CHAPTER 17

LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY GEOGRAPHY AT SEVENTY-FIVE:
“BERKELEY ON THE BAYOU” AND BEYOND

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INTRODUCTION. L.S.U.’s Department of Geography and Anthropology celebrated its 75th anniversary in 2003, hosting the 99th Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers in New Orleans, and sponsoring other events to commemorate this milestone. However, this datum—as with most founding dates—is open to interpretation. The actual beginnings of academic geography at Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College are similar to geography’s origins in many American colleges and universities from the mid-to-late decades of the 19th century. A few standard geography courses were features of most curricula, though in many cases they were offered only at sporadic intervals reflecting a lack of trained or interested personnel. With the onset of what Dunbar (1981, p. 71) has dubbed “The Guilded Age,” middle class America’s concern for careers, credentials, and professionalization in general laid the groundwork for the emergence of geography as a formal academic discipline and geographers as members of the professoriat. The first separate Department of Geography in an American research university was founded at the University of California in 1898 (Dunbar, 1981, p. 73). With the arrival of Berkeley-trained geologist-geographer Richard Joel Russell at L.S.U. 30 years later, an ongoing geography program was established that soon became an important component of the university’s research and teaching mission. During the subsequent 50 years L.S.U. geographers demonstrated fidelity to their Berkeley roots and maintained close relations with the parent department. At the same time the development of a sustained geography program did not result in an entirely independent Department of Geography. Rather, Russell, together with geologist Henry Howe, formed an integrated School of Geology, later called the School of Geoscience, in which geography grew in close association with geology and anthropology. This arrangement helped both physical and human geography to flourish, in effect united with closely allied disciplines.

In the past 25 years or so, L.S.U.’s combined Department of Geography and Anthropology has enlarged its foci and diversified its faculty to be sure, but the bearings set by the Berkeleyans Russell, Kniffen*, and West* in the first three decades still help inform the interests and provide the orientation of a number of its faculty and students2 (Fig. 1). Whether this is a confirmation of Zelinsky’s (1973, pp. 13-14) Doctrine of First Effective Settlement, or simply conformal with

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Louisiana's customary quirkiness and arrière-garde pacing and posturing is left to the reader to decide. We, however, would like to think that it represents fidelity to geographic thought and practice that has made good sense to local constituents and has produced good science and artful studies for a larger academic audience over a fairly long haul. Although L.S.U.'s joint Department of Geography and Anthropology has been the only such program (offering graduate degrees in both disciplines) in North America for most of its existence, its strong emphasis on the cultural, historical, and physical branches of the discipline invites comparison with some departments at other research universities, especially in the AAG's Southwestern region (SWAAG). While L.S.U.'s Geography Department was the first in the region to institute a graduate program (1933), what impact and influence it has had on the development of other programs in the SWAAG region, is beyond the skin of this telling. Here, we are primarily concerned to offer some outlines for a larger history of L.S.U. geography. We should note, however, that graduate departments in the AAG's Southeastern Division (SEDAAG) generally developed along very different lines, with lesser apparent interaction with either Geology or Anthropology.

PRELUDES TO ACADEMIC GEOGRAPHY AT L.S.U.: 1860–1928. Louisiana State University was established near Pineville, Louisiana, as the Louisiana State Seminary of Learning and Military Academy in January of 1860. Its doors closed after only 18 months and its Superintendent, Col. William Tecumseh Sherman, departed in the summer of 1861 with the outbreak of the Civil War. But during this time, the earliest infancy of L.S.U., two geography courses were a part of the curriculum, “Geography” and “Descriptive Geography” using texts by Morse and Davies respectively (Blouet and Stitcher, 1981, p. 332). Following the Civil War, the Seminary reopened only to burn in 1869. It was then moved to Baton Rouge, its name changed to Louisiana State University in 1870, and the institution was merged with the Louisiana State Agricultural and Mechanical College in 1877.

Courses in geography returned in 1893 as components of the geology curriculum. Professor of Geology and Botany W. W. Clendenin taught “Physical Geography” and “Meteorology” in addition to courses in geology and botany, from 1893 to 1895. From 1896 to 1901 geography was dropped once again from the curriculum but was reintroduced in the Department of Commerce in 1901 with two courses in commercial geography. The first, “Industrial Physical Geography,” dealt with world resources, “political geography and commercial conditions” and the second, “Commercial Geography of the United States,” covered “trade relations and comparative resources of the United States and other countries.” These courses were offered from 1901 to 1918. In 1902 courses in physical geography and meteorology were revived as part of a new geology curriculum, but by the next year only one course in general geology was included in the university catalog. Efforts at establishing a geology program had apparently failed for the second time.
Geology enjoyed its third revival with Frederick Valentine Emerson’s (1871–1919) arrival at L.S.U. in 1913 after serving as a geology instructor at the University of Missouri. There he had worked with the eminent soil scientist and geographer C. F. Marbut (Martin and James, 1993, p. 338). Emerson had originally intended to be a geologist and was hired as a geologist at L.S.U., but his preference seems to have been with geography as most of his publications were on geographical topics. Emerson had studied with A. P. Brigham at Colgate (B.A., 1898) and spent a year each at Cornell (with R. Tarr) and Harvard (with W. M. Davis) before going on to the new Department of Geography at Chicago in 1905. Brigham, Marbut, and Tarr were students of Davis, and all promoted the Davisonian doctrines. Emerson was granted the first Ph.D. in geography from an American Department of Geography in 1907 (Dunbar, 1981, p. 75). His dissertation, “A Geographic Interpretation of New York City,” was completed at the University of Chicago under the direction of J. Paul Goode. This foray into urban geography and away from his earlier interests in physical geography may have been the result of his discomfort with Rollin Salisbury with whom he could have been expected to work (Dunbar, 1981, p. 76). In contrast, Carl Sauer found Salisbury quite compatible, and Chicago’s human geographers less congenial despite the fact that Sauer’s (1915) dissertation was a regional-historical geography of the Ozarks. This is but one minor and ironic dissonance among many, marking Emerson’s ephemeral legacy at L.S.U., when compared with Sauer’s major and lasting impacts through his former associates and students. While at L.S.U., Emerson also served as Director of the Soil Survey of Louisiana and published articles on the geography and geology of the southeastern U.S. and Louisiana (1916, 1919a, 1919b). His capstone publication, a text on Agricultural Geology (1920), was published posthumously.

