



Roosevelt
Institute for
American
Studies

A Water's History of the United States

21-23 May 2025

**Abdij 9
4331 BK Middelburg
The Netherlands**

Conference Program

Wednesday, 21 May 2025

9:00-9:30 **Registration & Coffee/Tea**

9:30-10:00 **Welcome and Introduction** [AUDITORIUM]

- Dario Fazzi (Leiden University/RIAS)
- Gaetano Di Tommaso (RIAS)
- Michael Patrick Cullinane (Theodore Roosevelt Center/Dickinson State University)
- Frank Mehring (Radboud University Nijmegen/Netherlands American Studies Association)

10:00-11:00 **Opening Lecture** [AUDITORIUM]

Martin Melosi (University of Houston)
The Many Faces of Water

11:00-11:30 **Coffee/Tea** [FOYER]

11:30-13:00 **Panel 1: Water and Race** [AUDITORIUM]

Chair: Marcella Schute (Erasmus University Rotterdam)

Thanayi Jackson (Cal Poly San Luis Obispo)
Allensworth, California: Race Colonies, Segregation and Water Policy in Early 20th Century

Sam Hege (Max Planck Institute)
Mining for Water: Reckoning with the Legacies of Aquifer's in US Histories of Race and Capital

Sara Fingal (California State University) & Camille Wise (Brown University)
Wade-Ins on the Chicago Shoreline: An Environmental History of the Civil Rights Movement

Panel 2: Water Narratives and National Imaginaries [PRIORIJ]

Chair: Frank Mehring (Radboud University Nijmegen)

Sabine Sielke (University of Bonn)
Waves of Knowing: Shapes of Water in US-American Literary and Cultural Practice

Steffen Wöll (Leipzig University)
Waves of Conquest, Currents of Dissent: Liquifying America's Transoceanic Empire

Jutta Zimmermann (Christian Albrecht University of Kiel)
The Literary Oeuvre of Lidia Yuknavitch in "Water's History of the United States"

13:00-14:30	Lunch	[FOYER]
14:30-16:00	Panel 3: Water Colonialism and Dispossession [PRIORIJ] Chair: Mike Patrick Cullinane (TR Center/Dickinson State University) Anthony Carlson (School for Advanced Military Studies) <i>Conservation and Indigenous Dispossession: The Weaponization of Drainage during the Progressive Era</i> [ONLINE] Lubna Alzaroo (University of Washington) <i>US Water Infrastructure as a Settler Colonial Infrastructure: A Comparative Study between the "Tennessee Valley Authority" and "Jordan Valley Authority Plan"</i> Laura M. De Vos (Radboud University Nijmegen) <i>"This Paper Secures Your Fish": Settler "Progress" vs. Indigenous Continuity</i>	
	Panel 4: Flowing (of) Waters, Writing (of) Identities [AUDITORIUM] Chair: Heleen Blommers (Radboud University Nijmegen) Elisabeth Winkler (Christian Albrecht University of Kiel) <i>"One Limitless River": The Flood of 1927 of the Mississippi River in William Faulkner's "Old Man"</i> Anna-Lena Oldehus (Albert Ludwigs University of Freiburg) <i>Narrating Nation and Resistance through Water: The Great Lakes in the Writings of Margaret Fuller and E. Pauline Johnson (Tekahionwake)</i> Maarten Zwiers (University of Groningen) <i>Toxic South: Liquids, Land, Insects, and Plants in Jim Crow Agriculture</i>	
16:00-16:30	Coffee/Tea	[FOYER]
16:30-18:15	Panel 5: Water, War, and Empire Building [PRIORIJ] Chair: James J. Kimble (Seton Hall University) Brooks D. Simpson (Arizona State University) <i>Ulysses S. Grant's Use of Waterways, 1861-1865</i> Daniel Roberts (Maritime Administration, US DOT) <i>The Rise and Fall of the United States Government Freight Services</i> [ONLINE] David Stradling (University of Cincinnati) <i>Empire, Dredges, and the Control of Water</i> Adrienne Renee Brown (Rachel Carson Center) <i>Water and War Industry: A Water History of the Kaiser Shipyards in Portland, Oregon</i>	

Panel 6: Water and Practices of Indigenous Resilience [AUDITORIUM]

co-sponsored by the Network for Indigenous Studies at Leiden University
Chair: Jessie Morgan-Owens (Leiden University)

Cristina Puntaru (University of Edinburgh)

In Defense of Water and Land: Demilitarization Movements in Hawaii [ONLINE]

James D. Rice (Tufts University)

Aquacide: Wetlands, Indigenous People, and Colonialism in California's Sacramento Valley

Jessica D. Conaway (University of Wisconsin-Madison) & Edith S. Leoso
(Bad River Tribe)

Ganawendan Ginibiiminaan (Take Care of Our Water!): Mobilizing for Watersheds-at-Risk with the Bad River Ojibwe

Vedran Obućina (Centre for Interreligious Dialogue – Croatia)

Sacred Currents: The Significance of Water and Rivers in Eco-Theology and Native American Traditions

18:15-19:15

Reception

[FOYER]

Thursday, 22 May 2025

9:30-11:00

Panel 7: Rivers of History

[AUDITORIUM]

Chair: Julia Irwin (Louisiana State University)

Rachel Herrmann (Cardiff University)

The St. Marys River, Florida, as a US Place

Anna S. Cohen (Florida State University) & Molly B. Cannon (Utah State University)
Water-Community Entanglements on the Colorado Plateau

