
**Missouri State University-West Plains
Ozarks Studies Committee
Presents**



**The Eleventh Annual Ozarks
Symposium
“Marginal Voices of the Ozarks”
September 21-23, 2017**



The Ozarks Studies Committee is sponsoring this program in partnership with a generous donation from Carol Silvey (Member of the Missouri State University Board of Governors, Missouri State University-West Plains and The West Plains Council on the Arts

The Ozarks Studies Committee Wishes to Recognize the Following Major Supporters of Past Symposiums:

Anonymous
Missouri Arts Council
Missouri Folk Arts Program
Missouri Humanities Council
Missouri State University-West Plains Office of Academic Affairs
National Endowment for the Humanities
Trillium Trust
West Plains Council on the Arts

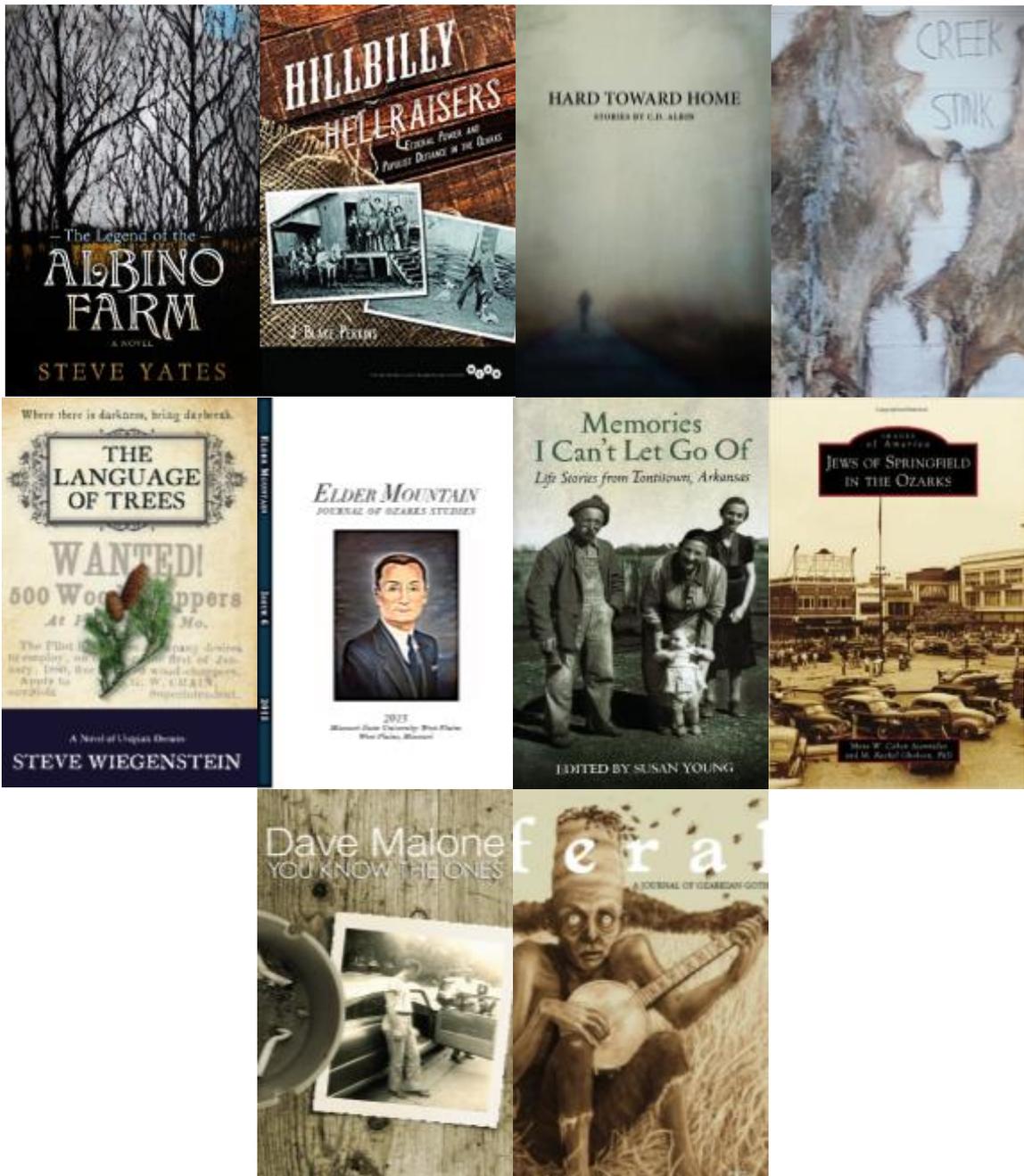
Image: Reverend Abe Taylor, African American minister in West Plains. *Ridgerunner* (No. 9, Spring 1989)

