

18th Annual Louisiana Studies Conference

“Remembering Louisiana”

September 12, 2026

Conference Keynote Presentation: Emily M. Goldsmith, Louisiana State University

Conference Co-Chairs: Donna J. Baker, University Archivist and Records Officer,
Cammie G. Henry Research Center, Northwestern State University

Jason Church, Chief, Technical Services, National Center for
Preservation Technology and Training

Daniel Gordy, Associate Professor of Criminal Justice and English,
Northwestern State University

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

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

Conference Programming: Jason Church, Chair

Shane Rasmussen

Conference Hosts: Dr. Thomas Reynolds, Head, Department of English, Languages, and Cultural
Studies, Northwestern State University

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

NSU Louisiana High School Creative Visions Contest: Rebecca Macijeski, Chair

Jason Church

Daniel Gordy

Shea Montgomery, Instructor of English,
Northwestern State University

NSU Louisiana High School Essay Contest: Shane Rasmussen, Chair

Jason Church

Daniel Gordy

Rebecca Macijeski, Creative Writing Program
Coordinator and Associate Professor of English,
Northwestern State University

Shea Montgomery

Conference Program Cover and Poster Photo: Emily M. Goldsmith

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Administrative Support: Marisa Dawson, Administrative Coordinator, Department of English,
Languages, and Cultural Studies, Northwestern State University

Louisiana Folklife Center Staff: Cecilia Flanders, Jaime Perdue, and Sylvia Ross

Saturday's luncheon provided by Sodexo.

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

CONFERENCE OVERVIEW

Please note: All events take place in Alost Hall, NSU Campus

Saturday, September 12, 2026

8:00-9:00 a.m.	Conference Check-in, Alost Ground Floor
9:00-9:15 a.m.	Conference Welcome, Alost 006B
9:30-10:45 a.m.	Presentation Session 1, Alost 268, 269, & 270
11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.	Keynote Presentation, Alost 006B
12:00-12:30 p.m.	Awards Ceremony, Alost 006B
	18 th Annual NSU Louisiana High School Essay Contest & 1 st Annual NSU Louisiana High School Creative Expressions Contest
12:30-1:45 p.m.	Light Lunch and Reception, Alost 006A
2:00-3:15 p.m.	Presentation Session 2, Alost 268, 269, & 270
3:30-4:45 p.m.	Presentation Session 3, Alost 268, 269, & 270
4:45 p.m.	Conference Close

SCHEDULE

Please note: All events take place in Alost Hall, NSU Campus

Saturday, September 12, 2026

8:00-9:00 a.m. **Conference Check-in** *Alost Ground Floor*

9:00-9:15 a.m. **Conference Welcome** *Alost 006A*

9:30-10:45 a.m. **Presentation Session 1**

Panel 1A Louisiana's Forgotten History and Peoples Alost 268

Session Chair: Lisa A. Kirby, Collin College

Lisa A. Kirby, Collin College

“Remembering What Louisiana Forgot: Counter-Memory and Resistance in *The American Daughters*”

Bruce R. Magee, Louisiana Tech University

Stephen Payne, Editor, Louisiana Anthology

“Remembering Henry Clay Lewis in North Louisiana”

Wesley Harris, Claiborne Parish Library

Jacquelyn Tripp, Caddo Parish Civil Rights Heritage Trail

“William Jasper Blackburn: A Louisiana Life Guided by Conscience, Marked by Cost”

Panel 1B Louisiana Language Traditions Alost 269

Session Chair: Benjamin Forkner, Northwestern State University

Jolie Fontenot, Louisiana Scholars' College

Benjamin Forkner, Northwestern State University

“Learning Louisiana French Outside the Classroom”

Mia C Johnston, UL Lafayette

“*Le Grand Dérangement* in Cultural Memory: The Exile in Cajun Oral Tradition”

Heather Salter Dromm, Northwestern State University

“This Ma Speaks Yama: My Experiences Learning a Native American Trade Language and the Importance of Language Revitalization”

Trever Lee Holland, Louisiana School for Math, Science, and the Arts

“Literary *Haksuba*: Beyond Sovereignty in LeAnne’s *Shell Shaker*”

Panel 1C *Losing Louisiana Bit By Byte*

Alost 270

Session Chair: C.E. Richard, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

C.E. Richard, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

“‘Strewn about the Gulf in Fantastic Tatters’: Literature as Recollection & Repository”

Allison Shaver, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

“The Forgotten Front: North Louisiana’s Role During Hurricane Katrina”

Gekera Gilmore, Delgado Community College

“Documenting Memory: A Digital Archive of New Orleans School Desegregation”

Kade Davis, Independent Scholar

“Not Fully Rendered: How Video Games Influence Players’ Memories of New Orleans”

11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. *Keynote Presentation*

Alost 006A

Emily M. Goldsmith, Louisiana State University

**“The Dead Are Always With Us; To ‘Dance the Person Home’:
Louisiana Creole and Cajun Memorialization Practices”**

In this presentation, I will share my findings from the past three years of ongoing research about Louisiana Creole culture, language, literature, and funerary practices. In 2024, I distributed a survey that was the basis for a digital humanities exhibit. This survey-based project examines memorialization practices among Louisiana Creoles and Cajuns, drawing on 135 anonymous responses collected via an IRB-approved Qualtrics survey conducted through the University of Southern Mississippi. Building on my earlier oral history work with Kouri-Vini speakers during a 2023 fellowship at The Historic New Orleans Collection, the project combined cemetery documentation with survey data on tombstones, grave

decoration, funeral customs, home altars, and observance of All Saints' and All Souls' Day.

My cumulative findings highlight distinctive, and often creolized, communal and ritual practices: families "grieve as a unit," and death is marked as both mourning and celebration, with repasses featuring food, music, and dance to honor the deceased and "dance the person home." Other practices include directional placement of the body in hearses to prevent the dead from "looking back."

The project also situates these practices within questions of identity, arguing that Louisiana Creoles, including Cajuns, constitute a multi-racial, multi-ethnic group with a distinct culture, foodways, and endangered language. Anne Malena, in *Just Below South*, expressed Louisiana's resistance to categorization: [Louisiana] "is not so much black and white as everything in between, a place where categories fall apart but where difference still matters." Survey responses on race, ethnicity, and self-identification reveal this diversity, complicating singular narratives of Creole and Cajun identity and emphasizing cultural preservation and education. Collectively, Louisiana Creoles are a distinct group of people and ethnicity with a vibrant culture, rich history, and layered story. Death and remembering those who have passed on are aspects of our story.

