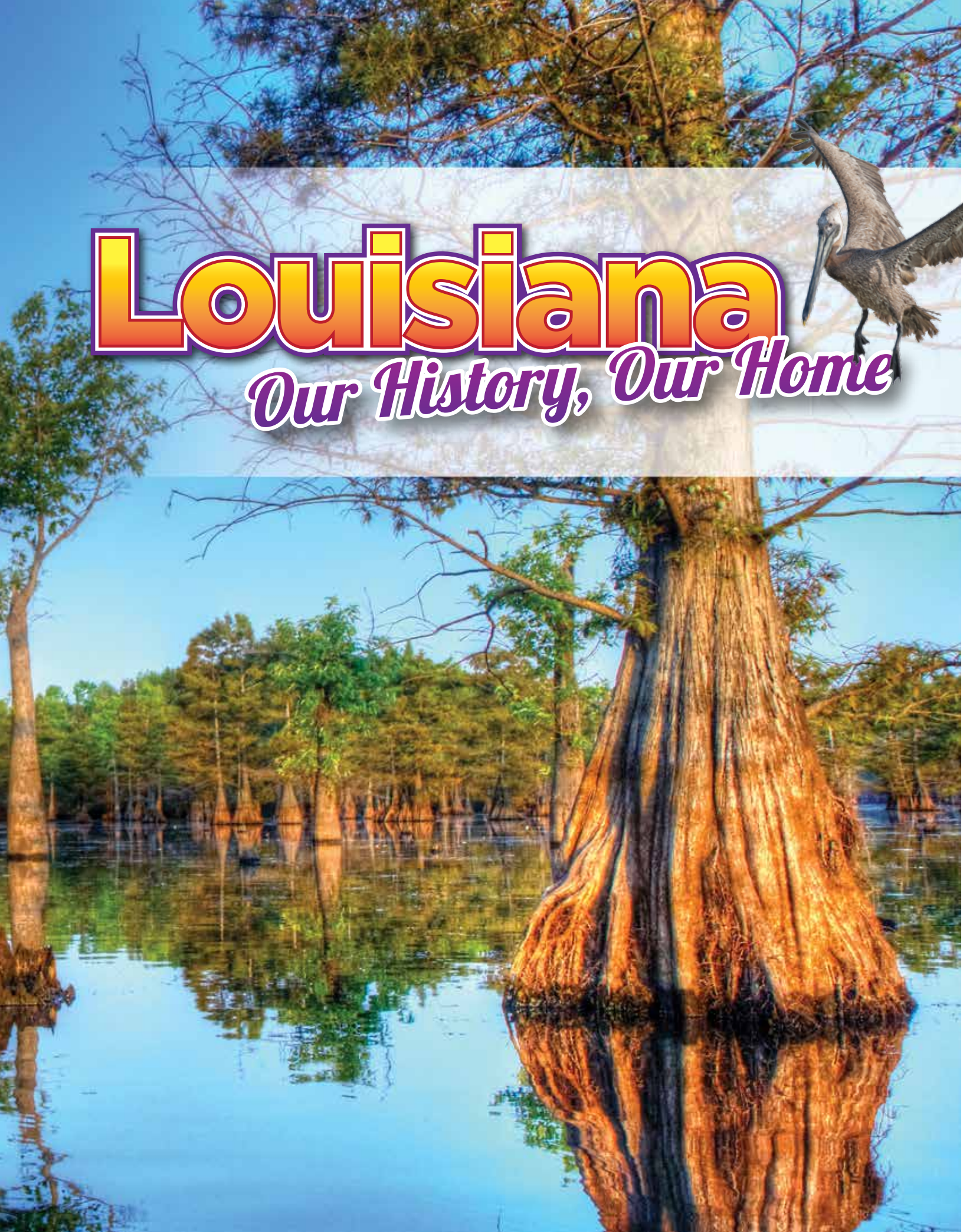


Louisiana

Our History, Our Home





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Alecia P. Long


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Long has appeared in numerous documentaries, has worked on several museum exhibitions, and has written a number of articles on Louisiana subjects, including an article on the state's history in *The Louisiana Field Guide: Understanding Life in the Pelican State*.