Emerson taught a number of geology courses as well as offerings with more geographical content such as “Physiography,” “Geological and Geographical Fieldwork,” and “Geology and Geography of Louisiana.” The physiography course was basically an introductory physical geography and was divided into two sections the last year he taught it. The first focused exclusively on weather and climate, emphasizing “effects of climate on human affairs and the distribution of the world’s crops” while the second was devoted to the genesis of landforms and their “influence on human affairs.” His course “Geography of the Great War” [World War I], introduced shortly before his death, reflected another facet of his interests. Earlier he had written articles on the “physiographic control” and “geographical influence” in Civil War campaigns (1905a, 1905b, 1906).

With Emerson’s untimely death at the age of 48 from a “cerebral hemorrhage caused by acute indigestion” (State-Times Advocate, 1919) in October of 1919, a growing geology department once again collapsed “leaving only scattered heaps of rocks, minerals, and fossils” (Morgan, 1987). Given his Harvard physiographic and Chicago environmentalist training and outlooks, Emerson’s presence might have fostered an earlier and quite different evolution of geography at L.S.U. Had he presided over a growing geography program in the 1920s based on the methodological approaches and research interests he held at the time of his death, then the Berkeley connection might never have occurred. Rather, the L.S.U. geography program would have probably developed in a fashion parallel to the departments emerging upriver in the greater Midwest. However, with the repeated faltering of geography once again failed to take root as a discipline at L.S.U.

In 1922, the same year that construction of the current L.S.U. campus began, Henry V. Howe was hired as Assistant Professor of Geography “with a mandate from the governor and the university president to build a credible department of geography to aid the state in the development of a burgeoning petroleum industry” (Morgan, 1987). Howe quickly and efficiently built his department, introducing coursework in economic and petroleum geology, petrography, and petroleum production methods. He achieved the status of full professor in three years and immediately set out to expand his department beyond geography. Howe revived geography once more, adding “Principles of Geography” to the geography curriculum in 1925—“a course Dr. Howe quite possibly taught himself” (Kniffen, 1978).

In 1927 Paul T. Post was added to the faculty of the Geology Department with the title “Assistant Professor of Geography,” making him the university’s first designated geography professor though he “taught primarily geography courses and remained only one year” (Kniffen, 1978). In addition to continuing the initial course in geography, Post added the course “Geography of North America” which explored how “geographic factors... influenced and determined the history and development of the United States, Canada, and Mexico.”

**GEOGRAPHY TAKES ROOT.** Most of the geography course descriptions prior to 1928 are thick with phrases that suggest environmental determinism was accepted and promoted by the professors teaching geography. Frederick V. Emerson, trained at Chicago, was certainly a proponent of determinist doctrine and the description of “Geography of North America” indicates the same was probably true of Paul Post.

In 1928 Richard Joel Russell replaced Post and brought with him new and different ideas about geography. Russell graduated from Berkeley with a Ph.D. in geology, but was exposed to geography as well. In particular, Russell had been exposed to W. M. Davis’s ideas and approaches after participating in one of his guest seminars at Berkeley and spending time with him in the field. After Carl Sauer and Albrecht Penck offered alternatives to the Davisonian approach, Russell moved solidly into their camp (Walker, 1990). While at the University of California, Howe and Russell had been classmates and friends, though Howe completed his studies at Stanford while Russell stayed on at Berkeley where he taught beginning geography courses as an associate with the arrival of Carl Sauer (Howe, 1971). After completing his dissertation in 1926, Russell taught at Texas Technical College for two years until he was contacted by Howe about a position at L.S.U. (Howe, 1971):
In 1928 I offered Russell a position to teach structural geology and to develop a Department of Geography at Louisiana State University. Dick was delighted with the opportunity and remained at L.S.U. for the remainder of his career, despite attractive offers from many of the leading universities of this country and Canada.

Russell recognized the potential the position offered (Howe, 1971):

One [Howe quoting Russell] could join with an old friend to help build a major school. In what other place could one organize the committee structure of a faculty, serve as Chairman of the Committee on Libraries for 25 years, practically design one of the most modern library buildings in the United States and see a collection grow from about 200,000 to well over a million volumes? And where could one establish a Department of Geography that need not be concerned with bread-and-butter courses, and, in fact, at the time of conferring the first Ph.D., had a record of turning out 11 masters and but one bachelor? . . . One could be a professor for doctoral candidates in either Geology or Geography, find generous research support, and enjoy the physical facilities.

Russell had a long and productive career at L.S.U. He was Head of the Geography Department from its inception until 1949, and served as Acting Director of the School of Geology from 1944–1949. From 1949–1961 he was Dean of the Graduate School. In 1962 he was made a Boyd Professor, the university’s highest honor. Scientific research and publication, however, remained Russell’s top priorities. He traveled the world and produced more than 150 publications in various aspects of geography and geology, established the Coastal Studies Institute at L.S.U., and remained active until his death in 1971.

