



Council of Geographic Names Authorities COGNA 2024, Columbia Missouri

**Conference Dates
September 16-19, 2024**

**Hosted by the Missouri Board on Geographic Names
at the Center for Missouri Studies
605 Elm Street
Columbia, MO 65201**



Welcome to CoGNA – Columbia 2024!

We thank you for joining us this year at CoGNA – in beautiful Columbia, Missouri! We are indebted to our wonderful hosts on the Missouri State Board on Geographic Names, who have worked for many months to help organize this conference at the Center for Missouri Studies and share their beautiful state with all of us!

CoGNA is both a very large and simultaneously very small organization; we comprise state geographical representation from every state (and now territories), but that means usually less than 50 of us are having a conversation at any given time. We are working to ensure ALL 50 of states and participating territories are connected, and part of the national dialogue with regard to place name issues, and you being here and part of this conference is the foundation of growing this dialogue.

CoGNA works best if you are active in the organization. Please work with your own boards, local governments, and interested parties to ensure they are aware of CoGNA, and pass on the information learned at or through CoGNA to those you work with at the state and regional level(s). Almost every state has been active in the COGNA organization during the last year, with connections being made, requests for help and information shared, and general discussions over email is now happening – all a result of simply (re)connecting in this forum. We are glad you are here, happy to reconnect, and welcome you to what we hope will be many more annual meetings in the future.

I serve as the Executive Secretary for CoGNA, elected in November of 2021, and effective January of 2022, but ‘found’ CoGNA originally back in 2015 – when searching “geography conferences” online. When I arrived at the conference and realized what CoGNA was (and that my own state had not been active in years), I was quite surprised to realize I was an active member in this organization that I had never heard of until then. Since 2015, I’ve hosted and attended the subsequent conferences – almost always on my own time and funding – just because the information and the networking is so helpful and meaningful. It is my hope that ALL states and territories will eventually be funded to perform the work they do as State Names Authorities (SNAs), which includes traveling to this conference to continue our conversations, learn from our colleagues in other states and within the USBGN, and build our networks of support, and broaden our connections with our Tribal communities and other stakeholders. Please share the information with your boards, your networks and communities – be sure CoGNA is part of the institutional knowledge of your state teams, and let’s keep this growing – and going!

Kindest regards,

Christine Johnson
Executive Secretary, CoGNA
ckjohnson@cogna50usa.org
ckjohnson.nevada@gmail.com

Welcome to Columbia, Missouri!

On behalf of the Missouri Board on Geographic Names (MOBGN), welcome to the 2024 Council of Geographic Names Meeting in Columbia, Missouri!

Columbia is located in the center of Missouri, halfway along I-70 between our two major metropolitan centers of Kansas City and St. Louis. Mid-Missouri is known as both a center for education and state government, but it is also steeped in history, with excellent access to culture and recreation, and an active involvement in the fields of transportation, communication, and energy innovation.

Columbia can trace its history back to the early 1800s during the rapid settlement of mid-Missouri by settlers following the Boonslick Trail, a road established by the sons of Daniel Boone connecting salt springs to the town of St. Charles on the east side of Missouri. In 1818, a small group of men from the Boonslick area purchased land for a town and named it Smithton for Thomas A. Smith, the Receiver at the new land office at Franklin. Smithton was laid out the following year, located on a hill just west of Flat Branch. The settlers soon learned that groundwater was not to be found on that hillside, and the discovery of plentiful groundwater on the east side of Flat Branch prompted the settlers to move across the creek. According to early accounts, the name Columbia was suggested for the new settlement by Wallace Estill, who likely had in mind the idealized use of the Columbus-derived nickname for America that embodied optimism, discovery, democracy, and progress.

Columbia was soon selected as the county seat for the newly formed Boone County, named after Daniel Boone, who died just days before the formation of the county. From the very beginning, Columbia aspired to be an educational center, setting land aside in the hope of securing a state university. In 1839, Columbia emerged victorious from a fierce competition with neighboring towns and the University of Missouri, the first public university west of the Mississippi, was established on the south edge of the city. In the ensuing decades, both Columbia and the University have grown, with the University of Missouri being the largest university in the state with more than 31,000 students, and Columbia the fourth largest city with a population of 128,000.

