

University of Alabama in Huntsville

LOUIS

Summer Community of Scholars (RCEU and HCR) Project Proposals

Faculty Scholarship

1-1-2015

"In Conjunction with the Alabama Bicentennial Commision, Alabama State Archives, Alabama Tourism Council and the Town of Mooresville Alabama, I will be Creating a Template for Small Towns Interested in Developing Historical and Cultural Resources as Part of Alabama's Upcoming Statewide Bicenntenial Celebration"

John F. Kvach
University of Alabama in Huntsville

Follow this and additional works at: <https://louis.uah.edu/rceu-proposals>

Recommended Citation

Kvach, John F., ""In Conjunction with the Alabama Bicentennial Commision, Alabama State Archives, Alabama Tourism Council and the Town of Mooresville Alabama, I will be Creating a Template for Small Towns Interested in Developing Historical and Cultural Resources as Part of Alabama's Upcoming Statewide Bicenntenial Celebration"" (2015). *Summer Community of Scholars (RCEU and HCR) Project Proposals*. 345.

<https://louis.uah.edu/rceu-proposals/345>

This Proposal is brought to you for free and open access by the Faculty Scholarship at LOUIS. It has been accepted for inclusion in Summer Community of Scholars (RCEU and HCR) Project Proposals by an authorized administrator of LOUIS.

RCEU Proposal for Alabama Oral History Project

Faculty Mentor

Dr. John F. Kvach

Department of History

407 Roberts Hall, Department of History, UAH, Huntsville, AL 35899

(256) 824-2570

john.kvach@uah.edu

Project Summary

In conjunction with the Alabama Bicentennial Commission, Alabama State Archives, Alabama Tourism Council, and the town of Mooresville, Alabama, I will be creating a template for small towns interested in developing historical and cultural resources as part of Alabama's upcoming statewide bicentennial celebration. I currently serve on the Education Committee of the Bicentennial Commission and will be working with public and private partners to implement a statewide oral history program. These oral histories will preserve the memories of Alabamians and serve as a foundation for future scholars and the general public interested in state and local history. The town of Mooresville, Alabama, has agreed to serve as a "test balloon" for other towns interested in implementing an oral history program, and I will be working with town leaders, private citizens, and local businesses to develop and implement a program to systematically identify, collect, and preserve the oral traditions of Mooresville. I will present my research, the oral histories, and project results to Mooresville and to the Alabama Bicentennial Commission. This work will become the template for a larger statewide oral history program.

Student Duties

A UAH student will work closely with me to develop and implement an oral history project with clear goals and results. The student will be expected to work with the town of Mooresville (15 minutes west of Huntsville) to develop historical and cultural resources that can be used by the town in conjunction with the oral history program. They will learn how to conduct professional quality oral histories and will receive the necessary equipment to do field work. The student would also work with local residents to cultivate new sources of information and new interviewees. I have worked extensively with students in the field and understand the process of learning while doing. Conducting an oral history is best learned through practice and actually doing them. Yet a strong mentor is also part of the learning process, and I will have regular meetings and debriefings to assess the fieldwork being done by the student. Ultimately, I want the student to become confident and experienced enough to become a shareholder in the project and work with me as an equal who will benefit from the exposure of a highly visible statewide project. As part of this project the UAH student will travel to Birmingham and Montgomery to meet with other experts in the field and begin the process of creating a professional network. I believe in a win-win-win experience. The student will win because he/she will have a substantial experience in the field and have something to put on their resume. The town of Mooresville and the state of Alabama will win because these oral histories will become the foundation for a larger oral history

program. As the director of UAH's Public History program I will win because a project like this will attract new students to a growing program.

Mentor Supervision and Interaction

I am going to ask the town of Mooresville for office space and necessary support for a project such as this. With physical space a student will have a place to work from but also a place in which we can meet on a regular basis. Over the course of ten weeks I would like to start and end each week with a meeting to gauge progress, talk about challenges and concerns, and to assess the quality of material being produced. In addition to these regular meetings I will also have less formal but regular meetings to talk about larger historical issues, professional aspirations, and ways to improve the project from the student's point of view. The student will report to me during these ten weeks but will also have a local contact person who will serve as a point of contact. Ultimately, I hope this experience will provide a student with the knowledge, tools, and confidence to work independently. This project will create professional visibility for a student at the local, regional, and state level. I am looking for a competent student willing to learn and work and who wants to be a stakeholder in the project.