

The Historic New Orleans Collection Quarterly

VOLUME XLI
NUMBER 1

WINTER 2024



ODD MEN OUT: The World of Freemasons and Odd Fellows

THE HISTORIC NEW ORLEANS COLLECTION PRESENTS



Above THE Fold

The History of Newspapers in Louisiana

Join us Saturday, February 24, 2024
9 a.m.–5 p.m.

Williams Research Center
410 Chartres Street

Newspapers have played a complex, transformative role in Louisiana history, not only covering but also shaping local life. The 2024 History Symposium will survey topics including the state's first Black newspapers, disaster and crime reporting, editorial cartoons, and the groundbreaking alternative weekly *Figaro*.



Registration opens to THNOC members
on Monday, January 15, at 9:30 a.m.,
and to the general public on Monday, January 22.

Scan to register or visit www.hnoc.org/symposium2024

ABOVE: *Newspaper salesman*; 1976; gelatin silver print; by Josephine Sacabo; 1976.128.14

For a full calendar of events, visit my.hnoc.org.

EXHIBITIONS

All are free unless otherwise noted.

CURRENT

A Mystic Brotherhood: Fraternal Orders of New Orleans

Through May 10, 2024
520 Royal Street
Media sponsorship provided by WWL-TV

OFF-SITE

The Trail They Blazed

Through March 4, 2024
University of Holy Cross, 4123 Woodland Dr.

This traveling exhibition is part of THNOC's NOLA Resistance initiative, dedicated to preserving and sharing stories from the New Orleans Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s–70s. This project is supported through a grant from the African American Civil Rights grant program as administered by the National Park Service, Department of the Interior. It is available at no charge to host sites in the community.

UPCOMING

Mystery and Benevolence: Masonic and Odd Fellows Folk Art

February 16–May 10, 2024
520 Royal Street

Organized by the American Folk Art Museum, New York, from the Kendra and Allan Daniel Collection and toured by International Arts & Artists, Washington, DC. Media sponsorship provided by WWL-TV

A Vanishing Bounty: Louisiana's Coastal Environment and Culture

Opening April 2024
520 Royal Street

Captive State: Louisiana and the Making of Mass Incarceration

July 19, 2024–January 19, 2025
520 Royal Street

GENERAL HOURS

520 Royal Street

Tricentennial Wing, French Quarter Galleries,
The Café at the Collection, and The Shop
Tuesday–Saturday, 9:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.
Sunday, 10:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

410 Chartres Street

Williams Research Center

Tuesday–Saturday, 9:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.
Appointments are encouraged. Please email
reference@hnoc.org or call (504) 523-4662.



FROM THE PRESIDENT

We started 2023 with a big step, closing our flagship campus at 533 Royal Street and beginning the long process of reevaluating it both historically and for future use. What followed was a year of discovery, as we worked with a team of architects and planners to gather information. Currently, we are in the thick of creating a comprehensive historic structures report that details every possible aspect of these properties' history. When complete, it will constitute a trove of archival data and will guide all phases of work on the project as it progresses.

Deepening our community and institutional partnerships has been a top goal of our strategic plan, and I'm proud of the strides we made this past year. We hosted a visiting exhibition from the Smithsonian, *American Democracy*, and connected with a number of civic groups through our own complementary show, "Yet She Is Advancing." Through NOLA Resistance, our community-driven initiative to document New Orleans's special role in the national Civil Rights Movement, we partnered with the Tate, Etienne and Prevost (TEP) Center and the University of Holy Cross to host the off-site exhibition *The Trail They Blazed*. Additionally, throughout 2023, curators worked with a community advisory committee to develop an exhibition about the history of incarceration in Louisiana, which will open this summer.

Furthering our mission to steward Gulf South history is reward enough, but who am I kidding—I love awards, too! In September we were named Museum of the Year by the Louisiana Association of Museums, and in October we received eight awards for our media content—including this magazine—from the Press Club of New Orleans. See the Staff News column on page 16 for the full slate.