Geographic names in mid-Missouri reflect the long and varied history of the region. Local Missouria and Osage names have largely been forgotten but features such as the Missouri River and Manitou Bluffs have a clear native influence. Early French exploration and trade in the area is remembered through names such as Bonne Femme Creek, supposedly named in remembrance of a helpful Native American woman, and Perche Creek, derived from a nearby geologic landmark, the Roche Percée, or pierced rock. Early America is represented by Jefferson City, named for Thomas Jefferson, and Boonville, named in honor of the Boone family. Central Missouri was a pocket of slave-holding landowners of Southern heritage which came to be called Little Dixie, and as such included a large Black population. The names Sharp End, the Black-owned Columbia business district where you were expected to be well dressed, Frederick Douglass High School, honoring the famed abolitionist, and Lincoln University, named for the 16th President, recall both the Civil War era as well as segregation. More recent names reflect the current values of Mid-Missourians, with names such as Three Creeks Conservation Area, which supports preservation native species, the MKT Nature and Fitness Trail, which encourages healthy lifestyles.

This COGNA Conference is dedicated to Jane Messenger, a long-time employee of the USGS in Rolla, Missouri. Through her work, Jane was heavily involved in geographic names, and was instrumental in the formation of the MOBGN in 1995, of which she was an active member until shortly before her death in 2020. Her passion for names was a source of energy for both the Missouri and U.S. Boards, and her efforts facilitated the decisions of many boards across the nation. It is with great appreciation that we remember Jane and hope that this conference and the ones that follow will continue to educate and inspire those involved in geographic names.

Chris Barnett
Vice-Chair, Missouri Board on Geographic Names

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

Monday, September 16th

Location: Center for Missouri Studies (605 Elm Street)

- 8:30 – 9:00am: Registration desk open. Location: Lobby, State Historical Society
9:00 – 9:15am: Housekeeping/Online Connections
9:15 – 9:45am: **Introductions and Opening Remarks**, Missouri Board Member Chris Barnett, Missouri Board Chair John Dougan, and Christine Johnson, COGNA
9:45 – 10:45am: **COGNA Business Meeting** (open to all)
10:45 – 11:00am: Break
11:00 – 12:00pm: **Presentation** Henry Sweets
“Mark Twain’s Missouri: Where Twain traveled and his use of Missouri placenames in his writings”
12:00 – 1:30pm: Lunch on your own
1:30 – 2:30pm: **Special Session** Memorial for Jane Messenger
2:30 – 3:00pm: **Special Session** COGNA Lifetime Achievement Award: T. Wayne Furr
3:00 – 3:30pm: Break
3:30 – 4:30pm: **Presentation.** John Fisher
“Southeast Missouri Town Names: Railroad Building and Transformation of the Southeast Missouri Lowlands”

End of official daily program

- 5:30 - 7:00pm: Welcoming Reception: (No host bar, Hors d’oeuvres)
Keynote Speakers **Dr. William Ambrose & Chris Dunn**
“Geospatially Rediscovering the Trail of Tears in Missouri”

Tuesday, September 17th

Location: Center for Missouri Studies (605 Elm Street)

- 8:30 - 9:00am: Registration and packet pick up. Location: Lobby, State Historical Society
9:00 – 9:15am: Housekeeping and announcements
9:15 – 10:45am: **State Names Authorities Reports**
10:45 – 11:00am: Break
11:00 – Noon: **Presentation:** Dr. Derek Alderman, Chancellor’s Professor of Geography, University of Tennessee:
“The Living Black Atlas: A Reparative Story of Mapping and Naming”
Noon – 1:30pm: Lunch on your own
1:30 – 2:30pm: **Presentation** Melanie Smith, Katy Trail State Park Director, and Ron Bentsch, Rock Island Development Coordinator for Missouri State Parks
“Missouri’s Rail-Trail Movement”
2:30 – 3:00pm: **Presentation** Dr. Debra Foster Greene:
*“Careful! You Could Be Living on N*gger Creek”: The Importance of Local Action in Geographical Name Changes”*
3:00 – 3:15pm: Break
3:15 – 4:00pm: **Federal Training for SNA’s**
Shellie Zahniser, Executive Secretary – Domestic Names Committee,
Matt O’Donnell, Jenny Runyon – BGN staff:
“Draft DNC Proposal Form – Discussion & Feedback”

