

The Appalachian Teaching Project 2014

Food Immigrants: From Commercial Success to Heritage Tourism

Can traditional historical foods from Southern Italy that became commercial economic successes in North Central West Virginia be the basis for a model to promote cultural heritage tourism?

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

**Sandra Shriver
Sponsored Programs Administrator
Office of Sponsored Grants Accounting
Fairmont State University
1201 Locust Ave.
Fairmont, WV 26554
sandra.shriver@fairmontstate.edu
304.367.4684**

(ATP project date)
June 15, 2014 – June 30, 2015

(Date this document was submitted)
June 2014

(Project director's name, title, telephone number, and email address)

**Dr. Judy P. Byers
*Abelina Suarez Professor, Senior Level,
Professor of English and Folklore Studies, Director***

**Mr. Noel W. Tenney
Cultural Specialist and Museum Studies Coordinator
Frank & Jane Gabor WV Folklife Center
Fairmont State University
1201 Locust Avenue
Fairmont, WV 26554**

**304-367-4403/304-367-4286
jbyers@fairmontstate.edu ntenney@fairmontstate.edu**

ATP PROJECT TEMPLATE (June 15, 2014, Deadline)

PROJECT FOCUS: Provide a one-sentence statement describing the project focus.

The Fairmont State University ATP Project will research how, during the early 20th century, traditional Italian food immigrants came to North Central West Virginia becoming commercial successes, and will propose ways that these success stories can assist various regional festivals, businesses, and projects to enhance cultural heritage tourism.

PROJECT DETAILS:

Course Number, Name, and Instructor:

FOLK 4400 – Directed Folklore Studies

Instructors – Dr. Judy P. Byers & Mr. Noel W. Tenney

Student Participants:

Christy Thompson, Caitlin Norwish, Amanda Madello, Leah Yoho
Undergraduate Students

Community Partners:

We have chosen the selected partners because of their historical connection to the topic of Italian food immigrants. Our project will begin in Southern Italy during the summer of 2014 when three of the above students will travel with the Gabor WV Folklife Center's *Roads to Appalachia through Southern Italy* travel/study abroad program. One of the community partners below: Mr. Rocco Muriale, owner of Muriale's Italian Restaurant, will also be participating in this travel experience. Students will begin their foods research during this time.

- **West Virginia Italian Heritage Festival, Clarksburg, WV** (A regional festival celebrating its 36th anniversary, August 29-31, 2014, and saluting traditional Italian customs, music, arts, and foods)
- **Three Rivers Festival, Fairmont, WV** (A local festival celebrating various aspects of regional history with a focus on Italian pepperoni foods including pepperoni roll bake off and eating competitions)
- **Feast of the Seven Fishes Festival, Fairmont, WV** (One day festival centered on observing Italian December holiday celebrations with a traditional cooking school)
- **Oliverio's, Clarksburg, WV** (Commercial production of specialty Italian canned foods, sauces, salsas, etc.)

- **Country Club Bakery, Fairmont, WV** (Original home of the pepperoni roll in West Virginia)
- Muriale's Italian Restaurant, Fairmont, WV** (One of the most successful businesses in North Central West Virginia celebrating the owner's personal and family history and Italian cultural background through foodways, historical memorabilia exhibits, and media construct advertisements emphasizing his cultural background)

Need: Provide a substantive statement regarding the need for this project, as agreed upon by you and the community partners. What problem(s) will you address and what solutions will you implement by working with the community partners?

Preliminary discussions with the community partners have centered on how this project can provide a clearing house of cultural and historical foodways and their applications that will be made available to the large Italian community in North Central West Virginia. These partners are business people or organizations that center their offerings on Italian culture. The purpose of this ATP student project is to provide historical research and cultural heritage ideas that can create a needed more unified front for Italian cultural heritage in this area and between our chosen community partners. The project will **[problem]** review the somewhat under explored historical content (general culture and specific foodways) on the role of Italian cultural influence in North Central West Virginia and **[solution]** provide a working model for this specific cultural grouping to more authentically and economically interweave their cultural heritage into an educational and business mode. This same model could be used by any other ethnic population of the region of which there are many, although the Italian population is the largest of the American ethnic groupings In North Central West Virginia.

Number and description of planned meetings with the community partners
(meetings are a required component of the ATP):

Student teams will meet with community partners beginning in summer 2014 and will continue various weekly or monthly meetings throughout late summer and early fall. Because of the number of community partners, student teams will be paired with selected partners with an emphasis on discussing organizational histories, economic statistics, partner needs, and overall strategies. Final meetings will be arranged to share findings and suggestions. At the time of this proposal, all community partners have agreed to work with the project.

Overview of the project, including its central focus (10-12 sentences):

The 2014 Fairmont State University ATP project will address the unique concept of studying Italian food immigrants and how those traditional foods brought to North Central West Virginia in the early 20th century have continued to be used in both family and commercial settings. Students will identify selected food types and their Italian origins plus conduct research and inquiry with current regional Italian-American businesses and organizations that promote their Italian heritage and culture through the sales or celebration of these foodways. Students will trace the history of selected Italian food heritages from their origin in Southern Italy (as a part of the travel/study program to Southern Italy in summer, 2014) to their immigrant arrival in North Central West Virginia in the early 20th century. Students will also research how these foods have been used as successful economic endeavors and will formulate a model of how historic awareness, economic success, and more specific understandings can be used for incorporating traditional foodways (along with value added concepts, such as family recipes and history, visual images that tell individual and family stories [early photographs], and celebrations attached to food) in a more creative and educational application for regional festivals, businesses, and programs promoting cultural heritage tourism.

Goals and Objectives: Please use a bulleted or numbered list.

Students will:

- conduct extensive research (scholarly and field observations) on the history of Italian food immigrants from Southern Italy to Appalachia's North Central West Virginia.
- prepare visual concepts that could include unifying logo designs, graphic visual components, and other tangible means of encouraging the application of historical and cultural content for economic development and cultural heritage tourism.
- share all research and design concepts with the six community partners.
- present all project outcomes to audiences at the Appalachian Teaching Project through the Appalachian Regional Commission's Conference in Washington D.C. in December 2014, the Appalachian Studies Association Conference at East Tennessee State University in March of 2015, the Celebration of Undergraduate Research at Fairmont State University in April 2015, and other local groups.

PROJECT OUTCOMES: In bulleted format, list all anticipated activities that meet the goals and objectives, including the poster, the conference presentation in Washington, D.C., and the required community presentation(s). Be sure that you have addressed all required goals, guidelines, and outcomes in the attached scope of work.

Students will:

- research the history of Italian food immigrants to West Virginia and share that research with community partners.
- complete a review of the literature and prepare an annotated bibliography of materials accessed.
- create a logo design that emphasizes various Italian foods of North Central West Virginia that will be used by the community partners to promote cultural heritage tourism within their individual programs or businesses and to form a coalition for working together.
- create a series of graphic visual images (may be used as posters, advertisements, TV announcements, etc.) that the community partners will have access to in order to promote cultural and historical foods awareness in their programs or businesses, as well as a design style for their cooperative application.
- work collaboratively with the community partners in focus groups as described above and present any historical research, statistical data, and application concepts pertinent to the community partners.
- present the compiled project and poster to the Appalachian Teaching Project through the Appalachian Regional Commission's Conference in Washington D.C., December 2014.
- present a poster session at the annual Appalachian Studies Association Conference at East Tennessee State University, March 2015.
- present the research outcomes at the Celebration of Undergraduate Research at Fairmont State University, April 2015.