
CENTERPIECE

Newsletter of the Center for Southeast Louisiana Studies
College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences
Southeastern Louisiana University

Vol. XXIX

Spring 2023



Center staff left to right: Center Assistant Director, Dr. Keith Finley; Graduate Assistant, Lauren Guillory, Graduate Assistant, Marissa Canterbury; Center Director, Dr. Samuel Hyde; Graduate Assistant, Ashley Tarleton; Student Worker, Max Hopcraft.

From the Director

What an exciting year! With pandemic restrictions continuing to relax and with the receipt of some generous financial support from benefactors, the Center was able to finally host some long delayed projects. Most significant, the Louisiana in Continuity and Change symposium, the fifth in our Louisiana and the South symposium series, allowed us to highlight critical issues confronting our state in a scholarly forum that had been delayed for three years due to the pandemic. Ten experts in their fields provided presentations with Governor John Bel Edwards offering the introductory lecture. The collection of essays will soon be published as a book to provide a legacy for the conference and a blueprint for future problem solving in the Bayou State.

We also opened a new exhibit in the Center which will be on display through March 2023. In partnership with the Edward Livingston Historical Association and the family of the late state representative Nicholas Cefalu we created two new student research scholarships to encourage further study of our home region. We also acquired multiple new collections and augmented many existing collections to assist scholars researching southeastern Louisiana and surrounding environs. Included are some remarkable one of a kind items that are certain to advance understanding of our past.

Our presentations to the public and outreach to historical and cultural organizations and institutions returned to full throttle

participation. We continue our role as headquarters of the Gulf South Historical Association and the Southeast Louisiana Historical Association supporting the lecture series and conferences of each. As to research, Center staff have recently completed multiple books with others in the works, and a new film project is in the planning stages. All these, and many other issues, are discussed in this edition of The Centerpiece.

Years ago when we first transformed our predecessor, the Center for Regional Studies, into the current Center for Southeast Louisiana Studies, we hoped a day would come when we were literally too busy to keep up with all that is happening. That day is upon us now. Public fascination with the long neglected history of the Florida Parishes and surrounding environs has never been higher - a corresponding byproduct of this trend has been the mass infusion of new materials into the collections of the Center along with ever increasing research into the region by scholars and amateurs alike. The more we learn, the more we realize how little we know, and how much more there is to be done. We encourage you to join us in this fascinating endeavor.

Samuel C. Hyde, Jr., Ph.D., Director
Leon Ford Endowed Chair
Professor of History
Director, Center for Southeast Louisiana Studies
Southeastern Louisiana University

Featured Articles

Governor Edwards headlines Louisiana Symposium at Southeastern

In the summer 2021, Center director Sam Hyde began preparations for an unprecedented event to bring Louisiana scholars together to provide cutting edge presentations highlighting issues that have challenged Louisiana in the past and into the present with an emphasis on how the challenges were overcome or managed. Next, Hyde reached out to scholars whose work focused principally on Louisiana, casting a wide net in an effort to bring together a truly diverse panel in keeping with the interdisciplinary vision of the symposium. By the end of the year, the panelists were selected and the Center staff turned to preparing for the event and preparing a new exhibit to open in conjunction with the symposium.

Throughout the spring, summer, and into the fall 2022, Center staffers worked tirelessly to pull everything together. Adding to the excitement was the fact Louisiana's governor, John Bel Edwards, agreed to deliver the keynote address at the symposium.

The program, titled: "Louisiana in Continuity and Change: Challenges Past and Present Confronting the Bayou State" took place on September 27 and 28 in the Student Union Theatre, featuring eleven scholars giving presentations over two days.

In a press release for the symposium, Director Hyde noted, "The project focuses on enduring challenges, ones that are seminal to understanding how the people in Louisiana behave and how they are perceived by others. Its purpose is to provide an enduring guide for how such trials emerged and how they were overcome or managed in the past to offer direction for how they may best be addressed in the future."










The symposium was a resounding success! Throughout the two-day event, scholars, students, politicians, and members of the local community came together to learn more about the past and present challenges confronting the Pelican State.

We would like to extend our gratitude to all of the speakers and attendees as well as to those who provided crucial assistance such as the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences and the Young Sanders Center. In addition, we are excited to report that the University of Mississippi Press has expressed interest in publishing the articles in a compilation. More information on this as the project develops.

