KY Folklife Program

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Western Kentucky University is nationally known for it’s folklore studies, offering the largest masters program in the country.

In this week’s View from the Hill, Amy Bingham shows us why that makes WKU the perfect fit to be the new home for the Kentucky Folklife Program.

For the past two decades, the Kentucky Folklife Program has been housed at the state capitol in Frankfort. But after reassessing the location over a year ago, it became clear the program could thrive even more on the campus of WKU.

The Kentucky Folklife Program’s mission is to identify, document and preserve the Commonwealth’s diverse cultural traditions.

“It’s really about validating the people’s cultural knowledge and what’s important to them.”

“Whether your connected to a family that’s been here for 200 years or you’ve been here for two months, we’re all part of this collective that is Kentucky.”

And soon, the Folklife archive that’s been amassed for twenty years in Frankfort is going to join existing archives here at the Kentucky Museum on WKU’s campus.

“It really merges with one of the most vibrant folk life/folk studies program in the country.”

The pioneer cabin that sits behind Rodes Harlin Hall will have a renewed presence with the Kentucky Folklife Program.

The cabin, built in the 1930’s, has another claim to fame.

“Most know it as the childhood home of the film maker John Carpenter.”

Since 2004, the cabin has been used for folklore concerts, club meetings and graduate classes.

That type of use will only increase as WKU’s Department of Folk Studies and Anthropology benefits from housing the state’s largest folklife archives.

“It’s going to take a lot of our rethinking curriculum on how best to integrate so we’re supporting the folklife program as well as folklife program supporting our curriculum as well.”

“We’re a very well established program here in Folklife studies but this is a new venture for us, it’s a really exciting time.”

If you would like to sample some of Kentucky’s rich musical traditions for yourselves, a concert will be held tomorrow night from six to eight pm at SKypac as part of the Bowling Green Gallery Hop series.

With this week’s View from the Hill, I’m Amy Bingham.

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