

The 8th Annual Louisiana Studies Conference

“Sacred Louisiana”

Conference Keynote Speakers: Matt Petty and Mary Lou Uttermohlen

Conference Co-Chairs: Lisa Abney, Faculty Facilitator for Academic Research and Community College Outreach and Professor of English, Northwestern State University

Jason Church, Materials Conservator, National Center for Preservation Technology and Training

Charles Pellegrin, Associate Professor of History, Northwestern State University

Shane Rasmussen, Director of the Louisiana Folklife Center and Associate Professor of English, Northwestern State University

Conference Programming: Jason Church, Chair

Shane Rasmussen

Conference Hosts: Leslie Gruesbeck, Associate Professor of Art and Gallery Coordinator, Northwestern State University

Greg Handel, Interim Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and Associate Professor of Music, Northwestern State University

Selection Committees:

NSU Louisiana High School Essay Contest: Shane Rasmussen, Chair

Jason Church

Lisa Davis, NSU National Writing Project Director and Instructor of English and Education, Northwestern State University

Conference Presentations: Shane Rasmussen, Chair

Jason Church

Conference Program Cover and Poster Design: Matt DeFord, Head, Department of Fine and Graphic Arts and Professor of Sculpture and Ceramics, Northwestern State University

Conference Program Cover and Poster Photo: Mary Lou Uttermohlen. *All Saint's Eve in Lacombe*, 2014.

“LACOMBE, LOUISIANA. In Lacombe, people of all beliefs practice a Creole and Indian ritual of honoring their dead on All Saints Eve. A priest blesses each cemetery and graves are cleaned and decorated with candles and flowers for the annual return of their dearly departed.”

Technical Support: Charles Rachal, Electronic and Continuing Education, Northwestern State University

Administrative Support: Shelia Thompson, Administrative Coordinator, Louisiana Folklife Center

Louisiana Folklife Center Staff: Cheryl Garrett, Angel Lewis, Kirsten Sanders, and Jeffrey Watley

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“Spiritual YaYa,” an exhibition of photographs by Mary Lou Uttermohlen, is on display through the generosity of the following sponsors: Dear School of Creative and Performing Arts
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Dr. J. Denise Lott
Leslie Elliottsmith

Special thanks to the many other people who graciously donated their time and talents to the Conference.

CONFERENCE OVERVIEW

Please note: All events take place in CAPA (Creative and Performing Arts)

Friday, September 16, 2016

2:00-2:30 p.m.	Conference Registration, CAPA, 2 nd Floor
2:30-3:00 p.m.	Conference Welcome, CAPA 206
3:15-4:45 p.m.	Presentation Session 1, CAPA
5:00-6:00 p.m.	Reception and Refreshments, Orville J. Hanchey Gallery

6:00-7:00 p.m. Keynote Address: Mary Lou Uttermohlen
CAPA 206

Saturday, September 17, 2016

8:00-9:00 a.m. Conference Registration, Donuts and Coffee, CAPA, 2nd Floor
 9:00-10:15 a.m. Presentation Session 2, CAPA
 10:30-11:30 a.m. Keynote Address: Matt Petty
 CAPA 206
 11:30-12:00 p.m. Awards Ceremony: 8th Annual NSU Louisiana High School Essay
 Contest, CAPA 206
 12:00-1:15 p.m. Light Lunch and Reception, Orville J. Hanchey Gallery and Alumni Plaza
 1:15-2:30 p.m. Presentation Session 3, CAPA
 2:45-4:00 p.m. Presentation Session 4, CAPA
 4:00 p.m. Conference Close

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Please note: All events take place in CAPA (Creative and Performing Arts)

Friday, September 16, 2016

2:00-2:30 p.m.	Conference Registration	<i>CAPA, 2nd Floor</i>
2:30-3:00 p.m.	Conference Welcome	<i>CAPA 206</i>
3:15-4:45 p.m.	Presentation Session 1	
<i>Panel 1A</i>	<i>Creole and Colonial French Culture</i>	<i>CAPA 205</i>

Session Chair: George E. Avery

Terri Schroth, Aurora University

Bryant Smith, Nicholls State University

“The Effects of Cultural or Linguistic Heritage in Studying French”

Cheryl Garrett, Northwestern State University

“Understanding the Creole in *Children of Strangers*, *Catherine Carmier*, and *The Clearing*”

Marcy Frantom, Independent Scholar

“The Backbone of Bousillage: Changes in Timber Frame Joinery in Natchitoches”

George E. Avery, Stephen F. Austin State University

“Garrett Snuff Bottles and the Dots”

Panel 1B Louisiana Musical History

CAPA 206

Session Chair: Tim Van Cleave

Ed Huey, The Baylor School, Retired

“I Hear That Train A’Coming”

Tim Van Cleave, Cane River Creole National Historical Park

Film Screening: *Juke Joints, Dance Halls, and House Parties: A Legacy of Music on Cane River*

Panel 1C Swamp Culture and Foodways

Magale Recital Hall

Session Chair: Lisa A. Kirby

Lisa A. Kirby, Collin College

“Swamp People, Bayou Folk, and Redneck Renegades: The Swamp as Sacred Space in Working-Class Culture”

Valerie Salter, Northwestern State University

“Divine Louisiana Food: The Importance of Food in Louisiana Culture During Holidays and Special Events”

Denise Bailey, Northwestern State University

“I Was Hungry and You Gave Me Food: Addressing Food Insecurity at NSU”

Jocelyn Donlon, Louisiana School for Math, Science, and the Arts

Jon Griffin Donlon, Consultant/Public Intellectual

“Hogs Gone Wild: Hunters Got Game”

5:00-6:00 p.m.

Reception and Refreshments

Orville J. Hanchey Gallery

6:00-7:00 p.m. Keynote Address: Mary Lou Uttermohlen, Photographer

**“Spiritual YaYa: Spiritual Tourism through
New Orleans and Southern Louisiana”**

CAPA 206

“Spiritual YaYa” offers a peek behind the veil shrouding the spiritual mysteries of New Orleans. The series visits a variety of spiritual groups that intermingle here like the ingredients in a pot of gumbo. It begins with Mardi Gras, St. Joseph’s Day, All Saints’ Days, and Christmas Eve Bonfires, but then it digs deeper into private spiritual communities.

The word YAYA originates from the language of slaves from Yoruba and it means divine. Today the word is used as a sign of endearment for aging women. Like the word YAYA, culture has a way of getting transformed in Louisiana. People cherish their beliefs and resist change yet over time customs morph. What once belonged to someone else becomes ours. It is this intermingling of culture plus strong community bonds that creates the soul of New Orleans today.

While the city remains predominately Catholic, many religions coexist here. Yet the interest of this documentary is not about the religions but what is unique about the spiritual culture. To discover this means crossing out of any comfort zone and venturing into the unknown. Out there away from the beaten path are religions that existed before Catholicism and a few that are blended with it since attempts to covert people failed.

Some preach that New Orleans is a portal where the veil between the realms is easier to cross. Tourists, evangelicals, energy workers, psychics, healers, and ghost hunters arrive like pilgrims in anticipation of a supernatural adventure.

Photographing this broad topic requires weaving in and out of communities with the manners of a humble guest. It is a gift to be allowed to document sacred moments. People worship for their own personal connection with God and with no desire to be recorded. Therefore creating this series is a sensitive undertaking requiring patience, grace, diplomacy, and respect.

Americans appreciate the constitutional right to worship freely and without judgment. It is clear to see that in New Orleans people take these rights quite seriously as they literally enjoy dancing to the beat of their own drums!

Saturday, September 17, 2016

8:00-9:00 a.m. Conference Registration, Donuts and Coffee

CAPA, 2nd Floor

9:00-10:15 a.m. Presentation Session 2

Panel 2A Cultural Tensions and Convergences

CAPA 205

Session Chair: Clayton Delery-Edwards

Clayton Delery-Edwards, Louisiana School for Math, Science, and the Arts, Retired

“Fernando Rios and the Drive Against the Deviates”

Ruth Foote, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

“‘*just as brutal ... but without all the fanfare*’: African American Students, Racism, and Defiance during the Desegregation of Southwestern Louisiana Institute, 1954-1964”

Bernard Gallagher, Louisiana State University at Alexandria

“James Lee Burke’s *White Doves at Morning*: Deconstructing Contemporary Ideas of the Confederate Flag and the American Civil War”

Thom Brennan, Cane River Creole National Historical Park

“William Smith: Civil War Soldier and Buffalo Soldier”

Panel 2B *Fans and Fanning: Spiritual Sounds for the Soul*

CAPA 206

Session Chair: Randall Dupont

Randall Dupont, University of Mobile

Élie Woerner, Former Director of French Missions, Louisiana Baptist Convention

“Evangelizing Evangeline Country: *L’Heure Baptiste en Français*”

Felice Coles, University of Mississippi

“Isleños’ Verbal Art Celebrating God in Nature”

Marie-Laure Boudreau, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

“‘At the Intersection of Participation’: Cajun and Creole Music Fan Videos on the Web”

Martha C. Arrington, Independent Scholar

“‘*When All of God’s Singers Get Home*’: The Influence of Gospel Music in Rural Louisiana”