The Department of Geography and Anthropology has adopted Russell’s arrival as its founding date (Fig. 1). However, geography’s formal establishment as a “department” in the School of Geology did not actually occur until 1931–1932. The undergraduate major in geography became available the following year. Russell enthusiastically took up the task of building a productive and viable department from scratch. He scrapped the geography courses taught by his predecessor, Post, and initiated a “sequence of quite differently oriented courses” (Kniffen, 1978). The 1928–1929 catalog included three geography courses: “Introduction to Geography,” “Economic Geography,” and “Map Reading and Interpretation.” His introductory geography course emphasized spatial relationships and the distribution of cultural forms rather than geographic influences or determinants.

Fred B. Kniffen was hired as Assistant Professor of Geology and Geography in 1929 and submitted his dissertation on the Colorado Delta (Kniffen, 1930) at Berkeley the following year. At the same time he accepted L.S.U.’s offer he was being considered for the chairship of the University of Oklahoma’s Anthropology Department. Kniffen had majored in geology as an undergraduate at the University of Michigan. After his three-year Wanderjahre in the Pacific Northwest and Alaska, Kniffen accepted Sauer and Leffly’s invitation to study geography at Berkeley (Walker, 1994). While Sauer served as his advisor, he also worked with and was heavily influenced by Alfred Kroeber (Kniffen, 1979). Anthropology, though technically only his minor, became more than a minor consideration for Kniffen during his career. Kniffen considered himself not only a geographer but “a special kind of anthropologist” (Richardson, 1994). Kniffen’s broad training in geography, geology, archaeology, and anthropology proved an ideal fit for the young and academically diverse department at L.S.U. Among the initial reasons he came to Louisiana was “the hope that work on the numerous Indian mounds would help date both coastal changes and changes in the course of the Mississippi” (Howe, 1971). Kniffen would soon find many new and exciting research directions in Louisiana, a region that was quite unfamiliar to him before he accepted Russell’s offer (Crews, 1977):

. . . So Dick [Russell] wrote out and wanted me to come down here in the fall of ’29 after I had my degree. I had a desire to see the Deep South and so I came down here.

During Kniffen’s first two years “World Regional Geography,” “Meteorology,” “Geomorphology,” “North America,” and L.S.U.’s first anthropology courses, “General Anthropology” and “The American Indians,” were added to the Geology roster. Kniffen headed the Anthropology Department (initially separate from geology) until 1939 and taught its courses along with most of the geography courses. The Department of Geology now included petroleum engineering, geology, geophysics, and anthropology, and faculty members often taught courses in two, or even three, of these divisions concurrently. In 1931 these four divisions formally became components of a “School of Geology” that persisted, losing petroleum engineering along the way, until 1970 when it was renamed the “School of Geoscience.”

Geography became the unifying link between the earth sciences in the School of Geology at L.S.U. Russell personified the junction between geology and physical geography while Kniffen provided the bridge between anthropology and human geography. Russell’s research and teaching were mainly in geomorphology and physical geography. He served as both president of the Association of American Geographers (1948) and the Geological Society of America (1957) (Morgan, 1987). Kniffen’s courses were mostly in geography and anthropology and his research interests were primarily culturally oriented. He served as honorary president of the Association of American Geographers (1964–1965) and became a Boyd Professor in 1967.

The department produced its first graduate student in 1935. Helen Bowie was granted the first Master of Science degree with a thesis in “social geography” entitled “Bayou Lafourche.” Kniffen served as major advisor. Between 1935 and
1941 seven master’s degrees in geography were granted and one Ph.D. This first
document was awarded to John S. Kyser who later became president of North-
western Louisiana State University. His dissertation, “The Evolution of Louisiana
Parishes in Relation to Population Growth and Movements,” was filed in 1938 but
no additional doctorates were granted for 15 years. During this period most gradu-
ate work was carried out on Louisiana topics as these were the most immediate and
accessible. The state, with its long history and resulting cultural “gumbo,” lent itself
well to the brand of geography taking shape.

In 1936–1937 Berkeley-trained geographer Lauren C. Post* spent a year at
L.S.U. as a visiting instructor while completing his dissertation on “Cultural Geog-
raphy of the Prairies of Southwest Louisiana.” Post taught “Louisiana Geography
among other courses. In 1938–1939 another Berkeley-trained geographer, Peveril
Meigs* spent a year at L.S.U. as a Visiting Professor while Kniffen was on sabbati-
cal in Europe. During the same year several anthropology courses were added:
“Cultural Anthropology,” “Culture Growth,” and a course on African cultures, all
taught by Kniffen. Archaeology got its start during this time with James A. Ford, a
Kniffen student, joining the faculty as a Research Associate in 1937. Charged with
directing a new Works Progress Administration (WPA) project, Ford directed excava-
tions at sites throughout Louisiana (Kniffen, 1978; Haag, 1994). The project ended
with the onset of World War II but was perhaps “the most fruitful period in
Louisiana archaeology” (Kniffen, 1978). After the war Ford left for graduate studies
at the University of Michigan, and formal archaeological research and instruction
were not revived until the 1960s.

