CALL FOR PAPERS

“The Unexpected Caribbean” Symposium
University of Kansas (Lawrence, KS)
October 18-20, 2018

In 1779, the first permanent resident of what was to become Chicago, IL was arrested by the British army, who suspected him of being an American sympathizer in the U.S. Revolutionary War. Jean Baptiste Point du Sable later moved to St. Charles, MO, where he died in 1818. While his home at the mouth of the Chicago River is now established as a National Historic Landmark, few people realize that this key figure in Midwestern history was of African descent, and likely of Haitian origin, arriving to the Upper Midwest through French Louisiana. He represents one of the most prominent examples of the “Unexpected Caribbean” in the Midwest, and in the greater United States.

Far from being exotic and isolated islands suitable only as tourist destinations or the site of natural disasters, epidemiological crises, and charity work, Caribbean societies have long been integral to U.S. history, economies, and cultural production (as well as the histories, economies, and cultures of England, France, Spain, Portugal, Denmark, and their territories and former colonies). The interplay between Caribbean cultures and people and the rest of the world reveals dynamic relationships and many instances of the Unexpected Caribbean—both within the Caribbean and outside its geographical borders.

The Association of Caribbean Women Writers & Scholars (ACWWS), partnering with KU’s Institute of Haitian Studies and Center of Latin American & Caribbean Studies, is planning a two-day interdisciplinary symposium and an educator workshop for regional teachers focusing on THE UNEXPECTED CARIBBEAN, to be held on the University of Kansas campus in October 2018. One of the keynote speakers will be Ulrick Jean-Pierre, a visual artist born in Haiti whose work explores the connections between the histories and cultures of Haiti and Louisiana. Jean-Pierre’s paintings will be on display at KU’s Spencer Museum of Art during Fall 2018, and will highlight the Mary Lou Vansant Hughes Haitian art collection, including pieces by Rigaud Benoît, Wilson Bigaud, Charles Ermistral (Thialy), Max Gerbier, Edith Stephane.

Conference organizers seek papers that reveal some of the unexpected moments and instances of surprise in Caribbean literature, film, history, culture, law, and landscape. We especially invite work that addresses the following:

* Caribbean art and artistry (painting, sculpture, film, music, carnival, fashion, architecture, etc.)
* Caribbean Louisiana / Caribbean presences in the Gulf of Mexico
* representations of Caribbean im/migrants in the Midwest
* creating Caribbean communities in the Midwest: the joys and challenges
* Caribbean migrations worldwide
* The Latinx Caribbean (from/in Puerto Rico, Cuba, the Dominican Republic)
* negotiating linguistic identity/ies
* the Caribbean subject in policy and law
* Caribbean gender performances
* exotifications of the Caribbean, incl. depictions of Caribbean religions in popular culture
* Caribbean ecologies
* natural disasters in the Caribbean
* NGOs in the Caribbean
* The Caribbean and the Digital: media, technology, and the Digital Humanities
* Jean Baptiste Pointe du Sable and/or other Caribbean “firsts”

Papers will be presented in English. Reading time should not exceed 15 minutes.

Please send a 300-word electronic abstract to Giselle Anatol and Cécile Accilien at acwwsexecutive@gmail.com. **Abstract deadline: March 31, 2018.**

Questions can be directed to Giselle Anatol, ganatol@ku.edu, or Cécile Accilien, cecile.accilien@ku.edu.