

SESSIONS AND SPEAKERS



ALECIA P. LONG, SYMPOSIUM MODERATOR
LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY

ALECIA P. LONG teaches courses on Louisiana history and the history of sexuality at Louisiana State University. Her areas of research specialization include the history of Louisiana, especially New Orleans, and the intertwined histories of race, gender, and sexuality. In 2005 Long's first book, *The Great Southern Babylon: Sex, Race, and Respectability in New Orleans, 1865–1920* (LSU Press, 2004) was awarded the Julia Cherry Spruill Prize for the best work published in Southern Women's History.

Long is also the coeditor of and authored an article in the recently published volume *Occupied Women: Gender, Military Occupation, and the American Civil War* (LSU Press, 2009). She is the recipient of a grant from the Ford Foundation, which is underwriting an oral history project called "Listening to Louisiana Women: Sexuality, Reproduction and Social Equality." Long is currently at work on a biography tentatively titled *American Clay: The Secrets, Identities, and Life of Clay Lavergne Shaw*.



JASON WIESE, WILLIAMS RESEARCH CENTER, THE HISTORIC NEW ORLEANS COLLECTION
Becoming American: Louisiana after 1812

Louisiana's admission to American statehood in 1812 did not immediately "Americanize" the former French and Spanish colony. Tensions between Louisiana's Francophone Creoles and newly arrived Anglo-Americans preceded statehood and persisted for decades afterward. Many accommodations had to be made in deference to Louisiana's unique colonial heritage, including a state constitution drafted in French. However, the War of 1812—and especially its culmination in the Battle of New Orleans—represented a crucial turning point and did much to form and foster an American identity in the state and in the country as a whole.

JASON WIESE is the assistant director of the Williams Research Center of The Historic New Orleans Collection. He holds advanced degrees from Iowa State University and Louisiana State University, and previously served as collections manager at Tulane University's Latin American Library. His subject specialties include the cartography of Louisiana, as well as the maritime and military history of the Gulf South, especially the Battle of New Orleans.



JESSICA LEPLER, UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
"Le Dérangement des affaires commerciales" (*The Derangement of Commercial Affairs*):
New Orleans and Panic in 1837

What did it mean to panic in 1837? For Théodore Nicolet, a prominent New Orleans merchant banker, financial crisis proved too much to bear. His panic provides us with a window into America's first "worst" financial crisis. New Orleans was not only a site of severe individual experiences of panic; it was saddled with blame for leading the rest of the United States into a crisis that would ultimately result in one of the worst economic depressions of the nineteenth century. This talk demonstrates the economic importance Americans associated with New Orleans in the 1830s and the importance of American economic events on the lives of individual New Orleanians.

JESSICA LEPLER is an assistant professor of history at the University of New Hampshire. She is currently completing a book on the panic of 1837, which will be published by Cambridge University Press. In 2008 Lepler received the Society of American Historians' Allan Nevins Prize for her Brandeis University doctoral dissertation, "1837: Anatomy of a Panic." She is a graduate of Newcomb College of Tulane University.





JUSTIN NYSTROM, LOYOLA UNIVERSITY NEW ORLEANS

Battleground State: How Louisiana Drew the Color Line for Post–Civil War Americans

Louisiana's unique social and cultural development in the early nineteenth century laid the foundations for its role as the key "battleground state" in critical dialogue over race and place in America. It was here that antebellum religious faith and social custom collided with the late nineteenth century's inexorable advance toward modernity and belief in science. The Civil War and Reconstruction accelerated the process and rendered older approaches to racial classification obsolete. Yet the social landscape of Louisiana did not mesh well with modern legal approaches to race, falling short of the expectations of both those who longed for a return to the social and racial deference of the antebellum era, as well as those who championed the cause of racial equality. While the battle for racial classification acted out in Louisiana's courtrooms may have ended most famously with the *Plessy* decision, a broader view of legal actions both great and small reveals the enormous role played by the Pelican State in shaping American racial consciousness at the dawn of the twentieth century.

