

# Currents

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The Newsletter of the Center for Great Lakes Culture

Issue 1, November 2001



**Above:** Rick Knupfer, Michigan Humanities Council, and nationally known Richard Ford debate the nature of regionalism as moderator Peter Berg, MSU Libraries, listens. This discussion can be heard on the CGLC web site, [greatlakes.msu.edu/keynote.cfm](http://greatlakes.msu.edu/keynote.cfm).

**Right:** Participants of the Maritime Gathering planning meeting.

## Mapping Great Lakes Identity: Past, Present, and Future

The Center for Great Lakes Culture and Michigan State University hosted a conference on February 16-17, 2001 entitled, "Mapping Great Lakes Identity: Past, Present and Future." The event included 75 participants from educational, museum, arts, community service, postsecondary, and library organizations and institutions from across the Great Lakes region. A great beginning for the new year and for the Center, the conference consisted of two days of sessions designed to identify significant themes and constituencies in Great Lakes Culture, and to articulate a strategy for the Center's development.

### Conference identifies the Center's role in Great Lakes Culture

This event was designed as a symposium that emphasized breakout sessions and brainstorming for the Center's agenda. Participants agreed that the focal role of the Center is both research and education on Great Lakes Culture and in its structure, with operations through unique "gatherings" of multidisciplinary communities. Core functions identified by participants included networking, serving as a clearinghouse, building and sponsoring collaborations, education and outreach, and cultural cartography by identifying, describing and publishing the region's culture. The Center will be the central network for scholars, teachers, writers, public intellectuals and researchers seeking contact and interaction on Great Lakes Culture.

An important element of the conference was the opportunity for interdisciplinary teams of scholars, teachers, and public humanists to meet and develop initial plans for "gatherings" in subjects of interest. For more information on Gathering Programs contact [greatlakes@cal.msu.edu](mailto:greatlakes@cal.msu.edu). ■



## Maritime Gathering takes shape

Plans for a Great Lakes and Ohio Valley Maritime Gathering took shape during a planning meeting on May 8, 2001. Held via conference call, the meeting was attended by Bob Graham, Historical Collections of the Great Lakes, Bowling Green State University, Jeff Gray, Underwater Archaeologist, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Peter Engelbert, Staff Archaeologist, Maritime Heritage, Ontario Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation, John Beck, Labor & Industrial Relations, and Gail Vander Stoep, Park, Recreation & Tourism Resources, both MSU. (cont. on page 2)



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**CGLC EVENTS**

**December 1**

Deadline for nominations for the annual CGLC Book, Exhibit and Web Site awards.

**December 4**

East Lansing, MI  
Dr. Francesco Melfi, recipient of the 2001 CGLC MSU Faculty Fellowship, speaks for the Michigan State University Libraries Colloquia Series.

**December 20**

East Lansing, MI  
Center for Great Lakes Culture Steering Committee Meeting.

**REGIONAL EVENTS**

**December 1**

Springfield, IL  
*The Twenty-Second Annual Illinois History Annual Symposium.*

**December 8-23**

Columbus, OH  
*Ohio Village Holiday Season - Civil War-era Ohio Village, holiday traditions of Ohioans during the 1860s.*

# Welcome



Welcome to the Center for Great Lakes Culture! The Center for Great Lakes Culture, at Michigan State University, was officially launched in December of 2000 and is dedicated to understanding and

interpreting the cultural history and expressions of the diverse peoples, traditions, and customs of the Great Lakes region (Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio, West Virginia, Illinois, Minnesota, Ontario, Wisconsin), and the region's interaction with the world. Through research, instruction, and outreach programs throughout the region, the center seeks to coordinate and expand current university research and collections and to increase

the visibility, use, and access to these resources, both at MSU and other colleges and universities, libraries, archives, museums, and cultural centers. The center works with a variety of partner institutions and draws upon the complementary expertise and strengths of regionally focused humanities and arts organizations. The CGLC operates with the support of a series of primary cornerstone units including the College of Agriculture & Natural Resources, the College of Social Science, MSU Libraries, the MSU Museum, the Consortium for Archaeological Research, MATRIX (Humanities and Social Sciences OnLine), and the Michigan Humanities Council. I hope you will consider joining the growing number of individuals who are becoming involved in the Center for Great Lakes Culture. ■

—C. Kurt Dewhurst, Ph.D., Director  
Center for Great Lakes Culture

## Maritime Gathering takes shape

(cont from page 1)

Discussion revolved around possible ways of focusing theme and purpose of the gathering, while at the same time maintaining a flexible structure, which would allow for creative interaction at the gathering itself and enable potential participants to assess its relevance with regard to their personal interests.

Planning meeting participants agreed that, while some of the functions of the CGLC include inventorying resources and serving as a clearinghouse for resources and partnership development, it is essential that the Center concentrate on new ideas, filling the gaps rather than reduplicating efforts of others. In fact, meetings and workshops might attempt specifically to develop both an inventory of existing and a list of desirable, not-yet-existing resources and projects as complementary services for Great Lakes scholars.

