

Dugger Lecture to Focus on Cultural Politics of Civil War Memory in Missouri

By Kayla Gaffney

The Harold Holmes Dugger Lecture is an annual talk given in honor of a former member of the history department at Southeast Missouri State University. Every year the history department brings in a new speaker to deliver the lecture which covers a different topic every year.

This year, the lecture will be given by Christopher Phillips, professor of history at the University of Cincinnati. The lecture will focus on cultural politics of Civil War memory in Missouri and the Middle Border.

According to Southeast Missouri State University Department of History Chair Wayne Bowen, this year marks the 150th anniversary of the end of the Civil War and to commemorate that, the department wanted to have the lecture focus on the war, specifically how it was remembered in Missouri.

"This is the 150th anniversary of the end of the Civil War and so we thought we needed to take the opportunity to commemorate the event and bring in a distinguished scholar who could speak to the significance of the American Civil War particularly in a state like Missouri which did see a lot of conflict and was on the border between the two sides in that war. Dr. Phillips is going to come and speak about how Americans who survived that conflict both in the North and South but especially in Missouri remembered it. And what it meant to them as today we are trying to determine what it still means to us."

Bowen says this lecture goes beyond the typical discussion of the Civil War because it relates to Missouri and how the war was remembered in this region.

"He's going to be talking about how Missourians and other Americans of 100 years ago and earlier fought in the Civil War. It's our discussion of the memory of the civil war to the memories of people who were a lot closer to the events."

Phillips says the discussion will also focus on the region that he refers to as the Middle Border.

"This is the border that I think best reflects the broader outcomes of the war in the sense of how people began to see themselves differently and see themselves regionally, more as northerners, and more complicatedly as mid westerners, and as southerners. And that's an outcome of the war."

When asked who would be interested in the lecture, Phillips says everyone can benefit from it in some way.

"Anyone and everyone would get something out of this lecture. If they see themselves as southerners, this lecture will explain why they do. If they see themselves as midwesterners, this will explain very differently how they do and why they do. I think there's something here in this lecture for everybody."

In addition to being a history professor and lecturer, Phillips is also the author of seven books about the Civil War. His latest book "The Rivers Ran Backward" will be published in October of this year.

The lecture will be held on Thursday, April 16th at 7:30 pm in the University Center Ballroom. The event is free and open to the public.