

Carson Benn, PhD

Assistant Professor of History, Program Director for Appalachian Studies



Biography

Carson Benn joined the faculty at LMU in Fall 2022. He holds a BA in History and Philosophy from New Mexico State University in Las Cruces (2012), an MA in History from Texas Tech University in Lubbock (2015), and a PhD in History from the University of Kentucky (2021). His work as a scholar and educator focuses on the Appalachian region of the United States south, specifically the region's political and social connections to other areas within the U.S., and its place within the nation's cultural heritage. As a student at the University of Kentucky, he taught courses for the school's interdisciplinary Appalachian Center and Appalachian Studies Program, and also served as a graduate intern at the Kentucky Historical Society in Frankfort. Before joining LMU, Dr. Benn directed research projects related to land and public revenue for the Livelihoods Knowledge Exchange Network (LiKEN) a community-based nonprofit organization.

Teaching and Research Interests

Dr. Benn's academic and research work examines the Appalachian region's culture within a national and global context. Within this heading, he focuses on the history of education and technology in the region, how these two topics intersect, and how the idea of Appalachia bears similarities to different regions around the world. His dissertation examines the role of educational media creators and television producers that designed programs and regional networks for the Appalachian region in the mid-twentieth century. This dissertation is currently being revised in preparation for publication as a single-author book. Dr. Benn teaches courses on U.S. history, Appalachian history, Native American history, the history of technology and education, and the material culture of moonshine. He also offers courses in public history—students interested in this field are encouraged to take on internship positions at public history institutions in the area for course credit!

Publications and Presentations (last five years)

Publications

Articles

“‘Signals to Every Dip and Hollow:’ The Rise and Fall of the Appalachian Education Satellite Program and the Appalachian Community Service Network,” *The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* 118: 1 (2020): 109-134.

Reviews

Review of Aaron Purcell, ed., *Lost in Transition: Removing, Resettling, and Renewing Appalachia*, *Journal of Appalachian Studies* (forthcoming issue).

Review of Sean Silfer, *So Much to be Angry About: Appalachian Movement Press and Radical DIY Publishing, 1969-1979*, *The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* 119: 3 (Summer 2021), 317-319.

Review of Edward Slavishak, *Proving Ground: Expertise and Appalachian Landscapes*, *The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* 118:1 (2020), 217-219.

Review of Sara K. Eskridge, *Rube Tube: CBS and Rural Comedy in the Sixties*, *Journal of Appalachian Studies* 26: 1 (2020), 136-138.

Presentations

"Educational Television in the Mountain South: Incorporating 'Place' as a Measure of Care in Distance Learning Technology," paper presentation, Society for the History of Technology, Viña del Mar, Chile, July 11, 2024

"Faith and Works: Religion and Sacred Space in the Founding of Lincoln Memorial University and Missionary Schools," Appalachian Studies Association Conference, March 18, 2023.

"Heirs Property in Appalachia: A Roundtable Discussion on Precarity in Land Tenure," Roundtable Discussion, Appalachian Studies Association Conference, March 18, 2022.

Contributor, WEKU-FM, "Heirs' Property," *Eastern Standard*, interview with Tom Martin, March, 2022.

Contributor, WEKU-FM, "UK's New Course on Moonshine," *Eastern Standard*, interview with Tom Martin, June, 2021.

"Appalachian Spirits: The History and Place of Moonshine in Appalachia's Culture and Economy," Speaker Series hosted by University of Kentucky Appalachian Center, April, 2021.

"Appalachia on the Airwaves: Public Television in the Mountain South as a Means of Compensatory Education," paper presentation, Society for the History of Technology, Milan, October 24-27, 2019.

"The Uses of Public and State Television in Appalachian and Carpathian Mountain Regions," paper presentation, Appalachian/Carpathian International Conference, Brasov, Romania, October 7-11, 2019.

LMU and other Professional Service

Editorial Board, *Journal of Appalachian Studies*

Member, *Mercurians*: Interest Group, History of Communications Technology

LMU Library and Learning Resources Committee, Elected Member

LMU School of Arts, Humanities, and Social Science Events Committee

Faculty Advisor, LMU Appalachian History and Culture Club

Faculty Advisor, Gamma Lambda Sigma Fraternity

Board Member, Cooperative Christian Ministry (Middlesboro, Ky.)

Member, Wilderness Road Chapter of Kiwanis International

Cumberland Gap National Historical Park, Community Volunteer

LMU Choir