

Request for Letters of Research Interest (LOI)

Title: Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historical Park Ethnohistory: African American Communities in Context

Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historical Park (CHOH) in partnership with the National Capital Region Cultural Anthropology Program are interested in producing an Ethnohistory for CHOH. Partners of the National Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit Network (CESU: <http://chwacesu.al.umces.edu/>) are invited to respond to this request for Letters of Research Interest.

This document will review existing information on park resources traditionally valued by stakeholders. An Ethnohistory is formed using information mostly from archives and publications; interviews with community members and other constituents—often on trips to specific sites— will be incorporated to supply missing data. This study will also identify further research needs.

Background

Stretching from Washington, DC to Cumberland, Maryland, the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal was an engineering marvel and testament to 19th century innovation and ingenuity. From 1828 to 1924 the C&O Canal was used to transport coal and other goods from western Maryland to the port of Georgetown. The Canal tells the story of immigrant labor, western expansion, and the Civil War.

The Canal also presents a microcosm of the Civil Rights story starting with enslaved people working near and on the canal, the Canal's use as a pathway to freedom for runaway slaves, African American men and women working for the C&O Canal Company during the Canal's operation, and African American communities who continue to live and work adjacent to the canal. While the C&O Canal's history is replete with the influences of African Americans, their stories have not been featured in park interpretation and historical narratives of the C&O Canal.

Established as a National Historical Park, "in order to preserve and interpret the historic and scenic features of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, and to develop the potential of the canal for public recreation, including such restoration as may be needed," the park has been under National Park Service (NPS) stewardship since 1971. Today CHOH provides visitors with a multitude of recreational and educational opportunities and is maintained by NPS in collaboration with the C&O Canal Trust and various affiliated local interest groups.

Purpose

C&O Canal National Historical Park, working with the National Capital Region Cultural Anthropology Program, are seeking a partner to aid in preparing an Ethnographic Overview and Assessment (EOA). This EOA of the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historical Park funded by the Civil Rights initiative will focus on African American contributions and associations with the Park. The Ethnographic Overview and Assessment will meet a critical need identified in the Regional Cultural Resource Management (CRM) Needs Assessment by providing a baseline

cultural anthropological study to document traditional associations between African American communities and park landscapes, places, and resources. Documentation will include analysis of primary source material as well as interviews with African American communities and descendants of persons historically associated with the canal in context to the resources and other significant communities of note (including but not limited to Native Americans and immigrants).

The Ethnohistory will comply with National Park Service policies and federal mandates. The overall goal is to inform park planning, management, and interpretation. The Ethnohistory is essential for all parks and can serve as the basis for many other studies, as explained in Chapter 10 of the NPS-28: Cultural Resource Management Guideline, per NPS Director's Order 28. A key goal of the Ethnohistory is to provide baseline ethnographic documentation in a manner that is accessible to park staff, the identified ethnographic groups, researchers, managers, interpreters, educators, and the public as appropriate.

The Ethnohistory will review existing information on park resources. It will identify potential key informants and devise methodology to efficiently capture their beliefs, values and opinions. The Ethnohistory will also describe the dynamics of the group these informants represent. Documentary information for the completion of the Ethnohistory will come mostly from CHOH archives, publications and online sources. It will be supplemented by interviews with community members and other constituents. This will involve trips to specific sites along the Canal to supply any missing ethnographic data. The study will also identify areas for future research and collaboration. Results of studies like these are fully considered in resource management plans, park interpretive or educational programs, and in the day-to-day operations of parks.

Nature of Work Required

Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historical Park is looking for a partner that can conduct and complete an Ethnohistory of the park. Responses to this LOI should briefly identify the specific capabilities within the CESU partner institution that will allow them to address the needs of the project, including identification of the relevant departments, faculty, students, and resources that will be involved in the project. Response to this LOI should also briefly outline their approach to the project. *A proposed budget is not required at this time.*

Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historical Park and the National Capital Region Cultural Anthropology Program envision the project will:

1. Provide historic context for understanding African Americans with historical and traditional associations with/within C&O canal park boundaries.
2. Document remnants or descendants of historic African American communities.
3. Describe cultural meaning and/or significance of CHOH by contemporary African American communities, describe their beliefs and values regarding CHOH.
4. Develop management recommendations/recommendations for future work for park wide Ethnographic Overview and Assessment identifying all associated groups.

5. Provide a meaningful exchange of knowledge and ideas that will enhance scholarly research, while expanding the Park's and public's understanding of CHOH.
6. Identify areas of shared interest or scholarship, and also divergent views of the experience of CHOH.
7. Identify other areas in which future consultation and cooperation is desired, warranted, or requested.