Emily M Goldsmith (they/them) is a Louisiana Creole poet, scholar, and researcher. They are an English Instructor at Louisiana State University. Emily received their PhD from the University of Southern Mississippi and MFA from the University of Kentucky. Their creative work and book reviews can be found in *Midway Journal*, *CALYX*, *Moist Poetry Journal*, *Tinderbox Poetry Journal*, *Penn Review*, *Pithead Chapel*, and elsewhere. Goldsmith's digital exhibit, "Louisiana Creole and Cajun Memorialization," was published in early 2026 with The Gravestone Project. They have presented at various national and international conferences such as the American Literary Association Conference, the Nineteenth Century Studies Association Conference, the International Conference on Narrative, and others.

12:00-12:30 p.m.	<i>Awards Ceremony</i>	<i>Alost 006A</i>
	18th Annual NSU Louisiana High School Essay Contest & 1st Annual NSU Louisiana High School Creative Expressions Contest	
12:30-1:45 p.m.	Light Lunch and Reception	<i>Alost 006B</i>
2:00-3:15 p.m.	Presentation Session 2	

Panel 2A Louisiana Losses

Alost 268

Session Chair: Clayton Delery, Faculty Emeritus, Louisiana School for Math, Science, and the Arts

Clayton Delery, Faculty Emeritus, Louisiana School for Math, Science, and the Arts

“The Necessity of AIDS Law in a Pre-Obergefell Plague”

David J. Holcombe, Independent Scholar

The Colfax Massacre: A Short Play

NSU professor Pia Wyatt and her talented theatre students will perform the reading.

Cast:

Yolanda LaCour performed by Tyla Stewart

Mayor Billy Crawford performed by KeShaun Bridgewater

Steve Hebert performed by Ian Davidson

Dorothy McCann performed by Caroline Losavio

Panel 2B Remembering Cenla History

Alost 269

Session Chair: Kent W. Peacock, Northwestern State University

Kent W. Peacock, Northwestern State University

“History Floating By: Historical Spectacles in Natchitoches & Louisiana after World War I”

Geoffrey Clegg, Washington State University

“Left Like a Scar: Remembering England Air Force Base as Both Cosmopolitan and Hauntological Space”

Timothy Bratt, Northwestern State University

“Pine to Palm: The Jefferson Highway, Louisiana, and Northwestern Louisiana’s Natchitoches Sector”

Art Williams, Independent Scholar

“Caroline Dormon and the Politics of Public Planting”

Panel 2C *Louisiana Stories*

Alost 270

Session Chair: Katrina Jordan, Northwestern State University of Louisiana

John P. Doucet, Nicholls State University

“Remembering Louisiana: The Poetic Lens”

Gavin Fremin, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

“Lafcadio Hearn’s *Chita*: a Parable Explaining ‘Creolization’”

Jerry L. Parker, Southeastern Louisiana University

Natalie Keefer, University of Louisiana-Lafayette

Trent Threeton, Southeastern Louisiana University

“*Kouri-Vini*, the Past, the Present, and the Future: A Review of Twenty-First Century Louisiana Creole Scholarship”

Katrina Jordan, Northwestern State University of Louisiana

Michelle Fazio-Brunson, Northwestern State University of Louisiana

“Remembering Louisiana’s Early Childhood Authors”

3:30-4:45 p.m. Presentation Session 3

Panel 3A *Louisiana’s Literary Legacy*

Alost 268

Session Chair: Robert Allen Alexander, Nicholls State University

Robert Allen Alexander, Nicholls State University

“Rip Van Winkle Saw in Louisiana a Live-Oak Growing”

Derek Foster, Upper Iowa University, Alexandria

“‘Can’t you see that I’m blind?’: Memory in Kate Chopin’s *At Fault*”

Bernard Gallagher, Louisiana State University at Alexandria

“Memory as Cultural Critique”

Panel 3B Remembering Louisiana Spanish Together: A Panel Discussion ***Alost 269***

Panel Chair: Hannah L. Rogers, Institute for Public Ethnomusicology

Shane Lief, Institute for Public Ethnomusicology

Elisabeth Perez, Institute for Public Ethnomusicology

William D. Buckingham, Institute for Public Ethnomusicology

Panel 3C Natchitoches History and Heritage ***Alost 270***

Session Chair: Donna J. Baker, Northwestern State University

Donna J. Baker, Northwestern State University of Louisiana

“Remembering 85 years of the Louisiana Collection at Northwestern State University”

Anna Kathryn Vaughn, Independent Researcher

“Louisiana Remembers: Ida Graham Price Strain, First Dean of NSU College of Nursing”

4:45 p.m. Conference Close

PRESENTATION ABSTRACTS

Robert Allen Alexander, Nicholls State University

“Rip Van Winkle Saw in Louisiana a Live-Oak Growing”

When one thinks of drama and Louisiana, there are unforgettable characters from stage and film who have left an indelible impression: Stanley Kowalski, Blanche DuBois, Grant Wiggins, Willie Stark, and Ignatius Reilly, among others. Yet there is one famous American dramatic character who is part of this Louisiana tradition but seldom associated with the state: Rip Van Winkle.

Like most of the aforementioned characters (with the exception of Stanley and Blanche), Rip Van Winkle was first introduced to us through prose fiction and not through a play script or dramatic performance. But in the nineteenth century one of the foremost actors on the American stage, Joseph Jefferson, developed Rip Van Winkle into one of the better-known dramatic characters in American theater. And this same Joseph Jefferson purchased a winter home on what we now know as Jefferson Island in Iberia Parish. Associated with this home is Rip Van Winkle Gardens, an expansive and beautiful public attraction.

Now that we know that Rip Van Winkle has established a foothold in Louisiana, perhaps we could play the role of the dramatist ourselves and contemplate what may have happened if a latter-day Washington Irving were to set his story among the cypress and sugar cane instead of the Catskills of New York. In the decades not too far removed from the original setting, Louisiana was undergoing many of the same dramatic political changes that were revolutionizing government in the original thirteen colonies. And if we were to modernize the setting, the pace of change would be even more dramatic, especially regarding the landscape that initially drew Joseph Jefferson to Iberia Parish. What can we in Louisiana learn from this thought experiment, from our adoption and transplanting of this dramatic character?