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To the Students

I have lived in Louisiana for almost twenty years, but I spent the first part of my life more than six hundred miles away, in an eastern Tennessee city named Knoxville. My hometown sits in a scenic valley near the Smoky Mountains. On a clear day, you can see those mountains in the distance. Even the fact that Tennessee has mountains suggests how different its geography is from Louisiana's. I was made aware of this fact on my first trip to your state, which took place when I was a nineteen-year-old student at the University of Tennessee. Some friends and I decided to travel to New Orleans to see our university play in the Sugar Bowl. We drove all night, and I remember waking up just after daybreak, as we were crossing Lake Pontchartrain. I fell in love with so much about New Orleans on that trip, and decided I would live there someday.

It took a lot of years to make that happen, but after many visits, I finally moved to New Orleans in 1997. The following year I was lucky enough to be offered a job at the Louisiana State Museum. Working there gave me the opportunity to learn about the state's history through the documents and the many beautiful paintings, drawings, and photographs in its collection. Working for the State Museum also gave me the chance to travel to many different parts of the state. Over time, my love for New Orleans expanded into a love for Louisiana and also into a deep affection for its people and its history.

Each of the following chapters begins with the story of a person, group, or set of events that took place in Louisiana. It is my hope that those introductions draw you in and help you develop an appreciation for some of the people who settled Louisiana, witnessed its history, and—in some cases—even changed that history through their actions.

As you read, you will learn that Louisiana's people have faced many difficult times, but they have done so with great resilience and a commitment to preserving the state's history and culture for future generations. You are the people for whom that history is being preserved. You are also the generation who will help to shape the state's future. Having a solid knowledge of Louisiana's history can help you figure out how you might like to participate in the state's future. Whatever choices you make about your own future, I hope the history of Louisiana provided here helps you develop a newfound appreciation for both your history and your home.

