

# **11<sup>th</sup> Annual Louisiana Studies Conference**

## **“Becoming Louisiana”**

**September 20-21, 2019**

Conference Keynote Speakers: Dustin Fuqua and Nathan Rabalais

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, Professor of History and Director of the Southern Studies Institute, Northwestern State University

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

Conference Programming: Jason Church, Chair

Shane Rasmussen

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

Francene Lemoine, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Northwestern State University

Selection Committees:

Conference Presentations: Shane Rasmussen, Chair

Jason Church

NSU Louisiana High School Essay Contest: Shane Rasmussen, Chair

Lisa Abney

Jason Church

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

Conference Program Cover and Poster Photo: *Badin Roque House, on the arpent*  
by Dustin Fuqua, September 2018

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

Saturday luncheon generously catered by Chef John Carriere and the Culinary Arts students in  
the NSU Hospitality Management and Tourism Program.

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

Conference Photographer: Chris Reich, Supervisor of Photography, Northwestern State  
University

Administrative Support: Ashley Smith, Administrative Coordinator, Louisiana Folklife  
Center

Louisiana Folklife Center Staff: Aaron Malone, Caitlyn Martin, Matthew Phillips, Meghan  
Quaglino, Benjamin Sanson, Terra Schulze, and Dylan Trahan

Conference Sponsors: The Friends of the Hanchey Gallery  
Louisiana Folklife Center, NSU  
National Center for Preservation Technology and Training  
NSU Center for Inclusion and Diversity  
NSU College of Arts and Sciences  
NSU Department of English, Foreign Languages, and Cultural Studies  
NSU Department of Fine + Graphic Arts  
NSU Hospitality Management and Tourism Program  
NSU Office of Recruiting  
NSU Writing Project  
Office of the President at NSU

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 20, 2019**

2:00-2:30 p.m.	Conference Registration, CAPA, 2 <sup>nd</sup> 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 and Alumni Plaza
6:00-7:00 p.m.	Keynote Address, CAPA 206 Nathan Rabalais, College of William and Mary

### **Saturday, September 21, 2019**

8:00-9:00 a.m.	Conference Registration, Biscuits and Sausage, CAPA, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor
9:00-10:15 a.m.	Presentation Session 2, CAPA
10:30-11:30 a.m.	Keynote Address, CAPA 206 Dustin Fuqua, Cane River Creole National Historical Park
11:30-12:00 p.m.	Awards Ceremony, CAPA 206 11 <sup>th</sup> Annual NSU Louisiana High School Essay Contest
12:00-1:15 p.m.	Light Lunch and Reception
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 20, 2019

**2:00-2:30 p.m.**      **Conference Registration**      *CAPA, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor*

**2:30-3:00 p.m.**      **Conference Welcome**      *CAPA 206*

**3:15-4:45 p.m.**      **Presentation Session 1**

*Panel 1A      Coastal Louisiana      CAPA 205*

Session Chair: Keagan LeJeune, McNeese State University

Jeffrey S. Girard, Northwestern State University

“The Discovery and Recovery of a 14<sup>th</sup> Century Dugout Canoe on the Red River”

Keagan LeJeune, McNeese State University

“The Place-Name Legend of Pecan Island”

Hiram “Pete” Gregory, Northwestern State University

“Making the Memphis Run”

*Panel 1B      Becoming and Unbecoming Louisiana      CAPA 206*

Session Chair: Christopher Gilson, Northwestern State University

Christopher Gilson, Northwestern State University

“A Loop, a Canal, and a Larger Town: Lessons from the 1957 Natchitoches Master Plan”

Steven C. Gruesbeck, Northwestern State University

Andy Ferrell, National Center for Preservation Technology and Training (NCPTT)

“Becoming Louisiana: Shaping Buildings, Shaping Ourselves”

Michael Mumaugh, Cane River National Heritage Area

“No Man’s Land: How Outlaws Influenced Our National Story”

Bernard Gallagher, LSU Alexandria

“The UnBecoming State”

**Panel 1C**     *Rising Waters and Climate Change*

**CAPA 207**

Session Chair: Sarah E. McFarland, Northwestern State University

Mark O. Melder, Northwestern State University

“Climate Change as a Factor in Homeland Security: Sociological Lessons from Katrina”

Lisa A. Kirby, Collin College

“Becoming Louisiana/Empowering Communities: The Intersection of Digital Humanities and Hurricane Katrina Studies”

Sarah E. McFarland, Northwestern State University

“Rising Waters: Environmental Crisis in Louisiana Literature”

**5:00-6:00 p.m. Reception and Refreshments**

***Orville J. Hanchey Gallery***

**6:00-7:00 p.m. Keynote Address**

***CAPA 206***

**Nathan Rabalais, College of William and Mary**

**“Glocalization and Cajun Culture on the Market: Questioning the Isolation Myth of French and Creole Louisiana”**

The rapid decline of the French language in Louisiana and the loss of many traditional customs are often lamented by scholars and activists as a direct result of modernization and technology which purportedly accelerated the influence of mainstream American culture. By the same token, the hitherto steadfastness of south Louisiana’s *francité* is seen by many as a positive side effect of acute isolation from the rest of American society. The pervasiveness of this narrative of “isolation” is surprising given the overwhelming evidence to the contrary. Many of the hallmarks of “Cajun culture” come from elsewhere and relatively recently (e.g. the accordion by way of German Jewish merchants and mail order commerce, the majority of Catholic clergymen from France or Canada until 1960, Hitachi rice cookers and Magnalite pots, etc.).

In this presentation, I will explore the appeal of the isolation myth and the subsequent boom of Cajun culture commercialism beginning in the 1980s through the lenses of Roland Robertson’s notion of *glocalization* and Jeffrey Alexander’s concept of collective identity. While Cajuns have long since appropriated foreign products into their own culture, Cajun goods are propelled abroad to such an extent that this have given rise to the “Certified Cajun” label to help locals avoid imposters. I further argue that the isolation myth was likely an explanation for linguistic difference interpreted by an Anglo-



**Panel 2C**      ***“Shaping and Being Shaped: Three Poets on ‘Becoming Louisiana’”***

**CAPA 207**

Session Chair: David Middleton, Poet in Residence Emeritus, Nicholls State University

Catharine Savage Brosman, Professor Emerita, Tulane University

John P. Doucet, Nicholls State University

David Middleton, Poet in Residence Emeritus, Nicholls State University

“Shaping and Being Shaped: Three Poets on ‘Becoming Louisiana’”

**10:30-11:30 a.m.**      ***Keynote Address***

**CAPA 206**

**Dustin Fuqua, Cane River Creole National Historical Park**

**“Traditionally Associated People of Cane River: Using Ethnographic Methods to Document, Study, and Interpret Descendant Communities”**

Perhaps one of the most special aspects of Cane River Creole National Historical Park (CARI) is its relationship with the descendant communities of Oakland Plantation and Magnolia Plantation. The term Traditionally Associated People (TAP) defines a living group of people whose traditions are closely tied to the resources in national park units. This concept was meant to ensure that these groups are taken into consideration when park managers formulate policy, develop plans, and make decisions. The term refers exclusively to groups which: form a community; are tied to park resources through cultural identity and heritage; pass traditions and identity from generation to generation; and were associated with significant resources for two generations before the creation of a park.

Though substantial ethnographic data was produced in the mid-1990s, time-sensitive opportunities to learn from aging Cane River TAPs still exist and must be acted upon quickly. A testament to their perseverance, descendants of both plantations continue to reside near both park units and often access its resources. Descendants of enslaved Africans, sharecroppers, tenant farmers, day laborers, overseers, planters, Tribes, Creoles of Cane River and traditional cultural practitioners remain and should be consulted. As such, the park proactively developed an ethnographic project to learn from TAPs about historic practices and traditional knowledge in order to better manage park cultural resources. In doing so the project team interviewed over 40 informants, digitized previously unreleased interviews, created final reports, and produced five Section 508-compliant documentary films. This presentation will highlight ethnographic interviews with informants and discuss project development and dissemination. A viewing of two 10-minute documentary videos will be provided for attendees, with a concluding opportunity for a question and answer session with park TAPs.