Donna J. Baker, Northwestern State University of Louisiana

“Remembering 85 years of the Louisiana Collection at Northwestern State University”

In 1940, as one of his first acts as University Librarian, Eugene P. Watson created the Louisiana Collection at Russell Library at Louisiana State Normal School. Knowledgeable and involved in cultural heritage in Natchitoches and Louisiana and having observed the creation of new archives and special collections at the state level as well as in universities and colleges across the American South, Watson paged books, maps, pamphlets, and other ephemera from Russell Library's holdings of to create a stand-alone special collection. This collection outgrew its designated Russell Library space at least twice due to the dedicated collection development, first by Watson and then by librarian Katherine Bridges of books, maps, family histories and charts, and manuscript collections from the families of Natchitoches and Cane River. Now in its current home as part of the distinctive collections at the Cammie G. Henry Research Center at Eugene P. Watson Memorial Library, the Louisiana Collection stands as a large, format-neutral, and often hidden treasure, of community and regional history. This presentation will highlight the history

of the collection, unique items, and those who have cared for the collection over the last 85 years. This history is not only to illustrate the significance of this collection over the years, but also to affirm its importance in remembering Louisiana in current historical and scholarly research.

Timothy Bratt, Northwestern State University

“Pine to Palm: The Jefferson Highway, Louisiana, and Northwestern Louisiana’s Natchitoches Sector”

The Jefferson Highway Association organized in 1915 intending to build an automobile route from Winnipeg, Manitoba, to New Orleans, subsequently known as the “Pine to Palm Highway.” The Jefferson Highway became America’s first north-south intercontinental auto trail and a route predating Route 66 as well as the federal numbered-highway system. This presentation traces the history of the Jefferson Highway, including the overall route and its impact on Louisiana, particularly the Natchitoches and northwestern Louisiana area.

At the statewide level, Louisiana was critical to the highway’s founding. Delegates met in New Orleans in November 1915 to select the route’s “cardinal” cities. This meeting was so contentious that participants nicknamed it the “second Battle of New Orleans.” The resulting Louisiana route connected Shreveport, Mansfield, Natchitoches, Alexandria, and Baton Rouge before terminating at a monument still standing at St. Charles and Common Streets in New Orleans.

Within this statewide route, Natchitoches and northwestern Louisiana were integral to operational success. Regionally, the highway superimposed sections of the El Camino Real near Robeline and Los Adaes. Additionally, the city of Natchitoches utilized the newly constructed highway to boost tourism and local economic development by promoting brick-paved streets, signage, and events like the 1919 “Sociability Run” to advertise its hospitality. A campground offering free gasoline once stood on the site of Northwestern State University’s Watson Library, and Jefferson Street was part of the Jefferson Highway and was aptly named in honor of it within the Natchitoches National Historic Landmark District.

From a tourism and recreation standpoint, the paper considers the highway an early instrument of Louisiana heritage tourism. While the visibility and popularity of the Jefferson Highway has faded due to the interstate highway system utilization, heritage tourism efforts have raised awareness through centennial commemorations, and driving-trail initiatives are keeping the spirit alive.

Geoffrey Clegg, Washington State University

“Left Like a Scar: Remembering England Air Force Base as Both Cosmopolitan and Hauntological Space”

Those who grew up on American military bases, such as myself, would call them home, but I find that England Air Force Base (EAFB) in Alexandria, Louisiana fits that designation best. I

spent twelve years on that base as a dependent, my father was an enlisted NCO, from 1981-1992 without ever living on another base. EAFB, once an economic driver for Central Louisiana, is the genesis of who I am and how I came to know much of the values I hold dear. Today, England is a space that is mostly dormant with just its international airport bringing in money and people into the region.

What makes England AFB a place worthy of memory? It holds many forgotten stories ranging from the tragic to the legacies of families who still use the grounds for burials to creating and rejecting a fulfillment of Ulrich Beck's ideal cosmopolitan space. We had our own educational institution, a Department of Defense chartered school available only to enlisted and officers' children, that offered courses and opportunities unseen within Rapides Parish schools at the time. The school, the environment, and mix of peoples making up its residents brought the global to local in a way that combined realities few Louisianians ever really ever experienced.

Sadly, with its closure in 1992, a move made to save money in a post-Cold War era, the legacy of England is largely forgotten. The remaining housing and structures have become part of a larger ICE/DHS detention center for deporting immigrants during the second Trump administration (Laughland, n.p.). What's left is a form of hauntological space where the past and potential future ideals mingle but never manifest. The stories, lives created and lost, and a dystopian use of the current space are stuck in a "hauntological dimension emerg[ing] from the unfulfilled hopes for the future" (Wardell, 12) that were never met. It is from this unfulfilled future that we need to examine this space as a tension point between cosmopolitan (past) reality and broken future.

Bibliography

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Kade Davis, Independent Scholar

"Not Fully Rendered: How Video Games Influence Players' Memories of New Orleans"

As video games have continued to grow increasingly cinematic, detailed, and complex in their design, so too have their settings. Video game cities are designed with the complexities of modern gaming in mind, such as leading the player in the right direction or maintaining their interest without distracting them too much. One of the real-world cities that has been the focus of several recent critically acclaimed games, such as *Red Dead Redemption 2* or *Mafia 3*, is New

Orleans. While these games do provide immense detail and an eye for reality, the unfortunate truth is that the far more complex reality of New Orleans is left out in each of these experiences. This presentation seeks to explore the disconnect between New Orleans proper and the representations of it in video games. The presentation will pull from a variety of literatures, including game studies, history, and game design theory. New Orleans, as the most famous city in Louisiana, is remembered in a myriad of ways, and, with millions of copies sold, these video games have the potential to introduce to players a memory of the city out of touch with reality.

Clayton Delery, Faculty Emeritus, Louisiana School for Math, Science, and the Arts

“The Necessity of AIDSLaw in a Pre-Obergefell Plague”

In both contemporary accounts of the AIDS crisis and in histories studying that period, much of the attention—rightly—goes to the medical difficulties people with AIDS faced in the roughly 14 years (1981-1995) between the first reported cases and the development of safe, effective drug therapies. During that time, over 500,000 cases of AIDS were reported and nearly 320,000 of those diagnosed had already died.

