

**Day at a glance:**

- 7:30 – 8:45 a.m.** Registration: Morrison Hall foyer
- 8:45 – 9:00 a.m.** Conference Welcome: 227 Morrison Hall  
Dr. Lisa Abney, NSU Provost and Vice President of Student and Academic Affairs, and Conference Co-Chair, and Dr. Shane Rasmussen, Director NSU Folklife Center and Conference Co-Chair)
- 9:00 – 10:00 a.m.** Keynote Speaker: 227 Morrison Hall  
Cecile Elkins Carter (Caddo Nation of Oklahoma)
- 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.** Morning Concurrent Sessions IA, IB, IC, and ID
- 12:00-1:15 p.m.** Lunch
- 1:15 - 3:15 p.m.** Afternoon Concurrent Sessions IIA, IIB, IIC, and IID
- 3:15 – 3:30 p.m.** Afternoon Break
- 3:30 – 4:00 p.m.** Presentation of winning high school essays, Room 227
- 4:00 – 6:00 p.m.** Afternoon Concurrent Sessions IIIA, IIIB, IIIC, and IIID

**Session I 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

Time	<b>IA</b>	<b>IB</b>	<b>IC</b>	<b>ID</b>
Room	227	221	146	115
Session Title	<b>Biography, Memoir, &amp; Identity</b>	<b>Lagniappe</b>	<b>Literature &amp; Place</b>	<b>Creole Art &amp; Culture</b>
Session Chair	Rasmussen	Delery	Abney	Furr
<b>10:00 – 10:20</b>	Matthews	Thorson-Barnett & Deep	Abney	Brocato & Furr
<b>10:20 – 10:40</b>	Jones	Fuller	McFarland	Graham
<b>10:40 – 11:00</b>	Callahan	Foster	Williams	Breedlove
<b>11:00 – 11:20</b>	Rasmussen panel	Sutherlin	Gallagher	Magaña
<b>11:20 – 11:40</b>	panel continued	Delery	Crank	
<b>11:40 – 12:00</b>	panel continued		LeBaron-Ennis	

**Lunch 12:00 – 1:15 p.m.**

**Session II 1:15 – 3:15 p.m.**

Time	<b>IIA</b>	<b>IIB</b>	<b>IIC</b>	<b>IID</b>
Room	227	221	115	146
Session Title	<b>Heritage Management &amp; Meanings</b>	<b>Archives Along the Red River: Research Opportunities</b>	<b>Race &amp; Social Relations</b>	<b>Folklore &amp; Material Culture</b>
Session Chair	Ernstein	Wernet	Granger	Riehm
1:15 – 1:35	Girard	Colson	West	Dromm
1:35 – 1:55		McLemore	Ulentin	LeBrun
1:55 – 2:15	Phillips	Riggs	L. Price	Riehm
2:15 – 2:35	Ernstein	Wernet	Giancarlo	Blackford
2:35 – 2:55	Gregory			DeFord
2:55 – 3:15	Desselles			

**Break 3:15 – 3:30****Essay Contest Presentations 3:30 – 4:00 Room 227**

2<sup>nd</sup> Place Winner - McDaniel, Heath “Live in the Sportsman’s Paradise”  
Ponchatoula High School – Ponchatoula, Louisiana

1<sup>st</sup> Place Winner - Bulliard, Morgan “Mais Sha, I’m Cajun!”  
Westgate High School – New Iberia, Louisiana

**Session III 4:00 – 6:00**

Time	<b>IIIA</b>	<b>IIB</b>	<b>IIC</b>	<b>IID</b>
Room	115	227	221	146
Session Title	<b>Tales &amp; Narrative Analysis</b>	<b>Spanish Borderlands Revisited</b>	<b>Language &amp; Linguistics</b>	<b>Race, Violence &amp; Justice in 20<sup>th</sup> Century Louisiana</b>
Session Chair	Crank	J. Price	Cundall	Pellegrin
4:00 – 4:20	Viator	Avery	Emmitte	Anderson
4:20 – 4:40	Nangia	Byrd	White	Aiello
4:40 – 5:00	Saloy	Dollar	Cundall	Jack
5:00 – 5:20		Lane		
5:20 – 5:40		J. Price		
5:40 – 6:00				

### Presentation Abstracts

**Abney, Dr. Lisa** (Northwestern State University)

“An Unexpected Data Source: Kate Chopin’s *At Fault*”

Session IC (Literature & Place): 10:00-10:20 a.m.

Kate Chopin’s first novel, *At Fault* is one of her least well known; however, the novel provides a significant set of historical, folkloric, and linguistic data. Throughout the novel, Chopin creates a world which is centered around the timber industry in Louisiana during the post-Reconstruction period. Additionally, Chopin documents the arrival of the “Americans” during these early, post-Louisiana Purchase years. Her ability to capture the many voices of Louisiana residents during her time is important in terms of linguistic data and folk culture. She portrays a world in which multiple social classes and ethnic groups live, and in so doing, she unintentionally documents history, folk culture, and linguistic features of North Louisiana.

**Aiello, Dr. Thomas** (Louisiana State University)

“Violence Is a Classroom: The 1972 Student Riots at Grambling and Southern”

Session IIID (Race, Violence & Justice in 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Louisiana): 4:20-4:40 p.m.

The most vociferous anti-war partisans of the late 1960s and early 1970s were college students, and their disillusionment with Vietnam and Civil Rights led to a mistrust of all bureaucratic organizations. Bureaucracy had proven corrupt. Of course, college was one of those bureaucratic organizations, too, and students also began reacting against the policies of their universities. In May 1970, four students were killed in protests at Kent State University. Less than two weeks later, student protests at Jackson State College brought out the Mississippi State Police, who killed two and wounded twelve more students.

This sort of campus unrest—against Vietnam, against discrimination, or against what students perceived to be an unjust campus administration—proliferated all over the country. In the fall of 1972, it reached Grambling and Southern, Louisiana’s two predominantly black universities. Both schools largely kept Vietnam from their arguments. Instead, they emphasized campus change. At Grambling, students wanted greater participation in policymaking. They wanted a say in faculty hiring. They wanted a department of Black Studies, more comprehensive mail and phone service, the removal of the school dress code. They wanted 75% representation on university disciplinary committees. Students wanted much the same at Southern. Frustration led both campuses to descend into violence, causing massive property damage and leaving the schools fundamentally shaken.

But the two differed in the role race played in their struggles. It was Grambling’s black security chief who tear-gassed the students in north Louisiana. And the students were dealing with a black administration. At Southern, however, students took their concerns to the State Board of Education and Governor Edwin Edwards. They were tear-gassed by the white sheriff. Two of them were killed by sheriff’s deputies. While incidents at both universities were severe, racial tension caused Southern’s student protests to escalate to

absurd proportions, leaving a legacy that lasted far longer than its northern counterpart. This paper examines the student riots at Grambling and Southern in fall 1972 and evaluates the role race played in each.

**Anderson, Dr. David M.** (Louisiana Tech University)

“‘Legal Lynching’ or Justice in Transition?”

Session IIID (Race, Violence & Justice in 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Louisiana): 4:00-4:20 p.m.

