

February 2, 2006

**Dear Colleague:**

It is exciting to tell you about a new faculty summer workshop entitled “Concord, Massachusetts and Utopian Thought of the Early 19th Century.” This is an opportunity for you to join with other community college faculty members from around the country for a one-week workshop in Concord and surrounding sites on the significance of seminal transcendental and utopian groups and individuals. It is hard to imagine a place on American soil that had a bigger impact on American social and cultural thinking in the early nineteenth century. At the workshop we will engage in interdisciplinary study of the rich cross-currents of literary, philosophical, religious, and social thinking that marks a pivotal point in American history. Many seeds of idealistic and utopian ideologies bore fruit in this small community to the west of Boston. Participants will enjoy all the advantages of a seminar setting with four major transcendental and utopian scholars. Interaction with scholars and colleagues, readings, and visits to historic sites will constitute the core of the week-long study. The workshop will provide participants the opportunity to develop classroom teaching activities or research projects based on interdisciplinary research conducted at the Massachusetts Historical Society and other Concord area repositories of primary sources.

**Workshop Topics**

As part of the NEH *We the People* initiative, emphasizing the exploration of significant themes and events in American history and culture, each seven-day workshop, July 9-15 or July 16-22, will be devoted to the study of transcendental and utopian thought centered in and around Concord, Massachusetts, and the intellectual and cultural environment that characterized the area in the early 19th Century. Each workshop will focus on the latest scholarship dealing with American utopian and communal groups, with special emphasis on homegrown communal societies such as the transcendentalists’ Brook Farm and Fruitland and more radical perfectionist utopias such as Ann Lee’s Shakers and John Humphrey Noyes’ Oneida, New York group. Such early 19<sup>th</sup> Century American religious/cultural groups demonstrated the potential of American freedom and these utopian groups had a unique role in broadening early American cultural, moral, ethical, and religious boundaries. They designed perfectionist societies and then set out to create utopian communities.

Among American intellectual movements, few equal the movement fostered by the transcendentalists centered in Concord. These writers and thinkers had an influence in American letters far out of proportion to their numbers. Because transcendentalism has the qualities of both a philosophy and a religion, many questions for discussion. For example, how did a community grounded in strict Calvinism come to embrace Unitarianism and then give birth to transcendentalism? How and why did Concord foster such a unique intellectual community? What is the relationship between a movement directed toward individual fulfillment and the structures of communal living in these utopian societies? We will ask why Brook Farm and Fruitlands, the two utopias founded by the transcendentalists and intended to foster the physical, intellectual, and spiritual growth of individuals, did not last long. Conversely, other perfectionist groups of the same era seem to have had more success by putting emphasis on the development of the group first, with individual happiness always tied directly to the health and development of the group. Both the Shaker communities and the single Oneida Community had longer and more successful existences than the transcendentalists’ communities, even though these

societies were each based on radically different ideologies. One obvious question is why did their societies survive for such a long time when the transcendentalists' communities did not? Ann Lee's ascetic Shaker communities and Noyes' hedonistic Oneida Community discovered formulas for more long-lasting success.

This workshop will raise a number of questions dealing with transcendental and utopian ideas. Dr. Robert Gross, University of Connecticut, will discuss the question of how and why did this little village west of Boston become so important in American thought. He will explore the relationship of transcendentalism and reform movements. Dr. Charles Capper, Boston University, will examine the nature of transcendentalism in the context of its time and place. The relationship between transcendentalists and community building will be explored by Dr. Sterling DeLano, Villanova University, in his talks on Brook Farm and Fruitlands. Dr. Lawrence Foster, Georgia Institute of Technology, will lead our study of the Shakers and the Oneida Community and engage the broader questions of why and how utopian and perfectionist societies developed in particular ways. He will address the closely related question, why did utopianism and perfectionist societies bloom only in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century in America? In addition, our study will include itinerary site visits to Canterbury Shaker Village in New Hampshire, Brook Farm, Fruitlands, and Walden Pond (site of Thoreau's one-man utopia). Both Dr. Foster and Dr. DeLano will share their unique expertise on this tour and they will be available to answer questions about the nature of these utopias and why and how they operated.

