

Utopian Societies along the Susquehanna

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Research Problem:

Why did utopian visions of very different types of communities emerge on the Susquehanna River in the wake of the removal of American Indians in the late 18th century, and how can the legacy of those long-ago utopias (tied to the early formation of America as a country) be portrayed in a way that is publicly accessible to people in the area today? This project will work to develop a 20-minute documentary, "Pantisocracy and Azilum," to address these questions. It would air on WVIA-TV and premiere at local movie theaters, as

the pilot documentary in a Bucknell-produced series, "Stories of the Susquehanna Valley." The documentary and related videography will also provide materials for digital atlas materials on the watershed being developed at Bucknell, in conjunction with community organizations on the North Branch of the Susquehanna and with local high school classes, to be used also by the Envision the Susquehanna organization of the Chesapeake Conservancy.

In the late 18th century there was an establishment of utopian communities along the Susquehanna River, following the military removal of the Indian nations, which placed the frontier region at the center of Trans-Atlantic debate over the future of the modern era. Why was the Susquehanna River chosen for the location of these communities? Who were the people leaving Europe to establish them? What were the myths and stories that made them choose North America as their escape from factions fighting over the meaning of the French Revolution in Europe? The focus will be on the contemporary establishment of Joseph Priestley's Colony of Friends, Coleridge's Pantisocracy, and the Physiocrat-influenced community of French Azilum, on the North Branch of the Susquehanna River. How did these three early settlements influence the areas of the river they inhabited? What was the legacy of their communal ideals, and vastly different politics, on the early American republic? What ideals and myths and apparent patterns of landscape developed in these times still persist along the Susquehanna today? What is the legacy that was left behind by the utopian societies and the men who attempted to establish them, and what are their lessons about the relationships of human beings and the natural world?

Interdisciplinary Nature:

There are many different disciplines that will be connected in this project. It involves history that is not only relevant to the Susquehanna community but to the United States as a whole. Dr. Joseph Priestley was connected with many of this nation's founding fathers, such as Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin. It includes transatlantic cultural studies. It will examine the literature that romanticized America and thus caused early European migration to this country, and the enduring influence of literary myth-making. It will consider environmental humanities implications of ideas about nature and patterns of settlement. It will also examine the politics of the people who came from Europe and their effect on the early American republic. Another aspect central to our work will be digital studies, developing appropriate forms for expressing research in publicly accessible ways, and in the process linking textual, spatial, and visual story-telling methods.

We have already been involved in research background for the summer project, as two of the seven students in the Susquehanna Digital Projects Group, which has been meeting

this year, coordinated by Prof. Siewers, Digital Scholarship Coordinator Andy Famiglietti, and Videographer Brianna Derr. This semester's research and field trips and script-writing build on work last semester and last summer by undergraduate researchers and faculty in the Stories of the Susquehanna Valley project at Bucknell, while also coordinating with the community network of the North Branch Trail. Bronwyn also has been developing video documentaries in her Film and Media Studies coursework this semester, gaining experience for the summer, while Laura worked last semester in the Environmental Residential College at coordinating production of a video that helped build resistance to the proposed tire burner in White Deer Township. The documentary project as a whole relates to Prof. Siewers' work on a book project for Stories of the Susquehanna Valley related to the Priestley, Pantisocracy, and Azilum communities. So far related digital mapping work by undergraduate researchers has yielded historically significant find the business and real-estate development aspects of Priestley's extensive landholdings in the region, apart from his utopian ideals.

Research Environment and Work Plan:

At the beginning in the summer, over a span of three weeks, we will work intensively in the development and production of the film that is the outcome of our research. We will be working with Professor Siewers, Digital Scholarship Coordinator Andy Famigiletti, and Videographer Brianna Derr for the production of the documentary. This project will also involve collaboration with WVIA-TV through board members Marty Walzer and Skip Wieder. We will have daily meetings and work in the LIT studios, visits to WVIA studios, and field visits to locations on the river for filming and interviews. We will go on working trips to Priestley's home, related stretches of the North Branch of the river, and to French Azilum, for footage and hours spent on editing. These three weeks of production will be high intensity work including weekends.