Historians of the Jim Crow South have often dismissed jury trials for black defendants charged with violent against whites as sham judicial exercises that merely gave official state sanction to what amounted to a “legal lynching.” Yet by the 1920s and 1930s, a black defendant occasionally prevailed in such cases, even in front of all-white juries, provided the defendant secured certain procedural protections and had access to a competent attorney. In this paper, I analyze one instance in which a black defendant won acquittal through the 1930 case of Jack “Son” Ross, a black Monroe, Louisiana, resident, who local authorities charged with shooting a white man and raping the man’s female companion. Ross’ defense was bolstered by the local NAACP branch, which raised the necessary funds to secure the services of a prominent, and expensive, white attorney, who successfully argued the case. Ross’ acquittal raises several significant questions about the nature of Jim Crow-era jurisprudence in Louisiana and throughout the South: (1) Were southern courts changing during the 1920s and 1930s and beginning to recognize that black defendants deserved procedural protections and the right to a fair trial? (2) Why were the officers of the Monroe NAACP confident that Ross could win acquittal? (3) What conditions, such as the reputation of the white victims, made it possible for a black defendant to prevail? and (4) How did local whites react to the acquittal of a black defendant? In some cases, white mobs took matters into their hands and lynched black defendants who had won acquittal in a jury trial, but Ross avoided this fate, why? Ross’ acquittal notwithstanding, southern blacks usually faced insurmountable obstacles in the courts, and rarely prevailed when charged with violent crimes against whites. But as demonstrated by the Ross acquittal and several similar cases, by the 1920s and 1930s southern courts were not the solid bulwark of white supremacy that historians had previously assumed.

**Armstrong, Margie** (see Rasmussen, Dr. Shane)

**Avery, Dr. George** (Stephen F. Austin University)

“French Influences at Los Adaes”

Session IIIB: (Spanish Borderlands Revisited): 4:00-4:20 p.m.

The interaction between Los Adaes and the French at Fort St. Jean Baptiste from 1721 to 1773 will be discussed drawing on both historical and archaeological research. The economic, political, social, and religious aspects of the relationship between Los Adaes and colonial Natchitoches will be summarized.

**Blackford, Mikeal** (Louisiana State University)

“Machine Guns Destructive of Life”

Session IID (Folklore &amp; Material Culture): 2:15-2:35 p.m.

World War I is the singular event that shaped world history in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and brought about what has been called “The American Century.” In 1914, Donaldsonville, Louisiana was uniquely positioned to be representative of America and Europe. A mid-sized town experiencing major growth, it is located near a major port, and was home to a widely varied population. Donaldsonville can be seen as a microcosm of Louisiana and America in 1914. Census data indicates that almost a quarter of the residents of Donaldsonville and over a third of the inhabitants of Ascension Parish were foreign born. Many of these people came from nations about to go to war with each other; the largest two groups of immigrants were French and German. Of the French and German immigrants, the majority were from either Alsace-Lorraine, or Prussia—two areas that would become the principal theaters of war.

Two accepted techniques from historical geography are taking a geographic region and looking at it during a single time period, or taking a small region and looking at it through an extended period of time. Is it possible to take what might be called a fractal approach combining these two methods into a single tool—and then to use that new tool to examine a particular event? How does that inform the observations?

The newspaper *The Donaldsonville Chief*, spanning June of 1914 to January of 1915, formed the core source material of this study. This study compares the news reports against a popular history of the war published just weeks of the end of the war, and with a scholarly but popular history published decades later. It shows the changing public perceptions, portrayal, and propaganda over time and demonstrates the relevance of Louisiana’s connections to the greater Atlantic world.

**Breedlove, Carolyn** (Northwestern State University)

“French Creole Plantation Life Along Red River: Lifestyles in an Extended Community”

Session ID (Creole Art &amp; Culture): 10:40 -11:00

Natchitoches and the Cane River region were among the very first areas settled by Europeans in Louisiana, the Deep South, and indeed the greater Louisiana Purchase territory. In terms of the culture ultimately dominant throughout those regions, however, they came to be something of an anomaly: an island, a vestige of the first culture that had established itself and evolved there. Pockets of this older European imprint remained, and to a lesser extent still remain, scattered in an archipelago through the heart of Louisiana to New Orleans.

Through the nineteenth century to the Civil War, the European offshoots, Gallic and Anglo-Saxon, pragmatically co-existed, accommodated one another, and interacted as necessary. They shared the notion of slaveholding. They—and those slaves—fell victim to the same epidemics and primitive medicine. French speakers eventually were obliged to learn English to do business; English speakers did not reciprocate. All engaged in similar work and pastimes. In religion, though, in language at home, in cuisine somewhat, and to some extent in attitudes toward women’s position in society, the two remained discrete.

From early familial relationships, many of the French Creoles shared an outlook and a way of life, though this varied slightly according to the rate of mixing with the newer transplants. The Cane River region, as opposed to, say, Rapides Parish, was slower to intermarry. In comparing and contrasting the different areas, it is possible to see nuances in attitude developing at varying rates. Yet the families still by and large shared common expectations and practices in their daily lives.

**Brocato, Mary and Dr. Paula Furr** (Northwestern State University)

“*The Natchitoches Enterprise: Historical Lessons on Diversity and Culture in Reporting*”

Session ID (Creole Art & Culture): 10:00-10:20 a.m.

In 1888, Hopkins Payne Breazeale Sr. established the *Natchitoches Enterprise*, which was published for almost a century until its folding after being purchased by its rival paper, the *Natchitoches Times* and publisher Charles Cunningham. For many years, the *Enterprise* was published by Ken and Ursula Walker, journalists who had moved to the area from the Midwest. Under their guidance, the paper won numerous awards and was recognized for the weekly column of François Mignon, a blind Creole who lived at Melrose Plantation. His column, “Cane River Memo,” won many awards. The newspaper also employed several Creoles from the Cane River area, and the printing presses and all commercial printing were operated and supervised by two Cane River Creoles, David and Charles Conant, whom Ken Walker trained. The newspaper staff reported on social events, weddings, engagements of the Creole and African-American community as well as the Caucasian citizens of Natchitoches. Such diverse content was considered a radical innovation by many locals and the Walkers were much criticized for their “unorthodox” reporting and news coverage. This presentation on the history of a small-town newspaper that reported on a racially and ethnically diverse community throughout its publication years is important for the paper’s legacy and lessons for today’s journalists.

**Bulliard, Morgan** (Westgate High School)

“Mais Sha, I’m Cajun!” Room 227 3:30 – 4:00 p.m.

**Byrd, Dr. Kathleen** (Northwestern State University, ret.)

“Colonial Natchitoches, Outpost of Empires”

Session IIIB (Spanish Borderlands Revisited): 4:00-4:10 p.m.

As an anthropologist, I have been drawn to the rich ethnic heritage and history of colonial Natchitoches. In addition to the almost unbelievable exploits of men such as the truly remarkable French Canadian Louis Juchereau de St. Denis, the history of Natchitoches is also the story of Tinhoun, the great Kadohadacho chief known as “the Peacemaker,” and of Marie Therese Coincoin, a slave who during her lifetime not only gained her freedom and that of most of her children but also was the matriarch of a family that by 1850 owned more than 5,600 acres and 436 slaves. These individuals and many other women, slaves, Indians, and small-scale farmers can occasionally be seen lurking in the shadows behind larger events. Their stories are worth bringing to light.