LOUISIANA IN CONTINUITY & CHANGE: CHALLENGES PAST & PRESENT CONFRONTING THE BAYOU STATE

A LOUISIANA SYMPOSIUM, SEPTEMBER 27-28, 2022

SOUTHEASTERN LOUISIANA UNIVERSITY
PRESENTED BY: THE CENTER FOR SOUTHEAST LOUISIANA STUDIES, COLLEGE OF ARTS,
HUMANITIES, AND SOCIAL SCIENCES, SOUTHEASTERN LOUISIANA UNIVERSITY

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| <p>Honorable John Bel Edwards Governor, State of Louisiana "1896-2022: The Pardon of Homer Plessy and Its Impact on Racial Justice"</p> |  |  | <p>Samuel Hyde, Ph.D. Southeastern Louisiana University "As Louisiana as Crawfish Pie: Endemic Violence and the Non-Unanimous Jury Verdict"</p> |
| <p>Keith Finley, Ph.D. Southeastern Louisiana University "Defenders of Tradition, Champions of Reform: Louisiana's Faith Communities Confront Civil Rights Change"</p> |  |  | <p>Craig Colten, Ph.D. Louisiana State University "Small Watersheds, Big Conflicts: Managing Floods in Louisiana's Florida Parishes"</p> |
| <p>Janet Allured, Ph.D. McNeese State University "Equality for Women in Louisiana: How Far We Have Come and How Far We Have Yet To Go"</p> |  |  | <p>Robert Mann, M.A. Louisiana State University "Should I Stay or Should I Go: The Political and Social Implications of Louisiana's Brain Drain"</p> |
| <p>Pearson Cross, Ph.D. University of Louisiana, Monroe "Outsize Influence: Reshaping K-12 Education During the Jindal Administration"</p> |  |  | <p>Marcus Cox, Ph.D. Fayetteville State University "The Fight for Equal Rights and Social Justice in Post World War II Louisiana"</p> |
| <p>John Lopez, Ph.D. President of Delta Science, LLC. "Louisiana's Coastal Crisis and the Strengths and Weaknesses of Integrated Planning for Restoration and Community Resiliency"</p> |  | | <p>Adam Fairclough, Ph.D. University of Leiden "An Enduring Burden: Historical Corruption in Louisiana Politics"</p> |
| | | | <p>Torbjörn Törnqvist, Ph.D. Tulane University "Is Louisiana's Coast Sustainable?"</p> |

Center Unveils New Exhibit

In conjunction with the Louisiana Symposium, the Center opened an exhibit titled: “Louisiana in Continuity and Change: Challenges Past and Present Confronting the Bayou State,” meant to complement and augment the symposium’s educational efforts. As in the past, the Center’s graduate assistants and student worker designed, researched, and completed the exhibit with direction from Center director Hyde and assistant director Finley.

The walkthrough exhibit explores many of the challenges discussed in the symposium, along with unique topics such as colonial West Florida, health care, substance abuse, and coastal erosion. Artifacts and documents from the Center’s many collections are featured throughout. The underlying theme running beneath both the symposium and the exhibit is the need for solutions to the problems that have long plagued our state.

According to director Hyde, “Louisiana is a complex state that shares many of the challenges confronting other states of the union, but that also faces some very unique problems. The purpose of the project is to reveal critical challenges that have burdened Louisiana in the past and explain how they were overcome, or managed, to offer a guide for solving similar problems in the future.”

The exhibit will remain open to the general public through March 2023. For more information regarding the exhibit, contact the Center for Southeast Louisiana Studies at (985) 549-2151.



Pictured above, with Gov. Edwards are, from left to right, Center staff members that helped create the exhibit Max Hopcraft, Lauren Guillory, Edwards, Brooklyn Sherrod, and Ashley Tarleton.

Hydes create work of historical fiction



Pictured above: Co-authors, Center Director, Dr. Samuel Hyde, with his wife, Dr. Sarah Hyde at a book signing for *Rebel Bayou*.

Southeastern Leon Ford Endowed Chair, Professor of History, and Center for Southeast Louisiana Studies Director Samuel Hyde and his wife Sarah, River Parishes Community College professor of history, have combined their talents to produce a work of historical fiction titled *Rebel Bayou*.

Samuel Hyde said the book, published by University of Louisiana Press, is designed to illuminate the troubled and fascinating history of southeast Louisiana and the surrounding environments. “For years we have had people asking us to create a book that tells the story of this region in an easy to read format,” he said. “This book offers an exciting dive into the dramatic story of our development and the adjoining regions of the Gulf South, absent the statistical analysis of our non-fiction books.”

“The book is designed to both entertain and educate,” said Sarah Hyde. “The story extends from the Florida parishes, through Mobile and even into the Pensacola region. History buffs across Louisiana and the entire Gulf South will find the story compelling and thought provoking.”