### **Workshop Leadership**

**Dr. Paul Benson**, Professor of Humanities, Mountain View College (DCCCD), Dallas, Texas, is the Project Director of the workshop. Winner of three national teaching awards, Dr. Benson has devoted many years and a sabbatical to studying American utopian groups including all those selected for this workshop.

**Dr. Geoff Grimes**, Professor of Cultural Studies, Mountain View College (DCCCD), is Faculty Mentor for the project. Well known for his cultural studies work, Dr. Grimes has been knighted by the country of Guatemala and has received the national Jefferson Award for Public Service.

**Professor David A. Berry**, Professor of History at Essex County College in Newark, New Jersey Executive Director of the Community College Humanities Association, will serve as the workshop's Project Manager. He received the highest national recognition for his work in the humanities when President Bill Clinton awarded him the National Humanities Medal in 1997.

### **Workshop Scholars**

Each workshop offers an extraordinary collection of scholars who are intimately familiar with historic Concord, transcendental thought, utopianism, and early American communalism.

**Dr. Robert Gross**, the James L. and Shirley A. Draper Professor of Early American History at the University of Connecticut, is the recipient of various national awards, including fellowships from the Guggenheim, Howard, and Rockefeller Foundations, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the American Antiquarian Society. He is currently finishing up a new study on the Concord

movement entitled, The Transcendentalists and Their World.

**Dr. Charles Capper**, Professor of History, Boston University, has been the recipient of Guggenheim, National Endowment for the Humanities, and National Humanities Center fellowships. This year he is a fellow at the Warren Center at Harvard, where he is carrying on a study of the transcendentalist movement in the age of Romantic democracy. His 1999 collection of readings on transcendentalism with Charles Wright, entitled Transient and Permanent: The Transcendentalist Movement and Its Contexts, has been an important contribution to the study of the transcendentalism...

**Dr. Sterling DeLano**, Professor Emeritus of English, Villanova University, is an eminent scholar in utopian studies. His 1983 study on Transcendentalism The Harbinger and New England Transcendentalism: A Portrait of Associationism in America is still a seminal text on the topic while his 2004 book Brook Farm: The Dark Side of Utopia is his recent contribution to the study of this most famous of all American utopias.

**Dr. Lawrence Foster**, Professor of History at Georgia Institute of Technology, is well known for his trailblazing work dealing with the Shakers, the Mormons, and the Oneida perfectionists entitled Religion and Sexuality. Selections from his work, Women, Family, and Utopia: Communal Experiments of the Shakers, the Oneida Community (1991) are included in the Workshop Readings.

**Workshop Readings**

Core texts on the workshop topics will be provided to every workshop participant. These two books are:

Hochfield, George, ed. **Selected Writings of the American Transcendentalists**.  
Second Edition. New Haven University Press, 2004.

Francis, Richard. **Transcendental Utopias: Individual and Community at Brook Farm, Fruitlands, and Walden**. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997.

Selected readings for the workshop will come from the following bibliography. Each participant will receive these readings in the **Workshop Reader** which will be sent to participants before the workshop.

Capper, Charles and Conrad Wright, eds. **Transient and Permanent: The Transcendentalist Movement and Its Contexts**. Boston: Mass. Historical Society/Northeastern University Press, 1999.

DeLano, Sterling. **Brook Farm: The Dark Side of Utopia**. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004.

DeLano, Sterling. **The Harbinger and New England Transcendentalism: A Portrait of Associationism in America**. Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1983.

Foster, Lawrence. **Women, Family, and Utopia: Communal Experiments of the Shakers, the Oneida Community, and the Mormons.** Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1991.

Foster, Lawrence. **Religion and Sexuality: The Shakers, the Mormons, and The Oneida.** Urbana. University of Illinois Press, 1984),

Gross, Robert. "'That Terrible Thoreau': Concord and Its Hermit," in the **Oxford University Press' Historical Guide to Henry D. Thoreau** (2000), edited by William Cain.