Tuesday, September 17th (continued)

Location: Center for Missouri Studies (605 Elm Street)

4:00 – 4:30pm: **Update on Secretarial Order 3405 for SNA's**
Howard Valandra, Chair – Federal Advisory Committee on Reconciliation in Place Names

Optional evening Event: Campus Tour of the University of Missouri with Chris Barnett (Weather Dependent)

Wednesday, September 18th

Location: Center for Missouri Studies (605 Elm Street)

8:30 – 9:00am: Registration and Packet pick up. Location: Lobby, State Historical Society
9:00 – 9:15am: **CoGNA 2025 Announcement** (Tim Mauck, Colorado Geographic Naming Advisory Board)
9:15am – 10:45am: **US Board on Geographic Names (USBGN) Meeting**
10:45 – 11:00am: Break
11:00 – Noon: **Training Session for State Naming Authorities:** Elizabeth Kanalley, USDA: *“Proactive Management of Derogatory Names: USFS & Cultural Responsibility”*
Noon - 1:30pm: Lunch on your own
1:30 - 2:00pm: **Training Session for SNAs:** Michael Tischler, USGS & USBGN: *“topoBuilder for Geographic Names”*
2:00 – 3:15pm: **Training Session for SNAs:** Federal/State Roundtable Workshop
3:15 – 3:30pm: Break
3:30 – 4:30pm: **Training Session for SNAs:** *Federal/State Roundtable Workshop (cont'd)*

Thursday, September 19th

Toponymic Session

Location: Meet at 8:30 at the Center for Missouri Studies (605 Elm Street)

8:00am – 5:00pm: Optional Toponymic Session

Coach bus trip to sites of interest including Rock Bridge Memorial State Park, the Missouri State Capitol Building in Jefferson City, Adrian's Island, a visit to Westminster and the Churchill Museum, and more!

Join Missouri Board on Geographic Names representatives on a toponymic session as they share information on historic names and places in this historic region (Additional description forthcoming).

****Requires registration for the toponymic session – be sure to register for *full conference with toponymic session* at initial registration, or register separately on the website for any additional attendees. Registration for toponymic session can be made as individual reservation as well at conference registration site. Register at (site link to come) or contact Christine Johnson at ckjohnson@cogna50usa.org for more information. Reservations for this session must be made prior to 8/31/2024.**

Abstracts

Keynote Speakers Geospatially Rediscovering the Trail of Tears in Missouri William Ambrose and Chris Dunn

What role did early Missourians play in the Cherokee removal story? Is it one of racism, indifference and greed? With Missouri Humanities funding and assistance from the Trail of Tears Association, William Ambrose and Chris Dunn assembled historical maps, recently discovered documents and contemporaneous government records to create a publicly available, evolving GIS model of the Trail of Tears in the state that relates a different story. In a narrative that truly comes to life, they tell instead of the care and aid extended by early settlers and farmers to the Cherokee on their long trek across the Missouri frontier.

Southeast Missouri Town Names: Railroad Building and Transformation of the Southeast Missouri Lowlands John Fisher

The southeast Missouri lowlands was both the last region of the state to be opened for agriculture and the last to be covered by railroad networks. The proliferation of railroad construction in the early 20th century gave rise to an abundance of new towns. Railroad entrepreneurs, especially Louis Houck, recognized as the “Father of Southeast Missouri,” contributed a large number of these new names – some arrived upon in rather creative and unusual ways.

