

XXI Ulster-American Heritage Symposium 2016
Mellon Centre for Migration Studies
Ulster-American Folk Park, Omagh, County Tyrone,
Northern Ireland
Wednesday 22 June – Saturday 25 June, 2016

***‘Forty Years On:
current directions in Ulster-American Heritage Studies’***

The first Ulster-American Heritage Symposium, hosted by the New University of Ulster, Coleraine, was held in 1976. When the twenty-first Symposium is held in 2016 it will be ‘Forty Years On’. Therefore our aim in 2016 will be to review the achievements of Ulster-American Heritage Studies over the last forty years, explore current directions, and discuss prospects for the next forty years. The centenaries of the Easter Rising and the Battle of the Somme will be marked in 2016 by many scholarly gatherings focused on ‘dealing with the past’. We look forward to reviewing the contribution of Ulster-American heritage studies in this regard, to learning from as many past contributors as possible, and welcoming new scholars in the field.

Since 1976 the Ulster-American Heritage Symposium has met every two years, alternating between co-sponsoring universities and museums in Ulster and North America. Its purpose is to encourage scholarly study and public awareness of the historical connections between Ulster and North America including what is commonly called the Scotch-Irish or Ulster-Scots heritage. The Symposium has as its general theme the process of transatlantic emigration and settlement, and links between England, Scotland, Ireland and North America. Its approach is inter-disciplinary, encouraging dialogue between those working in different fields including history, language and literature, geography, archaeology, anthropology, folklife, religion and music.

Confirmed keynote speakers in Omagh 2016 will be Michael ‘Mick’ Moloney of Glucksman Ireland House, New York University Global Distinguished Professor of Irish Studies and Music, and Dr Bill Smith, Chairman of the Ministerial Advisory Group on the Ulster-Scots Academy (MAGUS). Professor Moloney will speak on “‘If It Wasn’t for the Irish and the Jews’”: Exploring Irish and Jewish Historic Musical Links and Influences on Vaudeville and Early Tin Pan Alley in America’, and Dr Smith will speak about plans to develop a parallel academy in the United States.

The programme will include celebrations of two recent publications associated with the Symposium:

Wayfaring Strangers: The Musical Voyage from Scotland and Ulster to Appalachia, by Doug Orr and Fiona Ritchie (University of North Carolina Press, 2014)

Irish Hunger and Migration: Myth, Memory and Memorialization, edited by Patrick Fitzgerald, Christine Kinealy and Gerard Moran (Quinnipiac University Press, 2015), which includes a Foreword by Warren Hofstra and Brian Lambkin reflecting on the almost forty-year history of the Symposium.

As always offers of papers related to the broad theme of the Symposium are welcome. This year the organisers would be especially glad to receive offers related to the particular theme of the history and future of Ulster-American Heritage studies; the themes of the keynote speakers; the themes of the two publications mentioned; the themes of the 2014 Symposium programme in Athens, including the American Civil War; legacy and commemoration related to the migration of 1718; North Americans in Ulster; the 'Decade of Centenaries, 2012-2022', the theme of 'migration objects' (a small exhibition of 'migration objects related to the Mellon and Abercorn family migration stories is planned); and the relevance of historic migration to current migration issues.

Please submit offer of paper (title plus abstract, not more than 250 words) and brief cv (not more than 50 words) by email to:

brian.lambkin@nmni.com and patrick.fitzgerald@nmni.com

Deadline: 1 November 2015

A response from the organising committee (Patrick Fitzgerald, Warren Hofstra, Christine Kinealy, Brian Lambkin, Sam Thomas, Johanne Devlin Trew, William Roulston) should be received by 5 December.

Accommodation: the main conference accommodation will be the Silver Birch Hotel, Omagh

<http://www.silverbirchhotel.com>

The programme will consist of a welcome reception on the Wednesday evening, two full days of papers (Thursday and Friday) at the Mellon Centre and the Ulster-American Folk Park, and a half day on Saturday.

(We are exploring the possibility of holding the final session at a city centre venue in Dublin, travelling there by bus from Omagh on Saturday morning).