**Callahan, James** (Northwestern State University)

“Liminality, Marginality and the Southern Gothic Experience”

Session IA (Biography, Memoir & Identity): 10:40-11:00 a.m.

As a whole, Southern culture displays a resistance to change wrought by extra-cultural influences, despite being a heavily Creolized culture. This often places many Southerners in a peculiar state of cultural liminality—they are faced with a compulsion to preserve the past in a world that is evolving at an ever accelerating pace. The portrayal of Southerners, Louisianans in particular, as being “backwards” and “uncultured” stems from a variety of extra-cultural identities imposed upon the South and the people who reside there. These imposed identity definitions tend to marginalize the South culturally, further reinforcing the liminal state of the population groups who comprise Southern culture. This combination of inherent liminality and marginalization imparts to Southern culture a distinctly Gothic tone which often goes unnoticed by residents of the South. As a result, many people who do not self-identify as “Gothic” often display cultural traits that may academically define them as “Gothic” in a literary sense.

**Carter, Cecile Elkins** (Caddo Indian Nation of Oklahoma)

“This Land Was Made for You and Me” 9:00-10:00 a.m.

Keynote Address: 9:00-10:00 a.m.

An enrolled member of the federally-recognized Caddo Indian Nation of Oklahoma, Ms. Carter writes and speaks with authority based on 35 years of scholarly research. She is a retired teacher, working historian, writer, and speaker focusing on Caddo Indian history, culture, and traditions. She has produced a collection of oral histories, which she began recording with Caddo elders in 1970s.

**Colson, Janet** (see Wernet, Mary Linn)

**Crank, Dr. James Andrew (Andy)** (Northwestern State University)

“The Malaise unto Death: Walker Percy and the Sick South”

Session IC (Literature & Place): 11:20-11:40 a.m.

Though born in Birmingham, Alabama and raised primarily in Mississippi, Walker Percy spent the majority of his artistic career in Covington, Louisiana, where he incorporated the culture and traditions of its people into a complex and durable fiction. Walker Percy’s adopted home appears in the majority of his fiction as a kind of paradox. While Percy’s Louisiana exists as a representative of the southern mindset, its culture is striking and unique to itself. Percy documents the people of Louisiana as a complex and rich collection of southern, African, French and Spanish cultures that frequently resist easy categorization. Percy wrote often of the people of Louisiana because they suggested to him southern qualities that he felt were disappearing in the rest of the deep south: including the importance of community, the celebration of multiple cultures and perspectives, and the emphasis on religion and tradition. This paper explores Percy’s use of “malaise” as a consistent trope for the southerner’s vanishing identity and his/her inability to reconcile a diminished history; it also suggests that, for Percy, Louisiana represented Kierkegaard’s critical concept of “the ethical,” a space that both transformative and transportive where the aesthetic and religious Christian comes into a direct confrontation with himself.

**Cundall, Dr. Michael J., Jr.** (Northwestern State University)

“Cajun Jokes and Joking: Issues with *Blason Populaire* Humor”

Session IIIC (Language & Linguistics): 4:40-5:00 p.m.

In this presentation I outline some issues surrounding the use of racist and ethnic humor, or more appropriately termed, *blason populaire*. I begin by laying out the typical arguments one sees lobbied against the use of such humor. I then present some issues for the conclusion that *blason populaire* humor is wrong. I argue that humor of this sort often can be used toward good ends and when making evaluations one should take into account factors such as who’s telling the joke, the audience, and the purpose in the telling. I use Cajun jokes to make my point and then end by introducing a research question as to why one sees a proliferation of Cajun jokes and much less Creole humor.

**Deep, Neeru** (see Thorson-Barnett, Dr. Susan and Neeru Deep)

**DeFord, Matt** (Northwestern State University)

“Oscar on the Cane”

Session IID (Folklore & Material Culture): 2:35-2:55 p.m.

The author presents and discusses his Cane River journey on Oscar the raft.

**Delery, Dr. Clayton** (Louisiana School for Math, Science, and the Arts)

“Queers, Thieves and Fruit Jars: The Community and Media Response to the Fire at the UpStairs Lounge”

Session IB (Lagniappe): 11:20-11:40 a.m.

In 1973, a fire was deliberately set in the stairwell of a New Orleans gay bar called the UpStairs Lounge. Exploding from the stairwell into the bar itself, the fire had a death toll of 32 people and still ranks as the deadliest fire in New Orleans history. Placing this fire within the context of the 1972 Rault Center fire and the 1973 arson-sniper incident at the Howard Johnson’s Hotel, this presentation examines the varied and complex nature of the response to the UpStairs fire from the city government, the clergy, the gay and lesbian community as it then existed, and from the city of New Orleans as a whole.

**Desselles, Curtis** (Northwestern State University and NPS-National Center for Preservation Technology & Training)

“The Breda Town Cemetery Project”

Session IIA (Heritage Management & Meanings): 2:55-3:15 p.m.

Most thesis topics are conceived in an academic setting, but the Breda Town Cemetery Project began as a request for assistance from the Breda Town Cemetery Association (BTCA). The BTCA recognized that their cemetery was in a state of disrepair and requested that Northwestern State University of Louisiana (NSU) document the burials, assess the conditions of the burials, and research the origin of the community and the adjacent cemetery. This work resulted in a model for the documentation of Southern African-American cemeteries. There are many such models, but this cemetery is unique in that it is non-denominational. Most African-American cemeteries are associated with a church, but the Breda Town Cemetery consists of African-American, Creole, Chinese, Russian, and other ethnic burials. This fact creates a setting that is unique and full of contradictions. How does one document such a cemetery?

The primary survey consists of some basic demographic fields such as name, date of birth, date of death, material type, and comments. This survey served as a tool to assess the size and scope of the project. All of the burials were photographed with attention paid to the markers as well as the tombs. These photographs were integral in categorizing marker types. Out of 837 burials at the Breda Town Cemetery, 276 burials did not have names. This amounts to 32% of the total burials. The ethnographic interviews allowed for the identification of between 5-10% of the unknown burials.

The secondary survey (i.e., detailed survey) allowed for the assessment of the conditions of the burials and also verified the accuracy of the primary survey. The secondary survey gathered cultural data such as military service, organizational membership, religious affiliation, and socioeconomic status. The deliverables consist of an inventory of the burials in digital and hard copy formats, a digital copy of the photo documentation, and a booklet, which documents the Breda Town community, cemetery, and the BTCA.

**Dollar, Dr. Susan E.** (Northwestern State University)

“Colonial Natchitoches, Revision Historiography, Part 1”

Session IIIB (Spanish Borderlands Revisited): 4:40-5:00 p.m.

Because I grew up here, I remember my impressions from childhood about “the mythological history of colonial Natchitoches”—a rather limited, narrow view of dashing Frenchmen and beautiful “calico ladies” in hoop skirts. Even as a youngster, I knew there had to be more to it than that. At last we have two important books that help “flesh” out the fuller story of the foundings of Natchitoches. I hope to comment on the important additions to the story that we get from these two important works—additions that help tell the tale of a multicultural frontier settlement that served as a gateway to so many.

**Dromm, Heather Salter** (Northwestern State University)

“A Feminist Look at *la Llorona* and Other Louisiana Girl-ghouls”

Session IID (Folklore & Material Culture): 1:15-1:35 p.m.