No matter how many accolades we receive or partnerships we make, the beating heart of our institution is in our name—The Collection. Our collections are our oldest, most enduring assets, and behind the scenes is a steady churn of effort to acquire, register, process, and catalog thousands of new items each year. Toward that end the Laussat Society lends invaluable support, and in 2023 the member group sponsored the acquisition of the Bunny Matthews Archive, Deborah Luster's remarkable *One Big Self*, and Mark Sindler's photographic archive documenting four-plus decades of Vietnamese life in New Orleans. All of these important acquisitions will play key roles in exhibitions starting in the new year.

We also received a profound parting gift from our late Williams Research Center director, Alfred E. Lemmon, who bequeathed the bulk of his estate to THNOC upon his death, in August. I know we'll make him proud as we continue the work he loved so well.

—DANIEL HAMMER



ON THE COVER

Shriner officers at laying of cornerstone for Jerusalem Temple

1916; inkjet print from gelatin dry-plate negative

by John Tibule Mendes, photographer
gift of Waldemar S. Nelson, 2003.0182.72

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Acquisition Spotlight: Professional and personal papers from Dr. Louis Charles Roudanez

Recent Additions



The plain citizen sometimes wearied of his plainness and, wanting rites as well as rights, hankered for the ceremonials, grandiloquent titles, and exotic costumes of a mystic brotherhood.

—Arthur M. Schlesinger Sr., “Biography of a Nation of Joiners,” *The American Historical Review* (1944)

EXHIBITIONS

A Mystic Brotherhood: Fraternal Orders of New Orleans

Through May 10, 2024
520 Royal Street

Mystery and Benevolence: Masonic and Odd Fellows Folk Art

February 16–May 10, 2024
520 Royal Street

Organized by the American Folk Art Museum, New York, from the Kendra and Allan Daniel Collection and toured by International Arts & Artists, Washington, DC. Sponsored by the 2024 Bienville Circle. Media sponsorship provided by WWL-TV

Tall Orders

Two new exhibitions, one from the American Folk Art Museum, shine “three great lights” on the history, symbology, and lore of Freemasonry.

An original THNOC exhibition, *A Mystic Brotherhood: Fraternal Orders of New Orleans*, opened earlier this December, and in February comes *Mystery and Benevolence: Masonic and Odd Fellows Folk Art*, a traveling show from the American Folk Art Museum. The former focuses on local engagement in the tradition, while the latter provides a general history of fraternal organizations and delves into the rich world of Masonic emblems and aesthetics, elements of which permeate the built environment in New Orleans and beyond to this day.

Freemasonry refers broadly to a network of fraternal organizations devoted to self-improvement and mutual aid. Related groups, such as the Odd Fellows, Elks, Knights of Columbus, and many others, serve a similar purpose of bringing together men (and sometimes women) to better themselves and their communities. Masonic groups are organized by lodges—the word refers to both the chapter itself and the physical space for the chapter. Members progress through a series of degrees and optional side orders, both replete with named roles and insignia.

“Fraternal comes from the Latin word for brotherhood, and that’s what they’re about,” says Family Historian Jari C. Honora, who co-curated *A Mystic Brotherhood* with Chief Curator Jason Wiese. “The Freemasons, as they say, ‘make good men better,’ by offering a series of progressive degrees that each come with some sort of moral lesson. By engaging with the degree work, it inculcates a stronger sense of brotherhood—not only among the members, but also with their families and communities.”

Freemasonry stretches back to the 16th-century British Isles, when skilled craftsmen like stonemasons formed working guilds and built lodges to offer shelter and fellowship to members traveling from job to job. “That’s why, to this day, Freemasons and other fraternal orders

A. Masonic sign

1871; paint and gold leaf on wood
attributed to David Morrill
courtesy of the American Folk Art Museum,
New York, gift of Kendra and Allan Daniel,
photo by José Andrés Ramírez



B

have this idea of being ‘at work,’” Honora says. “That’s why a lot of the regalia involves an apron, as well as the square and compass. All of those are working tools of a stonemason.”

Freemasonry reached New Orleans in the early 18th century, with the formation of the Loge Parfaite Harmonie (Perfect Harmony Lodge) in 1752. *A Mystic Brotherhood* features a proposal, dated 1756, for another Masonic outfit, the Loge d’Elus Parfaits (Lodge of the Perfectly Elect), which offered continuing work beyond the three degrees (tiers) of typical Masonry. The Odd Fellows—so named because they comprised workers of “odd” jobs that didn’t already have a guild—arrived in New Orleans in 1831.