The Living Black Atlas: A Reparative Story of Mapping and Naming Derek H. Alderman, PhD

Reparative storytelling is an ethical commitment to create moments and spaces for amplifying and responding to the voices, experiences, and knowledge production of diverse, historically marginalized groups within our society and professional communities. Reparative requires looking beyond expert practices and scientific conventions and allowing oneself to acknowledge and learn from the everyday public intellectualism and oppositional research practices of oppressed communities. As an illustration, Derek Alderman introduces his ongoing work on the “Living Black Atlas, which curates and honors the seldom-discussed cartographic practices undergirding the African American freedom struggle. More than a static collection of maps, infusing the Atlas are dynamic political and historical understandings of the Black experience that challenge staid, flat, and Western notions of mapping as carried out by scientists, government authorities, and corporate interests. In affirming the value of Black life and imagining more just futures, African American communities have long engaged in a tradition of counter-mapping, restorative cartographies, radical geospatial intelligence, visual storytelling, and embodied productions of geographic knowledge for the purposes of activism, community-building and resilience, anti-racist navigation, and public pedagogy. The naming and renaming of places are important chapters in this Living Black Atlas as acts of self-determination, freedom-making, and healing. Reparative approaches to the Living Black Atlas are more than simply inserting the Black experience into our dominant ideas about cartography, geography, or data science. Black-resistant cartographies stretch what constitutes a map, who is a mapmaker, and the social and political work maps and place names can and should do to advance equality and justice.

Missouri's Rail-Trail Movement
Melanie Smith, Katy Trail State Park Director, and Ron Bentsch

Missouri has long been a leader in rail-trail development. Ron and Melanie will discuss the development of Katy Trail State Park, the longest developed rail-trail in the nation and the current and future development of Rock Island Trail State Park.

Careful! You Could Be Living on N*gger Creek": The Importance of Local Action in Geographical Name Changes
Debra Foster Greene, PhD

A discussion of the importance and complexity of local government's response to implementing federal mandate relating to changing racist and offensive place names in the United States. What role can state boards play?

Proactive Management of Derogatory Names: USFS & Cultural Responsibility
Elizabeth Kanalley, USFS

This presentation will provide an overview of USDA Forest Service work to address derogatory geographic names, not only in response to the DOI Secretary's Orders, but also the proactive efforts. The presentation will touch on some of the stumbling blocks encountered along the way.

Presenter Biographies

Derek H. Alderman

Derek H. Alderman (he/him) (PhD, University of Georgia) is the Chancellor's Professor of Geography and former Department Head at the University of Tennessee. Alderman is a past President of the American Association of Geographers (AAG), his discipline's flagship professional society. He is a cultural geographer focused on the role of memorial landscapes, heritage tourism, and the politics of place-naming and mapping in struggles over race, rights, and public space—often in the context of the African American Freedom Struggle. He founded Tourism RESET (tourismreset.com), a multidisciplinary initiative with affiliated researchers and industry specialists from over 25 universities and organizations and on the leading edge of studying and challenging racial inequalities in travel and tourism. Dr. Alderman is (co)author of over 170 articles, book chapters, and other essays along with the award-winning book (with Owen Dwyer), *Civil Rights Memorials and the Geography of Memory*, the co-edited volume entitled *The Political Life of Urban Streetscapes: Naming, Politics, and Place*, and most recently the co-authored book *Remembering Enslavement: Reassembling the Southern Plantation Museum*. Alderman frequently moves beyond academia to contribute to the national dialogue about commemorative and cultural issues. He is a nationally recognized authority on street naming, especially for Martin Luther King Jr. U.S. Department of Interior Secretary Deb Haaland appointed him to serve on the country's first Advisory Committee on Reconciliation in Place Names. He has provided unpaid assistance to dozens of agencies, community organizations, and diversity initiatives, and journalists have quoted or interviewed him over 300 times. The National Science Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities have funded his work. Dr. Alderman has received over 30 university, regional, and national awards for excellence in teaching and mentorship, distinguished research, and public outreach.

William Ambrose

Dr. William Ambrose earned his Doctor of Dental Surgery degree from the University of Missouri-Kansas City and practiced dentistry in Jefferson City, Missouri, until 2010, when he turned his attention to his Trail of Tears and the related Missouri experience. It was his idea to leverage the power of GIS to precisely map sites along the various routes the Trail of Tears took through the state. As an avid amateur historian, Ambrose has written numerous monographs about the events, lands and people of Missouri who played a role in this difficult period. In 2022 he was selected by The State Historical Society of Missouri and MO Humanities to join the Missouri Speaker's Bureau, and he currently serves as secretary of the Trail of Tears Association's Missouri chapter and Missouri's member on the nine-state board of the national association. More information about his work can be found at <https://MoTrailofTears.com>.