Panel 2C *Louisiana Letters*

CAPA 207

Session Chair: David Middleton

Rachel (Ray) Green, Texas Woman’s University and Harmony Science Academy

“Fosse’s Storm”

Jay Udall, Nicholls State University

“Louisiana as Spiritual Landscape in Five Poems”

John P. Doucet, Nicholls State University

David Middleton, Nicholls State University

“A Local Habitation and a Name: Sacred Time and Sacred Places in Louisiana Verse”

Panel 2D Cultural Lagniappe

Magale Recital Hall

Session Chair: Nolan Eller

Nolan Eller, Northwestern State University

Mary Linn Wernet, Northwestern State University

“Peeling Back the Paint: Examining the History, Preservation, and Iconography of the Metoyer Portraits”

Richard V. McGehee, University of Texas at Austin

“Sandra’s Ex”

10:30-11:30 a.m. Keynote Address: Matt Petty, Northwestern State University

LIGHTEN UP

CAPA 206

LIGHTEN UP is a multimedia music-theater production about visionary visual artists. Initially inspired by the life and work of Houston’s Flower Man, the piece explores the visions of several artists whose lives and work in various corners of the United States re-envision the American Dream in imaginative, powerful, healing ways. Collaborators Matt Petty and Eve Beglarian have been traveling the country for more than a year, meeting and talking with a wildly varied group of artists who share the experience of having lived as non-artists before being struck in mid-life with a vision they feel compelled to express. While sometimes called “outsider artists,” it is clear their work springs from sources deep in the ground of the places they live, and inside their deepest selves.

LIGHTEN UP is more a fantasia on the work of these artists than a conventional documentary. Matt Petty’s videos include footage of the work of Cleveland Turner, aka the Flower Man, Pastor Juanita Leonard, Prophet Isaiah Robertson, Jeff McKissack (the Orange Show), Kenny Hill

(Chauvin), and others. Eve Beglarian's music sets texts by Louise Glück, Ezekiel, and Reverend Milton Brunson as well as the artists themselves. The piece also explores the way the creators' lives have been transformed by their relationships with the artists and their work.

Link to the trailer: <https://vimeo.com/174963240>.

11:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Awards Ceremony: CAPA 206
8th Annual NSU Louisiana High School Essay Contest

12:00-1:15 p.m. Light Lunch and Reception *Orville J. Hanchey Gallery*

1:15-2:30 p.m. Presentation Session 3

Panel 3A Louisiana Literature and Spirituality *CAPA 205*

Session Chair: Heather Salter Dromm

Derek Foster, Upper Iowa University, Alexandria

“My God...my God! how miserable I am...’: Religious Metaphor in Victor Séjour’s ‘The Mulatto’”

Robert Allen Alexander, Nicholls State University

“Being and Praxis: Why Religion Matters More than Spirituality in Walker Percy’s Louisiana”

Heather Salter Dromm, Northwestern State University

“Sacred Easter in *Children of Strangers*”

Shirley A. (Holly) Stave, Louisiana Scholars’ College

“Reclaiming the Queen of Heaven: Marian Imagery in *The Divine Secrets of the Ya-Ya Sisterhood*”

Panel 3B Katrina Ten Years After: A Second Life, A Second Chance *CAPA 206*

Session Chair: Tika Laudun

Tika Laudun, Louisiana Public Broadcasting

Film Screening: *Katrina Ten Years After: A Second Life, A Second Chance*

Panel 3C *Re-envisioning History****Magale Recital Hall***

Session Chair: John P. Doucet

Jodie Cummings, American Public University

“Invisible Bonds and Visible Bondage: Teaching the Common Legacy of Slavery in New Orleans, Louisiana and Salem, Massachusetts”

Daphne Kuntz, University of Amsterdam

“The Power of Marie Laveau: Myth and Reality”

John P. Doucet, Nicholls State University

“Historical Hurricanes and the Marian Devotion of Prompt Succor in Coastal Louisiana”

Dennis Rohatyn, University of San Diego

“Raising Kane”

2:45-4:00 p.m. Presentation Session 4***Panel 4A Sacred Sites******CAPA 205***

Session Chair: Phyllis Lear

Wesley Harris, Louisiana State Park Service and the University of Phoenix

“A Study in Contrasts: Adjacent White and African American Cemeteries”

Lisa Abney, Northwestern State University

“Honoring the Dead: Grave Traditions in Louisiana and Other Southern Cemeteries”

Jennifer Ritter Guidry, Center for Louisiana Studies, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

“Rural Louisiana Graveyards”

Phyllis Lear, Northwestern State University

“Poverty Point Plaza: Sacred or Profane?”

Panel 4B Louisiana During World War II***CAPA 206***

Session Chair: Jerry P. Sanson

Bill Robison, Southeastern Louisiana University

Jerry P. Sanson, Louisiana State University at Alexandria

Film Screening: *Louisiana During World War II*

Panel 4C Sacred Landscapes

Magale Recital Hall

Session Chair: Dean Sinclair

Dean Sinclair, Northwestern State University

“From Darkness to Light: The Sacred Landscape of the Rock Chapel, Carmel, Louisiana”

Mona Lisa Saloy, Dillard University

“Southern Church Cultural Shift in Black Catholic Worship”

Sheila Richmond, Creole Heritage Center, Northwestern State University

“A Pictorial View of Sacred Louisiana through Three Creole Heritage Center Projects”

4:00

Conference Close

PRESENTATION ABSTRACTS

Lisa Abney, Northwestern State University

“Honoring the Dead: Grave Traditions in Louisiana and Other Southern Cemeteries”

Honoring the dead remains an important activity throughout the American South; many residents routinely care for and decorate the final resting places of their relatives. Regardless of ethnic background, families participate in yearly cemetery cleanings or visit graves. For some, these events align with a specific holiday such as All Souls Day or Memorial Day, and the gathering serves as a family-community reunion.

While grave cleaning and tending has been a tradition in much of the South, headstones and other permanent grave markers have changed dramatically over the past 100 years. Contemporary markers frequently illustrate the passions of the deceased such as quilting/hunting/fishing, cartoon characters, and even NASCAR racing. Be they pre-planned by the deceased or selected by family, these markers establish and represent the identity of the departed. The person’s age, economic situation, and social class become factors along with interests and hobbies in the construction of the person’s final identity for the outside world. Often, visitors to cemeteries find out a tremendous amount of information from looking at a headstone. While elaborate headstones have, in the past, been relics of wealthy families who could afford to construct tombs, statuaries, and markers, ornate contemporary markers are sometimes more secular and appear to be products of not only the wealthy but also those of more modest means.

In concert with permanent markers, temporary decorations of a grave also play a role in formulating a person’s identity. The items, placed by friends or family members, create a deeper understanding of the person who has departed. Some families spend a good deal of time planning for and constructing elaborate floral arrangements, statues, figurines, or other tributes to place on graves. In general, these pieces function as ways of commemorating the deceased or sharing details about his or her life with visitors.

Robert Allen Alexander, Nicholls State University

“Being and Praxis: Why Religion Matters More than Spirituality in Walker Percy’s Louisiana”

When Dr. Thomas More in Walker Percy’s *Love in the Ruins* declares “that it took religion to save [him] from the spirit world,” he underscores the author’s emphasis on orthopraxy—that is, the practice of religious ritual and practice as opposed to the transcendent qualities often associated with religious experience. While it would be easy to see Percy’s point as relevant for all of western Christianity, perhaps we should consider how it applies to Christianity within the unique cultural and topographical environment of Louisiana. The novel is, after all, set in a futuristic Louisiana, with unmistakable references to well-known Louisiana scenery. And that setting, with its elements of contrasts—decay juxtaposed with fecundity, racism thriving among otherwise loving people, willful ignorance espoused even by the well-educated and prosperous—

also reminds us of how Louisiana, with its crazy patchwork of cultural diversity, has a citizenry that largely shares the idea that what you do is much more important than what you say. Consequently, the cultural elements that draw Louisianans together are often connected to ritual: from Mardi Gras and Lent to the revolving seasons of the year noted more for what is shared—crawfish, football, king cakes—than what is indicated on a calendar. What seems to matter is not the idea or meaning behind the practices but the practices themselves. Much like the continental existential philosophers whom Percy recognized as key influences, Dr. More has learned that the greatest challenge for modern humanity is overcoming our tendency to think of ourselves as subjects trying to relate to an external world (that is, as beings that are in some way “spiritual” in the sense that our minds and not our bodies define us) when in fact we are always in the world, engaging in practices that require the engagement of our whole being.

Martha C. Arrington, Independent Scholar

“*When All of God’s Singers Get Home*’: The Influence of Gospel Music in Rural Louisiana”

Very few aspects of a person’s life leaves as many personal and yet collective traces of memories as their musical heritage. Gospel music was once a popular source for social gatherings and entertainment throughout rural Louisiana communities. Local residents who recall attending Fifth Sunday Singing Conventions, Shaped Note Singings, and Singing Schools relate the camaraderie of these gatherings and their lifetime love of gospel music.