THE 1940s. Cultural anthropology continued to grow during the 1940s as anthro-
pologist Andrew C. Albrecht was added to the faculty. Albrecht had received his
Bachelor’s degree at Berkeley and completed his Ph.D. in Vienna. In 1941 he
assumed many of Kniffen’s teaching duties in anthropology as well as conducting
the ethnohistorical component of the continuing WPA project for a short time.
Albrecht remained at L.S.U. until 1952, teaching most of the anthropology courses.
During this time he also introduced courses including “Primitive Society” in 1941,
“Indian Civilizations of Middle and South America” in 1942, and “Ethnology of the
Pacific Basin” in 1944. Kniffen continued to teach his anthropology courses on
North American Indians and Africa. Perhaps the major event (other than Russell’s
and Kniffen’s arrivals) in the first two decades of the department’s history was host-
ing the 1940 annual meeting of the Association of American Geographers (Walker,
1977). Appropriately, Carl Sauer was the AAG’s president that year. He delivered
his memorable presidential address “Foreword to Historical Geography” (Sauer,
scribed for American geography in this epochal address was being, or subsequently
would be, instituted within the L.S.U. program. The meeting and its well-run field
trips through south Louisiana brought widespread recognition to the department
(Kniffen, 1978). Kniffen succeeded Russell as Chair of the Department of Geogra-
phy and Anthropology, serving from 1949–1962. By the 1950s Kniffen’s name had
become synonymous with L.S.U. geography and his particular approach became
recognized as a unique tradition in American cultural-historical geography
(Wyckoff, 1979). Many of his students (he advised 27 Ph.D.s and 17 M.A.s) would
continue and elaborate his approach to studying the cultural landscape (Conzen,
1993). In 1932 Kniffen introduced his course “Elements of Cultural Geography.”
Through this course Kniffen conveyed to students what he had learned at Berkeley
and how his practice of cultural geography was evolving. It also helped him to
define what some refer to as the “Kniffen” or “Louisiana” school of American his-
torical and/or cultural geography (Conzen, 1993; Wyckoff, 1979).

At the end of the 1940s a fourth focus that helped to distinguish L.S.U. geog-
raphy—it along with the geology nexus, the integration with anthropology, and the
historical-cultural emphasis—began to emerge. Although Kniffen was the first of
Sauer’s many students to do doctoral fieldwork in Latin America, he did not con-
sider himself a Latin Americanist (Walker and Richardson, 1994). Nevertheless he
taught a course on the “Geography of Latin America” between 1944 and 1948. In
1948 Robert C. West* [1913–2001] joined the department explicitly as a Latin
Americanist adding courses on “Middle America,” “South America” and a graduate
course “Advanced Latin American Geography.” He also began to teach the anthro-
pology course on the Indian civilizations of the region. Since his undergraduate
days at UCLA in the early 1930s, West had concentrated on Latin American studies.
At Berkeley he wrote his dissertation on colonial mining in Northern Mexico and
was part of a cohort of Sauer students that included George Carter*, Andrew
Clark*, James Parsons* and Dan Stanislawski*. During WWII he worked in Arthur
Robinson’s cartography section of the O.S.S. After the war he spent two years in
Mexico as a researcher for the Smithsonian’s Institute of Social Anthropology
(Davidson and Parsons, 1980). Author and editor of a dozen books and monographs
and dozens of articles on Latin American topics, he continued to be one of that
region’s most accomplished authorities until his death (West, 1998). West, as
Kniffen and Russell before him, was awarded a Boyd Professorship in 1970 for his
accomplishments as both teacher and researcher.

The late 1940s also saw the beginnings of an extremely productive period in
physical geography at L.S.U. Richard Russell introduced “Alluvial Morphology” to
the geography curriculum in 1946–1947. Many courses in alluvial and coastal geo-
morphology would follow and these would become the primary preoccupations of
physical geography in the department. Russell was also laying the groundwork for
the establishment of the Coastal Studies Institute during this period. Howe (1971)
summed up the course of events leading to the formation of the Institute:

As a member of the Committee on Geophysics and Geography, Department
of Defense and a member of the Committee on Geography, Advisory to the
Office of Naval Research, Russell learned that progress in coastal research was lagging seriously in defense programs and was urged by both Army and Navy officers to turn his attention in that direction. At this time, 1949, he was assuming deanship of the graduate school at L.S.U., so he felt he had to turn down such offers. However, with the assistance of James P. Morgan, a proposal was developed and submitted to the Geography Branch of the Office of Naval Research for the study of trafficability of the Louisiana coastal marshes. This led to the creation of the Coastal Studies Institute. Initially, space was provided for the institute in the School of Geology Building, and the institute started...by providing graduate fellowships for students working under Russell’s and Morgan’s direction.

Russell’s Coastal Studies Institute was formally established in 1952 with “publications streaming out of this productive center” (Pruitt, 1979). Russell recognized that “research and graduate study are inseparable” (Walker, 1984), and by the 1950s one of the Department’s most important characteristics, emphasis on research and graduate study, was evident. Kniffen (1958) stated that “graduate work became a major concern of the Department only after World War II, when the big influx of students brought many who wished to further study in the field.” Indeed, graduate work was a major concern and this remains the case as the number of graduate students in the department continues to exceed the number of undergraduates.

THE 1950s. In between their many administrative, research, and teaching duties, Russell and Kniffen (1951) found time to collaborate on Culture Worlds, an introductory world regional text. Its cultural orientation and unorthodox organization made it widely popular. It was adopted for use in geography and anthropology classrooms in North America and elsewhere. It also found audiences beyond academia and stayed in print for more than two decades.