Ron Bentch

Ron is the Rock Island Development Coordinator for Missouri State Parks. Ron has more than 10 years of experience in bicycle/pedestrian advocacy including work as the Project Director for Missourians for Responsible Transportation. Ron has also spent time in construction management and community development in Africa.

Chris Dunn

Chris Dunn is a licensed Missouri attorney, geospatial business owner, expert witness and geo-historical researcher. Through GeoVelo, LLC, he conducts geospatial forensic investigations, produces demonstrative exhibits and provides other geospatial services in the investigation, mapping and modeling of incidents, accidents and crime scenes. Dunn's work requires the application of well-established geospatial techniques to case facts using GIS, 3-D modeling software and field confirmation procedures, often requiring the integration of other independent expert witnesses' geospatial products into a set of unified exhibits. The GIS model he constructed for the Trail of Tears in Missouri project contains over one terabyte of data. Dunn resides in Columbia, Missouri, with his dog and motorcycle.

John C. Fisher

John C. Fisher studied geology at Southeast Missouri State University and at the University of Missouri in Columbia. From 1973 to 1999 he owned and operated diversified row crop and vegetable farms in Missouri's Dunklin and New Madrid counties. In 2000, Fisher began freelance writing full time. He has written four books, two of which were coauthored with his wife, Carol. Fisher has coedited one volume of the Missouri Folklore Society Journal and has written numerous magazine articles about Missouri history, agriculture, horticulture and food history. He has also served as a citizen appointee on the Missouri Board of Geographic Names since May 2005.

Debra Foster Greene

Dr. Debra Greene is a native of Natchez, Mississippi. She received a Bachelor's degree in History from Alcorn State University and both Masters and Doctorate degrees in History from the University of Missouri. She served in the Missouri National Guard and was employed with the Missouri State Archives and Department of Economic Development before coming to Lincoln University in 1996. While at Lincoln, Dr. Greene served in several capacities, including Professor, President of the Faculty Senate, Interim Provost and Interim VP-Academic Affairs. She was instrumental in gaining additional recognition of Lincoln's Hilltop Campus Historic District. She retired in December 2018 and resides in Jefferson City, Missouri. Dr. Greene has also served as a citizen appointee on the Missouri Board of Geographic Names since May 2010.

Melanie Robinson-Smith

Melanie is a Deputy Regional Director for Missouri State Parks, and oversees eleven parks and sites in central Missouri. Melanie has more than 15 years of experience in state government including work in marketing and events for the Missouri Lottery and Missouri State Parks. She has also served as Assistant City Manager in Kirksville, Missouri where she managed Parks and Recreation, Economic Development, Public Information and Community Services. Melanie has a Bachelor of Science in Parks, Recreation and Tourism from the University of Missouri - Columbia.

Henry Sweets

Henry Sweets came to the Mark Twain Boyhood Home and Museum in 1978. He served many years as director and now is working part-time as curator. He is in his 47th year at the Museum. Sweets is known as a Mark Twain scholar and has made presentations on Mark Twain across the country. Sweets started and directed teacher workshops for 15 years, directed the international Mark Twain Conference in 2011, 2015 and 2019, and edits the museum publication *The Fence Painter*. Sweets has served on the Missouri Board on Geographic Names since May, 1999.

WELCOME TO COLORFUL COLORADO!



MT. BLUE SKY

SAVE THE DATE:
August 19 - 22nd - 2025!

COGNA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Hosted by the Colorado Geographic Naming
Advisory Board

More Details to Come

Future Hosts of COGNA

- 2025 – Denver, Colorado
- 2026 – Sacramento, California
- 2027 – Announcement coming soon