In the later part of the nineteenth through the first half of the twentieth century, gospel music developed in the Deep South mostly among the working classes of various Protestant denominations. Two emerging styles of gospel music became known at that time as Black Gospel and Southern Gospel music. Although participants and audiences of these two styles were generally segregated, they lived and worked in close proximity geographically. Both types of gospel music evolved on a somewhat parallel, each style borrowing from the other.

In its earlier days, gospel music, particularly among urban white congregations, was considered inferior at best and not allowed by many churches. This style was considered too secular, commercialized, nontraditional, and informal. However, gospel music grew rapidly in popularity as wholesome entertainment for the entire family.

Gospel music grew from the rural South, was promoted into an entire industry, and remains one of the top musical genres both in America and internationally. An entire industry was developed in the promotion of gospel music. Many musical careers were made or augmented by professional musicians and singers including several from Louisiana who credit gospel music for giving them their start. Today gospel music is still a vital part of our rich piney woods heritage with its universal appeal of personal soul searching messages and its participatory nature.

George E. Avery, Stephen F. Austin State University

“Garrett Snuff Bottles and the Dots”

Snuff is a tobacco product that was introduced to the Europeans by the American Indians in what is now the United States. It is dry, ground tobacco that was taken by snorting it up one’s nose, presumably with a straw-like device. By the turn of the century, in the South, it was common to “dip” snuff. A stick was chewed at the end to make a type of brush and then dipped into the snuff, and put into the mouth. Rural, Southern women commonly dipped snuff, although men dipped as well. By the early 1900s, there were dots on the bottom of most Garrett Snuff bottles, and the thought was that dots meant the strength of the snuff—no dots, or one or two dots were weaker than three and four dots. It was also said that the dots were a way of keeping track of the various molds of fully-automated snuff bottle production. The Garrett snuff bottles from the second half of the 1800s—which were made one at a time and human breath filled the bottles—did have dots on them, but there were also various other types of marks. I’ve looked at over 300 snuff bottles—some from the 1800s, most from the 1900s—from east Texas, and have supposed that there is a bit of truth to both explanations for the dots.

Denise Bailey, Northwestern State University

“I Was Hungry and You Gave Me Food: Addressing Food Insecurity at NSU”

The prevalence of food insecurity among university students is increasing and adding to the obstacles which hinder academic success. Many students at NSU (as well as other universities across Louisiana and the nation) are from impoverished families, and international students are not eligible for local or federal government assistance. In an attempt to address this need, a food pantry was established in 2015, becoming only the second one on a Louisiana university campus. This workshop emphasizes awareness of food insecurity on university campuses, identifies the impact of food insecurity on society in general and on higher education in particular, and explores the means of addressing the prevalence of food insecurity.

Marie-Laure Boudreau, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

“‘At the Intersection of Participation’: Cajun and Creole Music Fan Videos on the Web”

Today, almost everybody walks around with a video camera in their pocket. It is not unusual to witness show attendees recording a moment of the performance happening before their eyes. Even though the audience is often involved in dancing during the event, as opposed to solely watching and listening; Cajun and Creole musical performances are not exempt from this trend. In this sense, Cajun and Creole music’s position is somewhere in between the two poles on Thomas Turino’s continuum between “*participatory performance* [. . .] a special type of artistic practice in which there are no artist-audience distinctions, only participants and potential participants performing different roles [. . . and] *presentational performance*, [which] in contrast, refers to situations where one group of people, the artists, prepare and provide music for another group, the audience, who do not participate in making the music or dancing.” (2008, 26).

On the other hand, sharing performances on the web through social media and video upload sites is considered a form of participation on another scale. This sharing of performances on a participatory web is also expanding access to the music of a particular region worldwide, in a different way than the “traditional” distribution of recorded media. Many research questions involving ethnomusicological “virtual fieldwork” arise: “What is the relationship between music and identity for individuals and groups? How are communities created and maintained through musical practices? [. . .] do the ways in which people communicate cultural practices change those cultural practices?” (Cooley, Meizel, and Syed; 2008, 92).

For the purpose of this presentation, however, the main question will focus on the intersection of participatory performances and a participatory web: is the participatory web – through the incitation to “produce” and “distribute” performance artifacts on its platforms – removing the audience from participation in the performance itself?

References

- Cooley, Timothy J., Katherine Meizel, and Nasir Syed. 2008. “Virtual Fieldwork: Three Case Studies.” *Shadows in the Field*. 2nd ed. Eds. Gregory Barz and Timothy J. Cooley. Oxford: Oxford UP. 90-107.
- Turino, Thomas. 2008. *Music as Social Life: The Politics of Participation*. Chicago: U of Chicago P.

Thom Brennan, Cane River Creole National Historical Park

“William Smith: Civil War Soldier and Buffalo Soldier”

William Smith was born enslaved on Bermuda/Oakland Plantation near Natchitoches, Louisiana. During the Red River Campaign of 1864, Smith escaped to freedom and joined the Union army. He participated in the construction of Bailey’s Dam before being captured by Confederate forces and re-enslaved. After the Civil War, Smith traveled to New Orleans and was one of the first men to enroll in the newly-created Ninth Regiment of Cavalry. The Ninth was one of six regiments of African-American troops created after the Civil War. He served five years with the Ninth in west Texas. Smith also survived the Galveston Hurricane of 1900. He and his family moved to Monterrey, California, where he died in 1930.

Smith’s story plays out across the canvas of the Civil War, Reconstruction, the western frontier, and race relations in late 19th and early 20th Century America. In many respects, it is the story of an ordinary African-American.

The material in this proposal comes from research done for the booklet, *A Blacksmith’s Son Goes to War: The Story of William Smith*, published by the National Park Service.

Felice Coles, University of Mississippi

“Isleños’ Verbal Art Celebrating God in Nature”

The Isleño community of St. Bernard Parish is devoutly Christian, although historically they’ve had a fractious relationship with the Catholic Church (Baudier 1939; Din 1988). When Isleño Spanish speakers create religious songs and stories, they mainly praise God for the bounty of nature:

“God makes everything possible to live well in the world because everything was made by the hand of God in the world, and when you plant a tree, the tree bears fruit. That fruit falls to earth and yields more good fruit. That is the lesson from God. Fish as well: they are here and made by the hands of God. Everything that is in the world is worth more than you believe. Everything that God made, nobody in the world can do what God has done for us.”

And for watching over the residents at birth and at death in their territory:

“God was the one who put us in the world,
and God is the one who will collect us at the end.”

This presentation will focus on the stories about the relationship that the Isleños see between God and themselves as the recipients of the blessings of the physical world, including plants and animals and products of the earth. Isleños believe that their lives are affected by God infused in all nature, and their religious activities during the year celebrate this vital link that anchors them to their sacred space in the marshlands of southeastern Louisiana.

References

Baudier, Roger. 1939. *The Catholic Church in Louisiana*. New Orleans: Roger Baudier and A.W. Hyatt Stationery Manufacturing Co. (reprinted 2013 by Provincial P, Claitor’s Publication Division).

Din, Gilbert C. 1988. *The Canary Islanders of Louisiana*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State UP.

Jodie Cummings, American Public University

“Invisible Bonds and Visible Bondage: Teaching the Common Legacy of Slavery in New Orleans, Louisiana and Salem, Massachusetts”

To many Americans, New Orleans, and Salem might seem to be polar opposites in nearly every way imaginable. One is a subtropical, French colonial outpost while another is a coastal settlement originally inhabited by Puritans. Although these two towns might appear to have little in common, they share a common historical thread that would eventually define their lasting cultural legacies.

New Orleans is synonymous with the African inspired rituals of voodoo, traditions brought by slaves to America and adapted to blend with the Catholic traditions of Louisiana. Quite possibly,

voodoo might have been eventually relegated to little more than local myth if not for an event hundreds of miles away in the Caribbean. Toussaint L'Overture's violent overthrow of French plantation owners in Haiti caused an influx of immigrants into New Orleans as well as an epidemic like fear of voodoo fueled slave uprisings that would leave impressions on Louisiana into the modern day.

For most Americans, Salem immediately calls to mind the image of witches. While Puritans associated witchcraft with demonic forces, historical evidence points to African voodoo as a trigger for the witch hysteria of 1692. While the accusations of 'witchcraft' were heard with terror throughout the New England countryside, the strange rituals witnessed by a group of young Puritan girls was in reality, Caribbean voodoo, not unlike the type found in Louisiana.

For decades, this common thread was an often overlooked historical curiosity. However, as the 21st century has revealed many unhealed wounds of racial tension, the impact of fear of African influence is a topic that historians must address. As students grow more aware of racial tension in modern society, a comparative study of past societies and how racism drove them to the brink of hysteria becomes more relevant for educators.

Clayton Delery-Edwards, Louisiana School for Math, Science, and the Arts, Retired

“Fernando Rios and the Drive Against the Deviates”

Fernando Rios was killed while he was visiting New Orleans in September of 1958. He may or may not have been gay, but he was perceived to be by three Tulane students who were on a mission to “roll [i.e. mug] a queer.” The assailants turned themselves in to police, were arrested and tried, but they were ultimately acquitted. When the verdict for acquittal was read in the courtroom, the assembled crowd cheered.