These diagnoses and deaths had serious legal and financial consequences that often receive less attention. For example, people with AIDS who were unable to work often did not qualify for disability, and in a society that predated the *Obergefell* decision that granted marriage equality, surviving same-sex partners of deceased men and women were often treated as strangers under the law. As a result, they often found themselves disinherited, evicted from their own homes, and stripped of financial assets that courts assigned to “real” family members. In order to fight these inequities, an organization named AIDSLaw was formed in New Orleans and soon operated throughout the state. This presentation will examine the genesis and evolution of AIDSLaw.

John P. Doucet, Nicholls State University

“Remembering Louisiana: The Poetic Lens”

With diverse colonial nationalities, centuries of welcomed immigration and settlement, and possession of the deltaic mouth of America’s great river, Louisiana has a multifaceted history whose major events are book-worthy and well-known. But there is an abundant local, more microscopic history that is not only intricate and meaningful but also at risk for loss as generations pass and as lower latitudes suffer outward migration due to land loss. While these histories may never enter textbooks and encyclopedias focused on major events, the historical poem is a device through which such microscopic histories can be captured in concise and perhaps more permanent and memorable ways. Among the earliest native Louisiana literature, a poem by the purported earliest Louisiana poet, Julien Poydras, titled “La Prise du Morne du Baton Rouge par Monseigneur de Galvez,” preserves informative details of the capture of the British garrison at Baton Rouge by Galvez in 1779. In more modern times, Darrell Borque’s collection *if you abandon me, comment je vas faire: An Amédé Ardoin Songbook* preserves details from the tragic life of the Louisiana Black Creole musician with informative details from historical records preserved in imaginative and memorable ways. In this presentation, I

use the battered landscape of the lower Lafourche in coastal Louisiana as the setting of original historical poetry. The poems preserve local history in the region of the fastest land loss in the world--history that might never otherwise be told. The readings will illustrate the form and practice and, in turn, usher a call to action to Louisiana writers toward preserving local history through verse.

Heather Salter Dromm, Northwestern State University

“This Ma Speaks Yama: My Experiences Learning a Native American Trade Language and the Importance of Language Revitalization”

Ishla! Ino Choctaw Apache Ebarb. In the presentation of my essay, I will discuss my experiences learning Yama, a pidgin language that many southeastern tribes spoke as a *lingua franca* to trade and communicate with their distant neighbors throughout Louisiana and other southeastern states. From November 2025 to January 2026, I attended Yama language classes over Zoom, hosted by the Ho Minti Society and lead by linguist David Kaufman. I will begin my presentation by explaining the origins and purpose of Yama and its linguistic features including syntax, pronunciation, negation, and past tense. Next, I will share my experiences participating in the Zoom classes and interesting facts I learned about the language. Near the end of the presentation, I will discuss current and future Ho Minti Society plans and strategies to further language learning and acquisition. After all, language revitalization is an important part of preserving and revitalizing culture because as the linguist Joshua Fishman once said, “most of the culture is expressed in the language. Take language away from the culture and you take away its greetings, its curses, its praises, its laws, its literature, its songs, riddles, proverbs, and prayers . . . all those things that essentially are the way of life.”

Jolie Fontenot, Louisiana Scholars' College

Benjamin Forkner, Northwestern State University

“Learning Louisiana French Outside the Classroom”

Louisiana French, once a vibrant marker of cultural identity across South Louisiana, has experienced a significant decline in native speakers over the past century due to social, political, and educational pressures. This presentation examines that decline while highlighting the resurgence of efforts undertaken over the last three decades, including institutional initiatives, community-based programming, and increased visibility through cultural organizations.

Central to this discussion is the evolving landscape of language revitalization, where traditional transmission within families has been supplemented by innovative, grassroots approaches to learning. Particular attention is given to a case study of an independent learner of Louisiana French who navigates multiple informal and formal resources in her acquisition process. Drawing on personal networks and regional opportunities, this student engages with her grandmother as a heritage speaker, participates in French tables in the Lafayette area, studies with tutors affiliated with Northwestern State University, and utilizes social media platforms to access a wider community of speakers.

This case study serves to illuminate broader questions about authenticity, access, and sustainability in language revitalization. It demonstrates how contemporary learners actively construct linguistic competence outside conventional classroom settings and contribute to the ongoing redefinition of Louisiana French as a living, adaptive language. By situating individual experience within larger revitalization efforts, this presentation underscores both the challenges and the possibilities inherent in preserving and reimagining Louisiana's Francophone heritage.

Derek Foster, Upper Iowa University, Alexandria

“Can't you see that I'm blind?": Memory in Kate Chopin's *At Fault*”

In her *At Fault* (1890), Kate Chopin explores memory as a psychological and ethical force that shapes identity and limits freedom. In nineteenth-century Southern literature, memory often preserved regional identity. Unlike her contemporaries, though, Chopin complicates nostalgia by showing how attachment to the past restricts personal growth.

The novel's protagonist, Thérèse Lafirme, is deeply influenced by memory, though not through dramatic flashbacks. Instead, her recollections subtly guide her emotions and decisions. Chopin uses Thérèse's own memories of her marriage to reinforce her sense of duty, independence, and social respectability, contributing to her reluctance to remarry. More importantly, Thérèse's own cultural memory, specifically her inherited and Catholic values, shapes her moral judgments.

These remembered values become central when Thérèse discourages a relationship between David Hosmer and Fanny Larimore because David is divorced. Thérèse's actions reflect an adherence to social and religious norms, rather than to immediate human realities. Over time, however, memories of her interactions with David, particularly his character, their conversations, and her growing affection, compel her to reconsider her earlier choices.

In addition, memory in the novel also functions as self-reproach. Through this process, it becomes a means of not only personal growth, but also of ethical reflection. Beyond the individual level, though, Chopin sets the novel in a post-Civil War South marked by memories of a changing social order. While many Southern writers used memory to romanticize the antebellum era through the Lost Cause trope, Chopin critiques such nostalgia. Instead, she portrays moral codes and attachment to the past as forces that constrain freedom. Thus, in *At Fault*, Chopin transforms memory from simple recollection into a powerful influence on ethical choice, identity, and personal liberation.

Gavin Fremin, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

“Lafcadio Hearn's *Chita*: a Parable Explaining ‘Creolization’”

Generally, the term *creolization* is used to describe the process in which separate languages and cultures interact, combine, and form something new—distinct from its origins while still retaining some of their characteristics.