“Reflections on Cajun and Creole Identity from College Students in the Bayou Region”

**Panel 3C      *The Struggle is Real***

***CAPA 207***

Session Chair: Denise Bailey, Northwestern State University of Louisiana

Denise Bailey, Northwestern State University of Louisiana

“The Struggle is Real: Louisiana’s Lengthy Relationship with Poverty”

Ruth Foote, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

“*Echoes of Insanity? What the Black Man Wants*”

Darius Caleb Smith, Tulane University

“Black Labor at Odds with Deindustrialization and Discrimination: The *Parson v. Kaiser* Story”

**Panel 3D      *Louisiana Literatures***

***Magale Recital Hall***

Session Chair: Heather Salter Dromm, Northwestern State University

Emily Rice, Independent Researcher

“Becoming Louisiana: Amy Conner’s *Million Dollar Road* – Feminine Independence in Rural Louisiana”

Monika Giacoppe, Ramapo College of New Jersey

“Autobiography as Archive: *I, Jeanne Castille, of Louisiana*”

Tiffany Duet, Nicholls State University

“Cable and Carville: Revealing Family Secrets”

Heather Salter Dromm, Northwestern State University

“Jana DeLeon Shoots Down Gender, Age, and Regional Stereotypes”

**2:45-4:00 p.m.      Presentation Session 4**

**Panel 4A      *Campaigning***

***CAPA 205***

Session Chair: Nolan Eller, Louisiana Tech University

Jack Collins, Cane River Creole National Historical Park

“An Overview of the Red River Campaign along the Cane River”

Joseph R. Thysell, Nicholls State University

“The 1988 Republican New Orleans Convention”

Nolan Eller, Louisiana Tech University

“Reconstructing Louisiana: Exploring the Creation of Lincoln Parish and the Political Battles of E.M. Graham and Allen Greene through their Papers”

***Panel 4B Documenting Vanishing Louisiana***

***CAPA 206***

Session Chair: Jason Church, National Center for Preservation Technology and Training

Ina Sthapit, University of Florida

Jason Church, National Center for Preservation Technology and Training

Sukrit Sen, Ahmedabad University

“Cane River’s Vanishing Tenant Cabins”

Linda A. Shkreli, Delgado Community College

“Louisiana Coastal and Cultural Preservation: An Oral History Perspective”

Bruce A. Craft, Southeastern Louisiana University

“Becoming Redbone: The 3D (Re)Materialization, (Re)Discovery, and Abstraction of a Redbone Cultural Artifact”

Marcy M. Frantom, Independent Researcher

“Initial Observations Comparing Rural Farmhouses in the Normandy Region in France to Rural Houses in Natchitoches Parish, Louisiana”

***Panel 4C Louisiana Lagniappe***

***CAPA 207***

Session Chair: Robert Allen Alexander, Nicholls State University

Tina B. Granger, Nicholls State University

“Ethnographic Course Design Focusing on the Effects of Sociopolitical, Environmental, and Economic Factors of the South Louisiana Peoples: A Service-Learning Project”

Harvey Stern, Louisiana Purchase Cypress Legacy

“The Louisiana Purchase Cypress Legacy”

Robert Allen Alexander, Nicholls State University

“Slippery Slopelessness: Louisiana Mud and the Essence of Becoming”

**4:00**

**Conference Close**

## PRESENTATION AND EXHIBIT ABSTRACTS

**Robert Allen Alexander, Nicholls State University**

### **“Slippery Slopelessness: Louisiana Mud and the Essence of Becoming”**

Strolling on a Louisiana summer day is not without its perils, especially if one finds little pleasure in wearing a blanket of humidity. The oppressive moisture and searing heat can lead to disorientation as the walker ambles toward a destination, yet, with the senses it stimulates--in particular the dank and fetid smells--it can draw the mind into another place, where memories of summers past rise like a wavy mirage. It is in such a moment that one may recognize what Dr. Thomas More describes in Walker Percy’s *Love in the Ruins*: “The first thing a man remembers is longing and the last thing he is conscious of before death is exactly the same longing” (21). Now it may be, as Bertrand Russell claims when reflecting on Australia and the theory of evolution, “very difficult to suppose that sun and slime had brought forth a pair of complete kangaroos” (*Religion and Science* 67), but there does seem to be something about the heat and the Louisiana soil that engenders life, as is clearly evident from any untended and weed-choked plot of land. Sitting atop tens of thousands of feet of soil, unencumbered by the sterility of rocks, southern Louisiana is awash with an abundance of living things, yet, without a firm foundation, also exceedingly vulnerable to change. Likewise, the walker, continuing along the path, seeing and smelling the fertile mud, remembers that this experience is only a moment, and as is the case with all instances, it too will pass. It is that passing, that sense that, despite our technological abilities to freeze images in time, fills us with longing, with a desire to keep and to hold and to inhabit. And that sense is acutely heightened by our habitation, the lowlands of Louisiana, which, in its very being, is the essence of becoming.

**George E. Avery, Stephen F. Austin State University**

### **“Documenting the Mosaic Templars of America in Louisiana”**

The Mosaic Templars of America (MTA) was an African American fraternal organization that was in existence from 1883 to 1930. A history of the organization was written in 1924 (Bush and Dorman, *History of the Mosaic Templars of America: Its Founders and Officials*), chapters were organized in 26 states, including Arkansas (1883), Louisiana (1903), Texas (1903), Oklahoma (1904), and in one region outside the United States. A Vermont marble gravestone was part of membership benefits beginning in 1911. The membership records have been lost, and by the 1990s an effort to reconstruct a portion of the membership by documenting MTA gravestones was begun in Arkansas. The survey for MTA gravestones was begun in East Texas in the spring of 2012, and several years ago, the survey was brought to Louisiana. The discussion of the distribution of the MTA grave stones will also include gravestones representing other early 20<sup>th</sup> century African American fraternal/sororal organizations in the cemeteries surveyed, including the Prince Hall Masons, Eastern Star, Odd Fellows, Knights of Pythias, Knights and Daughters of Tabor, Sisters of the Mysterious Ten, Heroines of Jericho, and Supreme Royal Circle of Friends of the World. Comparisons will be made between Texas and Louisiana.

**Denise Bailey, Northwestern State University of Louisiana**

### **“The Struggle is Real: Louisiana’s Lengthy Relationship with Poverty”**

The cycle of poverty has a multigenerational stronghold on our state. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 19.7% of Louisianians live in poverty. Louisiana holds a second-place tie with New Mexico for the highest poverty rates in the country (Hansen, 2018). Natchitoches Parish ranks among the top five parishes in the state regarding the percentage of those who are impoverished (USDA Economic Research Service, 2017).

Although 55 years have passed since President Lyndon Johnson declared war on poverty, our nation and especially our state continue to struggle with the multifaceted impact of poverty on physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing; education; and the criminal justice system. This presentation explores these impacts and their effects on society.

**Samii Kennedy Benson, Southern University and A&M College**

### **“The Art and Design of Mardi Gras Costumes”**

The time-honored celebration of Mardi Gras is deeply ingrained into the fabric of New Orleans culture as its traditions and customs hold significant importance, both socially and commercially, for the city. Masquerading, one of the more prominent customs, has been popular in New Orleans since as early as the 1830s (Cohen, 1951). The practice of masquerading during Mardi Gras celebrations most often involves the wearing of elaborate masks, wigs and costumes by participants.

Although many Mardi Gras revelers enjoy playing dress-up, it is the Krewes, Tribes and Troupes that don the most extravagantly designed costumes to the themed parades and/or balls that are held throughout the carnival season. Thousands of dollars and countless hours go into the creation of Mardi Gras costumes. Due to their intricacy, the costumes can take up to a year to create and to fit the organizations ever-changing themes, new costumes must be produced each year.

In the same fashion as contemporary artists and designers, Mardi Gras costumers utilize the elements and principles of design in their work. The purpose of this research was to examine the art and design of Mardi Gras costumes. More specifically, this research asked: In what ways do Mardi Gras costumes exhibit the elements and principles of design?

Mardi Gras costume collections housed at two museums located in New Orleans were utilized as a primary data source for this research. The researcher employed the use of a creative process journal (CPJ) to record observations during museum visits in the form of notes, photographs, sketches and artifacts. The content of the CPJ was analyzed to uncover emergent themes as a means to answer the research question presented. The content analysis revealed the most commonly used elements and principles used in Mardi Gras costume design.

References

Cohen, H. (1951). The Terminology of Mardi Gras. *American Speech*, 26 (2), 110-115.

**Catharine Savage Brosman, Professor Emerita, Tulane University**

**John P. Doucet, Nicholls State University**

**David Middleton, Poet in Residence Emeritus, Nicholls State University**

**“Shaping and Being Shaped: Three Poets on ‘Becoming Louisiana’”**

The poet has been described as a creator, a shaper, a prophet, and an artisan whose materials and medium are words and whose practice has been called a “mystery” (a “craft”). The poet most often takes subject matter for poetry from perceptions of the senses combined with ideas (philosophy) and stories of humanity and the earth (history) to produce verse – patterns of words that evoke the senses and sound (music) to create a new thing – a poem.

The phrase “becoming Louisiana” suggests that “Louisiana” – broadly conceived – shapes its poet-shapers who, in turn, shape their, and any of their readers’, experiences of Louisiana. One may compare Robert Frost’s New England and Thomas Hardy’s Wessex. And one may also note the use of the possessive case. Is there one Louisiana, variously perceived, or more than one?

In this panel, three poets will examine these questions by way of a reading with commentary.

