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Office of University
Communications

September 4, 2014

Conference and Annual Writer's Meeting to Examine "Cotton Mill Culture"

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C. – The heritage, literature, and traditions of the southern textile mill culture will be showcased next week as part of the Southern Appalachian Culture Series, to be held Oct. 3-4 at Gardner-Webb University in Boiling Springs, N.C.

Photo by Lewis Wickes
Hine / courtesy of
Southern Appalachian
Culture Series

The weekend will focus on the exploration of many facets of Southern Appalachian culture. The theme for this year's event is "Threads that Count: Cotton Mill Culture," and is the third in a series of conferences, once again held in conjunction with the Appalachian Writer's Association (AWA) annual meeting and awards dinner.

Through the event, organizers hope to educate and inform the conference participants while celebrating the history of southern industrialism that emerged in the late 19th century. "The 'New South' that emerged after the Civil War was partly characterized by the rise of southern industrialists who worked to diversify the economy away from an overdependence on agriculture," said Dr. Tim Vanderburg, professor of history at GWU and an organizer of the conference. "The 'Cotton Mill Campaign' spread all over the southern Piedmont and people flocked to mill villages for employment."

The AWA will convene their annual meeting at 4:30 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 3. That evening, a dinner will be offered featuring Gardner-Webb University graduate and best-selling author Ron Rash.

A range of regional scholars will offer academic presentations throughout the Saturday sessions, which will include entertainment by Al Dunkleman and New Plowed Ground, an acoustic blend of old and new Americana, and Log Cabin String Band, among others.

As part of the conference, selected collections from the "Common Threads" exhibit will be showcased in the Tucker Student Center Gallery through Oct. 8. Earlier this year, the Kings Mountain Historical Museum (Kings Mountain, N.C.) displayed "Common Threads," an original exhibit that celebrated the textile traditions of the surrounding region. The show highlighted textile technology as a commonality that connects every generation of residents throughout the decades. Kings Mountain Historical Museum Director and

Curator, Adria L. Focht, will present a lecture about the exhibit during the culture series. Textile items from the Lawndale Historical Museum (Lawndale, N.C.) will also be featured at the Dover Memorial Library, on the Gardner-Webb campus.

The full conference is open to anyone who would like to attend. The cost is \$80, with a discounted rate of \$45 for students, independent scholars, high school teachers, and retired faculty. Those interested can attend the dinner only for \$20 per person. The deadline for conference and/or dinner reservations is Sept. 15. For more information or to register, visit www.soappculture.com.

The Southern Appalachian Culture Series embraces and showcases the culture, literature, and traditions of Southern Appalachia. We are dedicated to finding the literary gems and scholars throughout the Southern Appalachian region. Every two years a conference focusing on a theme or featuring a nationally renowned writer is held at Gardner-Webb University in celebration of Southern Appalachian culture.

Located in Boiling Springs, N.C., Gardner-Webb University blends a liberal arts core curriculum with 60 major and minor professional programs of study, a comprehensive academic experience that flows from our Christian commitment to intellectual freedom, service and leadership.