It is a relatively new word that's often attributed to the writer Lafcadio Hearn, a central figure in Louisiana literature and a pioneer in what would later become the field of Creole Studies. "Creolization" appears only once in Hearn's 1890 historical novel *Youma: The Story of a West Indian Slave*, and the author offers no direct explanation for what he intended it to mean. Instead of a definition, Hearn gave his readers a parable.

Two years before he recorded the term creolization in *Youma*, Hearn wrote *Chita: A Memory of Last Island*—a story that takes place in the multicultural setting of the Louisiana coast. The novel follows a little girl from Creole New Orleans named Lili, who is separated from her wealthy parents during the great hurricane of 1856. The girl, who speaks only French, is rescued and transplanted onto an island where she is raised among the families of poor Spanish fishermen. There, she learns a new language, a new culture, and a new way of life. Renamed Chita, she transforms into a blended identity.

In my presentation, I will argue that Hearn wrote *Chita: A Memory of Last Island* as a parable of creolization, embodying the concept in this character and the things that happened to her. Through storytelling, the author presents the meaning of creolization better than a conventional definition could.

Bernard Gallagher, Louisiana State University at Alexandria

"Memory as Cultural Critique"

Memory plays a large and complicated role in the Robicheaux novels of James Lee Burke. On one level, Burke uses flashbacks and narrative summary to develop character. While reading the various novels in the series, readers repeatedly encounter dreams, reminiscences, and retellings of events that include but are not limited to the following: the death of Robicheaux's father (Big Aldous), his mother's (Mae) abandonment of the family and her subsequent murder, his rescue by a corpsman (Willie Billiot) after being wounded in Vietnam, his failed marriage with his first wife, Nicole, and his rescue by Cletus Purcell. However, Burke's novels also use visions, dreams, reminiscences and retellings to develop multiple themes that include but are not limited to the following: the importance of religious faith, the ever-present possibility of moral and spiritual redemption, the necessity of stewardship, the phenomenal reality of evil. Of particular interest here are those remembrances that bind the personal recollections of Robicheaux to what might be termed ecological and cultural memory. Ecologically speaking, Robicheaux's memories of past Louisiana landscapes are couched in a rich, lyrical language that establishes both the affection that Robicheaux had and still has for a Louisiana landscape that now resides only in his memory. Furthermore, this "remembrance of past landscapes" not only apotheosizes the landscape of yesteryear, it also warns readers that what is at stake is not the environment but an entire culture. In effect, then, my presentation will attempt to show how the remembrances of Louisiana and its landscape in the Robicheaux novels of James Lee Burke warn readers that the unique culture of Louisiana and specifically the Cajun culture are threatened with a materialism and homogenization that will render them unrecognizable.

Gekera Gilmore, Delgado Community College

“Documenting Memory: A Digital Archive of New Orleans School Desegregation”

This project, completed during my master’s program, demonstrates my commitment to research and African American history. My main argument is that the desegregation archive project provides vital, original insights into overlooked Black educational narratives in New Orleans. By transitioning from a student perspective to a research-focused approach and by incorporating archival materials and oral history, the presentation educates and resonates with local audiences. As a New Orleans native, I see it as a privilege to share this history at Northwestern State University, representing NOLA in this conference. The Orleans Parish School Board’s history, often unfamiliar to many, embodies the challenges and triumphs of the city’s educational system, especially since Hurricane Katrina. This project connects community memory and engages audiences through its grounding in Louisiana history.

Growing up, I was taught to value education, and this experience helps me connect more deeply with Black culture in my birthplace. The legacy of African American high schools, which created strong communities, is central to this connection. For example, when former classmates come together, it feels less like a typical high school reunion, but it’s more like a family gathering in NOLA. Yearbooks from these schools reflect Black pride during tough times for many people across America. I’m pretty sure upper Louisiana high schools do the same tradition as well. This enduring sense of identity, drawn from those strong school communities, is especially pronounced in New Orleans. Here, we celebrate no matter what, and if you are from this city, the first question people ask is, “What school did you attend?”

Emily M. Goldsmith, Louisiana State University

“The Dead Are Always With Us; To ‘Dance the Person Home’: Louisiana Creole and Cajun Memorialization Practices”

In this presentation, I will share my findings from the past three years of ongoing research about Louisiana Creole culture, language, literature, and funerary practices. In 2024, I distributed a survey that was the basis for a digital humanities exhibit. This survey-based project examines memorialization practices among Louisiana Creoles and Cajuns, drawing on 135 anonymous responses collected via an IRB-approved Qualtrics survey conducted through the University of Southern Mississippi. Building on my earlier oral history work with Kouri-Vini speakers during a 2023 fellowship at The Historic New Orleans Collection, the project combined cemetery documentation with survey data on tombstones, grave decoration, funeral customs, home altars, and observance of All Saints’ and All Souls’ Day.

My cumulative findings highlight distinctive, and often creolized, communal and ritual practices: families “grieve as a unit,” and death is marked as both mourning and celebration, with repasses featuring food, music, and dance to honor the deceased and “dance the person home.” Other practices include directional placement of the body in hearses to prevent the dead from “looking back.”

The project also situates these practices within questions of identity, arguing that Louisiana Creoles, including Cajuns, constitute a multi-racial, multi-ethnic group with a distinct culture,

foodways, and endangered language. Anne Malena, in *Just Below South*, expressed Louisiana's resistance to categorization: [Louisiana] "is not so much black and white as everything in between, a place where categories fall apart but where difference still matters." Survey responses on race, ethnicity, and self-identification reveal this diversity, complicating singular narratives of Creole and Cajun identity and emphasizing cultural preservation and education. Collectively, Louisiana Creoles are a distinct group of people and ethnicity with a vibrant culture, rich history, and layered story. Death and remembering those who have passed on are aspects of our story.

Wesley Harris, Claiborne Parish Library

Jacquelyn Tripp, Caddo Parish Civil Rights Heritage Trail

"William Jasper Blackburn: A Louisiana Life Guided by Conscience, Marked by Cost"

This presentation examines the life and legacy of William Jasper Blackburn, a newspaper publisher, prolific writer, and Republican politician whose voice stood in sharp opposition to the prevailing attitudes of Reconstruction-era North Louisiana. Through his work in the press and in politics, Blackburn emerged as one of the region's most persistent advocates for civil rights and a vocal critic of the violence and injustices that followed the Civil War.