Regalia and symbology run deep in the world of Freemasonry and Odd Fellowship.



C

“These objects may seem mystifying to the uninitiated—but that is often the intent,” reads a text panel introducing visitors to *Mystery and Benevolence*, the show on loan from the American Folk Art Museum.

“Designed to instill a sense of wonder, the works on display embody a deep faith in fellowship, as well as in the potential for mystery and ritual to create lasting bonds.”

Masons’ use of iconography has its roots in European medieval artwork and 16th-century bestiaries and emblem books. These were popular illustrated books that matched pictures to certain tropes, values, or lessons.

B. Knights Templar parade on Canal Street

1922; gelatin silver print
gift of Mrs. Thomas Lennox, 1986.194.23

C. Masonic Past Master jewel

1825; silver gilt
courtesy of the American Folk Art Museum,
New York, gift of Kendra and Allan Daniel,
photo by José Andrés Ramírez



D



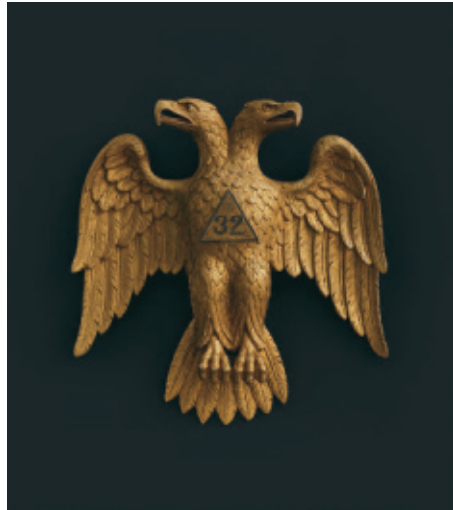
E



F



G



H

Many of the symbols found in emblem books—scythes, skulls, beehives, hourglasses—appear in Masonic and Odd Fellows art. The prototypical design of Masonic halls is based on principles of sacred geometry, and Masonic rituals involve the precise arrangement of symbolic items. These rituals typically happen in the hall’s sanctum, which bears a black-and-white checkerboard floor, symbolizing good and evil.

Regalia on display in *A Mystic Brotherhood* includes an Odd Fellows medallion from 1890, a Masonic apron presented to an initiate of Louisiana Lodge No. 102 in 1924, and a member’s signet ring from the mid-20th century. In *Mystery and Benevolence*, visitors can see a painting hidden on the underside of a chest lid that depicts the Masonic square and compass, symbolizing reason and faith, flanked by two pillars and, above, the all-seeing eye of judgment, or Eye of Providence.

Stacked with history, symbology, and a dash of mystery, fraternal organizations became a primary social outlet for men through the mid-20th century. By 1900, approximately 30

D. New Odd Fellows Hall, 500 block of Camp Street

by John William Orr, engraver
from *Jewell's Crescent City Illustrated*, 1873
1974.25.3.274

E. Etoile Polaire No. 1 Lodge, 1433 North Rampart Street

1978
by Owen Murphy, photographer
gift of Arts Council of New Orleans, 1996.93.50

F. Members of the Improved Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the World in front of Crescent City Lodge No. 299

1949; gelatin silver print
by Walter C. Allen, photographer
The William Russell Jazz Collection, acquisition made possible by the Clarisse Claiborne Grima Fund, 92-48-L.331.1898; MSS 520.1997

G. Independent Order of Odd Fellows bow-and-arrows plaque for First Degree

between 1860 and 1900; paint and gold leaf on wood, with metal
courtesy of the American Folk Art Museum, New York, gift of Kendra and Allan Daniel, photo by José Andrés Ramírez

H. Scottish Rite double-headed eagle carving

between 1870 and 1930; paint and gold leaf on wood
courtesy of the American Folk Art Museum, New York, gift of Kendra and Allan Daniel, photo by José Andrés Ramírez

I. Independent Order of Odd Fellows Heart in Hand staffs

between 1875 and 1900; paint and gold leaf on wood
courtesy of the American Folk Art Museum, New York, gift of Kendra and Allan Daniel