### **The Week at a Glance**

#### **Sunday/Registration and Opening Session**

4:00-5:45 PM      Registration  
6:00                      Opening Dinner  
7:00                      Introductions/ Overview by Dr. Paul Benson, Project Director  
7:15-8:45              Keynote Scholar, Dr. Robert Gross, University of Connecticut on **“Why Concord?”**

#### **Monday/Focus: Concord: Center of Reform and Innovation**

8:00-9:00AM        Continental Breakfast  
9:00-10:30         Dr. Robert Gross, "Transcendentalism and Reform"  
10:30-10:45        Break  
10:45-12:15        Dr. Gross, “Using Material Culture in the Classroom”  
12:15-1:45         Lunch with Dr. Gross with a Q/A session on questions raised during the morning session  
2:00-5:00            A guided tour of transcendentalist sites in Concord will be coordinated by Dr. Geoffrey Grimes. Special lectures by docents will be arranged in the Emerson Home Museum and Old Manse Museum.  
6:00-8:30            Dinner with Dr. Charles Capper, Boston University, **“Understanding the Transcendentalists in Context”**

#### **Tuesday/Focus: Significant American Utopian Groups: The Shakers and Oneida**

8:00-9:00AM        Continental Breakfast  
9:00-10:30         Dr. Lawrence Foster, Georgia Institute of Technology, **“The Shakers.”**  
10:30-10:45        Break  
10:45-12:15        Group Discussion on the Shakers led by Dr. Lawrence Foster  
12:15-1:45         Lunch with Dr. Foster  
2:00-3:30            Dr. Lawrence Foster, **“The Oneida Community”**  
3:30-3:45            Break  
3:45-5:00            Individual or Group Study and Research Time  
7:00-8:30            Video Documentaries on the Shakers and Oneida Community lead by Dr. Foster

### **Wednesday/Focus: Transcendental Utopias at Concord School of Philosophy**

#### **Lecture Hall**

9:00-10:30AM	Dr. Sterling DeLano, Villanova University, “ <b>Insights Into the Brook Farm Experiment</b> ”
10:30-10:45	Break
10:45-12:15	Group Discussion on Brook Farm with Dr. DeLano
12:15-1:45	Lunch
2:00-3:30	Dr. Sterling DeLano, “ <b>Insights Into the Fruitlands Experiment</b> ”
3:30-3:45	Break
3:45-5:00	Individual or Group Study and Research Time

### **Thursday/Sites Visits**

8:00AM-8:00PM	Travel to Brook Farm, Walden, Fruitlands and Canterbury Shaker Village with lectures at sites by Dr. Sterling DeLano, and Dr. Lawrence Foster. Faculty participants will have opportunities to talk with the visiting faculty members and docents throughout the day.
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### **Friday/Research Day**

8:30AM-1:00PM	Shuttle to the Massachusetts Historical Society or walk to nearby sites for research
2:00-3:30	Course presentation reports and reflections
3:30-3:45	Break
3:45-5:00	Course presentation reports and reflections

### **Saturday/Presentations**

8:00-9:00AM	Continental Breakfast
9:00-11:00	Course presentation reports and reflections
11:00-11:30	Summary and Closing

### **Workshop Sponsorship and Focus**

The “Concord” workshop is sponsored by the **Community College Humanities Association (CCHA)** and funded by the **National Endowment for the Humanities**. Participants may choose between two workshop weeks: **July 9-15, 2006**, or **July 16-22, 2006**, with twenty-five (25) participants chosen for each week. Faculty participants, selected nationally, will develop individual classroom teaching projects or work on an individual research project intended for publication using workshop resources.

Working with four renowned scholars, participants will have the opportunity to conduct research and use the results primarily to develop course modules to deepen their students understanding of this aspect of American culture or to research and prepare a paper for publication.. All participants will be asked to share the new units designed, explain the teaching modules for existing classes developed as a result of the workshop, or give an overview of a research project at the end of the workshop. Participants will make a commitment to either use new modules in a course taught at their home college or aim to publish a paper based on their research. Participants will be able to share teaching modules with other community college faculty by posting them on their college web site and linking it to the CCHA website. Five faculty participants will be invited to present their teaching modules or

research in concurrent sessions at the five CCHA regional conferences in October and November, 2006.