In 1952 William G. Haag replaced Andrew Albrecht who left due to poor health. Haag’s first two degrees were in geology from Kentucky. He earned his Ph.D. (Anthropology and Zoology) at Michigan specializing in ethnozoology and studying with Leslie White. His broad training in human and natural history was ideally suited to the department’s needs (Kniffen, 1981). Like Kniffen, he taught courses in the full range of the School’s offerings. Haag continued to develop the anthropology program at L.S.U. for the rest of his career. He introduced the first courses in archaeology in 1961 and served as department chair (1961–1962). He was Louisiana State Archaeologist from 1972 to 1977. In 1966 he was named “Alumni Professor of Anthropology” and retired with emeritus status in 1978.

During the 1950s the faculty numbers increased but primarily through internal recruitment. Teaching responsibilities remained extremely demanding for the core faculty. Russell, Kniffen, Albrecht (and later William G. Haag), and West covered most of the courses with loads up to 20 hours per week (Walker and Richardson).

1994). Partial relief came through hiring graduate students and recent graduates to fill some of the department’s teaching demands. From 1947 to 1953, L.S.U. geologist Benjamin A. Tator (Ph.D., 1948) taught courses in geomorphology, human geography and mapping sciences. Similarly William G. McIntire*, who completed his Ph.D. on prehistoric settlements in coastal Louisiana under Kniffen in 1954, taught a variety of courses from 1955 until his retirement in 1978. His research was centered on coastal studies and geomorphology.

John H. Vann*, a Louisiana native who completed his Bachelor’s (1943) and M.A. (1947) degrees at L.S.U. returned to the Department in 1953 to teach while completing his Ph.D. at Berkeley in 1959, a study of the physical development of the Parras Basin, Coahuila, Mexico. Vann taught various courses including map reading, aerial photo interpretation, geomorphology, and advanced courses until 1963. Thus, from the department’s beginnings through the 1950s the entire faculty including visitors (save for William Haag) had degrees from Berkeley, L.S.U., or both. The result was a faculty with complementary backgrounds “and the scholarly maturity...to challenge superior graduate students, a condition that other Southern departments did not equal for some time” (Prunty, 1979). While some may be critical of such “in-breeding,” Kniffen, in a 1977 interview stated that, early on at least, these Berkeley ties held in common by the faculty were instrumental in developing a viable department (Crews, 1977):

I don’t think that [having so many from Berkeley] was a bad idea because I think that perhaps unwittingly we had a hold of something good and durable and we could sort of reinforce each other and push...[the department] along. No, I think it was a good thing...as they say that in-breeding tends to accentuate good traits as well as poor ones.

THE 1960s. The 1960s were boom times for academia in general, and L.S.U.'s Geography and Anthropology Department enjoyed healthy growth. During the decade it doubled its faculty from five to 11. The first appointment was H. Jesse Walker in 1960. Walker* (1960) completed his dissertation at L.S.U. on human subsistence in the American Arctic under Kniffen. Walker's prior degrees were in geography from Berkeley where he studied with John Leaighy* and wrote his Master's thesis on rainfall in Mexico. As a L.S.U. faculty member, Walker added a new departmental emphasis—coastal and alluvial geomorphology of Arctic regions.

In 1962 Walker was named chair and headed the department for the rest of the decade. In this sense, the 1960s at L.S.U. can be seen as the “Walker Years.” After the effective but low-key leadership of Russell, Kniffen and Haag, Walker brought a new dynamism to departmental planning and growth. In most if not all measures—grants received, research produced and published, faculty and staff hired, graduate students and undergraduate majors enrolled and so on, Walker presided over large increases during this period. The only thing that noticeably decreased was the
number of courses each faculty member was expected to teach. By the end of the decade he had cut the number in half or more—from the "4 & 4" for some faculty to "2 & 2" (or less in the case of particularly active researchers). Through his intervention "Economic Geography" was moved from the Business School to Geography. This change allowed for the hiring of James E. Lewis (Ph.D., Georgia) as the department's first economic geographer in 1967. "Meteorology" was retrieved from Physics and Astronomy and taught by Walker until Robert Muller (Ph.D., Syracuse) was hired in 1969 to develop the department's climate program. Geography graduate student Philip B. Laramore (M.S., Virginia 1954) was hired as an instructor in 1961 to develop the cartography program. An already strong emphasis in cultural geography was extended with four new faculty hires during the decade. Donald Vermeer* (Ph.D., Berkeley) joined in 1968 as an Africanist and cultural ecologist. Roland Chardon (Ph.D., Minnesota) was hired the same year as a Brazilianist. Another new specialty was added with the hire of remote sensing specialist Anthony J. Lewis (Ph.D., Kansas) in 1969. In addition two of Kniffen's Ph.D. students, Charles F. Gritzner* and Milton B. Newton*, became faculty members in the department during the 1960s.

The anthropology program also enjoyed expansion. Miles E. Richardson, who spent a year in the L.S.U. Master's program in 1957–1958 before completing his graduate studies in cultural anthropology at Tulane, joined the faculty in 1965. Richardson, currently Doris Stone Professor of Latin American Anthropology has been active in both anthropology and geography in his research, writing, and student advising since joining the Department. Through his fieldwork in the American South and Latin America, and his conceptualizations of place and meaning, Richardson has become a distinctive voice within both contemporary humanistic anthropology and geography (1974, 1984, 1994). Jay D. Edwards, another Tulane anthropology Ph.D., was initially hired in 1967 as linguist. More recently Edwards has directed his research toward material culture studies in the Kniffen tradition. Director of the Fred B. Kniffen Material Culture Lab, Edwards oversees an active research program on vernacular and historic architecture in Louisiana and the Caribbean. Similarly, archaeologist Robert W. Neuman (M.S., L.S.U.) joined as an instructor and anthropology curator in the late 1960s, continuing Kniffen's interest in the local Amerindian built environment, especially burial mounds. All the anthropology hires in the 1960s went on to make significant contributions to the department's cultural geography focus.