Each presenter will be allotted 30 minutes; presenters are asked to limit their prepared presentations to approximately 20 to 25 minutes to allow time for questions and discussion.

There will be an additional five minutes allotted between presentations to allow for the introduction of the next presenter and to set up necessary equipment.

Fifteen-minute breaks and 90-minute lunches are scheduled.

Please visit the authors' tables to browse the published works of our presenters.



Thursday, September 21, On the Mezzanine, West Plains Civic Center

5:00-7:00 PM **West Plains Council on the Arts**
Exhibit: Marginal Voices of the Ozarks: Images by Artists of the Region

Friday, September 22, Redbud and Gohn Rooms, West Plains Civic Center

8:00-9:00 AM **Registration**

9:00 AM **Welcome. Dr. Drew Bennett, Chancellor, Missouri State University-West Plains**

9:15 AM **Dr. Jared Phillips, Clinical Assistant Professor, University of Arkansas**
Presentation: *Not Coming Gently: Hipbilly Babies, Small Farm Voices, and Environmental Advocacy*

In the early 1970s, Crescent Dragonwagon wrote in an article for the *Ozark Access Catalog* that back to the landers coming to the Arkansas Ozarks should “come gently” and not stir too much up as they entered the region. While many opted to do so, others in the BTL community chose to continue their counterculture advocacy in addition to their homesteading life, thereby enacting longstanding change in the region. By examining the efforts this marginalized group of newcomers had in changing laws and attitudes, this paper demonstrates the power that unconnected groups can have in the hills and hollers of the Arkansas uplands. Case studies presented will focus on homebirth advocacy via BTL guerilla press publications like the *Living in the Ozarks Newsletter*; The Ozark Institute’s fight for the preservation of small farms throughout the region and beyond, seen in the publication of *Uncertain Harvest*; and how groups like the Newton County Wildlife Association sought to preserve the natural beauty of the region as they fought to ban the use of chemical pesticides like 2,4,5-D in the Ozark National Forest. The back to the landers, though small in number and often derided in popular memory, proved crucial to the region’s preservation and development as the twentieth century wound to a close.

9:45 AM **Mara W. Cohen Ioannides, D.S., Senior Instructor, English Department, Missouri State University**
Presentation: *From the Outside to the Margin: German Jewish Refugees in the Ozarks*

During the Second World War, the United States permitted Jewish refugees entry if they had a guaranteed job. Synagogues in the Ozarks did their bit to support the German Jews by hiring refugee rabbis. This paper will examine how Rabbi Ernest Jacobs and Rabbi Alfred Vise, both from Germany, adjusted to their new lives as rabbis in Springfield, MO, and Blytheville, AR, respectively. Both came from war-torn Germany fleeing the Nazis and settled permanently in the Ozarks. They went from being outcasts in their country to being part of a margin community and both situations were due to their religion. Interestingly, they both felt very much part of the larger community despite being minorities.