Rios had the bad luck to be killed as the New Orleans was engaged in an effort led by City Hall that became known as the Drive Against the Deviates. There was strong feeling that gay men were a noxious influence upon the city, and that the best thing to do was to create an environment so hostile that they would leave and move elsewhere. In the weeks preceding the trial, and during the trial itself, *The States-Item* and *The Times-Picayune* would frequently run a story on one page about how the three defendants in the Rios case only beat the dead man after he had made “an improper advance.” On the next page, they print an article about how important it was to rid the city of deviates, because they were a moral blight.

My presentation will focus on the Drive Against the Deviates, the news coverage of the drive and the Rios trial, and show how it was nearly inevitable that the accused would be exonerated, despite overwhelming evidence of guilt.

Jocelyn Donlon, Louisiana School for Math, Science, and the Arts

Jon Griffin Donlon, Consultant/Public Intellectual

“Hogs Gone Wild: Hunters Got Game”

Throughout Louisiana—indeed throughout the United States—there are thousands of feral hogs perpetrating millions of dollars of damage to the landscape. Using fieldwork conducted in North Louisiana, we will discuss the history of hogs in Louisiana, the extent of the feral pig problem in the region, and the hunting methods employed to abate the problem—not to mention a few legends surrounding the importation of the feral hog. Finally, we will describe a “religious foodway” tradition in DeSoto Parish called “Feed a Friend,” sponsored by Joey Register, a local hog hunter. Mr. Register invites anyone and everyone to come “fill their bellies and their hearts.” He invites a preacher-friend of his, from a nearby Cowboy Church, to sing and deliver a message. About 200 people have attended each year. We attended the second annual Feed A Friend event on April 2, 2016, hoping for wild boar on the menu. However, Mr. Register put out “two farm-raised, well-fed pigs” that were smoked. He did tell us that he had a few live feral hogs captured in a trailer, waiting to be transported. So the contest continues.

John P. Doucet, Nicholls State University

“Historical Hurricanes and the Marian Devotion of Prompt Succor in Coastal Louisiana”

The two decades surrounding the turn of the twentieth century were alternately destructive and formative for settlement of southeast coastal Louisiana. This period began with the second largest natural disaster in U.S. history, the Great October Storm of 1893, which destroyed the densely populated coastal fishing village of Chênrière Caminada and killed 2,000 people across its path. Surviving Chênrière families migrated northward to either found or join other riparian villages in southeast Louisiana, including Leeville on the banks of Bayou Lafourche. After 1893, Leeville enjoyed substantial growth as a center of fishing and agriculture, leading the Diocese of New Orleans to establish a chapel for the largely French-speaking Catholic population. But prosperity and the chapel were short-lived, as sequential hurricanes of 1909 and 1915 drove a majority of the community directly up the bayou to a village that would become Golden Meadow. In turn, Golden Meadow’s post-hurricanes population growth convinced the Diocese to establish it as a church center for smaller chapels north and south along Bayou Lafourche. In acknowledgement of the historical-geographical antecedents of the community, the diocese authorized a change of parish name to Our Lady of Prompt Succor, after the devotion established in the middle of the 19th century by the Ursulines of New Orleans as protectorate of that city. Within a decade of the name change, Our Lady of Prompt Succor became Patroness of Louisiana and the traditional devotion for intercession from hurricanes. Extension of this devotion across the century’s turn from New Orleans to the church parish at Golden Meadow is a remarkable reminder of the relationship of historic hurricanes and community origins, as well as proliferation of the Roman Catholic devotion to Prompt Succor, in southeast coastal Louisiana.

John P. Doucet, Nicholls State University

David Middleton, Nicholls State University

“A Local Habitation and a Name: Sacred Time and Sacred Places in Louisiana Verse”

Poets have long celebrated the wonder and the mystery of things – their sacredness – whether it be the universe, the heavens, the earth and all its creatures, the seasons, the weather, or human beings and human history. The first known poet in the English literary tradition, Caedmon, a cowherd, became a poet by responding to a divine command in a dream to “Sing about Creation.” Where did the cosmos come from? Where is it going? Is there meaning in natural or human history, any plan and any purpose, divine or otherwise?

Many of our finest poets have rooted their poetry in a particular place – a nation, a region, a state, a city, a town, or the countryside. These poets include Robert Frost and Emily Dickinson (New England), Thomas Hardy (southwest England), and W.B. Yeats (Ireland), to name but a few. As Shakespeare wrote, the poet gives to universal feelings and ideas “A local habitation and a name.”

And, since the Romantic Period, poets have sometimes seen themselves as a kind of priest – perhaps Christian, perhaps not. Wordsworth called himself a priest of nature. Keats said that his mind was a monastery and he was its monk. Joyce called the writer a priest of the imagination. Poets, like, priests, are sometimes seen as celebrants of mysteries. Praising Fern Hill, Dylan Thomas wrote, “And the Sabbath rang slowly / In the pebbles of the holy streams.”

Many poems of Louisiana poets John Doucet and David Middleton are deeply rooted in Louisiana – its flora and fauna, its geography and geology, and its history, especially its religious history. Doucet, raised Roman Catholic in Lafourche Parish (Golden Meadow) and Middleton, raised Southern Baptist in north Louisiana (Shreveport and Saline) will read and comment on their poems set in Louisiana and that have a sacred dimension.

Heather Salter Dromm, Northwestern State University

“Sacred Easter in *Children of Strangers*”

Easter is a significant symbol in Lyle Saxon’s *Children of Strangers*. Some of the novel’s domestic folk beliefs connected to Holy Week include, as Philip Tapley has noted, the removal of the irons and poker from the family’s fireplace and the not killing of any living creature to avoid bad luck. A moment in which Easter has the most significant importance for protagonist Famie, a former Catholic, occurs at the black Baptist church during an Easter sunrise service, which bears similarity to the practice of Easter Rock. In my close examination of this part of the novel, I plan to draw upon the theories that the appeal of the Black Baptist church as an alternative to Catholicism was its promise of a more personal type of relationship with an individualized God and a more free-style form of worship, as seen in the Easter ceremony in the novel.

Moreover, although Laura L. Carroll and others have taken Saxon to task for misrepresenting folk practices and beliefs of the Natchitoches Afro-Creole community, my argument is that what

Saxon does get right is that the purpose of the religious folklore in the lives of the African-Americans and Afro-Creoles was to make them feel as if they had some sort of control of their fate during the extreme oppression they encountered during the timeframe of the novel. When Famie loses most of what is dear to her and suffers from both physical and mental ailments, she clings the hardest to folk remedies and folk magic. Having said this, however, I ultimately seek to prove that when Famie stops trying to control her fate and lets go of the past, she becomes truly free. When this happens, the old Famie dies a metaphorical death, and a new Famie rises.

Randall Dupont, University of Mobile

Élie Woerner, Former Director of French Missions, Louisiana Baptist Convention

“Evangelizing Evangeline Country: *L’Heure Baptiste en Français*”

Traditional church planting in French-speaking south Louisiana had proven steady but slow for Louisiana Baptist organizations, but a new medium for evangelizing rural Louisiana was emerging in the mid-20th century – radio. Radio opened doors where few Baptist ministers could go, into the homes of 800,000 French speakers. Initiated by the Louisiana Baptist Convention in 1941 and officially started in 1945, the French Baptist Hour was “on the air” weekly for 65 years. Élie Woerner led the radio ministry for 30-plus years, detailing its history in his unpublished manuscript, *L’Heure Baptiste en Français*. What began as a small venture over KVOL in Lafayette expanded under Woerner’s leadership into a 20 station network reaching from New Orleans to Alexandria to Beaumont, Texas. A native of France, Woerner’s excellent diction and grammar was well received and additional support came from the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board. In 1995, Élie Woerner received the National Religious Broadcasters’ prestigious Milestone Award for the ministry’s 50th Anniversary.

Nolan Eller, Northwestern State University

Mary Linn Wernet, Northwestern State University

“Peeling Back the Paint: Examining the History, Preservation, and Iconography of the Metoyer Portraits”

Two 15 minute sessions will make up our combined presentation. In the 1st session, Northwestern State University Archivist Mary Linn Wernet will explore the fascinating history of the three Metoyer portraits that hang in the Cammie G. Henry Research Center and were recently featured in the publication “In Search of Julien Hudson: Free Artist of Color in Pre-Civil War New Orleans” published by the Historic New Orleans Collection. In this examination she will look at the provenance, iconography, and the importance of the portraits to Natchitoches and the Creole Community. In the 2nd 15 minute session Library Associate Nolan Eller will discuss different research tools and techniques that can be utilized prior to going to an archives, library, or research center. He will take participants through his journey to trace the preservation and conservation history of the Mari Agnes Poissot Metoyer portrait.

Ruth Foote, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

“*just as brutal ... but without all the fanfare*’: African American Students, Racism, and Defiance during the Desegregation of Southwestern Louisiana Institute, 1954-1964”

The University of Louisiana at Lafayette, formerly known as the Southwestern Louisiana Institute, holds the distinction of being the first state-funded college to desegregate in the South. Desegregation occurred in 1954, a year after four African American students filed a lawsuit for admittance, and two months after the landmark *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education*.