THE 1970s. By the 1960s the broad earth-science focus of the School of Geology that had been so effective in its early years had become less so. The pressures of expansion and increased specialization plus the retirements of the founders brought this phase to a close. In 1970 the School of Geology was superceded by the School of Geoscience with a charge to renew interdisciplinary cooperation. As the founding document indicates (L.S.U. School of Geoscience, 1971):

The School of Geoscience is concerned with the advancement of the university's teaching and research programs in the geosciences, including the study of natural resources, mankind's relationship to his environment and its physical and cultural evolution within it. This interest is broader than that represented by the individual specialties within the departments. The School provides a framework in which these several disciplines are coordinated and developed to the mutual advantage of the departments and the University in academic, research, and public service programs. This grouping of disciplines was unique when it was organized at L.S.U. 35 years ago; with the present concern for human ecology and the environment, it provides a very pertinent and viable modern focus.

This new administrative organization facilitated a broad range of programs and services, and combined the resources available to support them. The newly reorganized School included the Departments of Geology, Geography and Anthropology, and the Museum of Geosciences. Also included were "Special Services" provided by the Cartographic Section, Photographic Section, Computer and Graphics Services, the Map Library and Reference Room. Ties were strengthened between the School and the Coastal Studies Institute, the Louisiana Geological Survey, and the Louisiana State Climatologist's office that had become a part of the School in 1967.

Perhaps the most important and enduring result of the establishment of the School of Geoscience in 1970 was the publications program that was initiated. The School's Geoscience and Man series materialized as "a medium for the publication of symposia, monographic studies, and collections of papers in anthropology, archaeology, geography, geology, meteorology, paleontology, and other areas of the geosciences" (L.S.U. School of Geoscience, 1971). Since its introduction, 37 volumes have been published in the series, the majority on geographical and anthropological topics. In turn, each of these volumes reflects department strengths and initiatives.

In another initiative, Walker helped establish the Richard Joel Russell Visiting Lectureship in 1975. Since its beginnings, the Department had welcomed visiting professors and guest lecturers from around the globe without any formal or consistent source of funding. Many were eminent scholars who stayed for periods of a month to a year. For example between 1964–1974 there were two dozen longer-term (from a month to a year or more) visitors including: H. Aschmann*, D. Brunsden, E. E. Evans, H. G. Gierloff-Emden, D. B. Prior, C. O. Sauer, J. Sauer, W. L. Thomas, Jr., J. K. Wright, and E. Yatsu (Fig. 2). The Russell Lectureship ensured that the stream of distinguished scholars would continue to be an important component of educating graduate students and developing research.

The growth in faculty numbers which began in the 1960s continued through the 1970s. Accordingly, many new courses were added, particularly in coastal
The geographers (and their main specialty) hired during this period included: N. J. R. Allan* (Ph.D., Syracuse) [cultural ecology], K. Hirschboeck (Ph.D., Arizona) [hydroclimatology], K.-B. Liu (Ph.D., Toronto) [biogeography], C. D. Woodroffe (Ph.D., Cambridge) [coastal geomorphology], N.-S. Lam (Ph.D., Western Ontario) [cartography/G.I.S.], K. Mathewson* (Ph.D., Wisconsin) [cultural], C. V. Earle* (Ph.D., Chicago) [historical], G. Veeck (Ph.D., Georgia) [economic], G. Stone (Ph.D., Maryland) [coastal geomorphology], D. Ramphall (Ph.D., Penn State) [development], A. Mosher (Ph.D., Penn State) [historical]. As indicated above by the number of faculty hires, the percentage of faculty turnover was somewhat higher than in previous decades, perhaps reflecting instability both within the university and the state. From some vantage points the 1980s may have been “Morning in America,” but to many in Louisiana it seemed more like “Twilight Time.”

From 1981 to 1985 Milton Newton served as Chair. As a Kniffen protégé and cultural-historical traditionalist, Newton might have been expected to slow the pace of growth and change. Instead, he sought to accelerate them. In his first three-year term he provided forceful and effective leadership acquiring the latest technology for the Department, new space for archaeology and the State Climatology Office, and helping to establish CADGIS (a center for computer mapping and G.I.S.). In his abbreviated second term he moved beyond material expansion to strong advocacy of new programmatic directions. Specifically, he sought a major initiative involving “geo-forensics” or the application of geographical knowledge to legal questions. This implied a political turn for the Department on several different but interlocking levels. He was unable to enlist support for these changes, and soon after retired from the university to devote himself full-time to forensic geography.

The 1980s. Social theorists and political economists of widely disparate views agree that the oil crisis of the early 1970s produced a major turning point in the global economy which is still unfolding (Harvey, 1989). Not surprisingly Louisiana was out-of-phase and given its oil-driven economy did not suffer immediately. Its oil crisis did not come until the early 1980s, and, as the state’s flagship university, L.S.U. did not suffer as much as it might have been the case. Still, retrenchment came and with it stagnation, decline, and faculty flight in some areas. Owing to its excellent standing within the university, among other factors, the Department of Geography and Anthropology not only managed to continue its general expansion, but also increased its full-time faculty during the decade—from 19 in 1980 to 25 in 1989.
The number of both graduate and undergraduate majors doubled during the first half of the decade. With some 150 graduate students, the Department had become the largest Ph.D.-granting geography program in the U.S. Both the numbers and quality of student participation in regional and national meetings of the AAG reached new levels. For example, at the 1993 Spring SWAAG meeting in New Orleans more than 40 L.S.U. students presented papers in regular sessions! This is almost certainly a record for student participation from a single department in a SWAAG meeting. From 1991–1993 the department hosted one of the AAG’s three Summer Minority Institutes and markedly increased its minority student recruitment efforts.

