

## About the Mahan Symposium

Each spring semester the University of South Alabama Department of History sponsors the Howard Mahan Lecture, a public lecture by a distinguished visiting historian. Previous speakers have been Dan Carter of the University of South Carolina (on the legacy of George Wallace) and Christopher Browning of the University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill (on the Holocaust). This year we will present the third Mahan Lecture, to be given by Professor Daniel Usner, Jr, recently appointed to Vanderbilt University after 22 years at Cornell. The title of his talk is "The Significance of the Gulf Coast in Early American History." The lecture will take place in the Laidlaw Center for Performing Arts on the USA campus, 7:30 p.m., Thursday, March 13, 2003, to be followed by a book signing and reception (with live music).

This year's lecture is presented in conjunction with the (first) Howard Mahan Symposium. This year the topic of the symposium is "The Colonial Gulf South." The department plans to host a symposium on some aspect of Gulf Coast history every third year. Professor Usner's talk will serve as the keynote address of the symposium, which will feature paper presentations and scholarly roundtables Friday and Saturday (March 14-15) at the Museum of Mobile. The symposium features some of the best and most distinguished historians working on the region (or colonial America in general) along with several promising advanced graduate students and recent Ph.D. recipients. In part the purpose of the symposium is to start (or continue) a scholarly conversation about the colonial Gulf South (i.e. Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana), to assess current and ongoing research, and to chart the course for future research and writing about the region. We plan to assemble the presentations into an edited volume to be submitted to a university press in the near future.

In all of this, the USA History Department seeks to advance the cause of research and writing on the history of the Gulf Coast region, and just as importantly, to bring the fruits of that research to the general public of our service area. We seek to make the university more meaningful to the local community at the same time we are supporting vital historical research and fomenting the creation and exchange of knowledge. Financial support is provided by the USA Foundation.

### ***About the presenters:***

**Daniel Usner** is a professor of history at Vanderbilt University. He is the author of the award-winning book, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy* (1992) and more recently *American Indians in the Mississippi Valley* (1998).

**Jane G. Landers** is the featured speaker at Friday's luncheon. Her talk is entitled "A Nation Divided? Blood Seminoles and Black Seminoles on the Florida Frontier." Professor Landers is Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Director of the Center for Latin American and Iberian Studies, and an associate professor of history at Vanderbilt University. Her book *Black Society in Spanish Florida* (1999) won the Simpkins Award of the Southern Historical Association. She is the editor of *Colonial Plantations and Economy in Florida* (2000) and *Against the Odds: Free Blacks in the Slave Societies of the Americas* (1996), along with numerous articles and book

chapters.

**Amy Turner Bushnell** is an adjunct professor of history at Brown University and formerly a professor of history at the University of Charleston and the University of South Alabama. She is the author of several books, articles and book chapters on colonial Florida, including *Situado and Sabana* (1994) and *The King's Coffer* (1981). Along with Jack Greene she edited *Establishing Exceptionalism: Historiography and the Colonial America* and *Negotiated Empires: Centers and Peripheries in the Americas, 1500-1820*.

**Gregory O'Brien** is an associate professor of history at the University of Southern Mississippi. He is the author of *Choctaws in a Revolutionary Age, 1750-1830*. (2002). His article "The Conqueror Meets the Unconquered: Negotiating Cultural Boundaries on the Post-Revolutionary Southern Frontier," won the 2002 Green/Ramsdell Award for the best article in the *Journal of Southern History*.

**Robin Fabel** is an emeritus professor of history at Auburn University, and the author of *Bombast and Broadides: George Johnstone, 1730-1787; The Economy of British West Florida*, and most recently, *Colonial Challenges: Britons, Native Americans, and Caribs, 1759-1773*.

**David Wheat** is a graduate student in history at Vanderbilt University studying the colonial Gulf South under the direction of Jane Landers and Daniel Usner.

**Shannon Lee Dawdy** is a Ph.D. candidate in anthropology and history at the University of Michigan. Her dissertation project is entitled "La Ville Sauvage: Colonials and Creoles in French New Orleans, 1699-1769." She is the former director of UNO's Greater New Orleans Archeology Program.

**Philip Boucher** is Distinguished Professor and Chair of History of the University of Alabama in Huntsville and the author of *Cannibal Encounters: Europeans and Island Caribs, 1492-1763* (1992), *Les Nouvelles Frances en Amerique: France in the Americas, An Imperial Perspective, 1500-1815* (1989) and *The Shaping of the French Colonial Empire* (1985). He is a former president of the French Colonial Historical Society.

**Sophie Burton** received her Ph.D. in History from Texas Christian University in December 2002. Her dissertation is entitled, "Family and Economy in Frontier Louisiana: Colonial Natchitoches, 1714-1803." Her article "A Demographic Overview of Colonial Mobile, 1786-1805" won the Bouligny Award from the Louisiana Historical Association.

**Andrew McMichael** is Assistant Professor of History at Western Kentucky University, and the author of the forthcoming book, *Reluctant Revolutionaries: The West Florida Borderlands, 1785-1810*. He is a former assistant editor of the Thomas Jefferson Papers at Princeton University.

**Ariana Hannum Moore** is a Ph.D. candidate in history at Johns Hopkins University who is completing a dissertation on the economy and society of Spanish West Florida. She has presented papers at the

meetings of the Southern Historical Association and the Gulf South Historical Association.

**Kevin D. Roberts** is a Ph.D. candidate in history at the University of Texas at Austin. His dissertation is entitled “Sugar Cultures: Slaves, Masters, and Atlantic World Identities in Louisiana and Cuba, 1791-1866.”

**Virginia Meacham Gould** has taught courses at Tulane University, Our Lady of the Holy Cross College (New Orleans), and Emory University. She is the author and editor of *Chained to the Rock of Adversity: To Be Free, Black, and Female in the Old South*, and co-author of *No Cross on Earth, No Cross in Heaven: Black Nuns in Nineteenth-Century New Orleans*. She has published numerous articles and book chapters on women and free people of color in the early south.

**Jack P. Greene** is the Andrew Mellon Professor of Humanities at Johns Hopkins University and a foremost authority on colonial British North America. He is author (or editor) of more than a dozen books on colonial America, including *Pursuits of Happiness; Money, Trade and Power; Peripheries and Center; The American Revolution: Its Character and Limits; Colonial British America; Colonial Identity in the Atlantic World; Negotiated Authorities; The Intellectual Construction of America; Interpreting Early America; Colonies to Nation; Imperatives, Behaviors and Identities; Negotiated Empires; Neither Slave nor Free*; and *Understanding the American Revolution*. He has directed more than 70 doctoral dissertations.