For some African American students, the desegregation of Southwestern Louisiana Institute began and ended with the beanies: little caps that adorned the heads of freshman students. So synonymous were the beanies with the freshmen, that some might have considered them the freshman mascot. Such were their significance, the beanies became part of the university’s legacy, netting a coveted spot in the school’s anniversary book on its first 100 years.

But there are no photographs of the day that a small group of young African American men who expected the beanies to become part of their freshman legacy after they registered as students in 1960. That was not to be. Instead of having their heads shaved by upperclassmen as was tradition at the time, black students encountered racism, and became pawns, even victims, of a discriminatory educational system that one of them described as *brutal*. And just like the beanies, their story and the story of others—on that first decade of desegregation at SLI—were never fully told.

Six decades later today, their story begins.

Derek Foster, Upper Iowa University, Alexandria

“My God...my God! how miserable I am...’: Religious Metaphor in Victor Séjour’s ‘The Mulatto’”

Born in New Orleans, Victor Séjour first published “The Mulatto” in France in 1837, though it was not translated into English until the 1990s. “The Mulatto” is the first short story by a United States-born African-American, as well as one of the earliest fictionalized accounts of American slavery. The story follows its African-American slave protagonist after he has killed his slave master. The protagonist later discovers that his master was actually his biological father.

Traditionally, scholars have paid attention to themes of slavery and inequality, class-based separatism, and persecution of minorities in all of Séjour’s work. However, what makes “The Mulatto” unique is that it is the only work where the author openly indicts New World slavery. “The Mulatto” thus anticipates the work of Frederick Douglass and William Wells Brown.

At the same time, scholars have largely failed to examine Séjour's usage of religion, particularly in "The Mulatto." Historically, Séjour's father was a free mulatto from Saint-Domingue, and his mother was a New Orleans quadroon. Therefore, he would have been very much aware of Creole social customs, as well as Roman Catholic belief systems and practices.

In "The Mulatto," Séjour employs metaphors that explicitly underscore religion as an equally important theme to slavery and inequality. The author refers to the Virgin Mary, specifically Our Lady of Sorrows, to the Sign of the Cross, and ultimately to Catholic burial rites and practices, as seen particularly with the dealing of Zelia's body after having been executed. Séjour uses these metaphors to examine moral and religious hypocrisy, as well as perversions of Christianity in general, as he attempts to manifest the reality of social injustices that he saw others undergo.

Marcy Frantom, Independent Scholar

"The Backbone of Bousillage: Changes in Timber Frame Joinery in Natchitoches"

There's a lot of interest in bousillage buildings as they survive in French colonial areas; however, we know little about the evolution of the joinery that hold together the panels of mud and moss and appear in attic structures. Called "colombage" and using carpentry joining techniques that date to the 14th century in France, my research in Natchitoches suggests that documentation of more structures might provide tools to date building cores and remodel periods. In this presentation I will compare and contrast area buildings in photographs.

Bernard Gallagher, Louisiana State University at Alexandria

"James Lee Burke's *White Doves at Morning*: Deconstructing Contemporary Ideas of the Confederate Flag and the American Civil War"

This paper will rely on recent debates about the significance of the Confederate Flag in order to sketch out two metanarratives that unconsciously and metonymically attempt to sanctify competing visions of the American Civil War. Once those metanarratives are sketched out, my paper will examine the way in which James Lee Burke's *White Doves at Morning* uses the individual experiences of characters to "deconstruct" and secularize these two competing metanarratives. It will show that for the characters in Burke's novel the Civil War is not a matter of a noble North and an ignoble South or of an ignoble North and a noble South. Instead, my paper will show that the novel constructs an alternative view of the Civil War, one in which truth with a capital "T" is hard to come by. In this world where human frailty and nobility can be found on both sides, Burke's fictional characters demonstrate how life requires people to wrestle with their mixed motivations and make sense as best they can of their perplexities.

Cheryl Garrett, Northwestern State University

"Understanding the Creole in *Children of Strangers*, *Catherine Carmier*, and *The Clearing*"

The term “Sacred Louisiana” conjures thoughts of religious practices, from the Bible Belt of the Protestant northern half of the state to the Catholicism of the bayous and swamps in the southern part of the state; yet, it also exists within the literary scholar’s sacristy holding the words of Louisiana authors, grounded in what can be recognized as Louisiana’s non-Anglo-Saxon heritage. The people of Louisiana and, in particular, the Creoles form the basis into which these authors delve and then write about cultural issues within the state. An examination of the textual treatment by authors of those who call themselves Creole at various intervals within the twentieth century and early twenty-first century allows for better comprehension of the state’s cultural development. The fictional works and authors that are the focus of this presentation are: *Children of Strangers* by Lyle Saxon (1937), *Catherine Carmier* by Ernest Gaines (1964), and *The Clearing* by Tim Gautreaux (2003). Distinct divisions whose definitions fluctuate and change over the years to include or exclude various peoples have existed within the term Creole since the first French settlers came to Louisiana in the early eighteenth century. The three novels noted herein, reveal the separateness the Creoles de Couleur have not only experienced, but also carefully guarded, with respect to other groups within the state. That separateness and the resulting controversies become a dynamic movement within the texts clearly focusing on cultural issues the state faces even today.

Rachel (Ray) Green, Texas Woman’s University and Harmony Science Academy

“Fosse’s Storm”

In the wide-ranging mythos of Louisiana, there is much that is considered sacred. But to the myths themselves? When shadows of legend stretch into reality, to what do they cling for ritual, sanctity, and identity? The answer, in many cases, is: us. But too often, simple, individual lives are overlooked in favor of the larger-than-life figures that have risen out their folklore. It is therefore my desire to contribute a short story which will attempt to place the common man on even footing alongside some of his mythological legacies, highlighting the sanctity of both storyteller and story.

My story will be from the genre of Urban-Historical Fantasy and will focus on a tale told by Baron Samedi to a recently deceased—and rather put out—individual. In this tale, we will learn of the mythological motivations behind the Great October Storm—a devastating hurricane in the Cheniere Caminada area in 1893—and its deeply human consequences and after-effects. The Great October Storm has had a surprising amount of underrepresentation, at least compared to modern storms that claimed even fewer casualties. It is therefore the perfect backdrop for Samedi’s tale, and hopefully will reiterate the importance of not overlooking the significance and sanctity of every human life.

Jennifer Ritter Guidry, Center for Louisiana Studies, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

“Rural Louisiana Graveyards”

Grief, mourning, reverence. Sanctuary. Peaceful rest. Graveyards are the final destination for our mortal vessels. How this repose is constructed, commemorated and frequented is dictated by religion (or lack thereof), tradition, and personal desire. In South Louisiana, graveyards dot the rural landscape, hugging a bayou bank or a sugarcane field, tucked behind a small chapel, sandwiched between businesses as the town grows. This project explores and documents the communal aspects of burial and remembrance on the Louisiana landscape and includes an examination of burial traditions, All Saint's Day, grave houses as well as spatial relationship and geomorphological features.

Wesley Harris, Louisiana State Park Service and the University of Phoenix

“A Study in Contrasts: Adjacent White and African American Cemeteries”

In many Louisiana communities, Caucasian and African American cemeteries lie adjacent to one another, usually separated by a low chain-link fence, or a few yards of neutral ground. Segregated cemeteries are a centuries-old phenomenon in the South. But beyond the matter of race, the separation is even more pronounced in terms of cemetery maintenance, grave markings, ornamentation, the recognition of family legacies, and even graveside visitation.

Through a comparison of adjacent cemeteries in Louisiana's rural communities, this paper and presentation will examine the contrasts between the two races in socio-economic standing, beliefs about death, importance of the cemetery to the living, and enduring segregation even beyond this life.

Some examination of the topic by journalists and historians has noted that black graves often sink into anonymity as headstones deteriorate and undergrowth takes over while adjacent white cemeteries are often meticulously maintained. Some evidence exists that African-American cemeteries in the South were started by small groups of black community or church leaders near the turn of the 20th century, but as those people died off and millions of their offspring moved North during the Great Migration of 1910-70, ownership of the cemeteries became muddled and the plots neglected. Other differences between adjacent cemeteries still experiencing active interment appear more related to economic status of the races in the vicinity.

With limited previous research available on the differences in adjacent Southern cemeteries, the presenter will call upon extensive personal examinations of numerous adjacent graveyards in north Louisiana.

The presentation will include visual exhibition of side-by-side cemeteries to illustrate the differences described above. The presentation will require a projector and projection screen.

Ed Huey, The Baylor School, Retired

“I Hear That Train A'Coming”

The 10-hole diatonic harmonica first appeared in 1824. It is the only modern instrument on which one may produce notes by blowing or drawing through the instrument. Because of this the Viennese instrument was popular almost from its invention for its versatility in playing German and European folk music and for its size and cost. By 1857 Matthias Hohner, a clockmaker from Trossingen, had begun making harmonicas. He became the first to mass produce the instrument and began supplying the United States. Hohner's brothers became the first American sales force.

By the late 19th century Hohner was selling about one million harmonicas per year in the USA. President Lincoln carried a harmonica in his pocket and soldiers on both sides of the US Civil War carried the instruments. Wyatt Earp and Billy the Kid played the instrument as it became a fixture in the musical landscape.

