley

Conference on the region's cultural and natural heritage

March 4-6, 2010

The Center for Delta Studies

Southern Illinois University Carbondale

The Center for Delta Studies invites scholars, genealogists, local historians, staff in government agencies, musicians, craftspeople, and others who are interested in the cultural and natural heritage of the lower Ohio and Mississippi Valley to submit proposals for workshops, posters, exhibits, performances, and demonstrations for a conference on the migrations to the lower Ohio and Mississippi Valley.

The conference focuses on migrations – the migrations of the people who populated this region from earliest human settlements to the present and the migrations of plants, animals, and diseases to and through the regions.

We seek the greatest possible interchange among the participants through organized panels, volunteered workshops, posters, exhibits, demonstrations, and performances.

Proposals for workshops, posters, and exhibits should be submitted by **January 15, 2009** to Kayeleigh Sharp sharpka@siu.edu. Registration will open in December.

The conference will cost \$50, which includes a reception, and snacks and beverages throughout the conference. Luncheons will be by subscription.

The story of the many migrations into the lower Mississippi and Ohio Valley and the nearby uplands reaches from the earliest human settlements to the present moment. Annual bird and butterfly migrations along the Mississippi Flyway give a unique rhythm to the seasons. People brought with them non-native plants, animals, and diseases for their agricultural use and as accidental by-products of their travels.

Family and regional heritage taps profound sentiments of attachment to roots, and it opens doors to the full range of human experience in the region. The story of migration involves religion, politics, history, demography, economics, anthropology, medicine, literature, art, and music. Human migrations have shaped the region's ecology for millennia, not just the past 200 years. The doors opened by a focus on migrations range from the most intimate knowledge of family roots to deeper understandings of the events, great and small, that make up world-changing, global transformations.

We invite proposals for workshops, posters, exhibits, and performances and demonstrations. Subject areas could include, but are not limited to:

Histories of specific ethnic groups in the region

(examples: Choctaw, Shawnee, French, African American, Upland Southerners, Scots, Irish, English, German, Italian, Lebanese/Syrian, Jewish, Lithuanian, Mexican, South Asian)

The industries that attracted immigrants

(examples: cotton, timbering, coal mining, horticulture and orchards, shipping, river control and swamp drainage, railroads)

Diseases and how they affected settlers and immigrants

(examples: European diseases and native peoples, malaria and the way it affected the way people in the region were viewed, yellow fever, cholera and other epidemics in family and community history)

Medicine through history

(examples: recollections of frontier cures, herbs and mineral springs, archaeological and oral historical evidence of pre-European medical practices)

Race – divisions and cultural flows

(examples: slavery, the Civil War, Reconstruction and their aftermath in family lore, exodus from the land, return migrations, memories of working the land, blending and divergence of styles in musical traditions, foodways, the Native American legacy)

The plants that people brought

(examples: crops cultivated by American Indians; naturalized European plants and pests; soil savers that escaped)

The religions people brought with them; archaeological evidence of Native religions

Gendered dimensions of migrations

Writing about the region – fiction, poetry, memoirs, histories.

Architectural styles, their origins and transformations

How Yankees and Europeans viewed the region

Musical traditions of the region

Commemorative and community celebrations

Ethnic and regional foods and their ties to heritage

Heritage in contemporary American identity

Bird and butterfly migrations

Other???

Where feasible, we will cluster posters, exhibits, performances, and demonstrations with similar themes in the same area. Workshop proposals with common topics may be merged, with permission of those proposing them.

Send proposals to Administrative Assistant Kayeleigh Sharp, sharpka@siu.edu

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS: NOVEMBER 20, 2009.

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