10:15 AM **Break**

10:30 AM **Dr. Thomas Kersen, Associate Professor of Sociology, Jackson State University**
Presentation: *The Purple People of the Ozarks*

Deep in the Arkansas Ozarks is an African American religious group called the Nahziryah Monastic Community. The Nahziryahs are better known as the Purple People because almost everything associated with them is purple in color. I first learned about this group when I was doing research about UFO enthusiasts in Eureka Springs, Arkansas. Some Purple People representatives, among the few African Americans present, drove an all-purple van and were dressed from head-to-toe in purple. One of the goals of this paper is to describe who the Purple People are and how they succeed in living in a predominately white, evangelical Christian Ozarks. According to the Fellowship of Intentional Communities (FIC), members formed the community in 1970. The color purple is important to the Nahziryah members because it denotes high vibration and the age of enlightenment. Reverend Baba Nazirmoreh K.B. Kadem is the spiritual master and he is the ultimate decision maker in the community. Members live on 103 acres and are required to turn over all assets upon joining and share in the workload. Another goal of the paper is to explore how traditional Ozark religious and cultural beliefs react to newer belief systems.

11:00 AM **Lynn Morrow, Former Director of the Local Records Preservation Program, Missouri State Archives**
Presentation: "*Refugee*" Bradford & Backcountry Radicals

The Civil War is not a subject where generalities fit nicely over geography. One would be hard pressed to find ephemera that identified Radical Republicans in south Phelps and Texas Counties. These areas are justifiably known for their wartime Southern partisanship and as a retreat for bushwhacking irregulars. Of interest are the roles of local residents who hated the idea of secession and actively worked to thwart southern sympathizers. The fact that Texas County had an assistant provost marshal, Dickerson Crow, is unknown. His friend, James Bradford, another Radical and "marginal voice" in the larger sense of the wartime Ozarks, was a figure who influenced Union military authorities at Ft. Wyman and the army's treatment of his own family.

The presentation will briefly survey war and Radical politics in Texas County, 1861-70. Houston merchant, Capt. Absalom McKinney, who had a deep economic stake in local real estate, became a leading Radical, and as James Bradford, functioned in a postwar, messy political transition that was less than constitutionally correct. Looking beyond the oft-quoted examples of mayhem and destruction by bushwhackers, the paper concludes that north of Arthur's Creek Bottom, some ten miles north of Houston on Big Piney River, and throughout the pineries and uplands into Phelps County, southern partisans did not murder or maim, or destroy the houses, industrial saw and grist mills, nor blacksmith shops of the leading pre-war commercial elites, whether they sided with the Union or Confederacy.

11:30 AM **Eric Tumminia, Adjunct Professor of English, Missouri State University-West Plains.**
Presentation: "*Paranoid People*": Live Original Songs by Creek Stink

Creek Stink will perform several original tunes inspired by people and places of Ozark County and beyond.

12:00 PM **Lunch**

1:30 PM **Steve Yates, Associate Director/Marketing Director, University Press of Mississippi**
Presentation: The Legend of the Albino Farm

Yates will read and discuss his new novel, *The Legend of the Albino Farm*, published in April 2017 by Unbridled Books. What if a thriving family farm in the Missouri Ozarks became haunted through the decades by a terrifying community legend of albinos and evil? And what if that dark lore caused the Irish Catholic family to suffer for generations an unending whirlwind of destruction from thrill seekers, partiers, bikers, and Goths? And what if that spook tale forever obscured a golden paradise?

In *The Legend of the Albino Farm*, Hettienne Sheehy is about to inherit this devouring legacy. Last child to bear a once sterling name, she is heiress to a sprawling farm in the Missouri Ozarks. During summertime childhood idylls in the late 1940s, Hettienne has foreseen all this apocalyptic fury in frightening, mystifying visions. Haunted by a whirling augury, by a hurtful local legend, and by a property that seems to doom all who would dare own it, in the end, Hettienne will risk everything to save the family she truly loves.

