

**The Appalachian Teaching Project 2010**

*Monongah: An Exploration of Its Eastern European Heritage*

Can the infusion of a student travel experience to Eastern Europe be used to help revitalize one community's history and culture thru heritage tourism development in this once devastated mining community of Monongah, West Virginia?

**The Frank and Jane Gabor WV Folklife Center  
at Fairmont State University**

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## Final Report Narrative

Name of Project: Monongah: An Exploration of Its Eastern European Heritage

Grant Period: January 1, 2010 – June 30, 2010

Grantee Name: Gabor WV Folklife Center, Fairmont State University

Project Directors: Dr. Judy P. Byers/ Noel W. Tenney

### **Description of Project:**

*Students worked through The Frank & Jane Gabor West Virginia Folklife Center, FSU, along with The Monongah Centennial Committee, Monongah Fest Committee, Senator Roman W. Prezioso, Jr., and other interested community members in exploring the heritage of the Eastern European community as it relates to the history of coal, disaster, and community in the town of Monongah and to how the content could be adapted to cultural heritage tourism.*

### **Activities:**

- Students enrolled in FOLK 4400 – Directed Folklore Studies and FOLK 4998 – Undergraduate Research  
Instructors – Dr. Judy P. Byers and Mr. Noel W. Tenney
- Students introduced the community to the 2010 Appalachian Teaching Project at the Monongah Fest on Saturday, August 21, 2010 by presenting the display from the 2009 project.
- Students researched the genealogical connection of Peter Urban to his native Poland and his descendants here in the United States, creating a celebration of survival.
- Students interviewed various Monongah residents and citizens.
- Students completed a review of the literature and prepared an annotated bibliography of materials accessed.
- Students traveled and studied during the summer of 2010 in parts of Eastern Europe that reflect the root cultures of Monongah.
- Students presented their compiled project to the Appalachian Teaching Project through the Appalachian Regional Commission's Conference in Washington D.C. in December 2010
- Students presented their compiled project at the Appalachian Studies Conference at Eastern Kentucky University, March 2011.
- Students presented the research outcomes at the Celebration of Undergraduate Research at Fairmont State University on April 25, 2011.

### **Project Outcomes:**

- *Students introduced the community to the 2010 Appalachian Teaching Project.*
- *Encouraged community members to share their individual stories so that they might be preserved as the story of the community in a format suitable for development into a published work.*
- *Encouraged a celebration of multi-cultural community as part of the Monongah Fest project.*
- *Encouraged the development of a listing of potential exhibits for a future Heritage Interpretive Center that will focus on the Eastern European culture.*
- *The infusion of a student travel experience to Eastern Europe was used to help revitalize the Monongah community's history and culture to promote heritage tourism and to heighten the student's awareness of cultural diversity in Appalachia.*
- *Suggested using a multi-media approach for presentations that engages the audience in the celebration of the Eastern European culture in Monongah's coal community.*

### **Problems Encountered:**

Because of the scope of the project, students lacked sufficient time to assimilate and analyze the complete spectrum of the content.

### **Program Continuation and Sustainability:**

This research project was a component of the Gabor WV Folklife Center's continuing "Roads to Appalachia through Scotland/Ireland (2005), Italy (2007), England/Wales (2008), and Eastern Europe (2010) travel/study/research abroad program where they emphasized the Romanian, Hungarian, Slovakian, and Polish heritages of Monongah. This was the second year of emphasis on the cultural diversity of Monongah and how that diversity can be used in the development of heritage tourism.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations:**

Student presentations were well received and generated interest in other students to become future participants. Continue funding this program so that other students may also have like experiences

### **Attachments:**

Budget Narrative

### **Student participants:**

Dena Jane Gilchrist

Elizabeth Golden

Liza Russell

Arnold Triplett

Colby White