Drawing on newspaper accounts, historical records, and surviving writings, this paper explores how Blackburn used his platform to challenge both slavery and the racial and political oppression that persisted in its aftermath. His efforts came at significant personal cost. Blackburn endured repeated threats, was shot, and saw his newspaper offices bombed and vandalized. Despite these dangers, he continued to write and speak out, as a newspaperman, local elected official, and U.S. Congressman, refusing to be silenced in a time when dissent carried real consequences.

The presentation also explores the personal toll of Blackburn's life, including the loss of his wife and ten of his twelve children in his lifetime, as well as the ridicule and attacks he endured from Democratic politicians and newspapers. Together, these experiences offer a fuller understanding of the man behind the voice.

In keeping with the conference theme "Remembering Louisiana," this paper argues that Blackburn's story represents a largely overlooked chapter in the state's history—one that complicates traditional narratives of Reconstruction and highlights the presence of individuals who resisted injustice despite overwhelming opposition. Remembering Blackburn is not only an act of historical recovery but also a recognition of the enduring power of the written word in shaping public memory.

The presenters have researched Blackburn and the Reconstruction Era extensively for years and plan a book on his life and work in the near future.

David J. Holcombe, Independent Scholar

The Colfax Massacre: A Short Play

The tragic events of Easter 1873 in Colfax, Louisiana, represented the single largest race-related massacre in the U.S. during Reconstruction. Over 200 Blacks were slaughtered and unceremoniously buried in an unmarked grave. The legal ramifications in the *Cruikshank v. U.S.* case went on to solidify and perpetuate the end of Federal oversight in the South and the beginning of the Jim Crow era. This short play hopes to bring this story to life using the battle over the racist historical marker that stood in Colfax from 1924 until its final removal and replacement in April 2023, 94 years later. Each character in the play represents some aspect of that debate over the marker and brings to life this important chapter in Louisiana history. NSU professor Pia Wyatt and her talented theatre students will perform the reading.

Cast:

Yolanda LaCour performed by Tyla Stewart

Mayor Billy Crawford performed by KeShaun Bridgewater

Steve Hebert performed by Ian Davidson

Dorothy McCann performed by Caroline Losavio

Trever Lee Holland, Louisiana School for Math, Science, and the Arts

“Literary *Haksuba*: Beyond Sovereignty in LeAnne’s *Shell Shaker*”

LeAnne Howe’s novel *Shell Shaker* (2001) presents a complex Choctaw cosmology to contemporary readers, which challenges readers to conceptualize Louisiana and the South as Indigenous spaces.

Within the text, Howe blends together revisions of Choctaw history, culture, and aesthetics as readers follow the lives of women in one Choctaw family, the Billys, over the course of 500 years, centering pivotal historical moments in Louisiana and Choctaw traditional lands throughout the Deep South. The novel also addresses Choctaw continued presence in Louisiana with direct references to Choctaw communities in Jena and Zwolle. Through these examples, Howe reshapes perceptions of Choctaw history and culture, creating a world that radically reconfigures the South as Indigenous through Choctaw sexuality, gender, and cultural practices to resist the horror and terror of colonialism and its legacies.

Howe has discussed her oeuvre in terms of the Choctaw term *haksuba*, a Choctaw word that Chickasaw scholar Jodi Byrd describes as “A generative, creative force as well as a potentially destructive one.” I examine how *Shell Shaker* enacts literary *haksuba* by placing scholars of queer indigeneity such as Qwo-Li Driskill and Mark Rifkin, in conversation with more canonical Western theory to address these overlapping colonial critiques and the text’s ongoing discussions of gender. Through its vacillations between creation and destruction, I suggest alternative modes of theorizing Native literature, moving beyond the troubled legacies of nationalism. In the process, this paper demonstrates how Howe’s novel reminds readers of the continued Indigenous history of Louisiana.

Mia C Johnston, UL Lafayette

“*Le Grand Dérangement* in Cultural Memory: The Exile in Cajun Oral Tradition”

There is a widespread consensus that folk cultures often use oral storytelling and songs as a means of interpreting and managing collective trauma experienced by that culture. We see this in examples of Irish folktales related to the famine as well as countless Native American tribes’ stories and songs about displacement and loss. The shared experience of *le Grand Dérangement* by the Acadians and their Cajun descendants in Louisiana qualifies as a collective trauma that we might expect to be alluded to similarly in their own oral tradition. Cajun culture of Louisiana is known for having rich storytelling and musical tradition, leading to a reasonable assumption that direct references to the exile would be found in the folktales and songs of the people. However, there seems to be a lack of obvious references to this life-altering event. In the words of Barry Ancelet, “though songs about the exile experience do not seem to have survived, the upheaval would have an affect [sic] on their music. The sufferings they had endured endowed their songs with a preoccupation with death, loneliness and lost love and their instrumental music with a mournful quality.” While I agree with Ancelet, I believe that it still appears in more *sublimated* ways. According to psychology, *sublimation* is a coping mechanism where societally negative emotions are channeled into acceptable and sometimes productive outlets, such as exercising to let out anger or writing to let out grief. In understanding how the heavy emotions of *le Grand Dérangement* maintain a presence in the folk traditions of Louisiana Cajuns, this mechanism can work as a helpful framework for identifying how, where, and why that presence is maintained. In my research, I analyzed repeated oral stories, spoke with musicians, and closely listened to Cajun folk music to find where there may be sublimated reference to thoughts and feelings about the exile.

This project has been developed under the guidance of University of Louisiana Lafayette professor Dr. Charles Richard. I am a UL undergraduate studying History with a minor in Cajun & Creole Studies.

Katrina Jordan, Northwestern State University of Louisiana

Michelle Fazio-Brunson, Northwestern State University of Louisiana

“Remembering Louisiana’s Early Childhood Authors”

This 15-minute presentation will focus on examples of children’s literature that are written by authors from Louisiana. Examples include works by Mike Artell, Johnette Downing, and Trosclair. Presenters will share excerpts, illustrations, and author bios.