March 14: Brianna and Andy create storyboard frame in which students fill research components

March 17: The next scheduled pizza lunch meeting at which Brianna and Andy will assign students to fill in research

March 28: Frame completed by students

March 31: Storyboarding work begins

April 14: Storyboard completed (NB: mini break due to end of semester student

commitments)

May 8: Final exams end

May 12: Script writing and video training begin (e.g. use of camera, location shooting training) Brianna trains students to do this

May 30: Draft script completed by students; test video (NOT final video) submitted by students

Student Self-Statements

Bronwyn Barnwell

Bronwyn is a theatre and Film and Media Studies double major. This semester she is a member of the Advanced Film and Media Production Seminar and is currently working on a short documentary film for the organization Love Flows which surrounds the issue of child hunger in the Central Pennsylvania area. She is also in "The Green World," a class taught by Professor Siewers, who has been an inspiration for her. She performed in an experimental theatre production *Same River* last year that covered the environment topic of oil fracking in areas near or around the Susquehanna Valley, and while she has been here for three years, she would like to learn more about the history of the Valley and make it accessible information for everyone. She is from New Mexico and is very interested in the idea of the past and present being available at the same time due to the environment and culture in which she was raised.

Laura Lujan

Laura Lujan is a first year student and a potential Sociology and English Major. This semester has been one of great change and adaptation. She is from Los Angeles, California and has never been in a small community, such as Lewisburg. She wants to learn more about it and what components are an important part of its history. She is a part of the Environmental Residential College and is current Terracycle coordinator for the Bucknell Environmental Club. Professor Siewers was Laura's professor for her foundation seminar class, a class every freshman takes to assimilate into college, and is her current advisor. Laura is also taking another course with Professor Siewers this semester, called Literature and the Environment. She feels that being involved in the Susquehanna Project will allow her to gain needed skills essential to the success of her life not only as a student but in general. She also finds that an opportunity to become more ingrained inside the Bucknell Community so early in your college career is an opportunity to great to pass up.

Annmarie Mullen

Annmarie Mullen is a first year student and a Biomedical Engineering major. She is the outreach coordinator for the Society of Women Engineers and a crew member for Bucknell's Performance Services. This semester has been focused on the math, science, and engineering for her, which has taught how to think practically yet creatively, but for her elective Annmarie choose an environmental studies class. Her interest in environmental studies began last semester when she first joined the Environmental Residential college and took Professor Siewers' class Christianity and Sustainability. As part of this program, she worked on a documentary about the sustainable aspects of a new building on campus where she performed and recorded interviews, filmed B-roll, and edited the video. Annmarie feels it is so important to be a part of the Susquehanna Project because she sees the value in doing things outside of one's normal realm in order to be both well rounded and satisfied. She also wants to be part of telling this region's story because she has learned the value of historical connections to a region from growing up near Milford, PA.

Michelle Gallagher

Michelle Gallagher is a first year English graduate student. As an undergraduate student, she wrote her honors thesis with Professor Siewers about fantasy literature and eco-criticism, and last semester as a graduate student she studied in his Seminar in Ecossemiotics. She believes that assisting with the Susquehanna documentary project will not only allow her to explore an interest in the relationship between storytelling and place, but also help her to develop crucial skills in research, filmmaking, and planning and implementing a comprehensive and cooperative project. This project also offers a unique opportunity to work with students and professionals from multidisciplinary backgrounds on a project connecting digital technology and the humanities. Having grown up in Elk County, Pennsylvania, she also feels a personal connection to this project, particularly as central Pennsylvania continues to be a focal point of current environmentalism discourse.

Emerging Scholars in Interdisciplinary Studies Summer Research Program

Application Guidelines:

Eligibility: Eligible candidates include all enrolled undergraduate students in good standing at Bucknell University. The program seeks to encourage undergraduates who have not yet had the opportunity to pursue independent research, especially those representing the social sciences and the arts and humanities.

