

The Appalachian Teaching Project 2013

Coal and Its Story: Development of a 21st Century Coal Community

Can the identification and promotion of North Central West Virginia Coal Heritage Sites provide economic stimulus within communities of North Central West Virginia by utilizing 21st Century technologies to accent heritage tourism?

**The Frank and Jane Gabor WV Folklife Center
on the campus of Fairmont State University
and Pierpont Community and Technical College**

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(ATP project date)
February 1, 2013 – June 30, 2014

(Date this document was submitted)
May 2014

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Final Report Narrative

Title of Project:

Coal and Its Story: Development of a 21st Century Coal Community

Can the identification and promotion of North Central West Virginia Coal Heritage Sites provide economic stimulus within communities of North Central West Virginia by utilizing 21st Century technologies to accent heritage tourism?

Grant Period: February 1, 2013 – June 30, 2014

Grantee Name:

Frank & Jane Gabor WV Folklife Center on the campus of Fairmont State University and Pierpont Community & Technical College

Project Director: Dr. Judy P. Byers/ Mr. Noel W. Tenney

Description of Project:

Students researched regional historic coal sites and utilized 21st Century technologies for the development of a model for heritage tourism integration. The focus of this project centered on educating our community partners to the potential of using social media tools (crowdsourcing) as a means of getting travelers to specific sites (wayfinding) and the value of these tools to enhance their individual missions, economic development and sustainability needs, and to develop a greater awareness of the historical context of the region.

Background:

North Central WV has played an historically significant role in coal production in Central Appalachia. By 1900, the Fairmont Coal Field encompassed more than 23,000 acres and a plethora of company owned mining communities. While there are similarities to the southern West Virginia coal fields in the use of an immigrant labor force and the structure of company housing and communities, it is also very different in other respects. This northern region has not only mined the coal, but has also been home to several industries that have relied heavily upon coal, such as power generation and manufacturing.

The construction of the Rivesville Power plant began in 1907 and within five years was fully operational. At various points in its history, the plant was a national leader in power production, home to innovative technology, and was once the largest coal powered electrical plant in the country. The plant closed in October of 2013, and at that time the Marion County Historical Society acquired thousands of photographs of the plant and its employees covering its 100 years of production. The availability of a dependable electrical supply was a key factor in industrial growth in Marion County early in the 20th Century.

Marion County was home to the Monongah Glass Company from 1903 to 1928. During that time, Monongah Glass was one of the largest glass producers in the world. Glass production remained in the area after 1928 under the Hocking Glass Company name. Various patterns of Monongah Glass are considered highly collectible and are much sought after. While coal was not used directly in the production process, the plant was dependent upon the generation of power at the Rivesville Power Plant.

Westinghouse Electric manufactured small appliances at its facility for more than 70 years in Marion County. Their business model was heavily dependent upon the availability of a steady and sufficient power supply.

Even though this strong manufacturing base has changed or been lost, coal remains an integral part of the community as seen in place names, historic photographs on display in the community, and the memories of the people. The above industrial examples, along with other local museums, former coal camps, coal history centers, and associated housing and food resources were used to create a content and context for the project. Community organizations are continuing interest in gaining skills to aggressively work towards preserving the history of coal in the region.

Activities:

In addition to the conference presentation, poster, and other activities, please include full details regarding the following requirements of the 2013-2014 Scope of Work:

- activities with community partners (include partner name(s), dates and locations of meetings, topics of Focus Group discussions, etc.)

Community Partner and Central Focus of the Research Project:

FSU students partnered with the Northern Appalachian Coal Mining Heritage Association (NACMHA), the Marion County Historical Society (MCHS), and the Marion County Convention and Visitors Bureau (MCCVB). NACMHA and MCCVB are both located within ½ mile of I-79 with easy access and MCHS is only 1.5 miles from the Interstate, these organizations serve as the gateway to the northern coal trail.

Community partnering also included various individuals that represented expert knowledge of the chosen focus communities of Rivesville, Monongah, Carolina, Fairview, and Fairmont. These individuals included:

- George Yost (September 15, 2013- traveled with George in and around Fairview, WV as he discussed the history of Fairview and growing up in that community);
- Frank Gabor (September 7, 2013 – traveled with Frank around Grant Town, WV as he discussed growing up and life in that coal community during the 1940s and 1950s);
- Trudy Lemley (Beginning September 2, 2013 through May 7, 2014 for Joanna Ross's senior project – met with Trudy on Wednesday evenings throughout the 2013-2014 academic year at the Frank and Jane Gabor WV Folklife Center on the shared campus of Fairmont State University and Pierpont Community and

Technical College to gather and preserve the oral history that Trudy collected about life in the Carolina coal camp);

- Danielle Williams (November 7, 2013 – met at the Frank and Jane Gabor WV Folklife Center on the shared campus of Fairmont State University and Pierpont Community and Technical College to discuss her campaign to save the historic Blumberg Building in Monongah, WV);
- Dr. Greg Hinton (September 20, 2013 – traveled to Barrackville, WV and met with two community members who lived and/or worked in the mines and talked about how their life was living in the Barrackville coal camp);
- Ron Winter (November 14, 2013 – met at the Frank and Jane Gabor WV Folklife Center on the shared campus of Fairmont State University and Pierpont Community and Technical College to scan images and collect history about the Westinghouse Electric Company).