Lisa A. Kirby, Collin College

“Remembering What Louisiana Forgot: Counter-Memory and Resistance in *The American Daughters*”

Historical fiction occupies a unique space as a literary genre: a blend of fact and fiction, it can reenvision, reframe, and recover historical figures and events that might otherwise be forgotten. As Don J. Rath states in the *Southern Review of Books*, “One of the challenges of historical

fiction is creating a story that reflects, yet uniquely redefines, the context of history.” Maurice Carlos Ruffin’s 2024 novel, *The American Daughters*, accomplishes exactly this. Set between 1851 and the Civil War, the novel follows Ady and her mother, Sanite, two slaves working for a wealthy businessman in New Orleans. When separated from her mother, Ady meets a woman, Lenore, who introduces her to “The Daughters,” a resistance group of Black women spies working towards freedom. Based on real people and events, Ruffin constructs a version of history that reconstructs the lives and resistance of enslaved women who have often been marginalized in Louisiana history. As such, *The American Daughters* functions as a counter-archive, recovering forms of resistance and community-building that official Louisiana histories often omit. By centering Ady and this secret society of women, Ruffin challenges dominant narratives of antebellum Louisiana and gives voice to these women.

This presentation will explore Ruffin’s novel both as a means of remembering a part of Louisiana history often forgotten and as a chronicle of resistance maintained through storytelling, kinship, and collective action. In the novel, Ruffin writes, “The women were well aware that whatever the Daughters accomplished would be forgotten for all time. Ady knew that she, too, would be forgotten.” Ruffin resists this idea and, instead, ensures these women’s stories are not forgotten or erased, resulting in a novel that recovers the past, informs the present, and provides inspiration for the future.

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Bruce R. Magee, Louisiana Tech University

Stephen Payne, Editor, Louisiana Anthology

“Remembering Henry Clay Lewis in North Louisiana”

“He hath given his last pill, had his last draught protested against; true to the instincts of his profession, he, no doubt, in the battling troop of the angels above, if feasible, will still continue to *charge*.” --- Tensas

Henry Clay Lewis (1825-1850) published “Odd Leaves from the Life of a Louisiana ‘Swamp Doctor’” under the pen name of Madison Tensas, M.D. Lewis originally published his sketches separately in *The Spirit of the Times*, a sporting and hunting magazine published weekly in New York. He then combined the stories into his book in 1850, which he published a few months before his death.

Lewis gives us an early look at life in North Louisiana. His perspective is somewhat autobiographical, but from a humorous perspective. Lewis helped develop Southwestern humor, providing a model to later authors like Samuel Clemens. Anybody reading Lewis' eye dialect and humorous tall tales will immediately be reminded of Clemens. Nevertheless, the book gives us much valuable information about the life of a country doctor in North Louisiana in the 1840s.

Jerry L. Parker, Southeastern Louisiana University

Natalie Keefer, University of Louisiana-Lafayette

Trent Threeton, Southeastern Louisiana University

“Kouri-Vini, the Past, the Present, and the Future: A Review of Twenty-First Century Louisiana Creole Scholarship”

Louisiana Creole (Kouri-Vini) stands as one of the most distinctive cultural and linguistic legacies of colonial Louisiana. Emerging from contact among French, African, Spanish, and Indigenous communities, the language encodes the complex social history of Creole identity. It also serves as a living archive of the people, places, and experiences that shaped Louisiana's unique heritage. Despite significant decline during the twentieth century due to language shift, stigma, and assimilation pressures, the twenty-first century has witnessed renewed scholarly and community commitment to documenting and revitalizing the language.

This presentation will provide the findings of a systematic review of literature on Louisiana Creole published since 2000. The purpose of this study was to examine how contemporary scholars have approached the language and its people and to provide future direction for the research as the century progresses. Special attention is given to the themes that have emerged from the literature along with relevant descriptive statistical data.

Framed within the conference theme of “Remembering Louisiana,” this presentation argues that modern scholarship has reframed Louisiana Creole not merely as an endangered language but as a vital vehicle of Creole cultural memory and historical identity. The review further identifies emerging directions for future work, including community-based documentation, interdisciplinary connections between linguistics and genealogy, and the integration of Louisiana Creole into educational contexts. Together, these developments illuminate the growing importance of Kouri-Vini research in honoring and preserving the heritage of Louisiana's Creole communities.

Kent W. Peacock, Northwestern State University

“History Floating By: Historical Spectacles in Natchitoches & Louisiana after World War I”

In the years following World War I, Natchitoches joined cities across Louisiana in remembering the state and United States' past through hosting large, outdoor historical pageants, some of which were produced by the Louisiana State Normal School (today's Northwestern State

University). Natchitoches also sent individuals of the city to act in mass pageants in other Louisianan cities to make sure Natchitoches was part of the story of Louisiana's and the nation's past and present those pageants told. Natchitoches' reality as the earliest permanent European settlement in today's Louisiana was one reason its pageants stood out from others in the state, but its geography also made such spectacles of memorializing notable as instead of utilizing streets, a physical theater, or fields to stage the pageant, Natchitoches created pageants that floated down Cane River Lake.

This presentation answers fundamental questions of when historical pageants happened, what they consisted, and who were the major players involved in their production, while paying particular attention to what memory of the city, state, and nation's history audiences were supposed to remember and why such mass public events became a part of the Natchitoches (and Louisiana) cultural scene following World War I.

C.E. Richard, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

“Strewn about the Gulf in Fantastic Tatters’: Literature as Recollection & Repository”

Louisiana has lost approximately 2,000 square miles of its coastal wetlands since the 1930s. That's less than a century. Without action, the state could lose as much as an additional 3,000 square miles in roughly half that time¹.

The most significant losses, however, defy all mathematical reckoning. Human geography isn't measured in square miles nor tallied up in ten-year census figures.

We know that civil authorities have tried to address Louisiana's coastal crisis by pouring vast sums of money into dubious efforts to “re-engineer” the lower Mississippi. Meanwhile, cultural researchers scramble to collect oral histories and document folklife in the Louisiana lowlands-- courageous attempts to preserve a precious regional identity before it vanishes entirely from maps as well as from collective memory.

But among humanities scholars, a vital resource has been largely overlooked.

A richly detailed image of Louisiana's wetland places and peoples is sustained in a literary history that reaches back to when Cabeza de Vaca recorded the first written account describing the mouth of the Mississippi River in the early 1500s. Our coastlands are remembered in the unexpectedly large body of literature it inspired in authors like Mark Twain, Lafcadio Hearn, Kate Chopin, Shirley Ann Grau, and Eudora Welty, down to New Iberia novelist James Lee Burke.