Violence by and against women is often a major component of the *la llorona* folktale. In Bess Lomax Hawes’ *la llorona* tales collected in a juvenile hall, mutilation is one of the most profound themes. One of the variants of Hawes’ collection depicts the *la llorona* character as missing a face; in her search for a face, she cuts off the faces of other girls. In another Hawes variant, *la llorona* cuts out the faces of children that resemble her murdered children. Folklorists and literary critics have placed *la llorona* in the “bad mother” category, along with Malinche, Cortés’ indigenous lover and translator. In many variants, narrators usually depict both *la llorona* and Malinche as victims and victimizers. Norma Alacrón states, “Because [Malinche] aided Cortés in the Conquest of the New World, she is seen as concretizing woman’s sexual weakness...always open to sexual exploitation.” The same can be said about *la llorona*. Like Malinche, she was shunned by her white lover. Left alone and without means to raise her children, she drowns them and hangs herself. Some *la llorona* variants depict the ghost as returning as a means of paying penance for her sins; others depict her as an evil, baby-killing monster. In the variants that I collected in my Master’s thesis in which I interviewed people who lived in

Zwolle and Ebarb, Louisiana, most narrators did not state a reason for *la llorona*'s death nor for her return from the dead. The only story that indicated suicide is the only story that has a violent spirit component. This paper compares my collection of *la llorona* narratives to other collections and to other old Louisiana folktales that depict female ghosts. I specifically focus on gender issues with a major focus on violence and female oppression.

**Edwards, Henry** (see Rasmussen, Dr. Shane)

**Emmitte, Aaron** (Louisiana State University)

“Defining the Use of English in Cajun French”

Session IIIC (Language & Linguistics): 4:00-4:20 p.m.

Due to the language shift currently underway in Louisiana among speakers of Cajun French, the issue of code-switching and lexical borrowing provides us with an excellent opportunity to discuss not only the differences between these two linguistic phenomena, but also a change to briefly examine how one language influences another. The relationship between a majority language, in this case English, and a minority language, French, is vital to understanding the parameters in which code-switching and borrowing can occur.

These two linguistic phenomena are common in many bilingual communities, and through this presentation I show exactly how they work and which linguistic rules they follow. Though often conflated, code-switching and borrowing are decidedly different. Simply, code-switching is an action in which the speaker intentionally or unintentionally changes from one language system to another, while borrowing is the use of a word or phrase from another language within the predominant language system. To help prove this point I will provide numerous examples of Cajun French, taken from recorded interviews as well as previous research where both phenomena occur. I also examine the rate of occurrence of code-switching and borrowing to show that these traits are a sign of the larger linguistic situation surrounding Cajun communities across Louisiana.

**Ernstein, Dr. Julie H.** (Northwestern State University)

“Plant the Seed and Watch It Grow: From Collections Management, to Disaster Mitigation, to Heritage (Re)Interpretation at the Kate Chopin House/Bayou Folk Museum (Cloutierville, LA)”

Session IIA (Heritage Management & Meanings): 2:15-2:35 p.m.

As the title suggests, this presentation provides an overview of ongoing work on interpretive planning at the Kate Chopin House/Bayou Folk Museum that grew out of previous service-learning, disaster mitigation, and classroom projects resulting in an online Virtual Museum developed for this Cloutierville National Historic Landmark. The author is currently developing an interpretive plan for the site's owners, with grant assistance from the Cane River National Heritage Area, and will provide an overview of that effort and how it was inspired by her students' efforts at the site.

**Foster, Derek W.** (Louisiana State University, Alexandria)

“‘Sad and Happy at Once...’: Intolerance and Hypocrisy in Shirley Ann Grau’s ‘The Homecoming’”

Session IB (Lagniappe): 10:40-11:00 a.m.

Shirley Ann Grau’s “The Homecoming” (from her 1973 collection *The Wind Shifting West*) teems with two themes so common of post-1960s northern Louisiana—intolerance and the pervading force of hypocrisy.

“The Homecoming” is the story of Susan, a young lady grappling with Harold’s death. The members of her community believe that she *should* mourn Harold’s loss, since they have assumed that the two would have wed. Dealing with her own intolerance toward her community, Susan for a moment questions if she *should* feel loss. Relying upon herself, Susan admits that her mourning Harold is wrong because she had only met him once at a dance. Susan states that she does not even remember what Harold looked like, so feeling regret for his loss would make a hypocrite out of her. Like other females in Grau’s fiction, Susan lives in tune with her own nature, allowing her intuition to guide her. Although Susan falls victim to the violence of nature in dealing with community, she heroically defies its destructive forces. At the end of the story, Susan whispers, “Good- bye [...] You poor bastard,” and closes the door behind her.

In “The Homecoming,” Grau creates a strong protagonist who neither gives in to fatalistic attitudes, nor allows fate to overcome her. Rather, she lives, speaks, and argues for herself. Grau has successfully blended her own unique sense of female imagery with a Louisiana world rich in historic detail.

**Fuller, Dr. Frank D.** (Northwestern State University)

“The One Room School as a Teaching Tool: The Example of the Northwestern State University Schoolhouses and Demonstration Schoolroom”

Session IB (Lagniappe): 10:20-10:40 a.m.

A commonplace artifact of universities, heritage centers, and local museums is the one-room schoolhouse, or a model classroom outfitted from the contents of one of these buildings. The Northwestern State University College of Education houses both a school and classroom. This presentation lists and provide examples for selecting ways to employ the space and equipment of the old classroom for learning, and for integrating class or group visits into establish curriculum. The process of planning activities, beginning with artifacts, will be demonstrated, along with references for further reading and individual application.

**Furr, Dr. Paula** (see Brocato, Mary and Dr. Paula Furr)

**Gallagher, Dr. Bernard** (Louisiana State University, Alexandria)

“Trailer Trash Talks Back: John Dufresne’s *Louisiana Power and Light*”

Session IC (Literature & Place): 11:00-11:20 a.m.

“Trailer Trash Talks Back: John Dufresne’s *Louisiana Power and Light*” inverts the split between the normal and abnormal as it privileges the “lower class” Fontana family over both the “elite” and middle classes of Monroe, Louisiana. The result of this inversion is a

curious kind of post-colonial twist that provides the reader with a subaltern's history of Monroe, thereby successfully and humorously erasing the boundaries between the normal and abnormal and convincingly demonstrating that everyone in Monroe, regardless of social standing, is no different from the oft-reviled Fontana family. Ultimately, the scope of the novel's post-colonial inversion goes beyond the confines of Monroe to critique most of urban Louisiana as a parody of the urban Northeast.

**Giancarlo, Alexandra** (Louisiana State University)

“MLK’s Legacy: The Lower Ninth Ward’s Fight for Education”

Session IIC (Race & Social Relations): 2:15-2:35 p.m.