Project methods should include the review and analysis of existing historical and ethnographic literature and archival documentation, and fieldwork including interviews with key cultural experts from traditionally associated and distinct cultural communities. The project documentation will include preliminary lists and information regarding ethnographic resources located in the park.

The park expects that various themes will organically arise through the analysis, but anticipates that the ethnographic overview and assessment will explore the following directions:

1. Slavery, African American Laborers, and Canal Workers: Throughout the canal's construction from 1828 to 1850, evidence of enslaved people working on the C&O Canal is indicated through evidence of letters of payment of services and newspaper advertisements noting runaway slaves.
2. Escape to Freedom - Underground Railroad: The canal provided an avenue for freedom seekers to escape bondage. Enslaved men, women and children traveled along the canal, or escaped as stowaways on canal boats. Known examples include Hancock, Maryland with anticipated documentary evidence.
3. Civil War and Emancipation: At Ferry Hill, enslaved people worked overlooking the Potomac River which became a boundary between the Confederacy and the United States during the Civil War; it faces a portion of Virginia incorporated during the Civil War as West Virginia; it overlooks the C&O Canal, a vital link heading northwest on the Underground Railroad; and it takes its name from the ferry that transported people and their stories through these hallowed grounds for generations. After the Civil War, "freedmen" schools were established nearby in Jefferson and Washington counties.
4. African American Boat Captains: African American captains piloted canal boats down the C&O operations until the C&O Canal Company banned African Americans from captaining vessels in 1856 after reports of "runaway slaves" working on the canal or escaping by hiding in boats with black boatmen. After the Civil War, the rules African Americans were again officially enrolled as boat captains on the C&O Canal Company boat registers in 1878.
5. Rehabilitation of the Canal: From 1938 to 1941, Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Restoration began on 22 miles of the C&O Canal near Great Falls; this work included two African American CCC camps based near Carderock, modern-day Carderock picnic pavilion adjacent to I-495 was the center of a bustling CCC Camp with over 200 men between the ages of 17 and 25. This segregated federal labor program attempted to operate "separate but equal" work and living conditions. These events strike at the heart of civil rights issues that gripped the Nation during the early 1900s by revealing the

similar, yet also markedly dissimilar, experiences that African Americans faced while working the same jobs as white workers.

6. Canal Communities: Several African American residential communities are located near the canal including the historic African American community of Tobytown near Swain's Lockhouse in Maryland. These communities were undoubtedly shaped by the canal's presence and conversion to a NPS unit in 1971. Documentation will explore how local residents interfaced with the canal's resources, and how these communities shaped local perceptions and histories of the canal through time.
7. Notable African American personalities associated with the canal such as George Pointer

Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historical Park's substantial involvement with the project will include: providing the cooperator previously collected ethnohistorical and ethnographic studies pertaining to the CHOH; providing introductions to individuals or groups for their involvement in the project; coordinating and consulting the findings; and aiding the cooperator in producing a report on the project that meets the Secretary of the Interior's standards.

Project Timeframe

Deadline for responding to this letter of interest is Wednesday, February 20, 2019.

Requirements

The research will be directed and overseen by a Principal Investigator (PI). The PI should hold a Ph.D. in cultural anthropology, or other associated field should be able to provide a comparable research portfolio. The researcher must demonstrate significant experience in the research, writing, and the timely completion of ethnographic research.

Products

The products from this project will include a report documenting the ethnographic study. The partner will also submit field notes, recordings and images captured during the study to CHOH. All field materials will become part of CHOH archives.

Funds Available

Project funds available includes the CESU overhead rate of 17.5 percent. The project will be funded by the National Park Service. Only non-federal partners within the national CESU network are eligible to apply. The National Park Service is expecting \$160,000 for this effort; the scope for the project will be adjusted based upon the funding received.

Letters of Interest

Letters of Interest (LOI) should be sent to the addresses located in the "contact" section. LOI's will be reviewed by a panel. The panel will select the top candidate(s) who will be asked to provide and submit a full proposal detailing the work to be done, providing and describing the methodology and research design, and outlining a schedule of deliverables.

The LOI should describe your research interest(s) in the projects, past projects that are similar in topic and/or form, and any relevant experience in completing ethnographic projects. Please include your name, affiliated organization(s), and contact information. Please try and limit LOI's to 2 pages.

Contact

Responses of interest should be directed before the closing date to Danny Filer (danny_filer@nps.gov). Additional questions can be answered by contacting Eola Dance, Regional Cultural Anthropologist, National Capital Region, National Park Service (202-619-7205).