I

J. Chest lid with Masonic painting
 between 1825 and 1845; paint on pine
 courtesy of the American Folk Art Museum,
 New York, gift of Kendra and Allan Daniel

K. Odd Fellows parade
 1953; chromogenic color print
 by John Bernard, photographer
 The John Bernard Photographic Archive,
 1999.41.3.12



percent of all men in the United States belonged to at least one group. “Unfortunately, even though they espouse brotherhood, most of the groups in this country were segregated by race,” Honora says, explaining how parallel groups emerged along the racial divide. The first Black Masonic group in the Deep South, Richmond Lodge No. 1, was organized in New Orleans by free men of color in 1849. The Independent Order of Odd Fellows was predominantly white, so Black men formed a separate group, the Grand United Order of Odd Fellows, in 1843. The Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks were white, so men of color came up with the Improved Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the World.

As the popularity of fraternal orders grew, so too did the number of orders and side orders (branches with their own degrees and regalia—the Shriners, a Masonic side order, are a well-known example). “Once you get into the 19th century, all the way up through the first decade of the 20th century, you have a proliferation of fraternal organizations,” Honora says. “You have the Elks. You have the Moose. You have the Knights of Pythias. You have the Knights of Columbus, which is for Catholic men. You have the Knights of Peter Claver, which is for Black Catholic men.”



After the end of World War II, participation in fraternal organizations began to drop off, as increased American wealth gave rise to leisure activities, offering more opportunities for entertainment and edification. Though their numbers have decreased, the groups persist, both in New Orleans and beyond. According to Honora, the Elks have approximately 45,000 members nationwide, and the Knights of Peter Claver have about 16,000. “The good thing is, their purpose has remained unchanged,” he says. “It’s still to make their members better men—and women, because some of them are coed. It’s to do good in the community and support their members. Some of them provided burial benefits—cemeteries for members and designated plots.”

Honora likens fraternal organizations to social science’s concept of “third spaces”—places that are neither work nor home where people can gather, in person, for fellowship. In an increasingly online world, those kinds of gathering spaces are becoming rare. “Our moms, dads, grandparents, they had a lot of third spaces—church, gardening clubs, bowling clubs, civic associations,” Honora says. “Now, the number-one space is the coffee shops. But how many people do you see striking up conversations in the coffee shop? Not many.”

—MOLLY REID CLEAVER

OFF-SITE

Days at the Fair

Our roundup of holdings that have appeared outside The Collection, either on loan to other institutions or in noteworthy media projects

The year 2024 will mark the 40th anniversary of the 1984 World's Fair in New Orleans, and Louisiana's Old State Capitol in Baton Rouge has planned a yearlong commemoration, with *Remembering the 1984 Louisiana World Exposition*. It runs January 23–December 30, 2024.



1984 World's Fair souvenir pillow
created for 1984
by Louisiana World Exposition, commissioner
gift of Betty Traber Spurlock, 2009.0208.3



Wonder Wall mug and plate
1983
by Louisiana World Exposition, commissioner
1984.204.2–3

Carnegie Hall used one THNOC image at its Juneteenth Celebration copresented live and streaming online in association with the Healing of the Nations Institute of the Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference.



Screwmen's Benevolent Association silk ribbon
1856
The William C. Cook War of 1812 in the South Collection, 2001-68-L.14, MSS 557.7.3

Two images from the Charles L. Franck Collection were provided to **Maastricht University**, in the Netherlands, for use in the exhibition "*Mixité sans frontières*": *The 1950 Dissemination of Louisiana Public and Private Law Publications in French Legal System*. Author Agustín Parise gave a lecture using the images at the 2023 congress of the World Society of Mixed Jurisdictions Jurists.



Roosevelt Hotel entrance
1940s
by Charles L. Franck Photographers
The Charles L. Franck Studio Collection at THNOC,
1979.325.4590



THNOC provided seven images to **CBS** for a CBS *Saturday Morning* segment on Edgar "Dook" Chase IV, grandson of famed New Orleans chef Leah Chase.