The harmonica was among the first instruments featured in jazz and traditional music recordings in the early 1920's. The earliest masters experimented with hand effects and tongue blocking and, the most important innovation of all, second position playing.

First position playing requires one to exhale through the instrument to play the chords and melody in the musical key of the harmonica. Second position requires one to inhale through the instrument to play most of the melody and chords while playing in a key 5 tones higher than the key of the harmonica. A harmonica player employs the tongue to channel air to access individual notes and chords in the same manner a guitarist employs the hands to play guitar strings.

Harmonicas became available in most variety stores, drug stores and by mail order. As its popularity grew players began to explore the idiosyncrasies of the instrument. Early recordings are evidence of popular songs and the entertaining possibilities of train imitations, fox chases, Lost John, "Talking" harmonicas, animal sounds, and a host of other chordal and melodic effects. Soon harmonica players mimicked what they heard on radio, saw in stage shows, and at social gatherings.

The train imitation begat second position playing. Second position playing begat Blues harmonica to accompany the Blues on its journey.

From the development and recording of this tradition the instrument has been heard internationally and incorporated into classical, jazz, rock, country music, Irish, Cajun, and in many other international music traditions.

Demonstration:

"Train Race with the Model T"

"Chasin' Lost Sonny"

"Sittin' On Top of the World"

"Greasy Greens"

Lisa A. Kirby, Collin College

“Swamp People, Bayou Folk, and Redneck Renegades: The Swamp as Sacred Space in Working-Class Culture”

“To love a swamp [. . .] is to love what is muted and marginal, what exists in the shadows, what shoulders its way out of mud and scurries along the damp edges of what is most commonly praised.

And sometimes its invisibility is a blessing.”

—Barbara Hurd, *Stirring the Mud: On Swamps, Bogs, and Human Imagination*

For southerners, the swamp has long been a site of livelihood, mystery, and sometimes shelter. As Barbara Hurd suggests, the swamp exists on the margins, a haven of sorts, a borderland, which offers a space where cultures exist in their own, often invisible, ways. Anthony Wilson continues in this same vein in *Shadow and Shelter: The Swamp in Southern Culture*: “the swamp occupies an intriguingly complex and liminal space in the Southern and national imaginations and signifies powerfully across discourses of race, cultural and literal contagion, ethnography, and ecology” (ix). While we certainly cannot help but think of race, folkways, and ecology when considering the swamp, social class too becomes an equally important lens through which we can view the power and importance of this space.

This presentation will consider Louisiana swamps specifically as sites of working-class life and culture and how that culture has been represented in literature and popular culture. Considering literary texts, as well as popular culture representations, this presentation will explore the complexity of swamp life and the often all-too-easy dismissal of the working class as “rednecks” or “swamp people.” This presentation will also seek to re-imagine the swamp as a sacred space of work, recreation, sustenance, and refuge for the working class and explore how the swamp represents the complex intersections of southern culture, working-class existence, and the politics of class and place.

Works Cited

- Hurd, Barbara. *Stirring the Mud: On Swamps, Bogs, and Human Imagination*. Athens: U of Georgia P, 2008. Print.
- Wilson, Anthony. *Shadow and Shelter: The Swamp in Southern Culture*. Jackson: U of Mississippi, 2009. Print.

Daphne Kuntz, University of Amsterdam

“The Power of Marie Laveau: Myth and Reality”

During the academic year of 2015-2016, I wrote my Master’s thesis about the ability of Voodoo in New Orleans to provide the communities that practice this religious tradition some power in their lives. I concluded that there were different powers, like the power of belief, the power of a

priest in his/her community, and, in some cases, the power of branding. Marie Laveau, the First and the Second, are interesting examples of the way some of these powers worked.

There are a lot of mythicized stories about Marie Laveau. She became known as the Queen of Voodoo, a figure central to stories about Voodoo in New Orleans and a character in popular culture. There are many stories about Marie Laveau cursing people and making love potions for her clients. In Zora Neale Hurston's book *Mules and Men* from 1935, this mythicized depiction of Marie Laveau is very clear. Hurston, for example, wrote about Marie rising out of the water during the feasts of St. John as a Saint herself.

The real Marie Laveau(s), however, had different powers than suggested in most of the stories about her. In reality, the Maries functioned as mediums between the people in their city and community, instead of mediums between a client and a spirit. They served as protectors of the weaker people, and the citizens of New Orleans believed in them and their knowledge. So, they served as a kind of priest-like figures. I will talk about the power of the mythical Marie, as depicted in Hurston's book, versus this specific power of the Maries as priest-like figures in their community in reality.

Tika Laudun, Louisiana Public Broadcasting

Katrina Ten Years After: A Second Life, A Second Chance

Katrina Ten Years After: A Second Life, A Second Chance is a one hour documentary program commemorating the tenth anniversary of Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath. Narrated by Wendell Pierce, and produced and directed by Louisiana Public Broadcasting's Tika Laudun, written by C. E. Richard and photographed and edited by LPB's Rex Q. Fortenberry, the documentary looks back at those ill-fated days and how, ten years later, the city of New Orleans has achieved what seemed almost unimaginable a decade ago - the resurrection of one of America's most beloved cities.

"It's not about what we went through in ten years; it's about the fact I'm here ten years after, and I can still celebrate and be happy." Robert Green, a lifelong resident of New Orleans' Lower Ninth Ward, who lost his home, and family members in the floodwaters which followed Hurricane Katrina. He is one of the people Louisiana Public Broadcasting will introduce you to in their documentary *Katrina Ten Years After: A Second Life, A Second Chance*.

The program reflects on past experiences and lessons learned, while exploring future plans for rebuilding and maintaining Louisiana's culture and coastline.

"As these marshes, ridges, and barrier islands start disappearing, they make us more vulnerable to storm surges, and those cities are in great danger because of that reason, and Katrina showed that quite convincingly," says Kerry St. Pé, a marine biologist and Emeritus Director of the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary, a 4.2-million acre area currently experiencing the world's fastest rate of land loss.

The program spotlights grassroots efforts by New Orleans residents who continue to make strides in rebuilding their neighborhoods.

“I ended up opening up my house, bringing volunteers here. And that’s really where I started,” said Connie Uddo from New Orleans’ Lakeview area. Before the storm, it was regarded as one of the city’s most upscale neighborhoods. Along with the Lower Ninth Ward, Lakeview suffered the most damage from the storm and subsequent flooding.

Uddo’s family home became the first satellite for Beacon of Hope Resource Center, a grassroots organization which helped repopulate and redevelop neighborhoods affected by Hurricane Katrina.

“New Orleans, you know, is far better than I ever dreamed we’d be. I’m proud of the people that live here – that we pulled ourselves up. I think we surprised the country,” said Uddo.

Post-Katrina, the Orleans Parish population is still rebounding, as it remains more than 100,000 below what it was in July 2005.

Floodwaters did not wash away some of the city’s most chronic problems such as crime and poverty, but strides have been made in other areas such as education. According to the Recovery School District, over 90% of all public school students in the city attend charter schools. New Orleans leads the nation among urban districts in the percentage of public school students enrolled in charter schools.

Healthcare was another area that was due for a facelift even before Katrina. At Charity Hospital, which was among the oldest continuously operating hospitals in the U.S., there were serious shortfalls.

“We would run out of money toward the end of the year,” explained Dr. Karen DeSalvo, Acting Assistant Secretary for Health in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Hurricane Katrina forced healthcare providers to find new, creative solutions to save lives.

“Part of rebuilding New Orleans healthcare after Katrina was not just community health, not just seeing that we have ways for people to pay for care, getting better quality, we needed to replace some infrastructure hospitals like the Veterans’ Hospital and what used to be the Charity Hospital that’s now the University Medical Center.”

The city’s culture survived the storm, says Nick Spitzer, a folklorist and professor of anthropology and American studies at Tulane University in New Orleans. *“Music and culture in general has led the return and recovery because natives simply couldn’t do without the life. They wanted to be back here. And the culture’s what brought people back.”*

Katrina Ten Years After: A Second Life, A Second Chance was produced, directed, written, filmed, edited, scored, and narrated entirely by Louisiana artists. It is a personal story told passionately and honestly by those of us who call this place home.

Phyllis Lear, Northwestern State University

“Poverty Point Plaza: Sacred or Profane?”

Is the “Plaza” at the Poverty Point World Heritage site ceremonial (sacred) or is it a dock/staging area (profane)? Several archaeologists have conducted research in the Poverty Point Plaza, shedding light on the construction, cultural features, and possible uses of this enigmatic area of the site. The goal of this paper is to consolidate their published information in order to form a holistic image of the Plaza, and to better inform future research by the author.

