As part of the World War II mobilization effort, federal officials set up a system of worker training so vast in scale that it had no precedent in American history. Gaining access to this extensive training system was a key area of wartime civil rights activism, though it is little studied compared to the contemporaneous struggles over fair employment. Using Houston as a case study, this talk examines the widespread and intense conflicts precipitated by African Americans’ attempts to enroll in defense worker training.

Bryant Etheridge finished his Ph.D. at Harvard University and is spending the academic year at the Clements Center revising his book manuscript for publication.