### **Eligibility and Selection**

Applications are welcome from all currently employed **full-time, part-time, and adjunct faculty members** at community colleges in the United States. An applicant need not have an advanced degree in order to qualify. Faculty from the disciplines of literature, history, philosophy, religion, foreign languages, humanities, religion, anthropology, sociology, political science, urban studies, art and architecture, speech and theater, music and dance and other humanities related fields are encouraged to apply. Individuals with an established interest in the topic and those wishing to develop or expand existing interests in new or interdisciplinary directions are welcome to apply. Please refer to the application eligibility guidelines for more details.

Please note: Under NEH guidelines participants may apply for, and participate in, **no more than two** Landmarks Workshops in the summer of 2006

Participants will be selected on the basis of their statement of purpose and explanation of an individual project, and their potential contributions to the workshop. Programs funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age.

### **Stipend and Commitment**

Each selected participant will receive a stipend of \$500.00 intended to help cover the cost of housing (double-occupancy), meals, materials, and travel. Additional funds for those traveling long distances will also be available, allocated on a case-by-case basis at end of the workshop or shortly thereafter.

Workshop participants are required to attend all scheduled meetings and to engage fully in all project activities. Any participants bringing family members or dependents to Concord must make their own arrangements for accommodations at the Concord Inn or elsewhere. However, participants are strongly encouraged to stay with their colleagues at the Concord Inn. Informal group discussions there are an important part of the leadership experience. Only selected participants may participate in workshop activities. NEH requires that any participants, who for any reason do not complete the full tenure of the project, must refund a pro-rata portion of their stipend.

### **Travel, Housing, and Meals**

Each participant will arrange individual transportation to Concord, Massachusetts to ensure attendance for all scheduled sessions. Workshop packets will contain location information and suggestions on Concord restaurants, museums, and local transportation. Special double-occupancy room rates for the six nights at the Concord Inn (in the center of Concord) will be arranged for participants. Singles will be available at a higher cost to the participant. Participants will find at least eight restaurants within walking distance of the Concord Inn and these vary from fast food to family-style restaurants to fine dining.

## **Application Procedure**

The workshop is intended to function as a stimulus to course and curriculum development, revitalized teaching, as well as to individual research and publication. In your **one or two double-spaced pages application essay**, you should include information about your background and interest in the subject of the workshop; your special perspectives, skills, or experiences that would contribute to the workshop; and how the experience would enhance your teaching and/or research. An application cover sheet must be filled out on line at <http://www.neh.gov/online/education/participants/> Include a current c.v. or resume, and ensure that a reference letter is sent.

Please follow the guidelines in the enclosed “Application Information and Instructions” document, and remember that your application (one original and two copies) in hard copy must be **postmarked** on or before **March 15, 2006**, and should be sent to the project manager, at the following address:

David A. Berry, Project Manager, “Concord”  
Community College Humanities Association  
Essex County College  
303 University Avenue  
Newark, NJ 07102-1798

We look forward to receiving your application. If you have any questions, please contact David A. Berry, at [berry@essex.edu](mailto:berry@essex.edu) or call (973) 877-3577, or contact the Project Director or Faculty Mentor at the address below. Additional information is also available at the CCHA website: [www.ccha-assoc.org](http://www.ccha-assoc.org)

Sincerely,

Dr. Paul Benson  
Project Director  
Mountain View College  
4849 West Illinois  
Dallas, Texas 75211

E-mail: [pfb6420@dcccd.edu](mailto:pfb6420@dcccd.edu)  
Tel: (214)860-8738

Dr. Geoff Grimes  
Project Mentor  
Mountain View College  
4849 West Illinois  
Dallas, Texas 75211

E-Mail: [gag8747@dcccd.edu](mailto:gag8747@dcccd.edu)  
Tel: (214) 860-8747