Catharine Savage Brosman will read four poems connected to the history and features of Louisiana and the “becoming” of Louisianans: “Grace King on the Bayous, 1862”; “Chata-Ima on Bayou Lacombe”; “Trembling Prairie,” and “Hats: A Portrait.” These selections include new verse from 2019 and poems from *Under the Pergola* (LSU Press, 2011)

John Doucet will read from his poetry on subjects deriving from history and natural world of early Louisiana. The poems celebrate a unique region of the state where coastal wetlands, scarred by hurricanes and extraction, gave land and time for unique cultural development in Louisiana.

David Middleton will read excerpts from the first chapter of his unpublished poetic autobiography “The Unsundered Ground: On Becoming a Poet in Louisiana” and will provide two Louisiana poems with similar settings: one from the years of his early maturity as a Louisiana poet (1985) and one a more recent Louisiana poem (2018).

**Catharine Savage Brosman, Professor Emerita, Tulane University**

**Olivia McNeely Pass, Independent Scholar and Author**

**“Evolution and Purposes of *Louisiana Poets: A Literary Guide*”**

Drs. Catharine Savage Brosman and Olivia McNeely Pass have authored *Louisiana Poets: A Literary Guide*, recently released by the University Press of Mississippi. In order to acknowledge and record the rich contributions of 41 Louisiana poets of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, they felt it

was important to present the poets' biographical information and literary achievements, along with excerpts and analyses of their poetry. The achievements of Louisiana poets of the past hundred years deserve both publication and critical examination. Connections between the individual poet and Louisiana were central to choosing poets to include. Brosman and Pass will discuss how the book evolved and developed.

### **Jodie Brown, American Public University**

#### **“From Versailles to the Vieux Carre: The Bourbon Footprint”**

In 1682, French explorer La Salle planted a cross at the mouth of the Mississippi River, claiming the entire river basin for France. He named this vast territory, La Louisiane for the French Sun King, Louis XIV. While naming colonies after European monarchs was common in the Americas, the namesakes of the Bourbon family in the New World are not just honorary; they tell the story of the powerful dynasty Louis XIV set out to build.

The French colonists didn't stop with just a nod to the king. When they established a new city to serve as a capital safe from floods, they once again turned to the ruling family for a name. By now, the Sun King was dead, leaving France under the care of the Duke of Orleans as regent for the future Louis XV – a fitting namesake for the city.

The French were not done paying tribute to the Bourbons, nor with telling their story. The Sun King was father to numerous legitimate and illegitimate children, many of whom rose to great prominence in his court. When Bienville commissioned engineer Adrien de Pauger to create what would become the now familiar street grid of the French Quarter, naturally, he turned to the ruling Bourbons for inspiration.

The grid plan of the streets is littered with symbolism. Running parallel to the Mississippi River are the streets representing the legitimate heirs of the dynasty – Chartres, Dauphine, Burgundy, and of course, Bourbon. Perpendicular to the river, the streets tell a much more colorful story. Squabbling members of the court – Conti, Du Maine, and Toulouse (all descended from Louis' mistresses) are interspersed. Between them, the names of Catholic saints sit benevolently, a permanent testament to the devotion and deprivation of the Bourbons.

### **Jack Collins, Cane River Creole National Historical Park**

#### **“An Overview of the Red River Campaign along the Cane River”**

During the spring of 1864, the Civil War arrived in Natchitoches Parish with the Red River Campaign, an effort by the United States Army and Navy to capture Shreveport, push into Texas, and capture cotton to bolster the Northern textile industry which had been suffering without access to Southern cotton. When the land forces under Nathaniel Banks arrived in the Cane River area, they found that the Confederate Army had burned most of the cotton in the area to prevent the Federals from seizing it. After regrouping near Grand Ecore, the Army and Navy split again with the land forces pushing far to the west away from the Red River. Banks then suffered a disastrous defeat at Mansfield on April 8 and withdrew after fighting a major though indecisive

battle the previous day. During their retreat through the area, the Federal army destroyed a large number of buildings, especially on the plantations along the river, all the while being harassed by Confederate skirmishers and ultimately having their route of retreat cut off at Monett's Ferry. There Federal forces engaged in the greatly outnumbered Confederates in the campaign's largest battle in the parish; the outnumbered rebels withdrew prematurely, opening the way for the resumption of the retreat to Alexandria. By pulling United States forces away from more worthwhile objectives, the Red River Campaign only served to lengthen the deadly conflict and bring widespread destruction to central Louisiana.

**Bruce A. Craft, Southeastern Louisiana University**

**“Becoming Redbone: The 3D (Re)Materialization, (Re)Discovery, and Abstraction of a Redbone Cultural Artifact”**

The cultural narrative of the Louisiana Redbones contains much mystery, folklore, and supposition but little by way of physical artifact. Redbone lore values three violent interactions with the dominant white culture of Southwest Louisiana in the last half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century: the Rawhide Fight of 1851; the Westport Fight of 1881; and the Locke, Moore & Co. Lumber Camp Fight of 1891. In each, Redbones and whites were killed. In each, the Redbones claimed “victory.” Contemporary Redbones privilege these fights as early efforts to preserve Redbone pride. As such, these periodic episodes of violence, murder and mayhem not only help form Redbone cultural identity in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century but also provide critical historical artifacts that contemporary Redbones have (re)appropriated and (re)discovered in order to create a new 21<sup>st</sup> century Redbone cultural ethos. Of the three incidents with white settlers, the least is known about the Rawhide Fight of 1851. Therefore, an effort to (re)materialize a known artifact from that fight sheds light on what it means to be a Redbone, then and now.

(Re)materialization through 3D computer modeling is an important feature of the digital humanities. In this presentation, I will examine Redbone cultural ethos through computerized (re)materialization of one of the most famous weapons in the 1851 Rawhide Fight, an axe. I suggest “(re)materialize” instead of “rematerialize” because the axe handle still may exist (lore holds that a progenitor Redbone family saved it for generations), so my 3D modeling of it is best suggested as a parenthetical (rather akin to a Platonic mimesis) of a potentially extant artifact. (Re)materialization of a cultural artifact provides for the viewer a meaning-making experience, embedded and overlaid with the complexities of prior and emergent meanings. In this multi-media presentation, I will take the viewer through the 3D modeling of the axe handle. The viewer – through that abstraction – can engage in meaning-making in the moment through the confluence of metaphors that exist in the model itself, and simultaneously understand the (re)materialized piece for its prior meaning (as a murder weapon) and emergent meaning (as a point of contemporary Redbone cultural pride). These meanings are at once contradictory and synergized. As such, the 3D model represents fully a cultural intertextuality in the moment of its observation and manipulation – a literal and metaphorical “becoming Redbone.”

**Jon Griffin Donlon, Consultant/Public Intellectual**

**“Looking for Lafayette in Louisiana”**

A few years ago, after an extended investigation of game cock fighting, mostly in the South and especially in Louisiana, I finally committed that research to book form. One of the chapters looked at what can be called the shadow cast by the phenomena, not the thing itself. The bibelots, brick-a-brack, collectables; the presence it had on design in popular culture, the use of cock fighting and its orbit in language; its multitudinous imbrications made across the surface of culture.

In the meantime, extending back essentially to my days in Boy Scouts, I've had a curiosity about the Marquis de Lafayette – the fascinating role in the foundation of the nation and similarly broad appropriation of “Lafayette” into the country's material culture and popular artifact debris.

As a historic figure Lafayette has essentially no real parallel.

As Patricia Brady puts it, “. . . ever since he fought in the Revolution, Lafayette had devoted himself to the American nation, supporting its cause militarily, financially, and diplomatically. Among his devoted American friends were John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, James Monroe, and George Washington's family . . .”

For his famous visit “Lafayette arrived in New York harbor August 14, 1824, to a tumultuous welcome. The actual man was almost lost in the patriotic frenzy of public receptions, parades, and military reviews. Mountains of souvenirs were produced: Lafayette's image appeared on sashes, badges, gloves, jewelry, programs, paper items, vases, pitchers, banners, buttons, transparencies, and bowls . . .” It's possible to understand Lafayette's role in our nation from a number of perspectives. I intend to approach from a semiotic direction, with a special focus on material culture and cultural mythology.

My presentation here includes providing a short reprise of how I became interested in the Marquis, examples of exactly how deeply I see this figure embedded into the social fabric this individual has become, and closing with an outline of my program of future inquiry, “Looking for Lafayette.” Keeping in mind the conference theme, I intend to discuss, in particular, Lafayette and Louisiana.

