

2019 Sweat Equity Investment in the Cotton Kingdom Symposium: 400 Years of “Knowing Who We Be”—The Gullah Geechee Story

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Type:

Symposium

Date:

September 30, 2019

Location:

Mississippi, United States

Subject Fields:

African American History / Studies, American History / Studies, African History / Studies, Art, Art History & Visual Studies, History Education

CALL FOR PARTICIPATION

2019 Sweat Equity Investment in the Cotton Kingdom Symposium:

400 Years of “Knowing Who We Be”—The Gullah Geechee Story

February 2019—The Gullah Geechee people are the descendants of Central and West Africans who came from different ethnic and social groups. They were enslaved together on the isolated sea and barrier islands that span what is now designated as the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor - a stretch of the U.S. coastline that extends from Pender County, North Carolina to South Carolina and Georgia Sea Islands and coastal lowlands of St. John’s County, Florida and for 30 miles inland. The people known as the Gullah and the Geechee had an inherently strong community life and the geographical isolation contributed to their ability to preserve their African heritage probably more than other African groups in the United States of America. As a result, the history, stories, beliefs, and creative expressions became critical antecedents to African American culture overall; as well as, the broader American mosaic. Their narratives chronicle **400 Years of “*knowing who we be.*”**

This year’s **Sweat Equity Investment in the Cotton Kingdom Symposium** is dedicated to the 400 Years of making a way out of “knowing” who we be ... as informed by the Gullah Geechee tradition. The tradition of the Gullah Geechee reveals how over time, place and space their forefathers and mothers developed a language as a means of communicating with each other and enabled them to preserve many African practices in their day-to-day activities through the arts, crafts, cuisine and spirituality still evident today. This is an evolving story of self-determination, persistence, resilience, innovation, isolation, and enslavement and this year’s theme for the annual event, **taking place on The Mississippi Valley State University campus, Wednesday and Thursday November 6-7, 2019.**

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Tobacco, indigo, and rice are considered by some to be “the holy trinity” but we must never forget about cotton; which links these four pillars of the capitalistic way of life in Western societies, (specifically the American and European economies) directly to the traditions of West Africa. The art, food-ways, language and overall way of life of the Gullah Geechee people have, in no small measure, contributed to America as its “foundational culture.” It is no wonder that European colonists and slave traders sought out African people to realize the great American experiment. They were experts in planting, harvesting, and processing the crops that grew well all along the Gullah Geechie Heritage Corridor. Their skills and expertise were thereby transferred along what is determinable the “African Trail of Tears,” ... the slave states of the American South.

This **Call For Participation** goes out to everyone who knows who they “be” and have information on how we collectively made a way out of no way in America. Please submit your proposal for papers, performance art, visual art, and food-ways presentations to the attention of 2019 COTTON SYMPOSIUM, cassie.turnipseed@mvsu.edu; or visit cottonpickers.us and follow the link to submit. DEADLINE FOR PROPOSALS SEPTEMBER 30, 1019.

For more information on becoming a sponsor, please contact:

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