Dr. Alecia P. Long
Department of History
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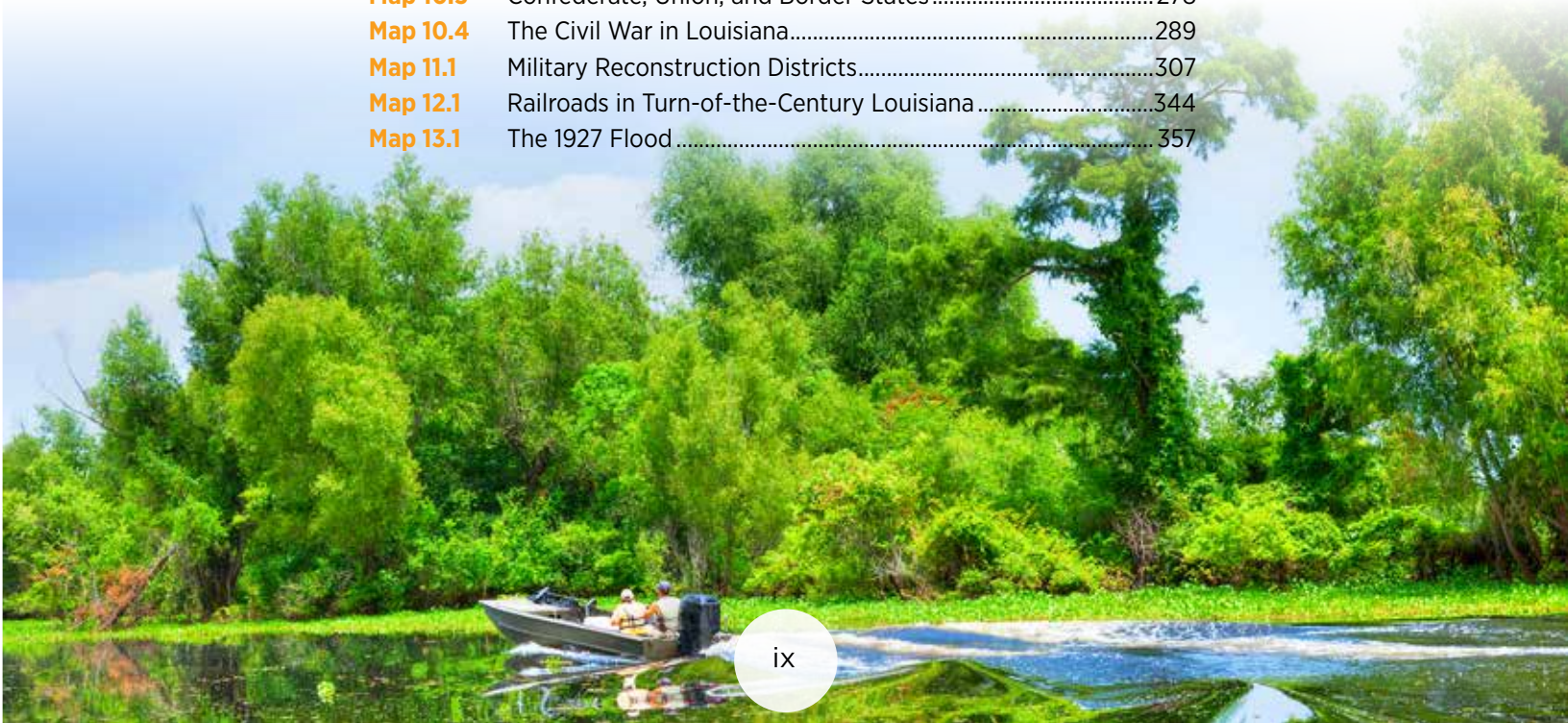
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