**Heather Salter Dromm, Northwestern State University**

### **“Jana DeLeon Shoots Down Gender, Age, and Regional Stereotypes”**

Traditionally the female detective has been depicted as more genteel than her male counterparts, but CIA agent Fortune Redding, the protagonist of Jana DeLeon's Miss Fortune Mystery Series set in the fictional Sinful, Louisiana, is an exception. The act that forces Fortune to hide out undercover as a former beauty queen in a tiny South Louisiana town is that she has assassinated the right-hand man of the world's largest arms dealer. After almost immediately arriving in the fictional bayou town, Fortune uncovers a human bone in her backyard and to solve the mystery, she teams up with the Geritol Mafia, two female septuagenarians who break the stereotype of the sweet little old Southern lady trope. These women drive motorcycles, speed race fishing boats, and karate kick bad guys. More importantly, the women support and rescue each other instead of

playing damsels in distress; they take matters into their own hands instead of waiting around for the menfolk to save them. In addition to battling chauvinistic and ageist ideas, the Geritol Mafia also work against the stereotype that residents of rural Louisiana are ignorant country bumpkins. As my title suggests, my paper will explore the ways in which DeLeon breaks gender, age, and regional stereotypes as I discuss Simone de Beauvoir's theories in *The Second Sex* and the *Ethics of Ambiguity* and those of Claude Steele in *Whistling Vivaldi: How Stereotypes Affect Us and What We Can Do about It*. Another major discussion in my essay will be the evolution of these stereotypes in popular literature and culture.

**Tiffany Duet, Nicholls State University**

**“Cable and Carville: Revealing Family Secrets”**

George Washington Cable's most famous works often center on Creole life in his home city of New Orleans. Many of his stories expose the dark past of slavery, the limited opportunities for residents not born into privileged life. Such became the subject of “Jean-ah Poquelin,” a short story which centers on the inscrutable actions of a reprobate slave owner, Jean Poquelin, and the mysterious disappearance of his brother, Jacques. Shunned by new arrivals in a city emerging from the Civil War, Jean's deeper family secret is revealed after his death, when readers discover the truth about Jacques' secret—leprosy. Part of the story's resolution includes our understanding of Jean as not a tyrant but a sympathetic sibling. And here is where my understanding of the story ended in 1999 and in subsequent years when I included the story in gothic literature and in Louisiana literature courses.

However, the topic of this conference has made me rethink the story's complications. This conference's focus on what shapes Louisiana—and Louisianians—inspired me to reconsider the shame of a condition such as leprosy and the lives of people who suffered from it and resided in the Public Health Service Hospital located in Carville, Louisiana. I see interesting connections between the prospects of life after being “sent” to Carville as similar to slaves who were “sent down the river.” As a state that touts itself as freewheeling and fun-loving, Louisiana, too, is burdened by its past, and, sometimes, Louisianians still hide their secrets. It was not until 2014 that I learned about one of my own family's secrets. This presentation as part literary analysis and part personal essay will allow me to finally speak about ours.

**Nolan Eller, Louisiana Tech University**

**“Reconstructing Louisiana: Exploring the Creation of Lincoln Parish and the Political Battles of E.M. Graham and Allen Greene through their Papers”**

This presentation will focus on the history of the creation of Lincoln Parish in 1873 and the political battles of the men who would shape it throughout its history, Allen Greene and E.M. Graham. Greene, a Republican and often thought of founder of Lincoln Parish, and Graham, Lincoln Parish's most prominent Democratic leader fought many political battles from 1873-1877. This four-year period is considered to be one of the most volatile in the history of the Parish and is evidenced in each man's personal papers. Through this presentation, I hope to

demonstrate the complexities of Reconstruction in North Louisiana, and to convey how the understanding of this history has evolved over time.

### **Ruth Foote, University of Louisiana at Lafayette**

#### ***“Echoes of Insanity? What the Black Man Wants”***

“‘What does the Negro want?’ is a question that has been asked through the ages and in a variety of ways. It is a question that should not have to be asked, but it is one that both races have pondered for a long time.”

Thus began the first few lines of chapter one of my master’s thesis, “‘Just as Brutal...but without All the Fanfare’: African-American Students, Racism, and Defiance during the Desegregation of Southwestern Louisiana Institute, 1954-1964.” In examining the plight of the black students, it was incumbent upon me to examine the plight of the race as civil rights leader Robert Weaver had done in a 1963 speech entitled “The Negro as an American.”

Weaver — the nation’s first black cabinet member — had noted: “Negro Americans usually feel that whites exaggerate progress; while whites frequently feel that negroes minimize gains.” His statement, just as relevant today, is why I want to expound on the question and its offspring taking root in “Black Lives Matter” and “Taking a Knee.”

In 1865, Frederick Douglass delivered a speech on the question, “What the Black Man Wants.” Half a century later, the NAACP addressed the question in a pamphlet, “What Does the Negro Want? Fourteen Articles Setting Forth What the American Negro Expects After Helping to Win the War for Democracy.” Two decades after that, historian Rayford W. Logan edited essays on the question that became a publication, “What the Negro Wants.”

The question’s repetitive nature showcases the racial divide across the country, across Louisiana.

Does this mean the question will repeat itself for eternity’s sake — as if on a loop? Are African Americans asking the same question over and over, and expecting a different outcome? And if so, are they simply echoing — what is commonly attributed to Einstein — the definition of insanity?

### **Benjamin Forkner, Northwestern State University**

#### **“Louisiana French: Old Challenges—New Opportunities”**

Last year, Louisiana was accepted as an observer member of the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie. This major decision is only the latest recognition of a series of statewide initiatives designed to rekindle Louisiana’s French speaking heritage. Over the last ten years, immersion schools, CODOFIL scholarships, documentaries and university programs have pushed to revive the use of French in aging communities. However, only a handful of parishes boast a healthy minority of Cajun French speakers. The generational gap between those who speak Cajun French and the much younger generation who is learning a more international

variety of French is the challenge Louisiana must confront and overcome. The current revival of Louisiana French brings forth old challenges and new opportunities. The gentrification of French speakers in Southern Louisiana urban areas combined with the growing presence of multilingual and international digital platforms show that a growing number of middle-class families want to reach out and join up with the traditional Louisiana Francophone community. However, in rural areas, while the population strongly desires to retain its authentic Francophone roots, the lack of public and private resources represent a challenging dilemma. Looking through the lens of documentaries, immersion programs and other digital initiatives, this analysis will bring a multidisciplinary approach to an academic debate that has mostly focused on the linguistic aspect of the evolution of Louisiana French.

**Derek W. Foster, Upper Iowa University, Alexandria**

**“Some precious thing we have lost’: Creole Sensibilities in the Poetry of Arna Bontemps”**

In his *The Negro in Poetry and Drama* (1937), Sterling Brown, folklorist and poet, praises Arna Bontemps’ poetic skill. In addition, one anecdote even recounts how Langston Hughes once remarked how he felt that Bontemps was a much better poet than he ever would be. Born in Louisiana in 1902 and raised in California, Bontemps was the child of Creole parents. As a teenager, he openly defied his father’s wanting him to become a skilled laborer—choosing education instead. Consequently, his parents then sent him to a white boarding school, where his father had instructed him not to “go up there acting colored.” From that point on, Bontemps’ relationship with his father was never the same. In fact, critics note how his family’s Creole-based approach to life ultimately shaped his own world view, evident in his often-used alienation theme.

Partly in response to addressing his own “lost” heritage *per se*, Bontemps turned to poetry. Though he composed only one volume of verse over the course of his career, he had finished half of them before he was thirty. Early on, Bontemps’ poetry won the praise of his contemporaries and critics, including Countee Cullen and James Weldon Johnson. While Bontemps openly admired the fiery work of both Hughes and Cullen, he tended to compose reflective poetry with quiet and contemplative themes. To that end, little to no bitterness characterizes Bontemps’ gentle poetry. As he writes with dignity and a sense of purpose, Bontemps employs an individual style where tone and irony achieve a subtle effect as the speaker searches for identity through summoning up and examining the past.

**Marcy M. Frantom, Independent Researcher**

**“Initial Observations Comparing Rural Farmhouses in the Normandy Region in France to Rural Houses in Natchitoches Parish, Louisiana”**

Marcy Frantom was invited to visit France by an historical preservation architectural firm to study the techniques and structures of colomage and torchis farmhouses in comparison with bousillage single-story rural houses in Natchitoches Parish. She prepared for two years by examining the marriage contracts of Natchitoches for the period of 1682-1803 to learn where settlers migrated from and by reading French studies of the appropriate departments. Alsace-Lorraine, Dauphine, and Aquitaine were likely places that might have influenced Louisiana mud,

moss and half-timbered building traditions. She read select volumes of “L’architecture rurale française” including Normandy, as the coastal communities contributed traders, hunters and settlers to Quebec. This series of books is the result of French research in vernacular architecture begun initially in the 1940s and renewed in the 1970s as many European countries realized they were losing their early farm buildings and associated technologies. In this preliminary report of her findings in Normandy, some observations can be made. As our earliest buildings in Natchitoches date from about 1800, she tried to document rural buildings in Normandy prior to that time and found their technologies were at variance in response to a different environment and materials in lower Louisiana. Some farm elements are familiar—the dovecote, bocage fencing, and a desire to enclose the farm area to protect young animals. Louisiana builders didn’t seem to remember how to construct gables that could support bousillage infilling; French builders didn’t always use tie-beams or knee walls. An interesting technique comes from the New World in dry-laid stone rubble walls made with American corn cobs. The layout of the French farmhouses is different to serve other purposes than those in American Louisiana. The visual appearance of the French farmhouses, many now functioning as barns or tool sheds, was impossible to duplicate in Louisiana.