Number and description of planned meetings with the community partners:

Meetings of the leadership committee (students, faculty advisors, and selected community partner individuals) began in late August and early September at the Folklife Center. Those participants included:

- Northern Appalachian Coal Mining Heritage Association (November 9, 2013 – met at the Coal Mining Museum on the grounds of the Coal Country Miniature Golf in Fairmont, WV to interview Mike Rohaly about his experience in the coal mines and the organization);
- Marion County Historical Society (October 25, 2013 – met at the Marion County Historical Society in Fairmont, WV to collect images and information about the Rivesville Power Plant);
- Marion County Convention and Visitors Bureau (October 11, 2013 – contacted the Visitors Bureau about our project and provided research that was collected for our project to be added to the Marion County Convention and Visitors Bureau’s mobile phone app).

Individuals representing the focus communities and the six student participants were also involved with the leadership committee. Dr. Judy Byers and Noel W. Tenney presided over the meetings. Focus Groups were developed for each partner with two students leading. These Focus Groups began meeting the week of September to develop the details and background of the project. Dr. Byers and Mr. Tenney attended the meetings as the research began. Students continued to meet weekly on Thursday afternoons, and they used these times to also work individually with members of the community partners and individuals representing the focus communities. Dialogue was continued with the various community groups as the project neared completion. Students worked with the Northern Appalachian Coal Mining Heritage Association to create and monitor crowdsourcing tools, such as Yelp and TripAdvisor. Students worked with Trudy Lemley to create a Pinterest page to promote the coal heritage of Carolina, WV.

- required presentations of student research to community groups other than the primary partner (include the name of the group(s), the date of the presentation(s), and document publicity surrounding the presentation in the attachment section below)

December 6, 2013

Student Susan Carleton represented the Frank and Jane Gabor West Virginia Folklife Center and the 2013 ATP students from Fairmont State University at the first annual Coal Mining Appreciation Day Swap Meet sponsored by the Northern Appalachian Coal Mining Heritage Association in Fairmont, West Virginia. She presented a display booth for the Folklife Center and brochures about the research project conducted by the ATP students at Fairmont State.

December 7, 2013

Students presented their research project at the 2013 Appalachian Teaching Project Conference in Washington, DC.

March 28, 2014

Students presented a poster session of their research project at the Appalachian Studies Conference held on the campus of Marshall University in Huntington, West Virginia.

April 16, 2014

Students presented their research project at the Celebration of Student Scholarship held on the shared campus of Fairmont State University and Pierpont Community and Technical College in Fairmont, West Virginia.

(see further documentation in the attachment)

- links to any videos or social media that show the students interacting with their community partner(s)

ATP Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/FSUATP2013>

NACMHA

<https://www.facebook.com/nacmha>

<http://nacmha.org/>

MCHS

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/152591356765/>

<http://www.marionhistorical.org/>

MCCVB

<https://www.facebook.com/MarionCVB>

<http://marioncvb.com/things-to-do/>

Ongoing Carolina, WV coal camp field project

www.carolinawvorahistoryproject.com

Course Number and Students

FOLK 4400 – Directed Studies (Fall 2013)

Susan Carleton, Christy Collins, Jane Gilchrist, Joanna Ross, and Jaimie Turner

Project Outcomes:

Students:

- Identified, researched, and located 8-10 regional historically significant coal sites and current heritage tourism trends of the region with a focus on the communities of Rivesville, Monongah, Carolina, Fairview, and Fairmont.
- Explored the use of crowdsourcing and wayfinding as a tool of developing heritage tourism and creating economic development and sustainability by generating traffic to these sites and service related businesses near these sites.
- Worked collaboratively with the Community Partners in Focus Groups as described above.
- Conducted a site survey of possible coal heritage areas along with interviews within the region relating to tourism, technology usage, and coal heritage:
 - Student Jaimie Turner conducted one interview with Mike Rohaly of the Northern Appalachian Coal Mining Heritage Association about his association with coal mining and his organization.
 - Student Jane Gilchrist drew upon her previous experience as executive director of the Marion County Historical Society to provide information about the

Rivesville Power Plant and she had dialogue with the Historical Society to gather information and photographs about the power plant.

-Correspondence was made with the Marion County Convention and Visitors Bureau about our project and they are planning on using the information and resources gathered about the Carolina coal camp and other locations to add to their mobile phone app.