Description: The goal of the Emerging Scholars in Interdisciplinary Studies Program is to enable promising young scholars to explore research interests with a faculty mentor. This program differs from other summer research grants, such as those provided through the Program for Undergraduate Research, in that applicants pursue different types of exploratory conceptual and applied research rather than a more structured research project. The program allows emerging scholars to develop interests and expertise in an interdisciplinary field of study while honing their research skills under the tutelage of a faculty mentor or mentors.

Successful candidates will present projects that explicitly draw on multiple disciplines such as economics and religion and/or multiple fields of study within related disciplines such as environmental economics and environmental ethics. In addition, projects should seek to explore and integrate themes of interest including, but not limited to, sustainability, democracy, human rights, public health, climate change, place/community studies, conflict studies, community wellness, civic education, shale gas development (e.g., Marcellus Shale), and watershed studies, among others.

Application: Students interested in applying for this program should submit an application that includes the following:

- ❖ A presentation of the research question(s) or theme(s)
- ❖ An explanation of the interdisciplinary nature of the research question(s) or theme(s) ❖ A description of the research environment
- ❖ A statement of support from faculty mentor or mentors

The application should be written by the student. Application materials should reflect a high level of involvement by the student in defining and narrowing the project. The student should include in

the application a brief summary of his/her own background and interest in undertaking this research. The proposal must include a clearly defined set of goals for the proposed research that are achievable within a period of 8-10 weeks during the summer months as well as evidence of intellectual collaboration between the student and faculty member(s) in both the formulation and completion of the project. The proposal should also include a brief summary of what the proposed research will produce (e.g., an annotated bibliography, a literature review, or a research paper) and how the project will support the student's educational goals (e.g., supporting development of an honors thesis project during senior year).

The proposal should be written in language that is understandable to those whose area of specialization is outside the area of the proposed research. It is important that the application criteria (see below) are clearly addressed. Please note that grammatical lapses, sloppy editing, and spelling errors will negatively influence the committee's impression of the proposal. In keeping with the objective of clarity, the goals of the project and the student's work plan should also be clearly evident to the members of the advisory committee.

PART I: Cover Page, to include:

1. Title of the Project
2. Student Name and Class Year
3. Campus Address (Box #) and Cell phone #
4. Email Address
5. Student BUID
6. Name, Department, and Email Address of Faculty Mentor (s)

The cover page is to be signed by the student and mentor.

PART II: Limit the following to three single-spaced word-processed pages, using 12 point font.
Statement of support from faculty mentor or mentors

Description of the research question(s) or theme(s):

The student should describe the research question(s) or theme(s) and the planned research outcome, typically a focused literature review or a similar finished product. In writing this paragraph, students should be mindful of time constraints in designing their summer research question, and thus propose a project that is sufficiently narrow to allow completion during the summer, but leave room for discovery of some new angles that might inform future projects. Regardless of what is proposed, a logical connection between process and outcome must be evident to the selection committee.

Description of the interdisciplinary nature of the research question(s) or theme(s)

The student should provide a brief discussion of the two or more disciplines, sub-fields, or domains, that will inform the project and the rationale for synthesizing material from these areas. Ordinarily, this discussion will include a discussion of the student's own background, through coursework or other means, in these disciplines, or discussion of the student's background in one area and advice received from faculty mentors on relevant other disciplines to add to this knowledge.

Describe the research environment and work plan

The student should discuss the planned research environment for the summer, including work plan, work location, and planned meeting frequency. Please note that contact and communication between student and mentor is expected to be both regular and substantive throughout the project. The frequency with which the student and mentor interact, and the general availability of the mentor, will be important factors in selecting summer fellows.

Faculty Endorsement

The faculty mentor should submit under separate cover a supporting letter that details his/her commitment to the completion of the project, summarizes how mentoring will occur, and provides an assessment of the student's scholarly potential. The letter should also briefly summarize how the project relates to the faculty mentor's scholarship or teaching as well as how the project will benefit the student scholarly development.