### **Dustin Fuqua, Cane River Creole National Historical Park**

#### **“Traditionally Associated People of Cane River: Using Ethnographic Methods to Document, Study, and Interpret Descendant Communities”**

Perhaps one of the most special aspects of Cane River Creole National Historical Park (CARI) is its relationship with the descendant communities of Oakland Plantation and Magnolia Plantation. The term Traditionally Associated People (TAP) defines a living group of people whose traditions are closely tied to the resources in national park units. This concept was meant to ensure that these groups are taken into consideration when park managers formulate policy, develop plans, and make decisions. The term refers exclusively to groups which: form a community; are tied to park resources through cultural identity and heritage; pass traditions and identity from generation to generation; and were associated with significant resources for two generations before the creation of a park.

Though substantial ethnographic data was produced in the mid-1990s, time-sensitive opportunities to learn from aging Cane River TAPs still exist and must be acted upon quickly. A testament to their perseverance, descendants of both plantations continue to reside near both park units and often access its resources. Descendants of enslaved Africans, sharecroppers, tenant farmers, day laborers, overseers, planters, Tribes, Creoles of Cane River and traditional cultural practitioners remain and should be consulted. As such, the park proactively developed an ethnographic project to learn from TAPs about historic practices and traditional knowledge in order to better manage park cultural resources. In doing so the project team interviewed over 40 informants, digitized previously unreleased interviews, created final reports, and produced five Section 508-compliant documentary films. This presentation will highlight ethnographic interviews with informants and discuss project development and dissemination. A viewing of two 10-minute documentary videos will be provided for attendees, with a concluding opportunity for a question and answer session with park TAPs.

**Bernard Gallagher, LSU Alexandria**

**“The UnBecoming State”**

“Becoming.” A curious word. Parents might tell their children that their behavior was very becoming or attractive. Or they might tell those same children on another occasion that their behavior was unbecoming or unattractive. Though this adjectival use of the word “becoming” is not suggested in the topic for the Louisiana Studies conference for this year, it does have an oblique application to the topic. Unfortunately, a good deal of “Becoming Louisiana” involves unbecoming political, social, and economic behavior.

‘Becoming.’ The word itself becomes “curiouser and curiouser” when I look at “becoming” from the perspective of Hegel. According to Hegel, becoming “cancels or negates the concepts of Being and Nothing because it is a new concept that replaces earlier concepts” while also ironically relying on them “for its own definition.”<sup>[1]</sup> Without going into further detail, which I am not really qualified to do, it appears to me that the political, social, and economic behavior in Louisiana is a kind of “unbecoming” in which Hegelian Synthesis does not occur, which leaves us in a state (pun intended) of un-determination. My paper, therefore—excuse the formality—will examine James Lee Burke’s *Neon Rain* (1987), *Cadillac Jukebox* (1997), *Tin Roof Blowdown* (2007), and *Robicheaux* (2019) in conjunction with various newspapers and census documents, and will argue that Louisiana, rather than “becoming,” repeats indecorous political, social, and economic behavior that ultimately confines it to the same dull round of behavior which prevents any kind of becoming or synthesis.

---

[1] “Hegel’s Dialectics” To Become is to go from Being to Nothing or from Nothing to Being . . . [it] is . . . “the immediate vanishing of the one in the other” (SL-M 83; cf. SL-dG 60). The contradiction between Being and Nothing thus is . . . [neither] a *reductio ad absurdum* . . . [nor] the rejection of both concepts . . . [instead] . . . [it] leads to a positive result, namely, to the introduction of a new concept—the synthesis—which unifies the two, earlier, opposed concepts <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/hegel-dialectics/>

**Monika Giacoppe, Ramapo College of New Jersey**

**“Autobiography as Archive: *I, Jeanne Castille, of Louisiana*”**

In the Acadian context, where archival recovery has fueled both resistance and renaissance, what are we to make of the puzzling story of Jeanne Castille and her archival autobiography, a social history erased from history? This paper will examine the resources this book offers, and the politics that make it difficult to handle. Published in 1983 by French publisher Ascot Luneau, *Moi, Jeanne Castille de la Louisiane*, functions as both autobiography and as archive, with particular emphasis on the people Castille identifies as her own, the Cajuns. Castille’s life story is the narrative thread that holds together this pastiche pieced together from documents of all kinds. Genealogies, letters, wills, menus, even literary texts by other authors are woven together in this repository of information about Louisiana’s French and Creole speakers. The book formed part of Castille’s activist agenda: campaigning on behalf of the French language and francophone culture in Louisiana. Ironically, this activism, combined with Castille’s deeply conservative ideas

about language and cultural preservation, may have consigned her autobiography – and the information in it – to near-complete obscurity in the US.

In *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (1995), Michel-Rolph Trouillot posits that “silences enter the process of historical production at four crucial moments: the moment of fact creation (the making of *sources*); the moment of fact assembly (the making of *archives*), the moment of fact retrieval (the making of *narratives*), and the moment of retrospective significance (the making of *history* in the final instance)” (26). Paradoxically, despite Castille’s inclusion of materials that disturb the claims in her autobiography, historians writing after her death have not included her in the “moment of retrospective significance”: the production of history.

### **Christopher Gilson, Northwestern State University**

#### **“A Loop, a Canal, and a Larger Town: Lessons from the 1957 Natchitoches Master Plan”**

In January 1957, the Natchitoches City Council voted to approve the city’s first master plan. The comprehensive plan addressed the placement of streets, subdivisions, schools, and parks, along with neighborhood “rehabilitation” and slum clearance. The new plan was widely celebrated. Mayor Frank Kees described it as “the most forward and far-reaching step the city of Natchitoches has ever taken.” The *Shreveport Times* suggested that Natchitoches was the first city of its size in the country to develop such a plan for future development. The Louisiana Municipal Association named Mayor Kees “Mayor of the Year” and President of their association. The present city of Natchitoches, though, bears little resemblance to the city described in the plan, which included an industrial canal and extensive, orderly suburban expansion. This presentation examines the aspirations and proposed solutions of the 1957 Master Plan, with special attention to their context in the history of American urban planning.

### **Jeffrey S. Girard, Northwestern State University**

#### **“The Discovery and Recovery of a 14<sup>th</sup> Century Dugout Canoe on the Red River”**

Early in June 2017, a remarkable prehistoric dugout canoe was discovered on the banks of the Red River north of Shreveport, Louisiana. At 10.2 m (about 34 ft) in length, it is the largest yet discovered in Louisiana, and one of the largest in the Southeastern United States. A radiocarbon date indicates that the canoe was constructed in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, contemporary with an extensive Caddo settlement on the east side of the river. This presentation summarizes the challenges that confronted researchers and local volunteers for extracting the canoe from the riverbank and transporting it to Texas A&M university for conservation; and provides information about nearby Caddo village and ceremonial sites whose past inhabitants might have made and used the boat.

### **Tina B. Granger, Nicholls State University**

#### **“Ethnographic Course Design Focusing on the Effects of Sociopolitical, Environmental, and Economic Factors of the South Louisiana Peoples: A Service-Learning Project”**

The development of a multifaceted course that includes biographical and historical readings, videos, guest speakers, field interviews, and survey data collection is presented. Student learning outcomes include knowledge of historical and social facts related to the Cajun culture, the sociopolitical forces that caused the decline of the Cajun language, and the economic and environmental facts that spurred urbanization in south Louisiana. The course included applied ethnographic research skill-building exercises and interviews. Multi-disciplinary students applied ethnographic research techniques at local public events and collected 500+ surveys.

**Hiram “Pete” Gregory, Northwestern State University**

**“Making the Memphis Run”**

Among commercial fishermen in the back swamps of the Lower Mississippi Valley stories are told about the past (1900 until the 1960’s at least). The coming of ice plants for manufacturing artificial ice, railroads, and urban markets spurred many to commercial fish. Communities centered on fishing were found on the Black River, Lower Red River, and down the Atchafalaya. Melville, Simmesport, Jonesville, and Krotz Springs became market towns. The seines took thousands of pounds of fish. Some, like the Spoonbill Catfish, were almost fished to extinction. As with any economy the markets grew, the products diminished, and regulations like taxes developed. Laws developed to protect certain species of fish, or tax the sales of others. Folks had a hard time.