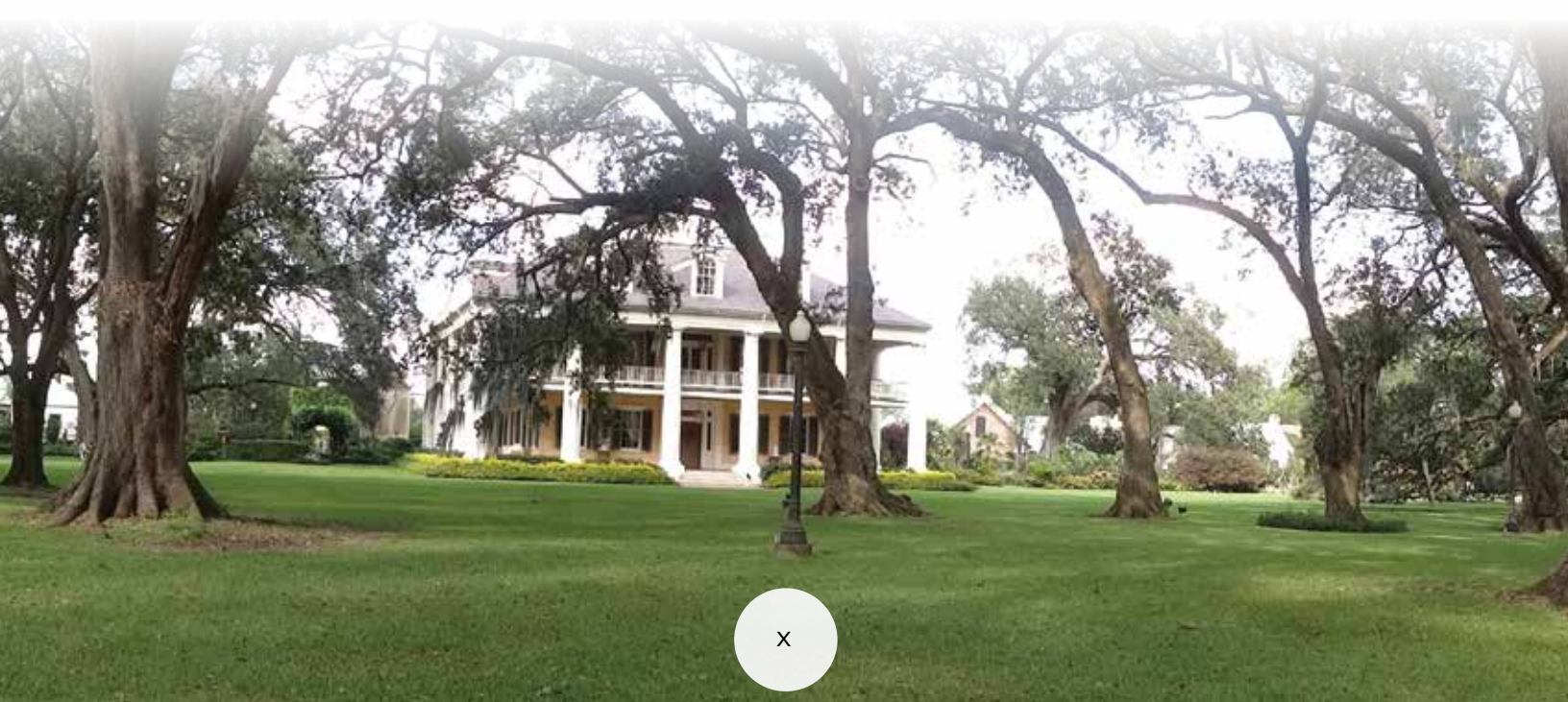
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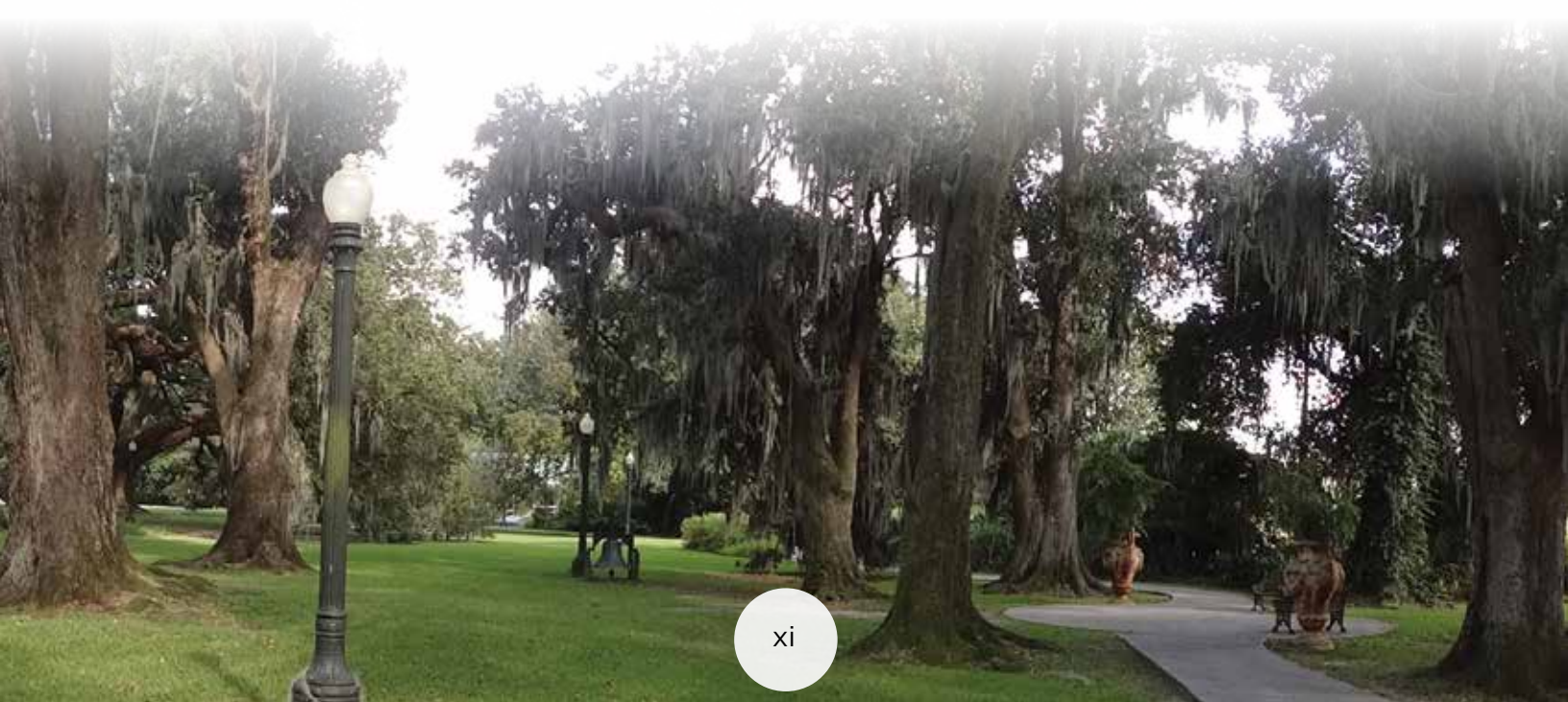