Ellen Griffith Spears (University of Alabama)

"Radical Impermanence": Riverine Environs in the Environmental Politics and History of the US South

Panel 8: Maritime Spaces, Maritime Narratives

[PRIORIJ]

Chair: Jeanine Quené (RIAS)

Tarık Tansu Yiğit (Başkent University)

The Maritime Mythos and Its Environmental Echoes in Nineteenth-Century New England

Ruth Gehrmann (Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz)

Women Writing on Whaling Vessels in the 19th Century

Niklas Müller (Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz/Obama Institute)

Water as the Uncanny Other in 20th-Century Comic Books

11:00-11:30	Coffee/Tea	[FOYER]
11:30-13:00	Panel 9: Urban Waterscapes Chair: Martin Melosi (University of Houston) Ella Howard, Thaddeus Guldbrandsen & Kristen Rosero (Wentworth Institute of Technology) <i>Legacies of Water Histories in New Orleans, Boston, and Norfolk</i> Michael Holleran (University of Texas Austin) <i>The Lost Waterscapes of Urban Ditches</i> Samia Cohen (Brown University) <i>Where the Ponds That Used to Be Dumps Used to Be</i>	[AUDITORIUM]
	Panel 10: Water for People, People for Water Chair: Ellen Griffith Spears (University of Alabama) Mark Squillace (University of Colorado Boulder) <i>Public Access to Water Resources</i> Maud Rijks (Leiden University) <i>The Beluga Campaign: Environmental Justice and Translocal Activism in the Great Lakes, 1985-1992</i> Matthew Herbst (University of California San Diego) <i>"Bring Us Back": Survival and Resilience in the California Desert</i>	[PRIORI]
13:00-14:30	Lunch	[FOYER]
14:30-16:00	Panel 11: Water Infrastructure Chair: Sarah Hamilton (University of Bergen) Anna Bierbrauer (University of Wisconsin-Madison) <i>Invisible Inequities: The Role of Water Infrastructure in Shaping Social Disparities in 20th-Century Denver</i> Ramya Swayamprakash (Grand Valley State University) <i>Infrastructures Hidden in Plain Sight: Internal Waters, Improvements, and Their Legacies in the North American Great Lakes</i> [ONLINE] Hunter Kennedy (University of Chicago) <i>Setting the River Free? Nature, Infrastructure, and Experiment at the Glen Canyon Dam</i>	[PRIORI]

Panel 12: Coastal Science and Coastal Life

[AUDITORIUM]

Chair: Sarah Elkind (San Diego State University)

Joanna L. Dyl (Pomona College)

Coastal Waters and Moving Sand: Science, Engineering, and Agency in the Development of California's Beaches

Matt Sedlar (George Mason University)

Life among the Levees: A Historical Analysis of Community Adaptation in Lafourche Parish, Louisiana

Thomas Blake Earle (Texas A&M)

Catching Hell: Social Conflict and the Estuarine Fisheries of the Gulf Coast in the Aftermath of the Vietnam War

16:00-16:30

Coffee/Tea

[FOYER]

16:30-17:30

RIAS Environmental History Lecture 2025

[AUDITORIUM]

Sarah Hamilton (University of Bergen)

"Towards Histories for a Thirsty Planet: Towards a Global History of Large-Scale Groundwater Exploitation"

18:00

 **GALE** Dinner & Launch Blue History Network

Friday, 23 May 2025

9:00-10:30

Panel 13: Water Techno-Politics at Home and Abroad

[AUDITORIUM]

Chair: Sarah B. Snyder (American University)

James R. Fleming (Colby College)

Rivers in the Sky in American History

Elizabeth Hameeteman (Technische Universität Berlin)

Insatiable Thirst: Solar Desalination and the US Quest for Water and Power in the Postwar World

Yoram Carboex (Norwegian University of Science and Technology)

An Ocean of Possibilities: The U.S., the Law of the Sea, and an Alternative Deep-Sea Mining Regime

Panel 14: Water Scarcity and Dystopian Fiction [PRIORIJ]

Chair: Nancy Mykoff (University College Roosevelt)

Teresa Botelho (Nova University of Lisbon)

The Archive of Water Rights in American Fiction: Writing the Colorado River in Drought Narratives

Anneke Schewe (Christian Albrecht University of Kiel)

Fluid Allegory: US Colonialism, Exploitation, and Water Scarcity in Denis Villeneuve's Dune (2021) and Dune: Part Two (2024)

10:30-11:00 **Coffee/Tea** [FOYER]

11:00-12:00 **Roundtable 1: Water and the American State** [AUDITORIUM]

- Julia Irwin (Louisiana State University)
- Martin Melosi (University of Houston)
- Mark Squillace (University of Colorado Boulder)
- Gaetano Di Tommaso (RIAS)

Roundtable 2: Water and American Studies [PRIORIJ]

- Mariia Kravchenko (Fulbright Program Ukraine/Institute of International Education)
- Frank Mehring (Radboud University Nijmegen)
- Sabine Sielke (University of Bonn)
- Dario Fazzi (Leiden University/RIAS)

12:00-13:00 **Lunch** [PRIORIJ]

13:00-14:00 **Closing Address and Remarks** [AUDITORIUM]

Sarah S. Elkind (San Diego State University)

Thinking with Water: Negotiating Federalism in Twentieth-Century America

14:30 **End of the Conference**

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