Regarding the program structure of the Maritime Gathering, there was consensus that it should include a variety

of people involved with maritime history, culture, and management. Incorporating a combination of structured and free-wheeling components, the gathering should allow individuals to share

related work, initiate development of an inventory of maritime resources and engage participants in a discussion about potential projects. More specific topics, themes to be discussed and presented on include literature of the sea and the Great Lakes, including poetry, as well as cultural history and oral history, whose importance is presently heightened by the fact that many people involved with traditional maritime lifeways and crafts are dying. For detailed minutes of the meeting, please visit the Center's web site. ■

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*"The cross-pollination creates opportunities for exciting collaboration."*  
-Gail Vander Stoep,  
Michigan State University

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**January 12 & 19**

East Liverpool & Youngstown, OH  
*Children's History Club: Canal Days* - development and construction of the once vast Ohio canal network.

**January 2**

Lisle, IL  
*Illinois Landscapes* - discussion on both original and established works that explore people's interactions with the natural landscape.

**January 23**

Indianapolis, IN  
*Statewide Arts Service Organization*.

**February 12**

Chatham, IL  
*Folk Music and Folk Musicians in Central Illinois*.

**February 28 -**

**March 1**

Dearborn, MI  
*Michigan Council for Social Studies Annual Conference*.

Further events and a continuously updated calendar can be found on CGLC's web site at: [greatlakes.msu.edu/calendar/](http://greatlakes.msu.edu/calendar/)

# Newberry Library Rural History Seminar: Great Lakes Rural History

*The October meeting brought together three historians of rural life in the Great Lakes region.*

The Newberry Library, Center for Great Lakes Culture, and the Scholl Center for Family and Community History partnered to host a special session of its Rural History Seminar focusing on the Great Lakes region. For more than a decade the Newberry Library's Rural History Seminar has been an important venue for new research on the history of the American countryside.

The October meeting brought together three historians of rural life in the Great Lakes region. Susan Gray is Associate Professor of History at Arizona State University, and the editor (with Andrew R. L. Cayton) of *Writing Regionally: Historians and the American Middle West*

The Newberry Library, Center for Great Lakes Culture, and the Scholl Center for Family and Community History partnered to host a special session of its Rural

(forthcoming from Indiana University Press). Her paper, "Family Stories from the North Country: An Ethnography of Place," is part of her new project, a biography of a nineteenth-century missionary couple, based on their diaries. Kalthen Mapes is Assistant Professor of History at the State University of New York, Geneseo. Her paper, "Farming the Farmers: Contract Farming in the Rural Midwest, 1898-1917," is part of her book manuscript on the sugar beet industry in Michigan during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Anna-Lisa Cox is a doctoral candidate at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, and a reader in residence at the Newberry Library. Her paper, "Highly Esteemed in their Community: Black Pioneers and Entrepreneurs in Rural Michigan, 1860-1910," is part of her dissertation on an African American community in rural Michigan. ■

## Dr Melfi, CGLC Visiting Fellow

Thanks to a Center for Great Lakes Culture fellowship I spent six wonderful months of assiduous research at MSU. My research project focused on the pedagogic and linguistic Delaware writings of Moravian missionary, David Zeisberger (1721-1808). My concerns were how language was used and how teaching methods were developed to "improve" the Delaware language and advance among the Native Delaware of the North East and Ohio a "superior" model of Western and Christian civility. I have greatly benefited by MSU Library's rich colonial and post-revolutionary collections and by MSU's great network of institutions and scholars. The CGLC truly provided me with the right context in which I could research and study. ■

-Dr. Francesco Melfi  
CGLC Visiting Fellow



*Dr. Francesco Melfi, recipient of the CGLC Visiting Fellowship, discussing his research with Gail Vander Stoep, member of the CGLC Steering committee and MSU Faculty.*

# Feeding America: The Historic American Cookbook Project

The Michigan State University Library and the MSU Museum, cornerstone units of the Center for Great Lakes Culture, are



partnering to create an online collection of the most important and influential 19th and early 20th century American cookbooks.

The digital archive will include page images of 75 cookbooks in the MSU Library's

collection as well as searchable full-text transcriptions. The site will also feature a glossary of cookery terms, essays by culinary historian Jan Longone, and multi-dimensional images of antique cooking

implements from the collections of the MSU Museum.

The full-text search capability of the site will enable students and scholars to locate passages on topics as diverse as the uses of nutmeg, Civil War era apple pie recipes, descriptions of kitchen appliances, and 1890s nutritional advice. The 3D images will help students visualize the technology of 19th century cooking by linking descriptions of unfamiliar cooking processes to images of the utensils and implements used to carry them out.

The Feeding America online collection will highlight an important part of America's cultural heritage for teachers and students at the primary, secondary, and college levels; as well as researchers investigating American social history, professional chefs, and lifelong learners of all ages. The two-year project will be completed in September 2003. ■



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