2:00 PM **Carla Kirchner, Assistant Professor of Language and Literature, Southwest Baptist University**
Presentation: A “whole ‘nother side of life”: Setting as Character in Daniel Woodrell’s Ozarks Novels

The Ozarks shapes and directs life in Daniel Woodrell’s *Give Us a Kiss* (1996), *Tomato Red* (1998), *The Death of Sweet Mister* (2001), *Winter’s Bone* (2006) and *The Maid’s Version* (2013). Each novel takes place in or around the town of West Table, Missouri, a setting based on Woodrell’s real-life home of West Plains. West Table is a staunchly conservative place with fundamentalist Christian roots; however, Woodrell’s works do not contain the heavy Christian themes of Wright’s *The Shepherd of the Hills*. Instead, Woodrell writes about a darker, law-breaking, drug-taking place, a place best summed up by Doyle Redmond, protagonist in Woodrell’s *Give Us a Kiss*: “Back behind the smiles and homespun manners, and classic American hokum, there’s a whole ‘nother side of life, a darker, semi-lawless, hillbilly side.” While Woodrell’s novels may not illuminate all sides of life in West Table, his plots and characters are based on fact—on neighbors, on events he witnesses from his window, and, most importantly, on the Ozarks itself. It is this regional connection that is the driving force in his novels and that makes the West Table area more than just setting. In Woodrell’s work, the region is a living, breathing entity that both punishes and comforts his characters. His Ozarks is a character with a long personal history, an insistence on the importance of family, a complicated personality, a distinctive voice, and a strong spiritual bent.

2:30 PM **Break**

2:45 PM **Diana Fox Bentele, Former Writing Instructor at Missouri State University, Ozarks Technical Community College, and Lebanon Technology & Career Center**
Presentation: Broken

Oprah Winfrey wrote “Education is the key to unlocking the world, a passport to freedom.” Google *education is the key to*, and your screen will quickly populate with entries expounding education’s vital role for success, prosperity, and equality. But how do our Ozark students and their families fit into the American education model of the 21st century? This remains one area where Ozarkers are marginalized from broader society.

Because Ozark citizens have less often been involved in policy, politics, or government, they are less prepared to advocate for their children in today's American public education system. Indeed, Ozark traditions even differ on who is a child or when it is appropriate to advocate. As students enter high school, the education system still views those students as children; Ozark families, though, often see those teenage students as adults. Therefore, what the education system calls *advocating*, Ozark families would call *meddling* that interferes with independence.

The American education system codifies criteria of, and services for, special needs students; however, Ozark families – because of their traditions – are not always well served by those policies. *Broken* is a story of the disconnect between the rules of America's education system and the traditions of Ozark families.

3:15 PM **Dr. Craig Albin, Professor of English, Missouri State University-West Plains**
Presentation: "Will and Testament"

This poetry reading consists of a sequence of eight persona poems, all in the voice of Cicero Jack, an Ozark farmer born in 1927 and still living on land bequeathed to him by his father. The speaker persists in living there alone, despite the reservations of his children and grandchildren. Cicero Jack's voice is "marginal" in part due to his age, but also due to his angle of vision, which in several ways runs counter to that of the contemporary region and even contemporary America. The poems address such issues as the environment, the symbolism of the natural world, mortality, Osage history, reflective guilt, grief, and personal legacy.

3:45 PM **Stanley Fick and Andrew Dietz, creators of *Feral***
Presentation: *Feral: A Journal of Ozarkian Gothic*

Feral: A Journal of Ozarkian Gothic is an independent literary journal which focuses on publishing short stories, poetry, and artwork exploring darker and/or weirder themes within the Ozarks. This presentation includes an introductory statement from the editors regarding the significance of its role in the symposium's theme, an expounding of the project's aim and influences, and coverage of a typical issue's contents. The presentation will include readings from selected issues, which would be accompanied by prerecorded sounds and music.

4:15 PM **Break**

5:00 PM **Keynote, Susan Young, Outreach Coordinator at the Shiloh Museum of Ozark History, Springdale, AR**
Presentation: *Good Times and Sorrow: An Oral History Project*

It wasn't a new idea. Ever since the Foxfire series of books began back in the 1970s, recording the memories of older members of a community about traditional life has become a popular way to document aspects of a region's folk culture. So when Juanita Bryant, director of the Madison County Senior Center in Huntsville, Arkansas, called me and said, "You need to come over here and interview some of these folks. They have a lot of history to share," I figured this was a chance to document life in the Ozarks a la Foxfire. Traditional Ozark life in Madison County has been a part of my own life for as long as I can remember. It was where my great-aunts and great-uncles lived in houses full of the mingled smells of wood smoke and moth balls, where my family attended Decoration each year at the Wesley cemetery, where I first learned about squirrel hunting, picking blackberries, and "the old home place." For me, an oral history project in Madison County seemed like the most natural of pursuits. And ultimately, it has been one of the most rewarding.

