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Session I: 10:30-noon: Issues in the Regional Study of the Shenandoah Valley

Goal: A prioritized shortlist of key issues demanding academic attention in the fields of regional studies and in particular, studies of the Shenandoah Valley. . .

Possible areas of concentration, from abstracts and prospectuses submitted by panelists/presenters:

Disciplines and categories are for purposes of discussion only; they may be expanded, shortened or deleted.

Some items are cross-listed as they tie into more than one discipline or category.

I. Social history

The impact of national and regional events on the family, or from a family perspective

Familial and demographic experiences of historical populations in the Valley

Folklife and religious history (and histories)

Diversity and community: African American, Native American, and Euro-American cultures; from settlement through the present (17th-21st centuries)

Analyzing and deconstructing myths, such as "frontier," "Valley of the shadow," "Lost Cause," and others

II. Agricultural history

The geometry and grammar of the farmscape; structures and images of order in agricultural space

Mineral and soil extraction; soil exploitation

III. Religious History

Sectarian evangelical religion and Protestant pietistic revivalism in the Valley

Immigration and diverse religious communities

IV. Political History

Intra-Virginia sectionalism

V. Economic History and History of Technology

Transportation: the Valley as artery

Transportation: nationalization of Valley transport

Industrial history: iron and steel manufacture; mineral extraction; deforestation; quarrying raw materials; power generation

The orchard industry

VI. Cultural Geography: Landscape

The geometry and grammar of the farmscape; structures and images of order in agricultural space

The relationships between town and country, mountain and valley

The impact of Civil War battles on the construction of mythic landscapes, such as “Lost Cause” Valley landscapes (1880s through the 1920s)

Construction and use of the landscape by different ethnic and economic groups

“Ordinary people on the land”—the spatial dimensions of social experience and economic activity

VII. Material Culture

Artifacts of the Valley

VIII. Cultural Archaeology

Late Woodland, protohistoric, and 17th-18th- century Native American life

Mineral and soil extraction

IX. Civil War History

North/South identity and allegiance

Dating and specifying the notion of “Southernness”

“Lost Cause” identities, landscapes, cultures

X. Tourism

Impact of evolving tourism (spas, caverns, national and state parks, railroads, hotels and other “draws” and amenities)

Relationships among public history, preservation, and historical tourism

XI. Globalism and Colonialism

Comprehensive histories: economic, social, cultural, political, demographic, agricultural, and a history of race and slavery

Comprehensive post-Civil War histories: Reconstruction, Gilded Age, Progressive, New Deal, and Cold War periods

XII. Regional Studies Scholarship

Definitions: How is a region defined for purposes of historical study? Can the Shenandoah Valley be meaningfully treated as a region? Does it “hold together” over time?

Standards of scholarship in regional historical studies

XIII. Micro-History and Drama

The resolution of character in conflict; understanding periodization through the medium of dramatic narrative

XIV. Gender Studies

Gender roles in specific Valley settings