

Paper

H. Description and Travel, Recreation and Sports

Q. Mass Media, Stereotypes

X. Other- Northern Appalachia

Many Mountains to Tour: Survey of Cultural Icons in Tourist Sites of the Southern Tier

This paper presentation provides a survey of tourist sites in the Southern Tier of New York in an effort to document the kinds of cultural icons used to promote tourism. Meeting the challenge set by the conference theme, this presentation offers a fresh perspective of Appalachia by focusing on the emerging frontier of Appalachian Studies- that of Northern Appalachia. This part of the region, and specifically the Southern Tier of New York, has a creative and dynamic force shaping the local tourism industry. It is, subsequently, shaping local economies and politics, as well as representations of local communities. Sponsored by state-level officials and using celebrities, tourism promotion in the Southern Tier offers images of romantic vistas, culinary and vintner delights, and nostalgic by-ways of days by-gone. This presentation offers an analytic and often humorous account of the range of cultural icons at play in tourism sites of the Southern Tier. Tourism within Southern and Central Appalachia draws on a variety of class-based and occupational cultural icons ranging from the hillbilly to coal miners to artists and musicians and even to wealthy railroad tycoons. Other icons, like mountain retreats and refreshing waters, are more ecological. Comparing the kinds of icons found in tourist sites in New York's Southern Tier to icons used in other parts of the Appalachian region might illuminate similar forces of cultural perceptions, similar patterns of recreational behavior, and shared values of tourists.

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Kristin Kant-Byers grew up in East Tennessee, but now lives in Rochester, New York, on the fringe of Northern Appalachia. She earned her doctorate in anthropology from the University of Kentucky and studies art, tourism, economics, and spirituality in Appalachia. Kristin is an Adjunct professor of Anthropology at the Rochester Institute of Technology where she exposes engineering and computer programming students to the diversity of cultures and to the human experience around the world.

Powerpoint presentation- no internet needed.