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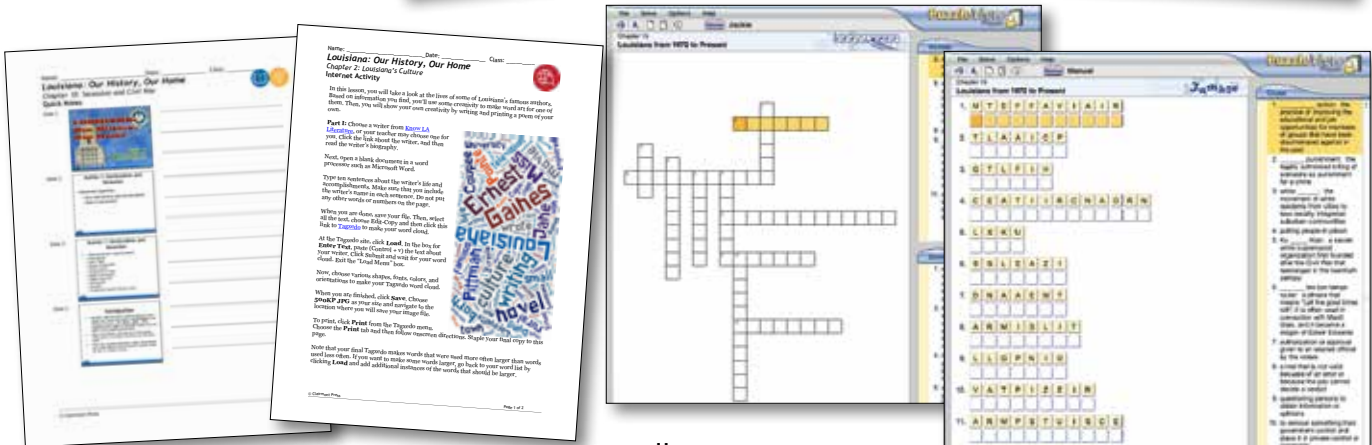
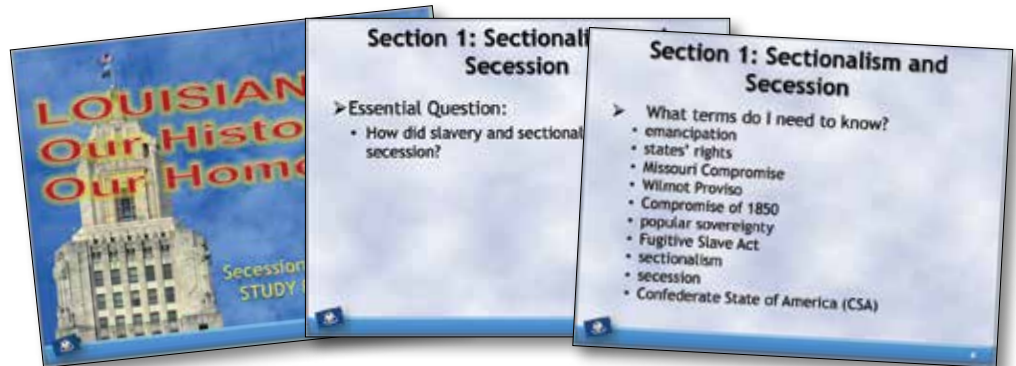
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