With Mrs. Bryant's guidance, and aided by a grant for supplies from the Northwest Arkansas Mental Health Association, I set out to record the lives of Madison County women. Here, in their own words, are their recollections. The common threads of family devotion, a strong work ethic, courage in the face of loneliness, and an abiding faith in the Lord are woven throughout these stories. Another belief that echoed from each woman was that her life was "nothing special."

Oh, how I beg to differ.

Saturday, September 23, Redbud and Gohn Rooms, West Plains Civic Center

8:00-9:00 AM Registration

9:00 AM Dr. John J. Han, Professor of English and Creative Writing, Missouri Baptist University

Presentation: *A Wind from the East: Haiku in the Ozarks*

The haiku, a globally popular poetic form that originated in seventeenth-century Japan, has reached the Ozark Mountains, and the number of Ozarkian haiku poets is steadily growing. Haiku regularly appear in regional poetry publications, such as *Spare Mule* and *Grist*, and contests sponsored by the Poets' Roundtable of Arkansas, Springfield (MO) Poets & Friends, and other poetry organizations offer haiku as an entry category. This presentation aims to discuss the state of haiku writing in the Ozarks, a seemingly unlikely region for a poetic form from Asia. Among accomplished haiku poets from the Ozarks is Cindy Tebo (Catawissa, MO), whose poems are featured in *tinywords: haiku & other small poems* (You step in the stream, / But the water has moved on. / This page is not here.), *The Heron's Nest* (winter solstice / out-of-town snow / comes in with the coal train), and other print and online haiku journals. Other haiku poets have had varying degrees of success in writing haiku, and some haiku poets still use a 5-7-5 syllable format which is avoided by most professional English-language haiku poets today. Nevertheless, the fact that a significant number of Ozarkians are interested in haiku—and its aesthetics rooted in East Asian religion and culture—demonstrates that the Ozark Mountain region is increasingly cosmopolitan.

9:30 AM Dr. Jason McCollom, Assistant Professor of History, Missouri State University-West Plains, and Mr. Dave Malone, Author of *Ottawa*

University: 150 Years of Significance

Presentation: *Towards an African American History of Olden and West Plains, Missouri*

In what ways did African Americans make a home in two small communities of the southern Missouri Ozarks, and how did this marginalized society interact and coexist with the white majority? How did their experience compare to similar locales in the Upland South? This paper represents the first step in answering these questions and seeks to highlight the African American history of West Plains by examining the intertwined lives of both white and black residents from the late 19th century through the first half of the 20th century.

10:00 AM Break

10:15 AM **Dr. Steve Wiegenstein, author of *Slant of Light; This Old World; and The Language of Trees***
Presentation: *The Language of Trees*

The Language of Trees is set in 1887-88, in the same remote Ozarks river valley as my first two books, but a generation later. The time setting is significant because it marks the beginning of the great industrial timber boom in the Ozarks, which serves as one of the driving forces of the book. Like the first two books, it is set in a fictional utopian community similar to some that we see in the Ozarks today, but the arrival of the Industrial Revolution puts enormous pressure on the 19th-century utopian ideals of the community. The novel captures the environmental, economic, and cultural impacts on the Ozarks of the coming of the modern age to a quiet farming community.

10:45 AM **Dr. James S. Baumlin, Distinguished Professor of English, Missouri State University**
Presentation: *Parlor Music and Musicianship in Early Springfield, Missouri*

This paper seeks to measure the extent to which parlor music touched early 20th-century Springfield, as evidenced by the number of pianos in town and by the music shops and teachers supporting the same. As further evidence, this paper presents a partial listing of sheet music published by or about Springfieldians and the Ozarks from 1900 through 1929. The extent of this sheet music strengthens the claim that, long before Springfield found its niche in country music, the town had grown into a regional center for “art song.” Springfield belongs to the Ozarks, and the rural Ozarks enjoys its living tradition of folk music. But, from its founding, Springfield’s wealthier citizens pursued a more formal style of domestic entertainment. In sum, the parlor song developed alongside the folksong tradition. And until we acknowledge the co-existence of both, our view of Springfield’s music history remains incomplete.