Richard V. McGehee, University of Texas at Austin

“Sandra’s Ex”

“Sandra’s Ex” is the story of Harold and Sandra. They met in high school in a small South Louisiana town. Harold was a thug, and after being expelled from school, he joined the army. Sandra, a high school beauty and basketball star, felt sorry for Harold and married him after her graduation. Harold abused Sandra from the start and after having children, he abused them too. They eventually moved to California, where Harold’s life changed radically. He learned to weld and he found the Lord. Both he and Sandra got involved with a bible college, and religion dominated their lives for a while. When the family moved back to South Louisiana, they established a welding shop, and life settled down for them until Harold took up with a group of holy rollers. Absorbed by his new church, Harold stopped working and isolated himself from his family. Sandra wasn’t included in the new church activities, and her life became working to support her family and making a home for her youngest son and Harold, whom she saw only on the rare occasions when he came out of his bible-reading room. Sandra finally had all she could take of Harold, kicked him out of the house, and then divorced him. He didn’t accept the separation and divorce and threatened Sandra with his and God’s wrath. With time his tone mellowed but by then Sandra had learned her lesson and didn’t respond to his entreaties to take him back. Now she’s getting involved with a man who may not be a great improvement, but it could possibly work out, as long as he doesn’t decide to take up religion.

Matt Petty, Northwestern State University

LIGHTEN UP

LIGHTEN UP is a multimedia music-theater production about visionary visual artists. Initially inspired by the life and work of Houston’s Flower Man, the piece explores the visions of several artists whose lives and work in various corners of the United States re-envision the American Dream in imaginative, powerful, healing ways. Collaborators Matt Petty and Eve Beglarian have been traveling the country for more than a year, meeting and talking with a wildly varied group of artists who share the experience of having lived as non-artists before being struck in mid-life with a vision they feel compelled to express. While sometimes called “outsider artists,” it is clear

their work springs from sources deep in the ground of the places they live, and inside their deepest selves.

LIGHTEN UP is more a fantasia on the work of these artists than a conventional documentary. Matt Petty's videos include footage of the work of Cleveland Turner, aka the Flower Man, Pastor Juanita Leonard, Prophet Isaiah Robertson, Jeff McKissack (the Orange Show), Kenny Hill (Chauvin), and others. Eve Beglarian's music sets texts by Louise Glück, Ezekiel, and Reverend Milton Brunson as well as the artists themselves. The piece also explores the way the creators' lives have been transformed by their relationships with the artists and their work.

Link to the trailer: <https://vimeo.com/174963240>.

Sheila Richmond, Creole Heritage Center, Northwestern State University

“A Pictorial View of Sacred Louisiana through Three Creole Heritage Center Projects”

Through the years, the Creole Heritage Center (CHC) has worked on projects related to Creole culture and traditions, both as a leader in the research and as an aide. In 2013, the Center released a pamphlet entitled “Black Churches in Natchitoches Parish” as a way of getting a snapshot of the churches and pastors at that time. Additionally, in 2013, some staff at the CHC helped to edit and compile photos for the book entitled *Breda Town Cemetery*, written by Curtis P. Desselles, Jr. In 2015, the CHC produced a calendar featuring churches across Louisiana that are important to Creole and other non-white communities.

Bill Robison, Southeastern Louisiana University

Jerry P. Sanson, Louisiana State University at Alexandria

Louisiana During World War II

The documentary film *Louisiana During World War II* was created as part of a Teaching American History Grant received by Southeastern Louisiana University and the Tangipahoa Parish School District. The film recounts the war's impact on the state by focusing on changes in politics, society, social relationships, race relations, the economy, and other aspects of life in the wartime state. It reveals the human side of the war by featuring interviews with an individual whose father was an eyewitness to the infamous Lee Street Riot in Alexandria and another who remembers the movement of troops through her community. Economic coverage includes information about Higgins Industries in New Orleans, the state's largest wartime contractor which produced landing craft used in every amphibious invasion staged by the allies during the war, the introduction of Louisiana sweet potatoes in Army rations, the major expansion experienced by oil and gas industries, and other changes that occurred.

The film has been digitally remastered from its original format and is now ready for a premier showing in its revised form. Running time is about one hour, so it will fit into the 75 minute

session format of the Louisiana Studies Conference with time left over for discussion between the audience and the producer and screenwriter about the content of the film or the processes used in production.

Dennis Rohatyn, University of San Diego

“Raising Kane”

Harnett T. Kane (1910-1984) was a prolific author, critic and historian of the Old South. Today he is all but forgotten, despite publishing over 20 books plus countless articles. Born in New Orleans, and educated at Tulane, Kane worked as a reporter and free-lancer for 35 years, from the time he graduated (1931) until Alzheimer’s forced him to retire (1967). He earned national recognition for his scholarship on “regional” subjects. *Louisiana Hayride* (1941) is still the definitive account of the downfall of the Huey Long regime, written while Long’s disciples, antagonists and political successors were embattled. His book was a model of insight, thoroughness and objectivity, made more remarkable by the passions and prejudices that Long and his henchmen stirred, not to mention European turmoil and dictatorships. Every student of that era is indebted to Kane for an understanding of how and why the Kingfish came to power, and why his domestic empire came to naught. As a voice of political conscience, Kane rivaled (and recalled) the muckrakers, and their patron saint, Zola. As an investigative reporter, he set an example for a later generation of ‘participant-observer’ journalists, who exposed the horrors of Vietnam and Watergate. Kane followed his debut with less magisterial items: *The Bayous of Louisiana* (1943), *Deep Delta Blues* (1944), *Plantation Parade* (1945), *Natchez on the Mississippi* (1947), *Queen New Orleans* (1949), and many others. Yet each one was a masterpiece, a model of inquiry in the Tocqueville tradition, with Southern manners. He tried his hand at writing historical novels, but he had no aptitude for fiction, even as thinly veiled fact (unlike Lyle Saxon (1891-1946), whose talents both as novelist and folklorist prevented him from falling into oblivion, and have resulted in two biographies). He continued to write solid, competent, decent stuff (*The Golden Coast*, 1959; *Gone Are the Days*, 1960), cementing his reputation as an authority on the local customs, traditions, and conditions of his home state. Then fate reversed his fortunes, and stole his health. He vanished from the social scene, and as he did no more essays, nothing was said or written about him, either. Present one day, absent the next. He faded away, lingered awhile, hung on gamely: died, 1984. Today, there is almost no sign of Kane, hence no clue that he accomplished anything worthwhile, aside from those of his books that are still in print, a lone blogger who remembers meeting him and cherishes his works, and the Harnett T. Kane Preservation Award, given each year by the Louisiana Historical Society (N.O.) to local residents who do the most to restore classic homes in N.O.’s Garden District, where Kane lived. The reasons for such neglect are open to speculation. But it is more important to *end* it than to explain why it occurred. The way to begin is by (re)reading Kane, for the gifts he shares, plus the legacy he bequeaths: an exquisite feel for Southern culture; fair-mindedness; freedom from cant and cliché; an elegant, supple style; command of historical texts, contexts, and conditions; an acute sense of life’s follies, ironies, cruelties; above all, love of nature that transcends time and technology, combines ecology with economy, and sees life whole. Imagine Thoreau, not as a hermit or recluse but as the most sociable of characters, who respects customs but reserves reverence for democratic laws and principles. That is what Harnett T. Kane

represents—that and an enduring love for his homeland, its soil and its sludge. In raising Kane, we heed the call to redeem ourselves, both as children of earth and as citizens of the swamp.

Mona Lisa Saloy, Dillard University

“Southern Church Cultural Shift in Black Catholic Worship”

Both French then Spanish then French colonists again in Louisiana fostered Les Codes Noir, the Black Codes, laws co-written by the Roman Catholic Church deeming that enslaved Africans and especially descendants of intermarriages with colonialists and enslaved Africans be baptized and raised Catholic. Earliest Catholic worship from Masses to Baptisms to Confirmations were performed in the dead language of Latin through mid-twentieth century. In addition, the predominant liturgical music was traditional Anglophile hymns, many translations of European Catholic styles. Specifically the Holy Mass from the earliest times was a quiet and solemn affair punctuated by choral and organ accompaniment of such hymns in honor of the sacred. Other than the Priest and appointed church Deacons, there was incense burned but very little other fanfare during Holy Mass.

Southern author Tennessee Williams said that “America has three (interesting) cities: New York, San Francisco, New Orleans. Everywhere else is Cleveland.” New Orleans of course has many reputations. Today, New Orleans remains predominantly Black and is one of the largest Black Catholic cities in the country. After the rise of Black consciousness post mid-twentieth century, that colonial past and conservative Roman Catholic worship style, like its Black residents, gave rise to a more lively worship style, one that celebrates the rich Black cultural and musical wealth brought to shores via the direct African and Euro musical element mix, where Gospel music abounds among other examples of a Black flourishing faith via Catholicism and Black cultural heritage. Is this common in all Black Catholic Parishes in New Orleans? Outside the city in other areas? What other examples of Black cultural affects are visible in worship? What does this say about the state of Black Catholics in New Orleans? Are they Becoming “Baptist”? This discussion will explore these points of inquiry and through examples and draw some conclusions.

Valerie Salter, Northwestern State University

“Divine Louisiana Food: The Importance of Food in Louisiana Culture During Holidays and Special Events”

Food in Louisiana is not merely a life-giving sustenance. It is the focal point of many family gatherings and holiday feasts. Each region of Louisiana has their own unique fare and variations of traditional Louisiana foods are often dependent on cultural heritage, regional resources, religious backgrounds, and other characteristics. Preparation of these sacred dishes present a unique glimpse into Louisiana food culture as the preparation itself may also be considered holy to the individuals or families participating.

