Las Vegas' role in World War II discussed

A history professor will lecture on blacks in wartime Las Vegas Oct. 6.

James Coughtry's topic will be "The Road Not taken: Black Labor, the Black Community and the New Deal Coalition in Wartime Las Vegas." The lecture, which is free and open to the public begins at 3 p.m. in the museum located in Lorenzi Park, 700 Twin Lakes Drive.

In conjunction with the year-long exhibit "World War II and the Emergence of Modern Las Vegas," the Nevada State Museum and Historical Society will be presenting a series of lectures, films and discussions which focus on special issues arising during this crucial period of the city's development.

Coughtry's program is timed to coincide with the 50th anniversary of the start of construction on the mammoth Basic Magnesium, Incorporated plant at what is now Henderson.

The construction and operation of the plant, along with the simultaneous opening of the Las Vegas Army Gunnery School (Nellis Air Force Base), caused an overnight tripling of Las Vegas' population.

As wartime labor shortages worsened, increasing numbers of new workers were Blacks, many from the Deep South. A progressive New Deal coalition developed around efforts by the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) to organize workers at the plant already represented by the more conservative craft unions of the American Federation of Labor.

The unions were more resistant to the hiring of black workers. The CIO's more progressive agenda was ultimately defeated by conservative forces. "It was a fork in the road," Coughtry said. "The failure of the progressive coalition helps explain why, going into the 1950s, Las Vegas would have a very conservative political establishment and labor union movement."

Coughtry has an extensive background in the study of black communities throughout the country. He has taught at several universities, including Northern Idaho, Colgate and Brown. He has been at UNLV since 1982.

For more information about the lecture, call 486-5205.

KNPR to hold Craftworks Market

KNPR Public Radio will kick off its 10th annual Craftworks Market from 9 a.m. to dusk, Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 28 and 29, at the Jaycee Park, the corner of Eastern and St. Louis.

Children's hands-on activities will be sponsored by the American Nevada Corporation and facilitated by the Clark County School District (CCSD).

"The volunteers will be CCSD art specialists working with the children throughout the 2-day festival," said Candy Schneider, assistant director of the program.

Marsha Cutler, a storyteller for the Las Vegas Clark County Library District, will organize a group of volunteers to tell stories during the craftworks show.

Approximately 2,500 children are expected to participate in easel painting, bubble blowing and coloring.

Children can also help weave a spider web of yarn. A web created by children attending last year's Craftworks Market is hanging in the Lied Discovery Children's Museum.

An integration of children's activities makes up the craftworks experience. International fare, a variety of entertainment as well as the artists themselves, give the market a distinct, family oriented atmosphere. More than 130 artists from across the country will be part of the show.

Funds raised will help keep KNPR commercial-free as well as keep up the high quality of programming, listeners have come to expect.

Admission is $3 for adults, $1 for children six to 12. Children under six are admitted free. Tickets are available at the gate.

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