Fishermen soon began to seek ways to evade these regulations. Most abided by the law, settled for a safe legal existence. Others decided to try “outlawing,” catching and selling illegal gamefish, outwitting the game warden and the Law. These activities led to lots of stories. Lest you think these are vanishing I will tell you a couple we swapped a few weeks ago: Making the Memphis Run, Outsmarting the Warden, A Good Sheriff. The oral tradition is alive and well. Hopefully everyone is still out of jail.

**Steven C. Gruesbeck, Northwestern State University**

**Andy Ferrell, National Center for Preservation Technology and Training (NCPTT)**

**“Becoming Louisiana: Shaping Buildings, Shaping Ourselves”**

Winston Churchill famously said, “We shape our buildings; thereafter they shape us.” In this interdisciplinary project, we explore the reciprocal relationship between humans and their buildings from the perspectives of psychology and historic preservation. Images will showcase Louisiana structures and people. Discussions will explore the ways in which Louisiana’s people and their buildings have evolved and impacted one another, our culture and our history.

**Lisa A. Kirby, Collin College**

**“Becoming Louisiana/Empowering Communities: The Intersection of Digital Humanities and Hurricane Katrina Studies”**

The Digital Humanities are rapidly growing in many disciplines. This field incorporates digital tools, such as data analysis, geospatial mapping, and textual visualization, to find new ways to study the humanities. There are many digital and multimedia platforms and programs that can accommodate Digital Humanities' scholarly and pedagogical projects that offer new ways for scholars and students to understand specific literary and historical events. Considering the specific intersection of Digital Humanities and Hurricane Katrina Studies offers interesting and exciting new opportunities for how technology can enrich both our understanding of and consideration of this event. As Professor Anne B. McGrail points out, Digital Humanities can “offer empowering tools for students to represent their communities and to challenge inequalities.” For an event like Katrina, these opportunities are crucial to how our understanding of Katrina continues to evolve.

This paper will explore how Digital Humanities can offer innovative ways to consider Hurricane Katrina, its impact, and empower communities to preserve this history. The presentation will begin with an introduction to the Digital Humanities and will then focus on its importance in considering Hurricane Katrina specifically. I will look at current Digital Humanities projects that focus on Katrina, as well as offer my own specific ideas and pedagogical strategies for how Digital Humanities can be used in both teaching and research tool to better understand Katrina.

#### Works Cited

McGrail, Annie B. “The ‘Whole Game’: Digital Humanities at Community Colleges.” *Debates in the Digital Humanities*, CUNY, 2016, <http://dhdebates.gc.cuny.edu/debates/text/53>.

**Phyllis Lear, Northwestern State University**

#### **“The Travels of Poverty Point Objects (PPOs) to a Little Mound in Arkansas”**

Poverty Point Objects (PPOs) are artifacts that were made by shaping and firing small lumps of (usually) clayey-silty soils, most notably by peoples of the Poverty Point culture in and near northeastern Louisiana, mainly between about 1500 and 1200 B.C. Traditionally thought to have been used as stone substitutes in a form of “hot rock” cooking, they were made in many shapes, and sometimes decorated. Recently a refined typology of their forms has been developed and used in Louisiana. This study extends the application of that typology to specimens from the Lake Enterprise Mound site (3AS379), a small, very late (c. 1200s B.C.) Poverty Point culture site in southeastern Arkansas. The Lake Enterprise PPO assemblage, like that of other small Poverty Point sites studied so far, appears stylistically impoverished by comparison with that from the great Poverty Point site itself.

The specificity of PPO types at the Lake Enterprise Mound continues to support the hypothesis that shapes and decorations “cluster” across the cultural geography (Lear, 2006), though they may also cluster in time (late, in this case). This specificity strongly argues that the shapes and decorations of PPOs were meaningful to the prehistoric people of Lake Enterprise Mound – they chose, at this place and time, for whatever reason(s), to manufacture and use only four specific types of Biconical PPOs and to either leave them plain or decorate them minimally with two or

four wide grooves. PPO shapes and decorations meant something to the ancient people who manufactured them for centuries.

**Keagan LeJeune, McNeese State University**

**“The Place-Name Legend of Pecan Island”**

This presentation considers the role of outsiders and outside attention in the formation of place, especially how “outside” perspective imagines or defines place. To this end, this brief presentation employs certain theories about place, such as the work of Yi-Fu Tuan and Kent Ryden, to examine how the use of land and the perceptions of landscape are inextricably tied. The examination, here, is how the use of land and its non-use (i.e., idleness) function as shapers of place and how an “outside” perception might misalign with an “inside” view or local perspective. In particular, this presentation considers the place-name legend of Pecan Island, which is located near the coast of Louisiana. The legend of this place’s name developed and changed as exploration and exploitation of the area increased, becoming most expressively the perspective of the “other” or “outsider” during the region’s offshore drilling boom. At that point, the place-name legend morphed into its current form. This presentation considers how perceptions about the “use” or “usefulness” of the land directed this legend and how the legend reflects these competing perspectives.

**Katie Magaña, Northwestern State University**

**“Louisiana with Fangs: Defining the Vampire of Louisiana”**

There’s something about Louisiana that inspires people to imagine the paranormal. Something about our past, or the heat, or our general willingness to accept things as *possible* (even if not probable) makes Louisiana the ideal setting for novels of the Southern paranormal. I’ve heard New Orleans credited with being the root of the paranormal in Louisiana. But is this, in fact, a self-fulfilling prophecy? Write enough books about voodoo and offer enough tours of graveyards and, eventually, the city is the obvious setting for the spooky and ghastly in fiction. Regardless of the reasons, Louisiana has an unmistakable claim to the American vampire beginning with Anne Rice’s *Interview with the Vampire* and including Charlaine Harris’s Sookie Stackhouse novels, as well as a plethora of young adult fiction.

Working towards a unique definition of the vampire for a Louisiana context, this paper will consider the ways that the infamous Count of Transylvania’s literary grandchildren have become Louisianan. The Louisiana vampire novel is not merely a factor of the human characters drinking sweet tea and the vampires waiting until the cooler night to seek out their beverage of choice. Vampire mythology has shifted in relationship to key themes for the setting in Louisiana. Considering Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* (1897) as the foundation of modern vampire stories in English, I will discuss ways that Rice alters or breaks from the British vampiric tradition and points where later authors build on her work to continue the evolution of the vampire for a setting in Louisiana. After all, a creature that will “live” forever must continue to adapt to its surroundings.

**Bruce R. Magee, Louisiana Tech University**

**Stephen Payne, Writer**

**“*Liberty in Louisiana: Liberty on Whose Terms?*”**

The concept “liberty” forms the very keystone of a liberal democratic republic. So too does the idea preoccupy writings by James Workman, a judge and playwright of early 19<sup>th</sup> century Louisiana. Indeed, the subject propels his play *Liberty in Louisiana*, a comedy written c. 1804 and first performed in Louisiana no later than 1807. It represents one of the few literary artifacts from the Federalist period. But it is even more important for another reason.

It may be the first play performed in English in the Territory of Orleans. Now available for the first time in digital format and indeed rescued from obscurity, *Liberty for Louisiana* returns via the *Anthology of Louisiana Literature*, an online library. Set in New Orleans during a twenty-four hour period, December 19-20, 1803, the narrative covers the final day of Franco-Spanish rule and the first one of American control. Workman humorously shows that the residents of the former *La Louisiane* can become newly-minted Americans or more precisely, Louisianians. But to do so, they must abandon their corrupt form of Franco-Spanish governance, their unfair trade practices, and their hierarchical (monarchical) ideology. In so doing, they, like their fellow Americans, will share the blessings of liberty. Still, that process comes with difficulty, as the text reveals.

Most of the characters represent the old European order. Two wandering picaros, the Irish Phelim O’Flynn and the Scottish Sawny M’Gregor initiate the action. Soon they encounter the corrupt and foolish Spanish judge Don Bertoldo de la Plata, his vain wife Señora de la Plata, and the young woman Laura, the innocent, yet intelligent, vivacious ward of Don Bertoldo. They and the text’s madcap impostures and mistaken identities underscore Workman’s contention that liberty can transform those willing to accept it.

**Michael S. Martin, Nicholls State University**

**“‘Under the Shadow of a Grand Forest’: Exoticism in Early Louisiana Travel Writing”**

In the late 18<sup>th</sup>-century and early-19<sup>th</sup>-century, two of America’s most-renowned naturalists made their first sojourns into Louisiana. William Bartram and John James Audubon traveled by boat through Lake Maurepas and Bayou Sara, and each encountered the low-lying ecosystem as if discovering a new world for the first time. Bartram writes that, at Manchac, he “directed [his] steps to the banks of the Mississippi,” and was “fascinated by the magnificence of the great sire of rivers” (*Travels* 145). Meanwhile, Audubon writes of his moving vision that “the lands were flattening fast” as he passes by “orange trees” that stretch across a “very luxuriant and agreeable” shoreline “verdure” (*Journal* 1821). Mentally speaking, both nature writers were either sick or exhausted at the beginning of their Louisiana travels; they awake to a vivid, exotic, waterly world of bayous and marshlands, with tropical plants and variegated flora and fauna. Both writers, then, try to frame their Louisiana landscape experiences through the epistemologies of both *exoticism* and *naturalism*, or reasoning. A naturalist discourse only goes so far in re-creating

their Louisiana experiences. This presentation, then, will argue that Bartram and Audubon's respective portrayals of Louisiana exoticize the landscape as a deliberate rhetorical device.