JUSTIN NYSTROM is the youngest of seven kids, born to a self-taught engineer and artist father and homemaker-turned-college professor mother. Thus imbued from the cradle with a love of doing things the hard way, he followed a circuitous career path. Eventually drawn to the promise of the soft academic life, Nystrom attended graduate school at the University of Georgia, where he received his doctoral degree in 2004. He soon became enamored of all things New Orleans and began writing about the city's colorful past. This obsession culminated in his first book, *New Orleans after the Civil War* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010). He is currently working on a book about Sicilian New Orleans, a clever project that allows him to eat under the guise of research. Nystrom is an assistant professor of history at Loyola University New Orleans and lives just a few miles from campus with his wonderful wife, Jessica, where they serve the improbably great needs of their two critters, Greta and Iry.



TYLER PRIEST, C. T. BAUER COLLEGE OF BUSINESS, UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

From "States' Rights" to "Coastal Restoration":

The History of Louisiana's Claims to Offshore Oil

This presentation looks at the long struggle by the political and business leaders of Louisiana to assert jurisdiction over the submerged lands in the Gulf of Mexico and claim revenues from oil development in the Gulf. Louisiana's claim to these revenues evolved from arguments based on states' rights—which in the 1940s and 1950s had clear racial overtones and helped shape a national political realignment—to arguments focused on the environmental costs the state has assumed in supplying the nation with oil and gas. This evolution, Priest argues, reflects the growing importance of energy and environmental issues in national politics.

TYLER PRIEST is clinical professor of business history and director of global studies at the C. T. Bauer College of Business, University of Houston. A specialist in the history of petroleum, energy, and globalization, he is a leading expert on the history of offshore oil and gas. In 2008 Priest won the Geosciences in the Media Award from the American Association of Petroleum Geologists (AAPG) for his book *The Offshore Imperative: Shell Oil's Search for Petroleum in Postwar America* (Texas A&M Press, 2007). During 2010–11 he served as a senior policy analyst for the National Commission on the BP Deepwater Oil Spill and Offshore Drilling.





EDWARD F. HAAS, WRIGHT STATE UNIVERSITY

Huey Long and the American People

President Franklin D. Roosevelt once contended that Huey Long was one of the two most dangerous men in the country (General Douglas MacArthur was the second). Others compared the Louisianian to Hitler and Mussolini. Pronouncements of dictator were common with the mention of Long's name. Those who countered these assessments, however, maintained that no poor person ever hated the Louisiana Kingfish.

Long came to power in an impoverished state and gained national attention during the Great Depression when the unemployment rate in the United States soared to 25 percent. Millions were without jobs, families stood on the brink of starvation, and despair reigned. For many of these individuals, Long offered a ray of hope. His appeal derived largely from his promises to redistribute the wealth, but there were other contributing factors as well. This presentation examines the skills, traits, and accomplishments that defined Huey Long, as well as the circumstances that caused the American people to bond with a backwoods Louisiana politician.

EDWARD F. HAAS, a graduate of Tulane University (BA, 1967) and the University of Maryland, College Park (PhD, 1972), is professor of history at Wright State University. He is the author of *DeLesseps S. Morrison and the Image of Reform: New Orleans Politics, 1946–1961* (LSU Press, 1974), *Political Leadership in a Southern City: New Orleans in the Progressive Era, 1896–1902* (McGinty, 1988), and *Louisiana: A History* (with Judith K. Schafer et al., Harlan Davidson, 2008). Haas is the editor of *Louisiana's Legal Heritage* (Perdido Bay Press, 1983) and *The Age of the Longs: Louisiana, 1928–1960* (Center for Louisiana Studies, 2001). He is the coeditor of *Louisiana's Black Heritage* (with Robert Macdonald and John R. Kemp, Louisiana State Museum, 1979) and *In Search of Fundamental Law: Louisiana's Constitutions, 1812–1974* (with Warren M. Billings, Center for Louisiana Studies, 1993). The Louisiana Historical Association (LHA) recognized Haas in 1972 with the President's Memorial Award for outstanding article in *Louisiana History* and in 1981 and 1985 with the F. Kemper and Leila Williams Prize for outstanding published book on Louisiana history. He is a past president of the LHA and a fellow of the organization.