11:15 AM **Dr. Blake Perkins, Assistant Professor of History, Williams Baptist College**
Presentation: *The War on Poverty and a Closer Look at Anti-Government Defiance in the Arkansas Ozarks, 1960s-70s*

This paper will examine responses in the Arkansas Ozarks to the federal government’s War on Poverty, which ultimately stirred bitter resentment and political resistance. Unlike the region’s rural populist forebears’ critiques of the liberal state in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, these were different popular expressions of “damn gov’ment” defiance in the 1960s and 1970s, stoked—at least initially—by a pro-business, elite-constructed vocabulary. Federal poverty reformers initially aimed to spur “community action” at the grassroots and “encouraged low-income participation.” Inspired primarily by Johnson administration officials’ concerns about the need to help poor blacks living under a southern political structure controlled by segregationists, federal War on Poverty programs were originally designed to circumvent state and local political establishments to take assistance directly to the poor themselves, a policy that very quickly raised the ire of local elites, including many of those in the Ozarks.

By the late 1960s, though, local elites had managed to co-opt many of the federal government’s poverty programs, like they had most of the liberal state’s reform initiatives throughout the past century, and they persistently assaulted those that challenged their control. Ubiquitous attacks on and public smearing of the government’s anti-poverty programs by agitated local and regional elites during the 1960s and 1970s helped set the course for new public debates about the role of government in the Ozarks. At the same time, federal poverty warriors’ and reformers’ inability to tap into the traditional “populist ethic” among dispossessed rural folks failed to counterbalance

the claims of the local power structure like backcountry agrarianism once had during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This failure ensured that the government's War on Poverty came under fire in the Ozarks, even by a number of those poor hill folks it intended to help. Indeed, it more broadly signaled the deflation of traditional anti-corporate populism in the rural Ozarks and the rise of a new anti-government political ethic in its place.

12:00 PM Lunch

1:30 PM Tim Nutt, Director of Historical Research Center, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences
Presentation: *Dr. W.A. Jaquith and His 1906 Tour of the Ozarks*

In early 1906, Dr. W.A. Jaquith, an examiner for the Prudential Insurance Company, traveled throughout Arkansas documenting the competency and professional fitness of the company doctors. Dr. Jaquith's travel report is full of local history and information about the cities and towns around Arkansas. His narratives on the Ozarks are particularly informative and provide a glimpse into the medical conditions of this rugged area during the early 20th Century. Dr. Jaquith's report is also an intimate glimpse into the lives of the Ozark Mountain doctors, many of whom had little formal education. This presentation will highlight Dr. Jaquith's visit to Arkansas's Ozark Mountains towns, including Fayetteville, Eureka Springs, and Berryville and present his personal and detailed opinion of the towns, the area's medical conditions, and the professional fitness of the towns' doctors.

2:00 PM Leslie Reed, Instructor of English, Arkansas State University
Presentation: *Life on the Fringes: The Desperate Reactions of Isolation and Marginalization in Daniel Woodrell's Tomato Red and The Death of Sweet Mister*

The Ozarks are often considered a region of small, tight-knit communities, and the idea of a small community creating a safe, nurturing environment for raising a family is a wonderful thought—a thought that is true for many people. However, a resident sometimes does not fit the unspoken standards for inclusion in the community, and for anyone who lives on the fringes of these small towns, being marginalized can create a very isolated existence. The marginalized characters in Daniel Woodrell's *Tomato Red* and *The Death of Sweet Mister* reveal the consequences of this isolation. Their lives are ones of very little societal security, leaving the so called American Dream, and its accompanying idea of community, out of reach—even when they fight for it. Controlled by dire circumstances, they have few ways to establish significance in the community, but what is easily available to the marginalized people of the rural Ozark Mountains is using their body to establish power over others in a will to endure, and perhaps improve, their difficult station in life. In my presentation, I demonstrate the direct correlation between the isolation of the marginalized individuals and the need to use violence and illicit activity for survival and finding significance in a situation where control over one's life is difficult, if not impossible, to achieve. By showing this correlation, the cause of widespread aggression becomes clear: people will use whatever means they have to gain autonomy for their place in a community—even if violent and illicit behaviors are the only options.