New Orleans’ Lower Ninth Ward became an unwitting icon of the tragedies that Hurricane Katrina wrought when the storm struck in August 2005. For many, the flooding of the city served as a symbol for the neglect within the city’s public educational system, which was mired in corruption, racially-based achievement gaps, and in which only 56% of its high-school students graduated. Regardless of these patterns, for residents of the Lower Ninth Ward before Katrina the Dr. Martin Luther King School was a beacon of hope in one of the city’s poorest neighborhoods. Some 96% of pupils qualified for a free or reduced-price lunch, yet it had the highest performance score of any city public school with a similar profile. In spite of these achievements, those at the helm of the rebuilding process had their own designs for the neighborhood which did not include the community’s rallying point, its school. When it became clear that the school board had misgivings about reopening the school and that city representatives had their own plans for the area, residents, school representatives, and volunteers took the matter into their own hands. They used civil rights tactics and some even risked arrest in the process. Using ethnographic interviews plus established and emerging literature, this paper presents the movement to reopen the Dr. Martin Luther King School as the community’s latest effort in a long history of activism and resistance. Furthermore, this study shows that the campaign served as a catalyst for community revival and for educational renewal post-Katrina. By understanding this movement as enmeshed in a long-standing tradition of Ninth Ward resistance, we can create an alternative narrative to post-Katrina discourses that presented residents as helpless victims.

**Girard, Jeffrey S.** (Northwestern State University and Louisiana Division of Archaeology)

“Origins of the Caddo People along the Lower Red River”

Session IIA (Heritage Management & Meanings): 1:15-1:35 p.m.

When first encountered by European explorers in the late 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Red River drainage in northwest Louisiana was the home of the Caddo people.

Archaeological research has traced Caddo artifacts styles and settlement organization back to at least the 10<sup>th</sup> century A.D. This presentation describes recent investigations at Mounds Plantation, an early Caddo ceremonial center in Caddo Parish, and discusses contemporary ideas concerning the early development of Caddo culture.

**Graham, Michael** (Louisiana State University, Shreveport)

“Cane River/Red River on Canvas”

Session ID (Creole Art & Culture): 10:20-10:40 a.m.

So many statements have been made about the importance of history. My contribution is visual, artistic. Through my drawings, I am confident viewers will come away with a greater appreciation of not only their own personal history and its documentation, but also a sense of value for the recorded history in their possession. I think it regrettable and sad to find stacks of old photographs in flea markets and garage sales. So few of these vintage images have dates or names or places attached to them. This imagery that represented a moment in our collective history now becomes history lost. That lost history belonged to more than just an immediate family. A considerable part of my effort is to enhance the viewer’s awareness of the importance of the history represented in these photographs of antiquity. Each and every one of these old photographs represents a tiny piece in a mosaic that is the history that belongs to us collectively as a society.

The South’s past, beyond the familiar “plantation days and setting” so often portrayed in movies and novels, is an increasing focus of scholarly research, literature and public interest. This visual and artistic, historical and cultural presentation is designed to increase and develop interest in the Cane River/Red River region.

For this presentation I will bring four or five original drawings representing the region, its history and culture. These drawings have been produced as a result of several grants from the Louisiana Board of Regents and the Louisiana Division of Arts. They have been exhibited in numerous state museums, universities, and the Cane River National Heritage Area Commission. I will present this work, briefly discuss my process and research, and open a Q&A discussion.

**Gregory, Hiram F. (Pete)** (Northwestern State University)

“The Choctaw in Louisiana: North and Western Louisiana”

Session IIA (Heritage Management & Meanings): 2:35-2:55 p.m.

The Jena Band of Choctaw, the third Federally-acknowledged Choctaw government, in concert with the Mississippi and Oklahoma tribal entities has begun researching the Choctaw presence in Louisiana. This is a brief synopsis of the Choctaw presence and how it developed in the northern and western portions of the present state.

These communities were overlooked by the 19<sup>th</sup>-century Choctaw removals from Mississippi to Oklahoma and were reinforced by other Choctaws both prior to the removals and subsequent to them. Louisiana became a place of refuge and extremely conservative communities took root here, gradually gaining autonomy as separate but related tribal entities. Cultural connections show in place names, material culture and foodways between the Choctaw as well as with their non-Indian neighbors.

The Choctaw and their contributions to the culture of the Louisiana hill and prairie regions are discussed to show their crucial role as cultural links over the past three centuries.

**Jack, Lenus** (Southern University, New Orleans)  
(see Pellegrin, Dr. Charles)

**Jackson, Bobbie** (see Rasmussen, Dr. Shane)

**Jones, Dr. Hardy** (Cameron University)

“Blessings from a Woman of the Good God”

Session IA (Biography, Memoir & Identity): 10:20-10:40 a.m.

“Blessings from a Woman of the Good God” is a memoir in which I speak with my Great-Aunt Gertie about her life growing up in an all-French world in south Louisiana in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The memoir’s title comes from the Cajun French expression for God: *le Bon Dieu*—the Good God. Great-Aunt Gertie speaks of her husband who was a French translator in World War II and how upon their return to Louisiana after the war many Cajun soldiers pretended to have forgotten their mother tongue in order to obtain better paying jobs in the growing Anglo world of Louisiana. Great-Aunt Gertie tells how she and her husband would hand-fish, the traditional way of catching fish that the Cajuns learned from the Native Americans. While this piece is a memoir, the topics the piece cover go beyond Great-Aunt Gertie and shed light on the transition that Cajuns faced after World War II as they became an ethnic and linguistic minority in Louisiana.

**Lane, Susette** (Northwestern State University)

“Colonial Natchitoches—Burton & Smith’s Revision of Historiography, Part 2”

Session IIIB (Spanish Borderlands Revisited): 5:00- 5:20 p.m.

In Burton and Smith’s book, *Colonial Natchitoches*, four pivotal aspects of historical Natchitoches are clarified as follows: (1) during the colonial period, the economy was not dominated by trade with Indians, (2) an overwhelming majority of the free people were of French descent, (3) in the slave community, Africans far outnumbered the Indian bondspeople by the end of the Spanish rule, and (4) during the 1780s, the majority of the slaves in the Natchitoches area labored on tobacco plantations—not cotton plantations. These points help clear up some previous misconceptions of colonial Natchitoches historiography.

**LeBaron-Ennis, Amy** (Northwestern State University)

“Politics and Strange Bedfellows in James Aswell’s Novel, *The Midsummer Fires*”

Session IC (Literature & Place): 11:40 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

In Louisiana, scandal and politics go hand in hand. As a young boy whose father served in the United States Congress, James Aswell, a native of Natchitoches, Louisiana, saw first-hand how the inner workings of the small Southern political system worked during the time of the Winn Parish Longs. Upon his return to Natchitoches as an adult, Aswell used the area surrounding the Cane River as a backdrop for his four novels, the most popular of which, *The Midsummer Fires*, gained him both fame and infamy with its 1948 publication. Challenging the reputation of the small Southern town in which it was set and exposing everyone from the local college professor to the town’s ministers, the novel gained Aswell a reputation as a troublemaker. One tale concerning the novel is that it was burned in the town square by a Baptist preacher. Despite the controversy, Aswell’s novel

earned him a Southern Author's Award in 1948 and gained him comparisons to James Joyce. Though Aswell is not well known as a writer, his insights into the scandals and controversies that plagued Natchitoches in the 1940s place him in the company of Kate Chopin, an earlier writer who also exposed many scandalous tales from the Cane River area. Though the names have been changed to protect the innocent, many felt that Aswell's writings hit too close to home. In addition to the exposé nature of his novel, Aswell also incorporated themes of goddess worship, fertility rites, impotence, incest and sexual deviance into a novel that caused quite a stir. Perhaps his work was before his time, or perhaps Aswell loved controversy. Either way, Aswell crafted a portrait of Louisiana's climate during these years, and the portrait still stands today as a worthy examination of a small town, warts and all.