From the mid-1980s until the present, faculty diversity also notably increased. In terms of gender and ethnicity as well as academic specializations, the department has broadened its profile. For some time now more than a third of the regular faculty has included women and/or persons of non-European ethnic backgrounds. Other initiatives during Earle’s term included launching the Louisiana Geographic Alliance (headed by P. Larimore), installing the U.S. Southern Regional Climate Center within the Department (directed by R. Muller), relocating the journal *Historical Geography* to L.S.U. (co-edited by Earle and A. Mosher), establishing the F.A.C.E.S. laboratory (a “state-of-the-art” center for forensic anthropology and locating missing persons), the Center for Geopolitical Studies, and modernizing the L.S.U. Map Library (among the largest collection of maps of any university). From the late-1980s to the mid-1990s grants received by the Department and its faculty increased some 20-fold—from under $100k to over $2m. By most measures the department under Earle’s direction experienced increases in resources and expansion of its facilities. Faculty members were noticeably active in a wide range of professional organizations, particularly the AAG, and during the 1992 IGU meeting in Washington, D.C.

William V. Davidson succeeded Earle in 1996 and served two three-year terms. Davidson continued many of the initiatives begun by Earle. A new round of fiscal retrenchment, however, forced lowering the horizons of what was once envisioned in various areas. A university-wide hiring freeze during 1996–1997 stalled faculty replacements in the Department’s cultural ecology and development geography positions. Cultural ecology, especially, had served as a key bridging point between the geography and anthropology programs. On the other hand, the Department managed to preserve its considerable depth in historical geography. Two historical-cultural geographers, Steven Hoelscher (Ph.D., Wisconsin) and Karen Till (Ph.D., Wisconsin) joined the Department during Davidson’s tenure replacing Hilliard who retired and Mosher who left for Syracuse. They also served as co-editors of *Historical Geography*. With their departure in Davidson’s second term, they were replaced by Craig Colten (Ph.D., Syracuse) and Dydia DeLyser* (Ph.D., Syracuse). Economic geographer John Grimes (Ph.D., Florida State) was hired to fill a vacancy in that line. The department’s expanding physical geography and mapping science concentrations also recruited new faculty. Michael Leitner (Ph.D., Buffalo) and Andrew Curtis (Ph.D., Buffalo) joined Lam and Lewis to strengthen the mapping sciences. Steven Namikas (Ph.D., U.S.C.) filled a long-vacant position for a coastal geomorphologist. David Legates (Ph.D., Delaware), Robert Kohli (Ph.D., L.S.U.), Kevin Robbins (Ph.D., North Carolina State), Maurice McHugh (Ph.D., Ohio State) and Barry Keim (Ph.D., L.S.U.) have arrived during the past few years to help build the climatology program into one of the best-staffed anywhere. Although Legates has since left (going to Delaware), climatology has joined coastal/fluvial geomorphology as one the department’s key concentrations in physical geography.

To counter the long-term possibility of no or slow growth, one certainly not unique to L.S.U. or its geography program, Davidson energetically sought to increase the Department’s endowment. His efforts continue to yield results. The Department has increased the number of named endowed professorships from one to six. The Fred B. Kniffen and William Haag Professorships were set up as rotating awards with three-year terms. The Kniffen Professorship’s first recipient was Miles Richardson (two terms), followed by Richard Kesel, Jay Edwards, and currently Tony Lewis. The first Haag recipient is Heather McKeelap. Additional designated professorships honor founder Richard J. Russell (Nina Lam), and long-standing friends of the Department Doris Z. Stone (Miles Richardson), Carl O. Sauer (vacant), James J. Parsons (Kam-chiu Liu). Since 1981 the Robert C. West Field Award program has supported some two hundred students with travel stipends of up to $1500 for field research. Partially as a result of this resource, a majority of the Department’s theses and dissertations continue to be based on field research, particularly in the American South, Latin America, and East Asia. The estate of Evelyn Pruitt, Office of Naval Research administrator and long-time friend of the department, bequeathed nearly one million dollars to establish a fellowship for female geography graduate students. A speaker’s series in her name was also set up to honor Pruitt’s career and contributions to L.S.U. geography and anthropology. Anne Buttmer, President of the International Geographical Union, and noted humanist geographer delivered the first Pruitt Lecture (March 2003) on Alexander von Humboldt’s cosmopolitan vision.

Davidson was equally effective in securing internal funding for department building. He successfully guided the department in intra-university competition for enhanced status. The geography program is one of 12 at L.S.U. that were designed enhanced programs. Among other benefits, the department is slated to receive six new faculty positions outside regular replacements. Historical environmental geographer Craig Colten was hired as the first of these enhanced positions. In 2001 Davidson stepped down as chair in preparation for retirement. Craig Colten stepped up to assume the chairship. During his term, Colten continued many of Davidson’s initiatives. He presided over several hires. Patrick Hesp (Ph.D., Sydney) was brought in as one of the six enhanced positions, joining Namikas to bring the department’s traditional strength in coastal geomorphology back in line with earlier
levels. Latin Americanist geographer Andrew Sluyter* (Ph.D., Texas) was hired as Davidson’s replacement. The department also hopes to be awarded two more new positions as part of the enhancement program over the next few years. The department was also the beneficiary of an upper administrative hire. Geographer Risa Palm joined the department as she assumed her new role as L.S.U. Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost in July, 2003. Colten also presided over a major reallocation of space in the Howe-Russell Geoscience Complex. With the opening of the new College of Coast and Environment Building, long-term residents (Louisiana Geological Survey, School of the Coast & Environment, and other units) of Howe-Russell moved out. Freed up space afforded the Climate Center and departmental components new and expanded space.