2:30 Dr. Alice Black, Associate Professor, Department of Geography, Geology and Planning, Missouri State University
Presentation: *First in Time, First in Importance: The Germans and Scotch-Irish in the Ozarks*

This presentation examines, from several vantage points, the possible inclusion of German settlers as a marginalized group in the Missouri Ozarks, in relation to a principle of settlement geography. That principle is the tenet stated in the title: "First in time, first in importance." This principle states that "the first people to settle a region tend to establish the culture of the area; later groups tend to modify that culture rather than completely transform it" (Rafferty, 2001). Several related questions are also asked, including whether the German-settled big-river regions in the geographic boundaries of the Ozarks defined by Rafferty should even be included in the Ozarks. Another related question asks if the Ozarks remains as much a distinctive cultural region as it once was (possibly due to the influence of the first group of people to settle there), or is it now "just rural" due to improved transportation and communication? What is the relationship of the physical geography to the characteristics of the Scotch-Irish and Germans in the Ozarks at different times in their histories in the area? These questions are considered in the context of the Geography of the Ozarks course taught at Missouri State University by the presenter and the travels undertaken by that class, the texts used in that course, research related to class assignments, and literature concerning the Ozarks, including *American Nations* by Colin Woodward, as well as personal experiences of the presenter, the product of a German-Scotch Irish family.

Elder Mountain: A Journal of Ozarks Studies

Published by the Department of English at Missouri State University-West Plains.
Volumes 1-6 are available for sale at the Symposium's book table.
Volume 7 will be released soon.

Ozarks Studies Program at Missouri State University-Springfield

The Ozarks Studies Program is an interdisciplinary minor course of study allowing students to concentrate on the geography, history, literature, and cultures of the Ozarks. The minor provides students with an understanding and appreciation of the environment and cultures of the Ozarks region, past and present.



“Back to the Landers,” 1970s. Courtesy Jared Phillips

Twelfth Annual Ozarks Studies Symposium, 2018

Call for Proposals

The Ozarks Studies Committee of Missouri State University-West Plains seeks proposals for its 12th annual symposium to be held in the West Plains Civic Center on September 20-22, 2018.

The theme of the 2018 symposium is **“Social Architecture and Foundations of the Ozarks.”** This broad theme is intended to accommodate consideration of a wide variety of topics related to the history, role, impact, or any additional influence of Ozarks socio-cultural life; the foundation or structures of groups, movements, or peoples; the aesthetics of the Ozarks; the genesis of any elements of the region; or an assortment of supplementary topics.

For purposes of this symposium, the Ozarks is defined broadly to encompass much of southern Missouri and northern Arkansas and adjacent portions of Oklahoma, Kansas, and Illinois.

Community members, historians, oral historians, folklorists, artists, writers, scholars, or students representing any discipline or field are invited to propose presentations consistent with this theme. Each presenter will be allotted 30 minutes; presenters will be asked to limit their prepared presentations to approximately 20 to 25 minutes to allow time for questions and discussion. Presentations may take the form of conventional conference papers or any other form suitable for such a symposium.

Proposals should be approximately 200 to 300 words in length and should include a preliminary summary of the content of the proposed presentation and a list of any audio-visual or other technological requirements. They should also include the submitter's name, institutional affiliation (if applicable), and complete contact information.

Email proposals to Dr. Jason McCollom, Assistant Professor of History at Missouri State University-West Plains, at either JasonMcCollom@MissouriState.edu or OzarkSymposium@MissouriState.edu. To be given first consideration, proposals must be received by July 1, 2018.

To offset personal expense of travel, a modest honorarium will be granted to presenters who are not Missouri State University employees and who do not have access to an institutional budget for professional development.