Louisianans are passionate about food, especially during holidays and special events. Food is not merely eaten, it is relished and pondered. Holiday and special event dishes will vary among the nine sub-cultural regions of the state. Gumbo is an excellent example of a dish that melts various multicultural backgrounds with the sacredness of food that is unique to Louisiana. Different regions of the state have different techniques of creating a roux (the base of gumbo) and how they choose which ingredients will be added to the gumbo.

Not only is food a way of life in Louisiana, its people take their cooking techniques extremely seriously. It is common for families and friends to prepare dishes during special gatherings and discuss their methods at length. In addition, it is also likely that their preparation methods are similar to the methods handed down from previous generations. Food cultures remain ingrained in individuals and family members for lifetimes.

Terri Schroth, Aurora University

Bryant Smith, Nicolls State University

“The Effects of Cultural or Linguistic Heritage in Studying French”

University students’ reasons for studying a foreign language include a number of external or extrinsic factors (i.e., ease in finding gainful employment and desire to travel) and internal or intrinsic factors (i.e., personal growth and using the language to communicate with and connect to family and friends). In the years following the recent economic recession, as unemployment numbers have increased while viable, well-paying jobs for new college graduates have decreased, studies indicate that students’ choice to study a foreign language is more influenced by external, employment-linked factors. In South Louisiana, many students report having French ancestry or a similar familiar connection to the language and culture. Our research and this presentation attempt to better understand the connection between family background and a desire to study French.

This study analyzed data collected from university students of lower-division French-language courses from college students from two different geographical regions of the United States (Midwestern U.S and South Louisiana). These participants completed questionnaires that sought to determine their top reasons for studying French. Results indicate that while finding gainful employment was a top motivator for both groups, a desire to connect with one’s family was stronger with the students from Louisiana. These results could be utilized for marketing and retaining students in French programs throughout Louisiana.

Dean Sinclair, Northwestern State University

“From Darkness to Light: The Sacred Landscape of the Rock Chapel, Carmel, Louisiana”

In 1886, Father Anastasius Peters traveled from west Texas to the Bayou Pierre community, tasked with establishing a Carmelite Monastery in the piney woods of northwest Louisiana. He oversaw the construction of a two story monastery of logs and mud which would eventually

house an estimated sixty men and boys, who were joined by nuns of the order who built a convent and created a girl's school on the nearly 100 acre site. In 1891, the monks began to construct a small stone chapel for contemplation nearly half a mile from the monastery. The chapel was decorated with frescoes on the ceilings and murals on the walls, painted by monks from France. However, in 1895 the monastery burned, and in 1896 Father Peters returned to Texas. The nuns left shortly thereafter, and the site was largely abandoned. All visible evidence of the monastery are gone, though the Rock Chapel remains a sacred site in northwest Louisiana. This paper will explore the sacred landscape of the chapel, as the monks laid out a path from the monastery through the rolling hills, journeying from the site of a shared life through the valley of shadows and then upwards towards heaven as they walked to the chapel for contemplation, a journey which visitors to the site can replicate today.

Shirley A. (Holly) Stave, Louisiana Scholars' College

“Reclaiming the Queen of Heaven: Marian Imagery in *The Divine Secrets of the Ya-Ya Sisterhood*”

Rebecca Wells' semi-autobiographical novel, *The Divine Secrets of the Ya-Ya Sisterhood*, treats three generations of Louisiana women whose familial dysfunction is overtly linked with the form of Roman Catholicism imposed on them. Buggy, Vivi, and Sidra all struggle with a desire for maternal love and acceptance, both from their own biological mothers but also from the Holy Mother; however, each woman's understanding of feminine divinity is inflected differently because of the time period in which she lives and the social networks that surround her.

The novel uses the metaphor of the liturgical season of Lent, a time of asceticism and penance, as a vehicle for illuminating a form of life-denying theology embraced by some proponents of Catholicism. However, several characters embody a much more joyous understanding of their religion and offer moments of respite, especially for Vivi. Nevertheless, the somber Lenten tone pervades the novel until the end of the work, when the resolution comes, not with the celebration of Easter, as one might expect, but with Samhain, the pre-Christian holiday, in which the souls of the living and the dead fuse in a celebration of the holiness of all life.

While Vivi remains the novel's most tortured character, it is her daughter Sidra's dark night of the soul and her return to an understanding of maternal love, both divine and earthly, that makes up the novel's narrative trajectory. Sidra comes to an understanding of the Blessed Virgin Mary in her earlier guise as the Queen of Heaven, a figure who celebrates both body and soul. Sidra embraces her body as essential to her spirituality and finds that the Queen of Heaven resides within her, part and parcel of all she is.

Jay Udall, Nicholls State University

“Louisiana as Spiritual Landscape in Five Poems”

I propose to read and discuss several of my original poems that interpret Louisiana as a spiritual landscape, drawing on the state's history, culture, and natural phenomena. In my poem “After the

Chauvin Sculpture Garden,” for example, I delve into the sacred vision of Kenny Hill’s renowned outdoor installation in southeast Louisiana, a work that features a Christ-like figure and is physically arranged in the pattern of the nine planets. The poem’s opening stanza invites the reader in, mirroring the garden’s strategy:

Enter through the emptiness, when the blood
finally seeps from your chest like someone
else’s, what you cannot keep, rivering
down shirt front and pant leg to puddle
between your shoes. Unroofing the sky,
two angels with re-bar wings descend
by the gate as if to help you find where
to begin this walk between the planets.

In “Jesus Walks in Blue above Louisiana,” on the other hand, I explore various meanings of Jesus in the social imagination through a tour that includes Amédé Ardoin, Clifton Chenier, Louis Armstrong, the state’s incarceration rates, plate lunches, drive-through daiquiris, and attitudes toward wealth and poverty.

In twenty lines, “I Slip on a Pair of Water Moccasins,” which was nominated for a Pushcart Prize, incorporates local burial practices, Fats Domino’s “Walking to New Orleans,” Hank Williams’ “Jambalaya,” the Thibodaux Massacre, and *Huckleberry Finn*, ultimately placing these elements in the context of the All:

Jim and Huck drifting free on their wide raft,
we rise as we drown, carry ground layered
with seashells remembering a salt sky
and what carries us, armless, uncarried,
the land vanishing from under as
we step second line through the eyewall.

Other poems, like “Passage” and “To an Armadillo,” focus on moments of spiritual insight through encounters with Louisiana’s flora and fauna.

Mary Lou Uttermohlen, Photographer

“Spiritual YaYa: Spiritual Tourism through New Orleans and Southern Louisiana”

Spiritual YaYa offers a peek behind the veil shrouding the spiritual mysteries of New Orleans. The series visits a variety of spiritual groups that intermingle here like the ingredients in a pot of gumbo. It begins with Mardi Gras, St. Joseph’s Day, All Saints’ Days, and Christmas Eve Bonfires, but then it digs deeper into private spiritual communities.

The word YAYA originates from the language of slaves from Yoruba and it means divine. Today the word is used as a sign of endearment for aging women. Like the word YAYA, culture has a way of getting transformed in Louisiana. People cherish their beliefs and resist change yet

over time customs morph. What once belonged to someone else becomes ours. It is this intermingling of culture plus strong community bonds that creates the soul of New Orleans today.

While the city remains predominately Catholic, many religions coexist here. Yet the interest of this documentary is not about the religions but what is unique about the spiritual culture. To discover this means crossing out of any comfort zone and venturing into the unknown. Out there away from the beaten path are religions that existed before Catholicism and a few that are blended with it since attempts to covert people failed.

Some preach that New Orleans is a portal where the veil between the realms is easier to cross. Tourists, evangelicals, energy workers, psychics, healers, and ghost hunters arrive like pilgrims in anticipation of a supernatural adventure.

Photographing this broad topic requires weaving in and out of communities with the manners of a humble guest. It is a gift to be allowed to document sacred moments. People worship for their own personal connection with God and with no desire to be recorded. Therefore creating this series is a sensitive undertaking requiring patience, grace, diplomacy, and respect.

Americans appreciate the constitutional right to worship freely and without judgment. It is clear to see that in New Orleans people take these rights quite seriously as they literally enjoy dancing to the beat of their own drums!

Tim Van Cleave, Cane River Creole National Historical Park

Juke Joints, Dance Halls, and House Parties: A Legacy of Music on Cane River

The park and television station KALB of Alexandria is producing a documentary entitled *Juke Joints, Dance Halls, and House Parties: A Legacy of Music on Cane River*. This 30 minute documentary examines a by-gone era on Cane River and Natchitoches. At one time during the mid-twentieth century several juke joints or dance halls located in Natchitoches and Cane River offered the local communities a place to gather to listen to music. Today, only two of these establishments still exist, near Melrose, and both have been closed for several years.

The documentary includes interviews of people who either played or frequented these establishments and musicians from the 2015 Cane River Music Festival who keep the music alive today. The documentary also includes an interview with Clementine Hunter consultant Art Shiver; Hunter lived near two of the most popular juke joints near Melrose and used one of them as a basis for a painting.

Juke Joints, Dance Halls, and House Parties: A Legacy of Music on Cane River provides a look into music, culture, race, and art during a time period that is slowly fading away in Natchitoches Parish.