In an epoch of “free market” triumphalism and priva(tiza)tion-as-panacea, even Louisiana with its proud residual of petro-populism has moved away from public solutions. If this trend continues, then the effects will shape policies and directions at all levels within public universities such as L.S.U. It is hard to forecast the changes that might be visited upon the L.S.U. geography program. Given its inter-disciplinary structure and intricate web of associated research and service units (the Climate Center, Map Library, CADGIS laboratory, and a number of other similar entities), along with its stature within the university, L.S.U. geography should be able to adapt to new conditions—whether constraints or opportunities—while continuing to pursue its time-tested concerns. While in some minds fluvial and coastal studies on the physical side and historical material culture studies on the human side may still be the stock images of what constitutes L.S.U. geography, of course the picture has always been more complex than this. There are recognizable nodes of shared interests and research foci that have shifted over time, but the founding pursuits of Russell and Kniffen do represent something of a symbolic core with which to compare or locate newer concerns. This is likely to continue well into the present century.

**SUMMARY.** In the 50 years between its founding in 1928 and when it hosted the AAG’s 1978 meeting in New Orleans, the Department of Geography and Anthropology had grown from a one-course program into one of the largest and most productive graduate departments in the United States. By 1970 the founders had retired, but their replacements largely followed trajectories they had established. Kniffen (1978) felt “the Department is in good hands . . . dedication to professional, scholarly standards, procedures, and goals is as strong as ever.” At the same time he conceded that “traditions must yield to the demands of the times.”

Times have demanded significant change in recent decades. The School of Geoscience was dissolved in 1983 but the joint Department of Geography and Anthropology remains very much intact. The Coastal Studies Institute severed formal ties with the Department, but close associations between individual researchers in both entities continue. Although increasing specialization has created centrifugal forces, a larger faculty has insured that none of the historically important foci have been neglected, and a number of newer ones have been added.

The mapping sciences concentration has enjoyed the largest comparative expansion over the past several decades, growing from one cartographer in the 1960s to four full-time faculty and several more support staff. Similarly, the climatology program has grown from one climatologist in the 1970s to three full-time faculty and a number of associated and support staff. In addition, the physical geography concentration has four other full-time faculty lines (three geomorphologists and a biogeographer/Quaternary specialist) making it the department’s largest concentration. In comparison, the human geography concentration currently has five full-time faculty, down from its historic high of eight a decade earlier. At the same time, the department has charted out a fourth concentration—anthropogeography. Within the anthropogeography concentration there are two tracks: ethnogeography and archaeological geography. Each of these terms evokes the work and interests of departmental founders. Fred Kniffen often described his own work as “ethnogeography,” or the study of ethnically distinctive material culture traits in the landscape. Robert West referred to Sauer and Brand’s studies of prehistoric Mesoamerican settlement patterns and infrastructural features (canals, roads, terraces, etc.) as “archaeogeography.” This captures well the focus and approach taken by students pursuing this track. The anthropogeography concentration offers considerable potential in attracting and training students with dual interests in archaeology and geography.

Although no full-time lines are allocated to it per se, several of the anthropologists have served as advisers to students in the anthropogeography concentration. They include Jay Edwards (material culture), Heather McKillop (Maya archaeology), and Miles Richardson (culture and place). They pursue research and teach topics that directly relate to the program’s objectives. The quality of students who have come to L.S.U. to pursue this concentration is partially indicated by the unprecedented success of its graduates in dissertation award competition. Douglas Deur* (Ph.D., 2000) won both the AAG’s Nystrom Award in 2001 for the best dissertation in geography and a comparable award from L.S.U.’s Graduate School. Mark Banta (Ph.D., 2001) repeated Deur’s distinction by winning the L.S.U. best dissertation award the following year. Daniel Weir (Ph.D., 2002) extended the winnings to three years in a row with his award in 2003. Beyond attracting and training some of the department’s most accomplished graduates, the anthropogeography concentration offers new opportunities for interdisciplinary research and teaching. It may also offer a model for some other geography programs facing retrenchment or those seeking strategies for renovation and revitalization.

Although the broad earth-science program initiated by Howe, Russell and Kniffen no longer exists, the earth-sciences continue to occupy a common place on the L.S.U. campus bearing their names. In 1987, the new Howe-Russell Geoscience Complex opened, integrating the “old” School of Geology Building with a new state-of-the-art facility, and in 1994 the original portion of the complex was
designated the Fred B. Kniffen Wing. The faculty of the Department of Geography and Anthropology occupy offices in both wings. Indeed, the “new” sits comfortably beside the “old” at L.S.U., and is likely to do so as long as Louisianans are willing to support a center of research and higher education that takes particular interest in how and why people near and far occupy and modify their environments.

NOTES

1 This paper is a revised version of Mathewson and Shoemaker 1997. “Louisiana State University’s Department of Geography and Anthropology: A Selective History,” Southwestern Geographer, Vol. 1, pp. 62-84.

2 An asterisk indicates a geographer in the “Sauer line,” i.e., Carl Sauer served as that person’s Ph.D. advisor, or that person’s advisor studied with Sauer, and so on.

3 The Carl O. Sauer Professorship is currently vacant. The first recipient was Carville V. Earle 1942-2003.

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