**Sarah E. McFarland, Northwestern State University**

**“Rising Waters: Environmental Crisis in Louisiana Literature”**

Sea levels are rising, a fact that impacts the Louisiana coastline in complex ways that makes for a provocative combination of familiarity and disaster, a slow flood. As Adam Trexler argues in *Anthropocene Fictions: The Novel in the Time of Climate Change*, “floods offer a rich, literary means of rendering climate change in a local place, as a tangible concrete effect” (83). In much Louisiana fiction, climate itself is a character: the heat, the wet, the greenspace. This presentation documents instances of climatic transformation in Louisiana fiction to explore the long literary history of its indiscriminate ecological effects, the uneven distribution of recovery efforts, the importance of material place, and the tensions between political, social, and environmental features to argue that such fictions, meaningfully connected to our resident Louisiana ecosystems, show how people can create even stronger communities in the face of adversity and climate trauma: they also rise.

**Mark O. Melder, Northwestern State University**

**“Climate Change as a Factor in Homeland Security: Sociological Lessons from Katrina”**

Climate change is a factor in homeland security and has been part of military planning for at least the last decade. Using a first-person account of my experiences in New Orleans in the first days after Hurricane Katrina as an introduction, this presentation will then examine the changes in emergency response planning and training as Louisiana took lessons learned during the events of Hurricane Katrina to prepare for the effects of climate change. Although national efforts at updating and improving responses to natural and manmade disasters have faltered, Louisiana—and more specifically the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP)—has made use of our experiences as a state to construct what is acknowledged as the exemplar of state-level emergency preparedness in the nation.

**Michael Mumaugh, Cane River National Heritage Area**

**“No Man's Land: How Outlaws Influenced Our National Story”**

When the United States purchased the Louisiana territory from France, Spain and the U.S. came into conflict over the location of the southwestern boundary. No Man's Land or “the Free State of Sabine” became the official buffer between the Louisiana Territory and Spanish Texas from 1806 until the 1819 Adams-Onís Treaty. The ratification of that treaty established the Sabine River as the western boundary between the United States and Spain.

During this period and beyond, the region was a haven for those looking for a new start on life, riches in black market trading, and hideouts from the laws of the United States and Spain. The wild lands of Louisiana's No Man's Land became the sanctuary of many notorious individuals

with such names as Jean Lafitte, John Murrell, Ozeme Carriere, and many more. All of these, to one extent or another, have become legends in this Nation's folklore.

This presentation will shed light on the figures, both big and small, whose actions within Louisiana's No Man's Land played influential roles in the development of the United States, Spain, Republic of Mexico, and the Republic of Texas.

**Nathan Rabalais, College of William and Mary**

**“Glocalization and Cajun Culture on the Market: Questioning the Isolation Myth of French and Creole Louisiana”**

The rapid decline of the French language in Louisiana and the loss of many traditional customs are often lamented by scholars and activists as a direct result of modernization and technology which purportedly accelerated the influence of mainstream American culture. By the same token, the hitherto steadfastness of south Louisiana's *francité* is seen by many as a positive side effect of acute isolation from the rest of American society. The pervasiveness of this narrative of “isolation” is surprising given the overwhelming evidence to the contrary. Many of the hallmarks of “Cajun culture” come from elsewhere and relatively recently (e.g. the accordion by way of German Jewish merchants and mail order commerce, the majority of Catholic clergymen from France or Canada until 1960, Hitachi rice cookers and Magnalite pots, etc.).

In this presentation, I will explore the appeal of the isolation myth and the subsequent boom of Cajun culture commercialism beginning in the 1980s through the lenses of Roland Robertson's notion of *glocalization* and Jeffrey Alexander's concept of collective identity. While Cajuns have long since appropriated foreign products into their own culture, Cajun goods are propelled abroad to such an extent that this have given rise to the “Certified Cajun” label to help locals avoid imposters. I further argue that the isolation myth was likely an explanation for linguistic difference interpreted by an Anglo-centric U.S. perspective, whereas francophone Louisianians gained an easy to understand reason for the sudden loss of their language that points to an inevitable modernization, rather than placing responsibility for culture loss on the community itself.

**Emily Rice, Independent Researcher**

**“Becoming Louisiana: Amy Conner's *Million Dollar Road* – Feminine Independence in Rural Louisiana”**

The novel *Million Dollar Road* by Amy Conner explores the roles of three native Louisiana women from different ages, backgrounds, and economic statuses. All three women live in the rural Louisiana community near Covington, LA, specifically Million Dollar Road. Lireinne Hooten is a high school drop-out who works as a hoser at the local alligator farm to help her stepfather and brother barely make ends meet. Lizzie MacBride-Costello is a recently married housewife to a wealthy, womanizing lawyer. Emma is a lonely, damaged divorcee who works a small organic farm while pining for her ex-husband. While it appears that these women submit to their respective stereotypical gender conventions: Lireinne – poor, white trash; Lizzie – domestic

housewife; and Emma – crazy ex-wife, these women actually discredit their assumed labels and assert themselves as strong, independent women. Lireinne leaves Louisiana to pursue a modelling career in Paris, France. Lizzie leaves her womanizing husband even though pregnant, embarking on a journey to restore her career as a lawyer and raise a child. Emma finally finds peace and forgiveness to move on from her past, finding love in the process. Despite the negative stereotypes associated with these Louisiana women, they discover their freedom and value beyond the masculine-dominant culture of the rural South, paralleling the local mascot, Snowball, the rare, female, white alligator.

**Linda A. Shkreli, Delgado Community College**

### **“Louisiana Coastal and Cultural Preservation: An Oral History Perspective”**

It is widely known that the Louisiana coastal region is in crisis, losing land, resources, and people at a pace that outruns current responses. The infamous statistic of losing land at the rate of “a football field every 100 minutes” is no exaggeration, nor is the fate of the Isle de Jean Charles community. With a federally funded community relocation project, members of the community have become the first “climate refugees.” As residents of southern Louisiana, we know that coastal erosion is cultural erosion. Along with the countless eroded miles of shoreline and wetlands, the archive of living histories in coastal Louisiana is in danger of permanent loss as well. In other words, the geographic erosion amounts to potential irreversible loss of cultural history given that disappearing communities are intrinsically part of the land loss of the region.

This proposal looks at the value of implementing oral history research and coursework in college STEM and speech communication classrooms. Specifically, this project explores the design of a student and community-centered project called HEARD (Histories, Essays, Archives and Records of the Delta). HEARD is an oral history initiative serving the communities of the southern Louisiana bayou and coastal regions. HEARD’s mission is to preserve the vulnerable cultural histories of bayou communities through archived interviews. This initiative hopes to increase awareness of region-specific issues, engage students in community-building skills, and increase environmental and information literacy amongst students and those members of the community. Through archived storytelling, the loss of living community history can be mitigated and potential new ideas for land conservation shared and preserved.

**Dean Sinclair, Northwestern State University**

### **“Grave Sheds of Western Louisiana”**

One of the most symbolic cultural landscapes is the cemetery. Endowed with meaning and memory, these sacred places conjure images of loss and emotion unlike any other. From grave markers to flower arrangements to mementoes carefully placed, cemeteries represent a storehouse of memory. In western Louisiana, one of the most interesting cultural features in cemeteries are grave houses or, more accurately, grave sheds. These wooden structures are constructed around a grave, with roofs and lattice work enclosing the plot, delivering a profound statement about the importance of the lost family member. The cultural provenance, diffusion, and meaning of grave sheds are open to debate, but their persistence in the landscape is not. In

Louisiana, grave sheds are generally associated with western Louisiana and with rural white Protestant communities. This paper explores the various notions of the origin of grave sheds, as well as the largest culture complex of grave sheds in Louisiana, the Talbert-Pierson grave sheds at Pine Grove Cemetery. The grave sheds that are found in the vicinity of Natchitoches will be described, suggesting an “outpost” of grave shed construction in the rural hill country surrounding Natchitoches. The paper also discusses the changing nature of grave shed construction, which has evolved in the modern age as wood is replaced by more permanent building materials, contributing to the persistence of this fascinating cultural landscape feature into the present.

