

20th International James Fenimore Cooper/Susan Fenimore Cooper Conference & Seminar
June 1-4, 2015
SUNY, College at Oneonta

Keynote Speaker: Rochelle Johnson, Ph.D.
Professor of English, College of Idaho; Author of *Passions for Nature* and biographer of
Susan Fenimore Cooper

“Imagined Frontiers/Imagined Communities”

In 1978, the first International James Fenimore Cooper Conference was in Oneonta, New York, a beautiful valley on the banks of the Susquehanna River, at the foothills of the Catskills, just minutes from Cooper’s boyhood home of Cooperstown. Since then, over the course of nineteen conferences nearly 240 scholars and writers, including Leslie Fiedler, James Beard, Thomas Philbrick, and Rochelle Johnson, have presented papers on James Fenimore Cooper, Susan Fenimore Cooper, and the world around them.

For our 20th conference, we are seeking papers that address the theme “Imagined Frontiers/Imagined Communities.” The Coopers wrote at a time when America was growing as a nation, both geographically through westward expansion and conceptually, as writers, artists, politicians, and citizens worked through the process of defining national, regional, and even local identities. Benedict Anderson defines nation as “an imagined political community” populated by people who may never know, meet, or even hear their fellow-members, “yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.” Just as communities are imagined, so are the landscapes and frontiers on which they are built. We seek papers that explore the role the Coopers (and their contemporary writers and artists) played in imagining, representing, and interrogating the landscapes and communities of antebellum America. Paper topics may include (but are not limited to):

From “Hideous Wilderness” to “Nature’s Nation”
Gender and the Frontier
Slavery in New York
Exploration and Natural History
Displacing Native American Communities
Populism and Democracy
Social Conflicts in Frontier Communities
Early Nature Writing
Painters of the Hudson River School
Nativism and Immigration

We are happy to consider any paper that addresses James Fenimore Cooper’s or Susan Fenimore Cooper’s work and their time. Papers should be 8-10 pages (20 minute presentation). Send proposal via e-mail to Dr. Roger W. Hecht (hechtrw@oneonta.edu).

Proposal Deadline is March 1, 2015