The launch for the book, included a book signing on November 18, from 5:30 to 7 p.m., at Cavalier House Booksellers in Denham Springs. Since then the Hydes have participated in numerous signings. The initial response to the work has been overwhelmingly positive. In fact, the Press ran out of the initial run of the work and had to authorize a second printing which is likewise fast disappearing.

For more information concerning *Rebel Bayou* or the book signings, contact the Center for Southeast Louisiana Studies at Southeastern at selahistory@southeastern.edu.

SELHA holds meeting

Over the years, the Southeast Louisiana Historical Association (SELHA) has remained a fixture in the community. The town and gown group brings the community together to enjoy camaraderie and historical discussion. Interest in the association remains strong and assistance from generous benefactors, especially Ann Reiley Jones, has ensured the group is positioned to remain an integral part of the Center's annual operations for years to come. COVID and other scheduling issues have, of late, forced a change in the association's traditional spring meeting.

In 2022, the SELHA met in late August at our usual haunt, the Hammond Regional Arts Center. As always, members were treated to a quality meal—this time catered by local restaurant Tope La--and access to an open bar. Association president Clark Forrest called the meeting to order and served as emcee for the event.

This year's speaker Jennifer Levin of the University of Virginia presented the fruits of her research undertaken as the 2022 J. Y. Sanders Research Scholar. Her presentation centered on Spanish colonial era trade relations with Native Americans and French outposts in the Gulf South Region. Levin's work uses the material record to position the French settlement of Mobile at the confluence of intercolonial and intertribal relations in the larger Atlantic World.

The 2022 Young Sanders Center Graduate Research Assistant, Colin Mathison, along with incoming Sanders Scholar, Michael Budden, and the incoming Young Sanders Center Graduate Research Assistant, Ashley Tarleton were also introduced at the meeting and will serve as the guest speakers at the SELHA's 2023 gathering on Wednesday, April 19 at the Hammond Regional Arts Center in downtown Hammond. Be on the lookout for membership renewal and to secure your spot at the spring 2023 meeting.

For more information on either award, contact the Center at selahistory@southeastern.edu.



Pictured above: 2022 J. Y. Sanders Research Scholar, Jennifer Levin, gives her presentation.



Pictured above: From left, are Center Assistant Director, Keith Finley, SELHA President Clark Forrest, Young Sanders Center representative Hamilton Martin, Jennifer Levin, Mike Budden, Ashley Tarleton, and Center Director Samuel Hyde.

First Nicholas Cefalu Graduate Research Scholarship awarded

Southeastern history master's candidate and Center for Southeast Louisiana Studies research assistant Lauren Guillory has been selected as the recipient of the inaugural Nicholas Cefalu Graduate Research Scholarship.

The award, created in honor of former state representative and Tangipahoa Parish businessman Nick Cefalu, is designed to support student research centered in areas of particular interest to Mr. Cefalu, who was an avid promoter of agricultural, educational, and business interests in the region. The award, which includes a full graduate stipend along with a \$1,500 enhancement, is funded through a generous donation from Dr. Ann Kay Logarbo and the Cefalu family. Managed by the center, the award competition takes place in the spring semester each year.

For more information contact Dr. Samuel Hyde, director of the center, at shyde@southeastern.edu.



Pictured above: From left, are Center Director, Samuel Hyde, Dr. Ann Kay Logarbo, scholarship recipient Lauren Guillory, Director of Development, Vanessa Prentice, and Center Assistant Director, Keith Finley.

Gulf South History and Humanities Conference

The 2022 edition of the Gulf South History and Humanities Conference, hosted by the University of South Alabama, took place at the Gulfport Beachfront Courtyard in Gulfport Mississippi, and featured special theme sessions celebrating the diverse communities of the Gulf South. As always, Center employees figured prominently in the proceedings.

At the conference, Center Director Sam Hyde was reelected treasurer and he, along with Center Assistant Director Keith Finley, retained seats on the board of directors. Hyde delivered a paper centered on his research detailing Louisiana's non-unanimous jury verdict rule and Finley served as chair/commentator for a session highlighting regional politics and health services. Center graduate Research Assistant, Lauren Guillory, presented a paper in a session focused on military technology and related businesses. History and Political Science Department Head William Robison served as chair/commentator of the same session.

The GSHA board of directors unanimously approved an agreement with the Center for Southeast Louisiana Studies to resume production of the *Gulf South Historical Review*. The peer reviewed journal was formerly produced at the University of South Alabama. The Center will soon be seeking submission of studies highlighting issues and events affecting states of the Gulf South region and the wider circum-Caribbean area.