**Bryant Smith, Nicholls State University**

**“Reflections on Cajun and Creole Identity from College Students in the Bayou Region”**

Nicholls State University is the southern-most university in Louisiana. Located on the banks of Bayou Lafourche, it is in the heart of what the world would consider “Cajun Country.” In recent years, efforts have been made by local governments in South Louisiana to preserve local language and culture through festivals, language classes, and other cultural events and initiatives. In addition, “Cajun” and “Creole” food and culture have become mainstream in our society, as seen in television shows and films such as *Swamp People* and *Skeleton Key*. The students who attend Nicholls are overwhelming from this region, but do they consider themselves Cajun? Do they consider themselves Creole? To the rest of the world, these students are the embodiment of these Louisiana identities, but how do Nicholls students view themselves and these labels? In light of speakers of Louisiana French historically being marginalized and discouraged from speaking their native language, has this persecution led to a negative attitude towards Louisiana language and culture by Nicholls students? Instead of feeling shame for their cultural background, do these students feel pride and a desire to preserve or restore the language and culture of their ancestors?

To answer these questions and to better understand how students at Nicholls State University view South Louisiana culture including “Cajun” and “Creole” identity, a survey containing open-ended questions was given to students in various English, Spanish, and French courses at Nicholls. Questions included: *Do you consider yourself Cajun? Do you consider yourself Creole? Who is a Cajun? Who is a Creole?* In answering these questions, students shared their often-complex thoughts on cultural, racial, and linguistic aspects of South Louisiana culture and gave insight into what it means to be a “Cajun” or “Creole” in Louisiana.

**Darius Caleb Smith, Tulane University**

**“Black Labor at Odds with Deindustrialization and Discrimination: The *Parson v. Kaiser* Story”**

On September 2, 1967 the *Times-Picayune* reported that two African American employees filed suit against the Kaiser Aluminum and Chemical Corporation and the Aluminum Workers International Union’s Local 225 with charges of racial discrimination in employment at Kaiser’s plant in Chalmette, Louisiana. Harris Parson and Arcell Williams filed suit under Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. By June of 1984, the *Times-Picayune* reported that Parson successfully

sued the Kaiser company in an eighteen-year long struggle. This study uses the *Parson v. Kaiser* eighteen-year long struggle as a microcosm in investigating the development of Title VII in its first twenty-years. The *Parson v. Kaiser* story speaks to manuscripts written by Timothy Minchin, Nancy MacLean, Sophia Z. Lee, and Robert Zieger who situate a majority of their discussions on Title VII's impact on unionism and job progress. However, the *Parson v. Kaiser* story approaches Title VII as an evolving statute in order to argue that the law itself did not clearly define discrimination which in turn halted black labor advances. This presentation analyzes the evolution of Title VII by citing key court cases that led to a better definition of workplace discrimination. The cases cited involve seniority, promotion and testing claims. The decisions in these cases, along with the efforts of lawyers Nils Douglas and Richard Sobol eventually granted Kaiser's African American employees back-pay awards, but only after nearly two decades of litigation and after the Chalmette plant closed. This study examines court case files and correspondence papers between the two lawyers. This study uses law reviews from the latter 1960s to the mid-1980s to situate the *Parson v. Kaiser* case within the national scope of Title VII's development in reference to black labor.

### **Harvey Stern, Louisiana Purchase Cypress Legacy**

#### **“The Louisiana Purchase Cypress Legacy”**

Although the Louisiana Bald Cypress is Louisiana's State tree and adorns much of the tourist literature promoting the natural heritage and beauty of the state, it was not until 2003 that a concerted effort was made to inventory and landmark the State's remaining old growth cypress. It was in this year, the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Louisiana Purchase that the Louisiana Purchase Cypress Legacy (LPCL) campaign was initiated.

The intent of the LPCL is to identify, landmark, and promote the stewardship of Louisiana's remaining living old growth cypress – in particular cypress that was alive at the time of the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. The conventional wisdom is that there is little left of the ancient cypress that once thrived throughout Louisiana; however, dendrological borings we have taken from healthy old cypress have determined that healthy cypress several centuries old still thrive throughout Louisiana, including Northwest Louisiana. Saline Bayou and Bayou Bodcau are among locations in this part of Louisiana where you will find landmarked cypress with LPCL plaques proclaiming, “Alive in 1803.”

Borings from old cypress throughout the state have revealed living trees, well over 25 feet in circumference (measured around the trunk), that may have been upwards of 800 years old at the time of the Louisiana Purchase! Even smaller cypress less than twelve feet in circumference have been found to be well over 200 years due to their extremely slow growth rate, as shown by the very closely spaced rings from sample borings.

**Ina Sthapit, University of Florida**

**Jason Church, National Center for Preservation Technology and Training**

**Sukrit Sen, Ahmedabad University**

### **“Cane River’s Vanishing Tenant Cabins”**

After emancipation the South’s slave based agricultural system had to adapt or perish. Enter the new system of tenant farming. In the system of tenant farming the laborer lives on the property and borrows money from the landowner to advance seed, fertilizer, mule use, and household supplies. At the end of harvest season when the tenant’s percent of crops are sold they must first pay back all borrowed money to the land owner. All profit left is theirs as income earned. Many times a debit was incurred. This indebts the worker and their family to the landowner until the debit is paid. This system of economic slavery lasted until the wide scale introduction of mechanized farming. As mechanized farming became cheaper and more reliable in the 1960’s tenant farmers were let go and forced to leave the farms that many families had occupied since slavery.

Once they were left vacant the tenant farmer cabins were demolished by the machines that had replaced their occupants. Farmers needed the land for crops that the rows and clusters of cabins occupied. Hundreds of cabins were wiped from the landscape in the 1970’s. One source estimates there are upwards of 800 cabins along the Cane River alone. This does not consider the areas around Grand Ecore, Coulterville, and Campti in Natchitoches Parish.

This presentation details the efforts of the National Center for Preservation Technology and Training (NCPTT) to document the remaining few tenant cabins still standing along the Cane River region of Natchitoches Parish. NCPTT has currently documented nine structures.

NCPTT documented the cabins using photography and 3D laser scanning. The 3D models that were made will be used to make measured construction drawings of the existing structures. This project hopes to not only document the vanishing structures but to draw awareness to their importance and fragile state.

**Joseph R. Thysell, Nicholls State University**

### **“The 1988 Republican New Orleans Convention”**

The August 1988 National Republican Nominating Convention was held in the Superdome in the city of New Orleans. The convention lasted four days. During that period, New Orleans and the state of Louisiana hoped to showcase the city as an ideal place for business and tourism. The hope was that future political conventions of both major parties would continue to select New Orleans. Mardi Gras and the Super Bowl attract more people to the city. But a political convention, those held every four years, brings in a more serious clientele. Business is conducted both nationwide and worldwide. All four major news outlets covered the city and the state. The state’s economy was also helped through the flow of out of state dollars into city and state coffers.

Louisiana was a safe Bush statewide and in the upcoming 1988 general election. Vice President George H. W. Bush was expected to give to the delegates a winning acceptance speech and select a credible running mate. On the first item, Bush was a total success. But on the second,

Bush's decision raised serious questions over his judgment should his selection of vice president become president. Bush's choice of Indiana's Senator J. Danforth Quayle was viewed as a direct appeal to conservative diehards who believed he was *not* conservative enough to continue the Reagan Revolution begun eight years earlier. In 1988, the controversy rose in the national media when reports surfaced that Quayle made phone calls in 1969 to an official in the Indiana National Guard in the order to avoid the draft. Quayle's blatant use of the National Guard drew a sharp contrast to a senator who became a conservative hardliner supporting large defense budgets. During the Vietnam War, state national guards were not mobilized for oversea service unlike state national guards today who routinely serve overseas in hostile areas. One other issue brought up was vetting and the extent candidates are now required to do when selecting a running mate.

**Mary Linn Wernet, Northwestern State University**

**Sharon Wolff, Northwestern State University**

**EXHIBIT: "The Making of *Gumbo YA-YA: A Collection of Louisiana Folk Tales*"**

The exhibit will feature book covers and copies of manuscripts from the NSU Cammie G. Henry Research Center Lyle Saxon, Louisiana State Director of the U.S. Works Progress Administration, Louisiana Writers' Project, book collection and Federal Writers' Project Manuscript Collection, that were originally compiled for the defining 1945 Louisiana folk tale book entitled *Gumbo Ya-Ya: A Collection of Louisiana Folk Tales*. Exhibited items will be mounted on a black multi-paneled exhibit tabletop board.

**John Zheng, Mississippi Valley State University**

**"Learning to Become Louisiana: Elizabeth Burk's Poems"**

Elizabeth Burk is a poet who has authored *Learning to Love Louisiana* and a psychologist by profession. She divides her time between her practice in New York and her husband in southwest Louisiana. The time divided between the two geographical points creates in her poetry a psychological distance between the persona and the person(s) she loves, between the past and the present, and between experience and imagination. My presentation is to argue that the geographical and psychological distances are not barriers; instead, they are the thematic thread that strings all her poems about Louisiana. At the heart of Burk's poems is her love that bridges these distances and that attracts the persona to describe her perception of the people and places in Louisiana.