



Rocky Fork Exhibit has been Infused into L&C Curriculum

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GODFREY – “Let the Church Say Amen: Rocky Fork Church in Voice and Vision,” a historical multimedia exhibit in Hatheway Cultural Center Gallery at Lewis and Clark Community College, has been infused into L&C’s curriculum by several faculty members. The exhibit is open to the public daily from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. until March 21.

The Rocky Fork Exhibit is presented by the Mannie Jackson Endowment and Center for the Humanities and is a Lewis and Clark Arts and Humanities Project, with funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and the Lewis and Clark Community College Foundation.

Philosophy Professor Gerald Mozur approached the exhibit from the question of personal identity for his philosophy class. His students visited the exhibit and explored W.E.B. Du Bois’ description of black consciousness as a “double consciousness” in relation to the exhibit.

“Perhaps it is my area, philosophy, that lends itself to this sort of infusion, but as I look down the road, I look forward to the next theme, and then a new one after that,” Mozur said. “Each year, via the NEH grant, teachers will get to work a different theme into instruction. For me, this represents an opportunity to push students further to think about themselves and others and how we come to know ourselves—a basic philosophical issue.”

Music Professor Peter Hussey used the exhibit as an opportunity to do something unusual in his non-western music class.

“I have an assignment involving aesthetics, music and culture I typically use for exhibits on campus, but in the case of this exhibit, given the depth, stories and history, I decided to try something different,” Hussey said. “In class, we have already focused on the ‘humanity’ and cultural aspects of the exhibit, and I will then reinforce these themes

with music as we reach the African, South American and African-American portions of the class this semester.”

Associate Professor of Nursing Dawna Egelhoff asked her students to work in teams and give presentations, which focused on Rocky Fork. The presentations are worth 10 percent of the students’ final grade.

“I wanted my students to familiarize themselves with the exhibit and assess the Rocky Fork community as a nurse,” Egelhoff said. “Students focused on the needs of the community, while thinking of how nursing impacts the evolution of care. I also asked them to use a variety of resources to help support their findings.”

Material culture kits are available for L&C students in the art department and Reid Memorial Library. These kits contain items from various cultures that can be used as references when learning about the exhibit. When the exhibit ends, an additional material culture kit will be created with items from the exhibit. This kit will be available for future use.

Exhibit Curator Jim Price compiled and distributed a list of books and videos that broadly suggest some ways of seeing and becoming aware of the historical knowledge surrounding the exhibit to instructors. Price also mentioned there are some videos in the library of interviews with members of the African-American community, some of them Rocky Fork descendants.

Secluded in an area of southwestern Illinois at the confluence of the Piasa Creek, the Rock Fork Creek and the Mississippi River, the Rocky Fork Community offered solace and a sense of permanence to African-American freedom seekers in the 1830s. This community grew as a network of people gathered to support each other and aid those seeking their way along the Underground Railroad.

L&C’s Rocky Fork Exhibit aims to shed light on this unique community by showcasing oral histories, the photography of L&C Faculty Member Jeff Vaughn, newspaper clippings, historical artifacts and more. The exhibit also features an adaptation of Rocky Fork New Bethel African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church. The AME church served as a focal point for the community and survives today.

To see more photos of the Rocky Fork exhibit construction and opening, visit L&C’s Rocky Fork Flickr set at www.goo.gl/1lqqxO. For more information on the exhibit, visit www.lc.edu/rockyfork. To view a video preview of the exhibit, please visit www.vimeo.com/88315045.

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