ROBERT SIEGEL, NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO

NPR and Katrina: Before and After

NPR reported on New Orleans's vulnerability to hurricanes long before Katrina made landfall in August 2005, was on the ground to cover the storm, and continues to report on Katrina's aftermath years later. Robert Siegel discusses how NPR covered the disaster and reviews the lessons Katrina taught NPR's reporters.

ROBERT SIEGEL is senior host of NPR's award-winning evening newsmagazine *All Things Considered*. He has reported from a variety of locations across Europe, the Middle East, North Africa, and Asia.

Siegel joined NPR in December 1976 as a newscaster and became an editor the following year. In 1979 he became NPR's first staffer based overseas when he was chosen to open NPR's London bureau, where he worked as senior editor until 1983. After London, Siegel served for four years as director the News and Information Department, overseeing production of NPR's newsmagazines *All Things Considered* and *Morning Edition*, as well as special events and other news programming. During his tenure, NPR launched its popular Saturday and Sunday newsmagazine *Weekend Edition*.

Before coming to NPR, Siegel worked for WRVR Radio in New York City as a reporter, host and news director and as a morning news reporter and telephone talk show host for WGLI Radio in Babylon, New York. A graduate of New York's Stuyvesant High School and Columbia University, Siegel began his career in radio at Columbia's radio station, WKCR-FM. As a student he anchored coverage of the 1968 Columbia demonstrations and contributed to the work that earned the station an award from the Writers Guild of America East.

In 2010, Siegel was recognized by the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism with the John Chancellor Award. Siegel has been honored with three Silver Batons from Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University.

Other awards Siegel has earned include a 1997 American Bar Association's Silver Gavel Award and the National Mental Health Association's 1991 Mental Health Award.

Siegel is the editor of *The NPR Interviews 1994*, *The NPR Interviews 1995*, and *The NPR Interviews 1996* (Houghton Mifflin), compilations of NPR's most popular radio conversations from each year.



NICK SPITZER, TULANE UNIVERSITY

Roots to Routes in Louisiana Vernacular Music

Louisiana's community-created vernacular musics—from traditional jazz, Mardi Gras sounds, R&B, soul, Cajun, and zydeco, to swamp pop, gospel, country, and rockabilly—have publicly defined a heterogeneous cultural profile of the state since the advent of sound recordings in the early twentieth century. All these forms have eighteenth- and nineteenth-century “roots,” or sources, in the Old Worlds of West Africa and Europe—as well as New World “routes,” or creolizations, in the Caribbean and Gulf South. The music and musicians of New Orleans and French Louisiana mingle culture- and class-based performance styles and contexts; the remarkable diversity of the music performed live on the streets and in clubs, dancehalls, churches, and festival settings has garnered both national and international attention. The city and region have produced beloved musicians from Louis Moreau Gottschalk and Jelly Roll Morton to Louis Armstrong, Fats Domino, Louis Prima, Dr. John, the Meters, and the Marsalis family, to name only a few. Music—as a part of community life and as a symbol—was at the center of the disaster recovery after Hurricane Katrina. It remains our most significant cultural expression, export, and attraction.

NICK SPITZER is professor of anthropology at Tulane and hosts , a radio program about vernacular music and culture. Spitzer has produced cultural features for NPR and *Nightline*, documentary films, and sound recordings, and has written extensively on public folklore and cultural creolization. He founded the Louisiana Folklife Program, served as senior folklife specialist at the Smithsonian, and was artistic director of the *Folk Masters* broadcasts from Carnegie Hall and the Independence Day concerts on the National Mall. Named Louisiana Humanist of the Year and a Fellow of the American Folklore Society (both in 2006), Spitzer also received a Guggenheim fellowship for researching creativity in Louisiana Creole communities.