This presentation invites its audience to reflect on the ample and underappreciated repository of literature written about Louisiana's coastal wetlands. Taken together, these stories, poems, and essays sustain the memory of a vital but vanishing eco-cultural landscape that has long occupied a place in the literary imagination much larger than just the space marked out for it on maps.

¹ According to the most recent data provided by the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA).

Hannah L. Rogers, Institute for Public Ethnomusicology, Chair

Shane Lief, Institute for Public Ethnomusicology

Elisabeth Perez, Institute for Public Ethnomusicology

William D. Buckingham, Institute for Public Ethnomusicology

“Remembering Louisiana Spanish Together”

The Spanish language has a three-hundred-year history in Louisiana, enduring since the colonial period in three distinct linguistic communities, where it survived in the form of unique local dialects into the twenty-first century. They sustained traditions of songs, oral literature and foodways, for example, which survived in St. Bernard Parish, along Bayou Lafourche, and in the vicinity of Natchitoches and along the Sabine River. Today, there are only a handful of surviving speakers of these unique local dialects, and each of these historical Spanish-language communities are faced with the prospect of obsolescence. These three traditions enjoyed extensive documentation in the late twentieth century. Beginning in the 1970s, the researcher Samuel G. Armistead sought to document these traditions, recording hundreds of ethnographic interviews on magnetic tape, producing the most extensive documentation of these traditions.

This panel presents Learning Louisiana Spanish Together, an ongoing public-facing language revitalization program that draws on the Armistead collection, which has been digitized and published online as part of the Louisiana Décima Project (<https://www.louisianaspanish.net/>). Public-facing educational materials are intended to engage all levels of Spanish-language learners, from beginners to fluent speakers, including heritage language learners as well as general audiences, with distinctive aspects of Louisiana’s Spanish dialects, songs, and folkways. Audiences engage directly with archival collection, enriching the experience of language learning as Louisianans realize they are a part of a tradition going back over three hundred years, and fostering connections with more recent Spanish-speaking communities in the state. We envision the possibility of the revival of these traditions. Speakers will present our modular language education materials, and address topics including the digital archiving project, history and language ideology, musical traditions, and language pedagogy.

Allison Shaver, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

“The Forgotten Front: North Louisiana’s Role During Hurricane Katrina”

In August 2025, the twentieth anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, Louisiana residents remembered how the storm battered the Gulf Coast, resulting in mass destruction and dislocation. Reflections largely centered on New Orleans: the failed levees that flooded the city, the panic of evacuees in the Superdome, and the numerous lives lost. Despite the vast body of research on Hurricane Katrina, little scholarship has been written regarding its impact on North Louisiana. Drawing on government materials from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette’s Blanco Archives and news reports, I employ historical policy and media analysis to argue that North Louisiana was a significant actor in the crisis. While current research has primarily focused on interstate

evacuations to cities such as Houston, I focus on intrastate evacuations to establish that North Louisiana served as an important evacuation hub. The region's inland cities were equipped to respond to short-term disaster management needs, such as trauma care, as well as long-term ones like sheltering. I also analyze North Louisiana's role after 2005, both as a receiver community that still retains many evacuees from South Louisiana and its continued function in the state's emergency preparedness plans. Ultimately, such research allows for a greater understanding of North Louisiana, its people, and its challenges.

Anna Kathryn Vaughn, Independent Researcher

“Louisiana Remembers: Ida Graham Price Strain, First Dean of NSU College of Nursing”

Every Fall semester, the Beta Chi Chapter (NSU) of Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing hosts the Graham Price Strain Conference. This two-hour continuing education program addresses issues in contemporary nursing. The chapter invites experts in their fields, such as mental health and compassion fatigue, cultural and diversity in nursing practice, and most recently, current trends in the diagnosis and treatment of HIV and AIDS in the community.

But ask any member of the Beta Chi chapter how much is known about the woman for whom the conference is named, and most do not realize that the program honors the first dean of the College of Nursing at Northwestern State University, the first state-supported baccalaureate of nursing program in Louisiana, Ida Graham Price Strain.

This presentation focuses on the woman who served her country through the Army Nurses Corps during World War II on the battlefield. Following the war, Lt Col Price continued to advance the profession of nursing as she advanced her own education as it became available. Upon retiring from military service, Miss Graham Price joined the effort for bringing nursing education forward by moving from hospital-based training of nurses to the four-year college degree, BSN.

In 2024, the NSU College of Nursing celebrated 75 years of nursing education with multiple programs for the advancement of nursing knowledge. This achievement reflects the goals and work of Ida Graham Price Strain. And for this, she deserves to be remembered.

Art Williams, Independent Scholar

“Caroline Dormon and the Politics of Public Planting”

Viewed in retrospect, Caroline Dormon's activities in the 1930s appear an extended project to preserve remnants of historic Louisiana that were rapidly disappearing. Legislation enabling the Kisatchie National Forest came in 1930, but the forest itself opened with no stands of native long-leaf pine due to depredations of industrial lumbering and bureaucratic incompetence at the federal level. The road-building project of the Huey Long regime threatened Native American antiquities and encouraged Dormon to take up the cause of native tribes. It was during this period that Dormon encouraged John Swanton of the Smithsonian Museum to undertake the first study of native Louisiana tribes.

By 1938 Dormon's focus returned to her enduring love for flowers when, through the offices of A.R. Johnson, an old friend and state Commissioner of Hospitals, Dormon was appointed by the Earl Long administration to landscape state hospital grounds in Pineville, Independence, and Monroe. In one respect this was an unlikely appointment since Dormon's North-Louisiana family was historically anti-Long, while Dormon's plan to landscape with native plants and trees ran counter to the progressive thrust of Long's regime.

Problems quickly ensued. Dormon herself was criticized for accepting private hospitality in her pursuit of suitable native plants. Job seekers took umbrage at the fact that most of the labor involved utilized the WPA and the YPA, cutting out opportunities for local employment. Nurserymen, centered at Forest Hill, were irate that plants were provided free of charge by Dormon's aristocratic friends thus denying them state contracts they believed were owed them. A stormy confrontation took place as a result.

In 1940 Dormon's personal situation was in a sense reversed. Having resigned her position with state hospitals, Dormon sought employment in the State Highway Department under new "reform" Governor Sam Houston Jones and was initially met with suspicion due to her previous employment by Earl Long. Only the intervention of prominent friends like Isadore Stern of New Orleans saved her project to adorn Louisiana's new highways with native trees and shrubs.