**LeBrun, W. Charlene** (Northwestern State University)

“Salt, Nails, and Prayer: Horseracing and Superstition”

Session IID (Folklore & Material Culture): 1:35-1:55 p.m.

The Horseracing industry has been an integral part of Louisiana culture for many years. Trainers, owners, and jockeys spend extensive amounts of time preparing Thoroughbred horses for races. Certain measures are taken to insure that the horse has the best opportunity to succeed. This paper focuses on the rituals and practices rooted in superstition and folklore that are employed by individuals to insure a successful outcome at the races. The paper presents data gathered through extensive interviews with various jockeys, trainers and owners of Thoroughbred race horses

**Magaña, Kathryn** (Northwestern State University)

“Senses and Relations: Familial Ties and Gaps in Lalita Tademy's *Cane River*”

Session ID (Creole Art & Culture): 11:00-11:20 a.m.

The women of Lalita Tademy's novel, *Cane River*, are not fully aware of their environments because each one relies on only one of the five senses for social interaction. Thus, each woman lacks a multifaceted perception of the world and the ability to reach out to those who relate to the world differently. Elisabeth interacts with the world through taste; Suzette, her daughter, relates to the world through touch. Philomene can envision a better future for her family through her use of sight. Emily becomes the first woman to gain a voice and use her speech to shape her world. Elisabeth, Suzette, Philomene, and Emily are, therefore, unable to fully communicate with each other because each one relates to the world in a simple manner using one sense rather than through a holistic approach that would encompass all of the ways to interact with and understand the world.

**Matthews, Michael E.** (Northwestern State University)

“Eugene P. Watson: His Life and Legacy at Northwestern State University”

Session IA (Biography, Memoir & Identity): 10:00-10:20 a.m.

Eugene Payne Watson (1911-1964), diagnosed with polio at a young age, was the Director of the Library at Northwestern State University for 24 years. He was a librarian of national renown, a scholar and teacher of 18<sup>th</sup>-century British literature, and the founder of Alpha Beta Alpha, the first honor society in the field of Library and Information Studies. Although betrayed by his body, he possessed an ingenious intellect, as evidenced by his cheerful and sophisticated correspondence. The presenter will

review the life of this latter-day Renaissance man, and his valuable—though forgotten—contributions to NSU, his beloved profession, and Natchitoches history.

**McDaniels, Heath** (Ponchatoula High School)

“Live in the Sportsman’s Paradise” Room 227 3:30 – 4:00 p.m.

**McFarland, Dr. Sarah E.** (Northwestern State University)

“Louisiana Landscapes and Literature: Ecocriticism in the Classroom”

Session IC (Literature & Place): 10:20-10:40 a.m.

This presentation examines the natural world distinctive to Louisiana—the cypress swamps, coastal wetlands, and pine forests—via two recently-published novels, arguing that fictional narratives and science combined can engage students while integrating interdisciplinary ecocritical practices to further ecological and literary analysis. John Biguenet's *Oyster* and Tim Gautreaux's *The Clearing* are ideal for this purpose because both entangle their characters with the land and each other, depicting the complexity of Louisiana ecosystems and the influence of landscapes on human relationships. I argue that these fictional tales fit nicely within the structures of environmental literature and that an ecocritical approach to their interpretation is fruitful for understanding the ways in which Louisiana becomes vital to the foundation of these novels, while encouraging students to experience literature and science through the familiarity of their southern settings.

**McLemore, Dr. Laura** (see Wernet, Mary Linn)

**Nangia, Dr. Shonu** (Louisiana State University, Alexandria)

“Mama Linda and the Indian Techie: An Urban Tale of Rural Louisiana”

Session IIIA (Tales & Narrative Analysis): 4:20-4:40 p.m.

This presentation primarily involves the reading of a creative work, my short story titled “Mama Linda and the Indian Techie: An Urban Tale from Rural Louisiana.” It is a humorous story that deals with the question of the individual in relation to place. In this age of global migrations, I am especially interested in the individual’s search for “home,” and in the manner our own backgrounds, aspirations, and affiliations—in particular, our affiliations with other places, especially our place of origin or another place we may have called home—influence our perceptions of and expectations form the new place where we may find ourselves, and color our perception of our experiences there. I am also interested in the general question of displacement and adjustment and in the idea that what we find normal, abnormal, bizarre, unusual, scary, or funny may be tied as much to our own identities and the legacies of our old “home” as to our own understanding, or lack thereof, of the politics of culture, race, and class at play in our new host society. It is in the broad context that is the intersection of place and the “quest of the individual” that I wish to situate my short story. The story is based on a real incident. Coincidentally, it also relates to the theme “New Populations in Louisiana, which was the official motif of the 2009 Folk Festival organized by the Louisiana Folklife Center.

**Pellegrin, Dr. Charles** (Northwestern State University)

Session Organizer and Discussant: “Race, Violence & Justice in 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Louisiana”  
 Session participants include Dr. David M. Anderson and Dr. Thomas Aiello. (See individual abstracts.)

Session IIID (Race, Violence & Justice in 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Louisiana): 4:00-5:00 p.m.

The session addresses issues concerning race relations, racial violence, interest groups, the justice system, and state administrative bureaucracy during two distinct periods of the Civil Rights struggle in 20<sup>th</sup>-century Louisiana. Moreover, this session seeks to challenge historians’ long-held notions concerning jury trials for African Americans charged with violence against whites during the Jim Crow era, as well as perceptions regarding campus violence on historically black colleges and universities during the post-Jim Crow era.

Overall, this session raises two significant questions: (1) What were the roles of interest groups and governmental organizations in regard to African Americans and Civil Rights? How do these roles compare/contrast during the Jim Crow and post-Jim Crow eras in Louisiana? (2) How exactly was "justice" defined by whites and African Americans during the Jim Crow and post-Jim Crow eras in Louisiana? Did their various notions of "justice" change over the years? How? Why? (Session format is two papers followed by a commentator/discussant’s presentation and audience Q & A.)

**Phillips, Susan** (Northwestern State University)

“Living the American Dream in Rural Louisiana”

Session IIA (Heritage Management & Meanings): 1:55-2:15 p.m.

From its inception in 1822, the village of Cloutierville, Louisiana, has been a special place—just ask present-day residents. Through the course of oral history interviews, the author has discovered that even though the high expectations founder, Alexander Cloutier, had for the settlement did not come to fruition, Cloutierville remains a great place to live, a place where everything from cotton to children flourishes.

Cloutierville is typical of the “line” villages of provincial France in the 1700s. All structures—homes, churches, businesses—are built in a line and anchored by a church, commonly a Catholic church. Recreating such a village was Cloutier’s vision for the Louisiana Purchase property which lured him from his native France. It lies in the shadow of the large cotton plantations of central Louisiana along the Cane River.

