



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 [AUDITORIUM] 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> 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> Cristina Puntaru (University of Edinburgh) <i>In Defense of Water and Land: Demilitarization Movements in Hawaii</i>	
	Panel 4: Flowing (of) Waters, Writing (of) Identities [PRIORIJ] 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 [AUDITORIUM] Chair: William Michael Schmidli (Leiden 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> 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 Resistance [PRIORIJ]

Chair: Jessie Morgan-Owens (Leiden University)

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

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

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

Vedran Obućina (Centre for Interreligious Dialogue – Croatia)
Sacred Currents: The Significance of Water and Rivers in Eco-Theology and Native American Traditions

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 Gehrman (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

[AUDITORIUM]

Chair: Martin Melosi (University of Houston)

Ella Howard, Thaddeus Guldbrandsen & Kristen Rosero (Wentworth Institute of Technology)

Legacies of Water Histories in New Orleans, Boston, and Norfolk

Michael Holleran (University of Texas Austin)

The Lost Waterscapes of Urban Ditches

Samia Cohen (Brown University)

Where the Ponds That Used to Be Dumps Used to Be

Panel 10: Water for People, People for Water

[PRIORIJ]

Chair: Ellen Griffith Spears (University of Alabama)

Mark Squillace (University of Colorado Boulder)

Public Access to Water Resources

Maud Rijks (Leiden University)

The Beluga Campaign: Environmental Justice and Translocal Activism in the Great Lakes, 1985-1992

Matthew Herbst (University of California San Diego)

"Bring Us Back": Survival and Resilience in the California Desert

13:00-14:30

Lunch

[FOYER]

14:30-16:00

Panel 11: Water Infrastructure

[AUDITORIUM]

Chair: Sarah Hamilton (University of Bergen)

Anna Bierbrauer (University of Wisconsin-Madison)

Invisible Inequities: The Role of Water Infrastructure in Shaping Social Disparities in 20th-Century Denver

Ramya Swayamprakash (Grand Valley State University)

Infrastructures Hidden in Plain Sight: Internal Waters, Improvements, and Their Legacies in the North American Great Lakes

Hunter Kennedy (University of Chicago)

Setting the River Free? Nature, Infrastructure, and Experiment at the Glen Canyon Dam

Panel 12: Coastal Science and Coastal Life

[PRIORIJ]

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

16:30-17:30 **RIAS Environmental History Lecture 2025** [AUDITORIUM]

Sarah Hamilton (University of Bergen)
Towards a Global History of Groundwater

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)

Suzanne Manizza-Roszak (University of Groningen)
Young Adult Fiction, Drought Futures, and Narrativizing the Limits of Resilience

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

11:00-12:00	Roundtable 1: Water and the American State • Julia Irwin (Louisiana State University) • Martin Melosi (University of Houston) • Mark Squillace (University of Colorado Boulder) • Gaetano Di Tommaso (RIAS)	[AUDITORIUM]
	Roundtable 2: Water and American Studies • Frank Mehring (Radboud University Nijmegen) • Mariia Kravchenko (Fulbright Program Ukraine/Institute of International Education) • Dario Fazzi (Leiden University/RIAS) • Sabine Sielke (University of Bonn)	[PRIORIJ]
12:00-13:00	Lunch	[PRIORIJ]
13:00-14:00	Closing Address and Remarks Sarah S. Elkind (San Diego State University) <i>Thinking with Water: Negotiating Federalism in Twentieth-Century America</i>	[AUDITORIUM]
14:30	End of the Conference	

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