

CCCC 2010

CATEGORY: (112) Community, Civic & Public

TITLE: Invisible Literacies, Invisible Pasts: Cultural Shift and the Erasure of Literate Activity

BRIEF DESCRIPTION: By identifying literacies that have been rendered invisible during moments of cultural shift, this panel argues for revisiting everyday locations of literate activity in order to rethink the relationship between past and present literacies.

[Individual papers] Vanessa Rouillon

“Decline of the Lyceum Movement as Redistribution of Rhetorical Activities”

Lyceums, of the early 19th century U.S., were sources of adult education and entertainment (Logan, 2008; Ray, 2005), complementary to formal schooling, and characterized by oratorical display (Bode, 1956; Logan, 2008; McHenry, 2002; Powell, 1895; Ray, 2005). Most scholars recognize that these lyceums, declined when their activities were assumed by public schools, libraries, and universities (Powell, 1895; Bode, 1956; Logan, 2008). Black lyceums, sponsored by black churches, were sites where African-Americans obtained and displayed their rhetorical education, prompted economic and intellectual self-improvement, and discussed race issues (Logan 2008, McHenry, 2002; Ray, 2005). A local instance is the Baraca-Philathea Lyceum (ca 1910-1940s), a literary society sponsored by the Baraca Men’s Bible Study, of Bethel AME Church—an African-American congregation in Champaign, IL. By collecting oral histories, Speaker 2 will investigate how lyceum-type of activities may have remained in church venues, thus exploring the decline of this lyceum as an internal redistribution of practices within Bethel’s literate activities, and questioning views on the assimilation of its practices *to* university spaces.