When Cloutier’s plan to make Cloutierville the parish seat failed to materialize, he left, but many of the original residents stayed. Their descendants, who represent French, Anglo-Saxon, Native American, and African American cultures remain steadfast in their allegiance to the quiet life this village offers. The church on the “line” is the hub of the community. Some have left the area in search of employment; many have returned.

There are lessons to be learned from the gentle people who live here. They are self-sufficient by nature, put God and family first, and many have realized the “American Dream” here in rural Louisiana. Life comes into proper perspective here; there is a sense of peace which is palpable.

**Price, John** (Northwestern State University)

Organizer and Discussant: “Spanish Borderlands Revisited.” Session participants include Dr. George Avery, Dr. Kathleen Byrd, Dr. Susan Dollar, and Susette Lane (see individual abstracts).

Session IIIB (Spanish Borderlands Revisited): 5:20-5:40 p.m.

This session incorporates the work of historians and historiographers, anthropologists and archaeologists who are actively engaged in reconsideration of the Spanish borderlands.

**Price, Lee** (Northwestern State University)

“The Nightriders versus the Vigilantes: The West-Kimbrell Clan and Their Influence on North Central Louisiana”

Session IIC (Race & Social Relations): 1:55-2:15 p.m.

In 1963, Richard Briley wrote a book entitled *Nightriders* that chronicles the reign of terror the West-Kimbrell clan had upon North Central Louisiana after the Civil War. With a vendetta, two former members of the confederate army, John West and Laws Kimbrell, embarked on a killing spree equal to that of Jesse James and the like; however, due to efforts to restore the Old South and clean up the destruction in the aftermath of the war, any publicity the two men would have received never spread any further than the surrounding area. In Briley’s book, he does not reconstruct history, but uses the stuff of myth to write a memoir of the West-Kimbrell clan that captures the essence of them. Much of their activity took place around the Atlanta/Montgomery area, so the intent of this presentation will be to outline the beginnings of the clan and to highlight a series of murders and massacres that lasted for seven years until a final showdown not unlike those of a Wild West film. Their legendary behavior stands as a precursor to that of Bonnie and Clyde but from a male homosocial stance.

**Rasmussen, Dr. Shane** (Northwestern State University)

Organizer and Discussant for Round-table Discussion titled “Shaking Out the Clothes for Spiders: Folklife Traditions along Louisiana’s Cane River Lake.”

Session IA (Biography, Memoir & Identity): 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

This is a round-table discussant involving interview and conversation with Bobby Jackson, Henry Edwards, Margie Armstrong, and Lillie Mae Wilson.

**Riehm, William Henry** (Illinois State University)

“Material Culture of Socially Mobile Acadians in Ascension Parish, Louisiana, 1840-1860: Landry Family Case Studies of Evolution into Landownership and Comfortable Wealth”

Session IID (Folklore & Material Culture): 1:55-2:15 p.m.

This paper examines the material culture of socially-mobile Acadian people of Louisiana, 1840-1860, by looking at the archival and written record of a family of slave-owning Mississippi River sugar planters in Ascension Parish. The question posed is whether these upwardly-mobile Acadians moved toward French Creole traditions or American English cultural and material traditions. The main subject is Eloi Joseph Landry and his extended family. An assessment of the historical background and political and geographical circumstance determines Ascension Parish as the geographical area of study. Through examination of archival documents, Eloi Joseph Landry was uncovered

as a potential archetype for the upwardly-mobile Acadian, rising from landless poverty to a stable position as a landed and moderately successful farmer. The examination of the evidence of plantation logs, ledger books, notarial records and family inventories reveals a family aspiring to comfort and prosperity, but not excesses of material position or expression. The record reveals complex sets of attitudes and actions related to the design, construction, embellishment and use of designed space. This research exposes a legacy and pattern material culture change that is both the result of cultural adaptation of, and assimilation into, other groups. These changes reveal a system of advantageous, perhaps opportunistic, choices rather than a specific idealized directed choice of assimilation or emulation of Creole or American traditions. Acadian material culture is defined with four major characteristics: an independent Acadian cultural model that does not emulate Creole or American traditions, material ownership belonging to the family group with objects associated as part of a whole “place,” individual material identity is held tightly in the proxemic personal sphere, and objects acting as tools for stability and safety not representations of wealth.

**Riggs, Michelle** (see Wernet, Mary Linn)

**Saloy, Dr. Mona Lisa** (Dillard)

“Zora Neale Hurston in New Orleans: A Slice of Her Folklore Life”

Session IIIA (Tales & Narrative Analysis): 4:40 - 5:00 p.m.

Beginning with Hurston's "Hoodoo" section in *Mules and Men*, plus recent scholarship contributions, by Deborah G. Plant (*Zora Neale Hurston: A Biography of the Spirit*), Carla Kaplan (*Zora Neale Hurston: A Life in Letters*), and Allyson C. Ward's *Algiers: The Untold Story*, provide a Folklorist's view into Hurston's fieldwork, the results of which became her signature collection. It was in August of 1928 that Zora Neale Hurston wrote to Langston Hughes:

Dear Langston--

I have landed her in the kingdom of Marie Laveau and expect to wear her crown someday—Conjure Queen as you suggested.

I have taken a 3 room house here in a splendid neighborhood from the point of view of collecting material. . . . (Kaplan 124)

These literary letters provide addresses to the actual places Hurston lived while here in Louisiana. Whether Folklorist or literary lover of Hurston, revisiting Hurston's time in New Orleans reveals a mapping of the places where Hurston lived and worked as well as some insights into her "actual" life and habits during those months. In addition, I provide pictures of the two addresses on record, an interview with a neighbor who ran her errands, resulting in new insight to her time here and how we can better understand her movements while collecting, researching, and writing in New Orleans for her Hallmark work, *Mules and Men*.

**Sutherlin, John W.** (University of Louisiana at Monroe)

“Louisiana’s Alternative Energy Policy: How the ‘Bayou’ State Could become the ‘Biomass’ State”

Session IB (Lagniappe): 11:00-11:20 a.m.

This paper evaluates existing technologies and regulations (i.e., tax rebates, credits) from a state perspective. This includes solar, wind, wave/tidal and biomass (i.e., wood, bagasse, and switch grass). The goal of this presentation is to suggest that Louisiana can remain an energy leader because it is well-positioned as an alternative energy hub for the Gulf South. Specifically, the Louisiana Biomass sector could represent one of the most important contributions to the green economy of the US. And, Central Louisiana could be the state leader for biomass production.

**Thorson-Barnett, Dr. Susan and Neeru Deep** (Northwestern State University)

“The Atta Boy or Atta Girl Network”

Session IB (Lagniappe): 10:00-10:20 a.m.

An academic portfolio is a purposeful collection of students’ work that tells the story of their efforts, progress, or achievements. It is a collection of materials that demonstrates what they have done during their collegiate career. The documents contained in this notebook will form the basis for completing a job or graduate school application. The focus of this presentation is on the essential components of the Atta Boy or Atta Girl Notebook. Upon the completion of this presentation, each attendee will be give handouts that will guide them through the process of creating and developing their Atta Boy or Atta Girl Academic Portfolio.

**Ulentin, Anne** (Louisiana State University)

“Opportunists or Saints: Slavery and Free Women of Color in Antebellum New Orleans”

Session IIC (Race & Social Relations): 1:35-1:55 p.m.

