

AHEA Conference
14-17 April 2011
John Carroll University, University Hts. (Cleveland), Ohio USA

AHEA OPENING NIGHT FILM “About a Village” - Documentary Film

**Thursday, April 14, 2011,
Dolan Center for Science and Technology,
in the Donahue Auditorium, JCU campus,
Free and open to the public, all welcome.**

**The film will be shown at approximately 9:00 pm
after the opening night keynote speaker (7:00 pm)
and after the reception.**

“About a Village” - Documentary Film

Where is one’s true home? For Elsa Koch and her circle of friends this question is more complicated than for most of us. Born in a German-speaking village in southern Hungary, they were forced to leave after the Second World War, still children. Although they eventually succeeded in building their lives in post-war Germany, the transition was not easy.



Having been expelled from Hungary as Germans—a measure sanctioned by the Allies in 1945—they were regarded as outsiders in Germany as well, often referred to as “Hungarian Gypsies.” They had to suddenly become adults when they did not yet feel ready for it. No wonder that the small Hungarian village keeps occupying a special place in their hearts. They yearn for the uncomplicated world of their childhoods, where their lives were mapped out

by the village streets and nothing could penetrate their sphere of joy and playfulness, not even the cruelties of war and politics. Is that world gone forever or have they managed to hold onto it throughout the past six decades? Is it in fact a physical place or more of an inner landscape? The viewer is free to reply to these questions or leave them unanswered. The characters in the



film tell the story and express their occasionally conflicting views in their own words, leaving room for interpretation. This is a film about people who were affected by historical events and not a film about “history.”

*68 minutes long
in German and Hungarian, with English subtitles*

ABOUT THE PRODUCER-DIRECTOR:

John C. Swanson is an Associate Professor in the History Department of Utica College, NY. He has a Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota. Professor Swanson's research interests focus on Central and Eastern Europe, especially questions of nationalism and ethnic identity.

He will be present during the opening night to answer questions about the film after before and after the viewing.

