

# **Final Report Documentation**

ATU Professional Development Grant

February 15, 2016 Funding Round

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## **RESTATEMENT OF THE PROFESSIONAL ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITY**

I presented original research in a paper presentation (“Cotton in the City: the Geography of Cotton Exchanges in Memphis and New Orleans”) at the 2016 Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers (AAG) in San Francisco, California on March 31, 2016.

## **BRIEF REVIEW OF THE PROFESSIONAL ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITY**

The Association of American Geographers (AAG) is the largest organization of geographers in the world, with professional geographers from academia, government, and industry represented in paper sessions, poster sessions, and panel discussions. My current research focus is at the intersection of historical geography and economic geography, examined through a quantitative geographic lens. Specifically, my research examines the commercial linkages within (and between) the New Orleans and Memphis cotton markets in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, particularly at the scale of an individual cotton exchange. Due in part to feedback received at the Southwest States AAG meeting in November 2015 (funded by an ATU professional development grant), my earlier New Orleans-centric research has expanded to a wider base of cotton exchanges, both in the Mississippi Delta and beyond the South altogether, including commercial linkages to European markets. An AAG annual meeting is the premier opportunity to interact with other historical geographers from across the country. (This research was co-authored with Deryck Holdsworth from Penn State University, although I was the sole presenter at this conference.)

## **SUMMARY OF EXPERIENCES**

The March 31 paper presentation session in which I presented was dedicated to Historical Geography, and presenters covered a wide range of geographic areas and historical time periods. My paper (“Cotton in the City”) was well-received by the other historical geographers at the session, and I received some valuable questions and discussions pertaining to my research (about the Historic New Orleans Collection, about qualitative perspectives related to cotton workers that could broaden my more statistical approach, etc.) Other presenters during this session cultivated my interest: a virtual reality/historical GIS approach to the reconstruction of plantation regions in South Carolina used software tools that could be employed in future GIS classes here at Arkansas Tech. Additional sessions I attended at the conference were valuable for my future teaching – especially a session on urban geography.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

I am grateful for the ATU Professional Development Grant in covering the costs of this conference trip. The benefits of this grant (which allowed me to present at the national AAG conference in March) combined with the benefits of my previous professional development grant (which allowed me to present at the regional Southwest States AAG in November 2015) have allowed me to craft my ideas with immediate scholarly feedback. The results of these conferences will be a submission of this work to an academic journal with an economic or historical focus (likely *Urban Morphology*) by late 2016.

EVIDENCE OF CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE/PRESENTATION