This paper investigates the personal and commercial endeavors of a group of free women of color who lived in New Orleans in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. By engaging in relationships with white men, exploiting specific patterns of manumission common in Spanish Louisiana, and by conducting various economic ventures—in particular, owning and trading slaves—some of them achieved unprecedented prosperity and social influence. While successions, wills, inventories, slaves sales, suit records, emancipation petitions, and mortgage records found in the Notarial Archives and the Public Library in New Orleans, all contain statistics of land and slave ownership, they also reveal the intricacies of the nature of the relations between free women of color, slaves, whites, and free men of color. A common perception seems to be that free persons of color were benevolent slaveowners. A natural question is a moral one: how could black women in good conscience profit from trading men, women, and children, of their own skin color? What were their motivations? The answer, it turns out, comes in shades of grey: while some bought slaves in order to emancipate them, the majority were simply businesswomen. We should not, however, pass judgment on or oversimplify (*opportunists* or *saints*?) historical analyses of free women of color: they sometimes passed their slaves down to their children, relatives, and friends. They also emancipated their slaves following additional years of servitude, or they simply did not make any provision to emancipate them. As a group, these free women of color were smart and complex, as often affluent as

indigent. Engaging in the slave trade could certainly provide financial security, and as a result, it is difficult to ignore evidence that free women of color engaged in slavery for commercial purposes—and prospered.

**Viator, Adam** (Northwestern State University)

“Camping with Ghosts: A Louisiana Tale of the LaLlorona Legend”

Session IIIA (Tales & Narrative Analysis): 4:00-4:20 p.m.

The La Llorona is a legend of Spanish origin widespread in Mexico, Mesoamerica and certain parts of the southwestern United States. Literally meaning the “weeping woman,” it tells the tale of a young woman overcome with jealousy for a philandering husband that she drowns her children and is cursed to forever wander the waterways. According to some legends she is a mantrap, a beautiful specter weeping softly to lure men into her grasp in her constant quest for vengeance against infidelity. In others she is merely searching for her lost children, weeping from sadness at their separation and willing to destroy any who get in her way.

The latter was the version I heard as a boy while sitting around the campfire, and one dark summer night in south Louisiana I was tasked with tracking down the lost children of La Llorona. Fueled by goading and grain alcohol, I set off to discover the ghost of La Llorona’s missing daughter. This creative non-fiction tale is told from my perspective as I attempted to see my first plantation ghost and avoid the vengeful mother also searching for her.

This story takes place in the mid-1990s while I was growing up just outside of Jeanerette, Louisiana, next to a small neighborhood in the country. It is the true account of my adventure investigating a lone grave belonging to siblings who died in the mid-1800s and were buried on the grounds of what used to be a plantation. Numerous supernatural stories surrounded that lone grave, some told by the neighborhood children, some told by workers at my father’s farm. The combination of tales and legends took on a form strikingly similar to what I later learned was a legend entrenched in Spanish-American folklore.

**Wernet, Mary Linn** (Northwestern State University)

“Organizer and Participant: Archives along the Lower Red River Valley: Research Opportunities.” Panelists include: Janet Colson (Louisiana Creole Heritage Center), Dr. Laura McLemore (Louisiana State University, Shreveport), Michelle Riggs (Louisiana State University, Alexandria), and Mary Linn Wernet (Northwestern State University).  
Session IIB (Archives Panel): 1:15-2:35 p.m.

A panel of Archivists from Louisiana State University of Shreveport, Louisiana State University of Alexandria, Northwestern State University of Louisiana and the Assistant Director of the Louisiana Creole Heritage Center will discuss collections within their facilities pertaining to the lower Red River Valley and the potential research opportunities held within each collection.

**West, Melinda G.** (Louisiana State University, Shreveport)

“Camp Claiborne and Segregation”

Session IIC (Race & Social Relations): 1:15-1:35 p.m.

Segregation was the rule, not the exception during World War II. During this time period Camp Claiborne was the site of racial unrest. This unrest spread to the city of Alexandria. Did soldiers die during the Lee Street Riots? No one is sure, or will officially say deaths did occur. The fact that a major riot occurred involving the 761st Tank Destroyer Battalion is recorded. Camp Claiborne continued to be a boiling cauldron when it came to race relations and the U.S. Army.

**White, Dr. Robin L.** (Nicholls State University)

“The Strange Case of French in Lafourche Parish”

Session IIIC (Language & Linguistics): 4:20-4:40 p.m.

Lafourche Parish is one of the Louisiana parishes that has held on to the French language most tenaciously; its francophone community, however, is rapidly aging. As in most of Louisiana, young people are more likely to be strictly English speaking. People do continue to speak French in towns like Mathews, Kraemer, and Choupic. French is even more common in the communities on the Bayou Lafourche, south of the Intracoastal Waterway, an area known colloquially as “down the bayou.”

Louisiana’s last Catholic church to have kept its records in French is located “down the bayou” in Golden Meadow. Radio station KLRZ in Larose transmitted programs in French well into the 1990s—these programs were not so much a part of the Cajun renaissance centered on Lafayette as a way for French speakers to communicate with each other.

About 20% of Lafourche residents reported speaking French or Cajun French at home making it the fourth most francophone parish according to the 2000 U.S. census. Within the past decade, the parish has hosted more native French speaking elementary school teachers than perhaps any other parish or county in the United States—between 40 and 50 CODOFIL teachers hailing from all corners of the francophone world work in Lafourche Parish. Despite the rich francophone culture and efforts taken by the schools and media outlets, the vast majority of people under the age of 50 have no French fluency.

This presentation explores how French nominally exists in Lafourche Parish’s schools and media, and whether French is being shortchanged. Are diluted French education and media ineffective supports of a fading francophone community? Or are the modern accoutrements of American society, free and open public education and expansive English media, simply too great a force to counter the limited francophone education and media?

**Williams, Dr. Art** (Louisiana School for Math, Science, and the Arts)

“Literature and Ethnology in the Career of Caroline Dormon”

Session IC (Literature & Place): 10:40-11:00 a.m.

During the 1920s and early 1930s the naturalist Caroline Dormon made a serious albeit unsuccessful effort to establish herself as a writer of poems and stories. More than two

dozen unpublished manuscripts housed in the Cammie G. Henry Research Center include a number of poems and several varieties of short stories, some of biographical as well as broader literary and cultural interest. Perhaps most noteworthy among these are the *Sand Hill Tales*, intended as a collection of 10 stories depicting the lives of small farmers in the upland regions of Louisiana.

In one respect, Dormon was trying in her stories to do for the farmers of the Louisiana hill country what her friends Ada Jack Carver and Lisle Saxon were doing in the 1920s for the creoles of the Cane River region. Her subject matter was quite different, however, as were the aesthetic principles that inform her stories. Whereas Carver, in particular, was striving for a sense of the exotic in her local color fiction, Dormon was committed to her own conception of realism. Her failure to reach a national audience sheds light on the literary market of the time and tells us something, as well, about the author's temperament and values. Insofar as her stories seek to capture the mores and customs of a farming community, they anticipate her later interest in ethnology and history that in the 1930s led her to write *Beloved Land*, an historical fiction—likewise never published—about the forced migration of the Cherokee to Oklahoma.

**Wilson, Lillie Mae** (see Rasmussen, Dr. Shane)