



Communal Pen: A Writing Workshop Celebrating Memories, Stories, and Traditions of Place

In conjunction with the Smithsonian's Museum on Main Street's traveling exhibit

Crossroads: Change in Rural America

What are the memories, stories and traditions that make our community *home*? What landmarks, customs, sights and sounds connect us with family, friends and neighbors, while highlighting our unique experience and identity? Sometimes, you've just got to write it down.

In the *Communal Pen* workshop, we will write to celebrate and explore our connections to place and community. Often, it is in our written words that memory lives. The writing process can itself help us to awaken and preserve thoughts and traditions, offering insight, understanding and respect to present and future generations. This three-hour writing workshop draws inspiration from the Smithsonian exhibit *Crossroads: Change in Rural America* as a springboard for igniting our own stories, giving voice to our shared and individual experience of place.

Saturday, June 8th
10:00am to 1:30pm
Dillon County Library
Main Branch
600 East Main Street
Dillon, SC 29536

To Register : Communal Pen is free and open to the public.

Please register online at:

<https://schumanities.org/projects/crossroads-change-in-rural-america/communalpen/>

or by calling **803-771-2477**, to reserve your spot.

Space is limited; registration will be on a first-come, first-served basis.

Walk-in registration is welcome, as space permits.

No previous experience necessary! We invite participants to view the exhibit before the workshop, and to pay special attention to those images and ideas that are most relatable to you.

Above: Old Sheldon, by Ment Nelson; featured in the exhibition, Crossroads: Change in Rural America. Based in Varnville, SC, Nelson celebrates his family, culture, and home community through his artwork. He is a Young Voice of the Art of Community-Rural SC initiative, and coordinator of the Creative Connectors, for the Create Rural SC project. On being an artist he says, "You never know who might be intrigued by your story."

The Art of Community:
Rural SC



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The *Communal Pen* writing workshop is offered by the South Carolina Arts Commission, in partnership with South Carolina Humanities, in conjunction with the traveling Smithsonian exhibition, *Crossroads: Change in Rural America*. *Crossroads* is presented through the Museum on Main Street (MoMS) program as part of the **Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service**. MoMS provides access to the Smithsonian for small-town America through museum exhibitions, research, educational resources, and programming. *Communal Pen* is developed through the SC Arts Commission's place-based initiative, the *Art of Community: Rural SC*, a new framework for engagement, learning, and action in rural communities. The writing workshops are coordinated through the SCAC's Folklife & Traditional Arts and Community Arts Development programs, with generous support from SC Humanities.

Who We Are

Communal Pen coordinator **Laura Marcus Green** is Folklife & Traditional Arts Program Director at the South Carolina Arts Commission, where she manages several grant and award programs, and at the University of South Carolina's McKissick Museum, where she develops programming in conjunction with folklife exhibitions. She holds a Ph.D. in Folklore from Indiana University and an M.A. in Folklore/Anthropology from the University of Texas at Austin. Selected prior positions include Community Engagement Coordinator for the Museum of International Folk Art's Gallery of Conscience, and work as a folklife fieldworker and researcher, writer, curator and consultant for the Louisiana Division of the Arts Folklife Program, the South Carolina Arts Commission, the Iowa Arts Council, New Mexico Arts, and the Idaho Commission on the Arts, among others.



Deeply rooted in South Carolina, *Communal Pen* co-facilitator, **Eboni Ramm** fell in love with the arts at a young age and was encouraged throughout her youth to express herself. Today, she is a gifted vocalist known for her special blend of timeless jazz classics with a pinch of poetry. Ramm resides in Columbia, South Carolina where she conducts jazz poetry workshops in schools, libraries, and various learning centers. She serves her community as Richland County Library's Literary Resident and as a teaching artist with ARTS ACCESS South Carolina and Youth Corps. She is a featured musician on SC-ETV's education web portal, knowitall.org. Her publication *Within His Star: The Story of Levi Pearson* celebrates the ancestor who added strength to the unprecedented Brown vs. The Board of Education case. Learn more at www.EboniRamm.com.

Communal Pen co-facilitator **Michelle Ross** is a folklorist and adjunct faculty in anthropology at the University of South Carolina Sumter. She holds an M.A. from the Folk Studies and Anthropology Department at Western Kentucky University. Ross embraces stories of all kinds. She helped establish the SC Center for Oral Narrative, through which she has co-created several writing workshops. Ross also works with the Mothers of Angels in telling and writing about grief from the death of a child, and has worked with veterans in telling and writing their stories. Her work has been published in *The North Carolina Folklore Journal* and an anthology of mother-in-law essays titled *His Mother!*; her poetry has appeared in *Sandhill* and *The Petigru Review*. For the past five years, she has been working on telling her Pontian Greek family's refugee story, her most important project to date.