Preparations are underway for the 2023 GSHA Conference scheduled for 12-14 October at the Natchez Grand Hotel in Natchez, Mississippi. If you are interested in presenting a paper, please contact the program chair, Dr. Brian Rucker at: brucker@pensacolastate.edu. Proposal deadlines are due no later than July 31, 2023. We look forward to seeing you in Natchez!



Pictured above: Dr. Marsha Hamilton, outgoing GSHA president, passes the ceremonial gavel to Dr. Brian Rucker, incoming GSHA president, at the Gulfport conference.

Center houses rare documents



Pictured above: From left, Graduate Assistants, Ashley Tarleton and Lauren Guillory, cataloging the rare documents.

In early July 2022 an impressive and extraordinarily rare batch of documents, previously a part of the Thomas W. Streeter Collection, went up for auction. Center Director, Dr. Sam Hyde, said he was contacted by one of the Center's biggest benefactors who notified him about the documents. "Ann Reiley Jones describes herself as first and foremost a hunter," Hyde said. "And fortunately for us, one of the things she hunts are rare documents pertaining to this region."

In the competitive bidding process, Jones invested \$13,000 to purchase some impressive documents to add to the Center's holdings, Hyde added. "The documents are all British land grants along the Natalbany and Amite rivers, mostly to soldiers who served in the French and Indian War," Hyde explained. "The grants, issued in 1777 and 1778, as the American Revolution raged, also included some to British loyalists who were being persecuted by the Americans during the Revolution and who fled to British controlled West Florida, a territory that chose not to join in the Revolution. All of the documents include maps, replete with identified 'witness trees' that were used to delineate the dimensions of the grant, and some include the seal of West Florida."

Louisiana's Florida Parishes remain the only place in North America where every major European power that intruded into the continent held governmental authority. The native peoples did not issue land grants and the initial French explorers of the region issued very few. It was the British who first began issuing substantive numbers of land grants. The documents, which represent some of the first block printing ever completed in the Gulf South region, are in pristine condition. Facsimiles of the documents are featured in the Center's latest exhibit "Louisiana in Continuity and Change." The documents will remain on permanent display in the Center through the end of the year.

For more information on the documents or to arrange viewing times, contact the Center at 985-549-2151 or email selahistory@southeastern.edu.

New Collection Highlights

Each year the Center for Southeast Louisiana Studies receives an assortment of donations from local history buffs and from members of the community who want their family's legacy preserved. Many are new donors, who are entrusting items to our care for the first time; whereas others are long-time donors who regularly augment their preexisting collections with the addition of new items. We urge everyone who receives this newsletter to consider setting up a collection at the Center for Southeast Louisiana Studies. There is no better time than the present to take action.

This year, Ann Reiley Jones donated a series of 1777 and 1778 Florida Parish land grants that she secured at auction. (Please see the more detailed story on the donation contained elsewhere in this edition of the Centerpiece.) In addition to her donation of the British Land grant documents, Ann made a generous financial donation to the Southeast Louisiana Historical Association that will ensure its solvency for years to come. We are blessed to have such friends and benefactors as Ann. Alex and Roxanne Kropog donated an assortment of materials associated with the Hungarian community and the Livingston Parish Library. Ann Kay Logarbo opened the Cefalu Collection to commemorate the work of her late-father and state politician Nick Cefalu. Natalie Needham opened the Needham Family Collection which features an impressive array of genealogical materials associated with her ancestry. Constance Smith donated materials highlighting the career of former Southeastern Louisiana University President, G. Warren Smith. The family of Edward Deano donated an array of real estate and insurance maps covering St. Tammany, Orleans, and Tangipahoa parishes. Cynthia Hebert deposited an assortment of documents associated with her family's history in the Hammond area and Greg Knothacker initiated a donation featuring material from the Hammond Rotary Club. As always, Center friends such as Yvonne Lewis Day, Clark Forrest, Joe Minton, Howard Nichols, and Ralph Shaw continued to expand their already impressive collections with new materials. Likewise, Margaret Quin augmented the Tom Morgan Collection and Rod Lincoln made another impressive donation to his Plaquemines Parish Collection that he intends to expand with further material in 2023.

We thank everyone for their donations both large and small. All of them contribute to making us the preeminent archival repository in the Florida Parishes. If you would like to make a donation, please contact the Center for Southeast Louisiana Studies at 985-549-2151.



Pictured above: From left, Graduate Assistant, Marissa Canterbury, and Student Worker, Max Hopcraft, cataloging one of our new collections.