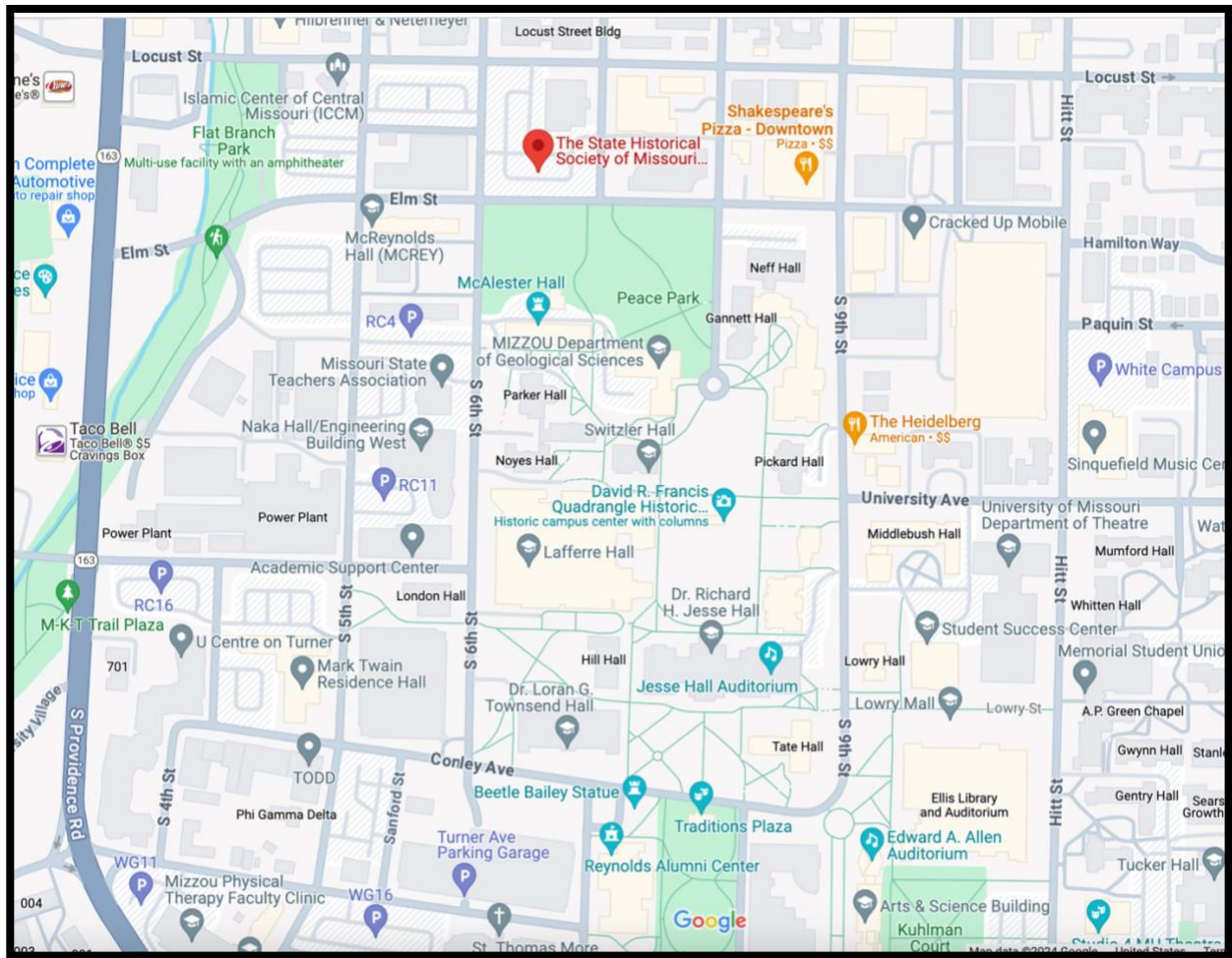
CoGNA Columbia would like to thank the following for their generosity and support:



Map and Parking Directions

The Center for Missouri Studies is located at 605 Elm Street in Columbia.

See map below for more information.



PHYSICAL ADDRESS

605 Elm Street, Columbia, MO 65201

Parking

ON-SITE PARKING

The Center for Missouri Studies has limited visitor parking available in a parking lot located at the corner of Locust and 6th Streets. Visitors can receive a **free** daily parking pass at the Welcome Desk in the Center lobby.

MORE PARKING OPTIONS

The University of Missouri [Hitt Street Parking Structure](#) has metered parking available on Level 4. Visitors may also purchase a temporary virtual permit through [MU Parking](#).

The City of Columbia parking garage at 6th and Cherry Streets. More information, including rates, can be found on the [City of Columbia Public Works site](#). You can view more parking tips on [The District website](#).

Notes