



United States Department of the Interior



National Park Service

Midwest Region
601 Riverfront Drive
Omaha, Nebraska 68102-4226

**Midwest Regional Office, National Park Service
And Arkansas Post National Memorial, Arkansas**

Letter of Research Interest (LOI)

Title: Ethnographic Overview & Assessment: African-Americans and Arkansas Post National Memorial

The Midwest Region Cultural Anthropology program is interested in an ethnographic overview and assessment study relating to the involvement of African Americans in historic developments at Arkansas Post National Memorial (ARPO). Historic resources indicate that African Americans have been present at the post and environs since the early Historic period, but details are sparse through the Fur Trade and Territorial periods, with slightly more evidence known for the Civil War period. It is not until the post-Civil War that historic records on African Americans are more readily available. Census data indicates a significant proportion (more than half) of the local population is African American; this, and the prevalence of intergenerational continuity (for both African- and Euro-American communities) in Desha County suggest that the local African American community has significant historic connections to cultural resources at ARPO. This project will initiate a targeted ethnographic study to identify connections, assess significant gaps in the data, and develop interpretation of the African American history at Arkansas Post.

Henri de Tonti, an explorer and fur trader, established the Arkansas Post in 1686 as a French trading post on the Arkansas River as the first European settlement in the lower Mississippi River valley. For the next 118 years, the Arkansas Post served the trading and strategic purposes of the French and Spanish governments until the area was acquired by the United States as part of the Louisiana Purchase in 1804. It was designated the first capital of the Arkansas Territory in 1819. The site was briefly under Confederate Army control from 1861-1863 during the American Civil War. The Arkansas Post National Memorial was established in 1860 to commemorate the multi-cultural history of the area including the Quapaw Tribe, the French and Spanish settlements, the American Revolutionary War period, and American settlement and history.

For the National Park Service, an Ethnographic Overview and Assessments is a comprehensive study of types, uses, and users of ethnographic resources, in this case groups of people of African-American descent who may have historic and/or contemporary cultural connections to the Arkansas Post and surrounding area. An EO&A reviews existing information and identifies new data needs. This type of study is conducted when park resources are known or thought to be traditionally associated with a contemporary group or groups¹. The

¹ The NPS defines “traditionally associated peoples” as social/cultural entities such as tribes, communities, and kinship units, as well as park neighbors, traditional residents, and former residents who remain attached to a park area despite having relocated. Such groups are “traditionally associated” with a particular park when (1) the entity

overview reviews and summarizes existing ethnographic data for people and resources associated with the park; the assessment evaluates them and identifies data gaps. Information is derived primarily from existing archival and published materials and is supplemented with ethnographic interviewing of knowledgeable community consultants.

The EOA will include development of a historic context of African-American cultural connections to ARPO. The EOA will also include a synthesis of descriptions and an evaluation of existing ethnographic sources and data and description of use for each type of resource identified by the study and develop a list of ethnographic resources for inclusion in National Register of Historic Places data, and an annotated, current bibliography and record of consultation, as well as recommendations for further study.

This project will address the Park's ethnographic resources by developing baseline information, capturing and transferring knowledge, improving geographic information systems, and improving interpretation of African-American history and contemporary cultural significance of ARPO. This project addresses a significant information gap regarding the relationship of the African-Americans to the park.

The Midwest Regional Cultural Anthropology Program envisions the project will provide a meaningful exchange of knowledge between traditionally associated African-American communities and ARPO about culturally important places located within the park.

Responses to this LOI should identify the specific capabilities within the university 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 outline the approach to the project envisioned by the Principal Investigator, along with a proposed budget outline that supports the research approach.

LOI Response Timeframe

Deadline for responding to this letter of interest is Monday, March 25, 2019.

Project Principal Investigator Requirements

The research will be directed and overseen by a Principal Investigator (PI). The PI should be an applied cultural anthropologist with a Ph.D. in cultural anthropology, or someone with demonstrable and comparable research experience, evidenced by a publication record demonstrating a professional level of research, analysis, and report preparation. It is expected that this record will reflect an understanding and ability to apply ethnographic and cultural anthropology research methods, and a level of education and experience beyond that of a B.A. and two years of graduate study in cultural anthropology. The researcher must demonstrate significant involvement in the research, writing, and the timely completion of ethnographic research. Experience and research with African-American communities in the United States is desirable.

Products

The products from this project will include a report documenting the ethnographic study.

regards park resources as essential to its development and continued identity as a culturally distinct people; (2) the association has endured for at least two generations (40 years); and (3) the association began prior to establishment of the park. (Management Policies 2006: 159)

Funds Available

Project funds available are approximately \$97,000. The funding includes an overhead rate of 17.5 percent. The project will be funded by the National Park Service. Universities within the CESU network are eligible to apply. ***This project is not a grant***, and will be administered as a Federal Financial Assistance research project through the CESU network.

Letters of Interest

Letters of Interest (LOI) should be sent to the address located in the “contact” section. LOI’s will be reviewed by the NPS and the top candidate(s) will be asked to provide and submit a full proposal responsive to a Scope of Work. That proposal will detail the work to be conducted, providing and describing the methodology and research design, and outlining a schedule for the project.

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, along with a copy of a resume or vita for the Principal Investigator. Please include your name, affiliated organization(s), and contact information. Please try and limit LOI’s to 4 pages.

Contact

Responses of interest should be directed before the closing date to Michael J. Evans, Ph.D. (Michael_Evans@nps.gov). Additional questions can be answered by contacting Michael J. Evans, Ph.D. , Chief, Cultural Anthropology Program, Midwest Region Ethnography Program, National Park Service (612-345-0019).