**Session Format: Paper** 

Session Track:

Title: "Printed Word Warfare in the Backcountry: Publishing for the State of Franklin" Abstract/Summary:

This paper engages in an historical, print culture analysis of the political material, both governmental and partisan, generated by the late 18<sup>th</sup> century struggle to establish the State of Franklin. The State of Franklin was an attempt by frontier Euro-American settlements in an area roughly encompassed by present day eastern Tennessee to formally secede from North Carolina and thereafter gain admittance to the new United States union as the 14<sup>th</sup> state. Although the establishment of Franklin was vehemently opposed by the North Carolina legislature and "anti-secession" settlers in the region, a rudimentary government apparatus was cobbled together by the Franklin separatists and persisted from 1784-1790. Near constant tension, occassionally violent, between pro-Franklin and anti-Franklin forces often handicapped even the most basic of government operations and printing was, consequently, a lesser concern in the attempt to form the first trans-Appalachian state. Nonetheless, like other 18th century political movements that encompassed literate populations, the State of Franklin made recourse to the printing press to circulate arguments justifying its existence. While no evidence suggests that printing operations ever set up shop within the short-lived borders of Franklin, would-be Franklin partisans and their North Carolina-loyalist opponents utilized the established printers of eastern North Carolina to wage a backcountry war of the written word.

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## **Biographical Summary:**

Born and raised in the Roanoke, Virginia area, Paul earned an Appalachian Studies MA and an English MA from Appalachian State. He has taught courses on media representations of the American South/Appalachia and is currently working on his dissertation "The Mountains at the End of the World: Subcultural Appropriations of Appalachia and the Hillbilly Image, 1990-2010" in the Media, Art, & Text (MATX) Program at Virginia Commonwealth University.