Call for candidates for the 2023 Nicholas Cefalu Graduate Research Assistantship

The Center for Southeast Louisiana Studies at Southeastern announces the annual competition for the Nicholas Cefalu Graduate Research Assistantship. The assistantship is designed to encourage graduate student research into long term Louisiana legislator and businessman Nicholas Cefalu's home region of southeast Louisiana and/or surrounding regions of the state and Gulf South.

The renewable award includes full tuition for fall, spring, and summer semesters at Southeastern beginning in August 2023, along with a full graduate student stipend and a \$1500 enhancement, for a total stipend package of \$13,000 annually. Submissions will be accepted from existing or entering graduate students in virtually any academic field including the following: history, cultural studies, art, music, literature, environmental studies, science, etc. During the period of the award, the successful candidate will work as a research assistant in the Center for Southeast Louisiana Studies. Candidates must also be conducting, or planning to conduct, research centered on southeast Louisiana or the wider Gulf South with an emphasis on topics reflecting the professional interests of Mr. Cefalu, such as regional business development, agricultural interests, particularly strawberry and dairy farming, education, philanthropy, and regional politics and culture. The product of the research should be directed toward the completion of a master's thesis or publishable paper.

Call for Candidates for the Young Sanders Graduate Research Assistantship

The Center for Southeast Louisiana Studies at Southeastern Louisiana University announces the annual competition for the Young Sanders Center Graduate Research Assistantship. The assistantship is designed to encourage graduate student research into Congressman J. Y. Sanders home region of southeast Louisiana and/or the wider Gulf South, and to facilitate management of the Young Sanders Center materials to be housed in the archives of the Center for Southeast Louisiana Studies.

The renewable award includes full tuition for the fall, spring, and summer semesters at Southeastern Louisiana University beginning in August 2023, along with a \$13,000.00 stipend to be provided in three installments. Submissions will be accepted from existing or entering graduate students in virtually any academic field including: history, cultural studies, art, music, literature, environmental studies, science, psychology, sociology, criminal justice, etc. During the period of the award, the successful candidate will work as a research assistant in the Center for Southeast Louisiana Studies. Candidates must also be conducting, or planning to conduct, research centered on Louisiana or the wider Gulf South in anticipation of completing a master's thesis or publishable paper.

Candidate applications will be reviewed by an award committee consisting of the director of the Center for Southeast Louisiana Studies, a representative of the Young Sanders Center, and an independent scholar.

Call for Candidates for the J. Y. Sanders Research Scholar Award

The Center for Southeast Louisiana Studies at Southeastern in cooperation with the Young Sanders Center announces the annual competition for the J. Y. Sanders Research Scholar award. The award is designed to encourage and facilitate research centered on Louisiana and the other states of the old Confederacy in conformance with the bequeath of Mary Elizabeth Sanders.

The award carries a \$5,000 stipend to be distributed in two installments beginning in April 2023 and extending through March 2024. Submissions will be accepted from scholars in virtually any field including history, literature, environmental studies, art, music, science, etc. The successful candidate will be expected to conduct primary source research, a portion of which must be conducted in the Center for Southeast Louisiana Studies, that will ultimately result in a published study or like-minded project of scholarly merit. The successful candidate will also be expected to provide a presentation highlighting the work completed during their tenure as the Sanders Research Scholar at the annual meeting of the Southeast Louisiana Historical Association in April 2024.

To apply for any award, applicants should submit a brief abstract of their proposed project, no more than two pages in length, along with a cover letter and c.v., to Dr. Samuel Hyde, director of the Center for Southeast Louisiana Studies, to the address below.

Applications for the J. Y. Sanders Research Scholar Award must be received annually by March 1 to be considered for the award.

Applications for the Young Sanders Graduate Research Assistantship must be received annually by March 1 to be considered for the award.

Applications for the Cefalu Graduate Research Assistantship must be received by May 1, 2023 to be considered for the award.

For more information, contact shyde@southeastern.edu.

CENTER FOR SOUTHEAST LOUISIANA STUDIES

The Center for Southeast Louisiana Studies is always pleased to receive letters, printed materials, and photographs, which help document the history and the cultures of our region. We can, if necessary, copy photographs and manuscripts for historical research and return the originals to their owners. For more information about contributing materials or about the Center, please contact:

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*Centerpiece is written by
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Center for Southeast Louisiana Studies
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Linus A. Sims Memorial Library
Hours: 8:00am - 5:00pm Monday - Thursday
8:00am - 12:00pm Friday

https://www.southeastern.edu/acad_research/programs/csls

Mission:

The Center for Southeast Louisiana Studies preserves and promotes the history and the cultures of Louisiana's Florida Parishes, southwestern Mississippi, and surrounding areas through scholarly research, conferences, film productions, and publishing.

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