- Collected testimonies through oral history gatherings in the region. The following individuals assisted our students with their research on the region:
 - George Yost provided history and information about Fairview.
 - Frank Gabor discussed his life in the coal community of Grant Town.
 - Trudy Lemley shared information about the history of the Carolina coal camp.
 - Danielle Williams discussed her efforts to save a historical building in Monongah and her use of technology to promote her campaign.
 - Dr. Greg Hinton discussed his life growing up in a coal camp outside of Barrackville and provided connections to interview residents of the coal camp, such as a 95 year old widow of a coal miner.
 - Ron Winters provided images and information about the Westinghouse Electric Company.
- Researched suggestions for the Northern Appalachian Coal Mining Heritage Association, Marion County Historical Society, and the Marion County Convention and Visitors Bureau and made recommendations regarding development and implementation of a crowdsourcing strategy. The MCCVB included this research and made it available through their “Marion County CVB” app.
- Conducted research into the development of a cohesive crowdsourcing plan for Marion County, WV.
- Created and monitored crowdsourcing tools [such as TripAdvisor and Yelp] for our community partners. NACMHA has begun using both of these tools to promote their resources.
- Completed a review of the literature and prepare an annotated bibliography of materials accessed. (See Addendum for project brochure and bibliography)
- Used a multi-media approach to present suggestions to members of the community partners.
- Presented their compiled project and poster to the Appalachian Teaching Project through the Appalachian Regional Commission’s Conference in Washington D.C. in December 2013.
- Presented a poster session at the annual Appalachian Studies Association Conference at Marshall University in Huntington, WV in March of 2014.
- Presented the research outcomes at the Celebration of Undergraduate Research at Fairmont State University in April 2014.

In addition, the graduate student, who was participating in this program through EDUC 6818, Educational Practicum as a requirement of a Masters in Education with an emphasis in Digital Media, New Literacies, and Learning;

- Provided education and training on the value and use of crowdsourcing and wayfinding to both undergraduate student participants and representatives of the community partner organizations.
- Developed curriculum related to crowdsourcing and wayfinding, along with its integration into the community. Shared these materials with ATP undergraduate students and community partners.
- Researched and synthesized community education of technology integration into heritage tourism and generated materials that meet the requirements of the degree practicum experience.

Problems Encountered:

Because of the nature and scope of this project (being both field collecting and technology application), the size became somewhat difficult to manage. Otherwise, the project was well received by the community partners and of great interest to the students involved.

Program Continuation and Sustainability:

ATP student, Joanna Ross continued her work with Community Partner, Trudy Ice Lemley of the Carolina coal community, for her senior Folklore Capstone project in the spring of 2014. Joanna organized Trudy's collection of Carolina oral histories, catalogued her miscellaneous research, and edited and compiled the data into an online oral history project at <www.carolinawvorahistoryproject.com>. This will be an ongoing project.

ATP graduate student, Jane Gilchrist was responsible for the groundwork in establishing the "Coal Mining Appreciation Day Swap Meet" which was carried out by Community Partner NACMHA. This is slated to be an annual event.

Conclusions and Recommendations:

- Further collaboration of FSU Gabor WV Folklife Center folklore students and community members to collect histories, photographs, and stories from area coal camps, especially for the annual "Coal Mining Appreciation Day Swap Meet."

Attachments (in PDF format):

Include such items as the following:

- **Minutes of meetings with community partners**
 - Interview with Frank Gabor Summary.pdf

- Interview with George Yost.pdf
- Interview with Mike Rohaly of NACMHA - Jaimie Turner.pdf
- **Flyers, text for PSA announcements, etc.**
 - ASA Cover.pdf
 - ASA Poster Session Schedule.pdf
 - Brochure ATP 2013.pdf
 - Celebration of Student Scholarship Cover.pdf
 - Celebration of Student Scholarship.pdf
 - FOLK 4400 ATP Syllabus.pdf
- **Photographs showing students in action**
 - 1st Annual National Coal Miners Appreciation Day Swap Meet.pdf
 - ASA Poster Session.pdf
 - ATP Conference Photos.pdf
 - Gabor – Grant Town Interview Photos.pdf
 - Haught & Yost – Fairview Interview Photo.pdf
- **PR such as newspaper articles, documentation of radio spots, etc.**
 - Students Participate in 2013 Appalachian Teaching Project_FSUNow_Fairmont State University.pdf
 - TimesWV ATP 2013.pdf
- **Correspondence with community partners**
 - Attachment from Email with Dr. Hinton – News Article on Mine No. 7.pdf
 - Correspondence between Jaimie Turner and Mike Rohaly.pdf
 - Correspondence with coalcampus.pdf
 - Correspondence with Dr. Greg Hinton – Barrackville.pdf
 - Correspondence with Dr. Greg Hinton – News Article on Mine No. 7.pdf

NOTE: The final report should document that all elements of the approved project proposal have been addressed, in addition to requirements of the Scope of Work.