Dooky Chase's
1983 or '84
by Harold F. Baquet, photographer
gift of Harold F. Baquet and Cheron Brylski,
2016.0172.1.48.11



ONLINE

“Coming to New Orleans”

A five-part series on New Orleans immigration history
hnoc.org/publications/first-draft



A

Coming to New Orleans

During the run of *American Democracy*, Curatorial Cataloger Emily Perkins detailed the history of immigration to New Orleans in a five-part series for THNOC’s blog, *First Draft*. This installment focuses on the city’s expanding ties to Latin America in the 20th century.

Between World War I and the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the United States became more connected to Latin America than in any other period in its history, with New Orleans serving as a major gateway. Though New Orleans was part of the Spanish Empire from 1763 to 1803, very few Spanish officials permanently settled in Louisiana. Therefore, most Hispanic immigrants to Louisiana have come from outside the Iberian Peninsula, largely from former Spanish colonies in the Americas. Canary Islanders immigrated to the region beginning in the late 18th century. In the 19th century a small number of economically prosperous Mexican immigrants arrived, along with a contingent of Cubans who were working with Louisianians to achieve independence from Spain. But the largest group of immigrants of Hispanic origin came in the mid-20th century. Hailing primarily from Central America and Cuba, they brought new energy to the economic, political, and cultural development of the Crescent City.

A. *S.S. Atenas Moored at Old Havana Harbor*
 1920; oil on canvas
 by William Woodward
*acquisition made possible by the Diana Helis
 Henry Art Fund of The Helis Foundation with
 additional funds from Neal Auction Company,
 2011.0431.1*

New Orleans reached its peak population of over 600,000 residents in the 1960s thanks in part to these new immigrants, though they faced challenges at the federal level. A law passed by Congress in 1924 had instituted a quota system limiting immigration based on nation of origin. The subsequent rise of anticommunist hysteria following World War II led to increased scrutiny of immigrants. These laws resulted in the lowest US immigration rates of the 20th century, during the 1950s and '60s. However, New Orleans's growth and development during that time remained an attractive pull for those in the Americas seeking better opportunities in the United States.

The rise of the banana import industry at the dawn of the 20th century facilitated a close connection between Honduras and New Orleans. Migrants first began arriving from Honduras as early as the 1910s, aboard refrigerated steamships carrying bananas operated by the United Fruit Company. In addition to employment, United Fruit offered free education for employees' children at New Orleans Catholic schools—a major incentive for Hondurans, who were (and remain) predominantly Catholic. Other Honduran immigrants were Black West Indians and Afro-Latinos fleeing racial discrimination in their home country.

In a circa-1930 map of United Fruit Company ports across the Americas, some of the heaviest red lines converge on New Orleans, signifying that it was the preferred port of entry for Central Americans arriving in the US.

As airplanes began to replace steamships for overseas travel, TACA International Airlines (Transportes Aéreos de Centro América) became the dominant mode of transportation for Central Americans arriving in the city. As seen in a 1953 pamphlet, the airline offered a number of flights among New Orleans, Central America, and South America. Colloquially, the airline's acronym, TACA, came to stand for "Take A Chance Airlines," as Honduran migrants post-1950 were fleeing low employment, political instability, violence, and hurricanes.

New Orleans attracted Hondurans because of its accessibility, environmental

B. United Fruit Company passenger service route map

ca. 1930
by General Drafting Company, delineator;
Redfield-Kendrick-Odell Co., printer
gift of Mrs. James P. Ewin Jr., 1984.106.32 i, ii



B

C. TACA International Airlines timetable

1953
2023.0164

similarities, Catholic culture, and the prospect of continued employment in the fruit trade, where bilingual speakers were in high demand. These Hondurans were a racially and ethnically diverse group, including white European descendants, mestizos, Afro-Indigenous groups like the Garifuna people, and Black West Indians. Because of this racial diversity, some Hondurans faced challenges entering the black-white binary of Jim Crow New Orleans. However, some scholars argue that they faced less oppression than Hispanics in the Southwest due to the relative social mobility enjoyed by Spanish speakers.

As immigration from Honduras increased during the 1950s and '60s, a community of Honduran expatriates, or *Catrachos*, as they call themselves, began to form in the Lower Garden District. They called it *El barrio Lempira*, named after a Honduran national hero killed by the Spanish in the 16th century. Hondurans opened businesses catering to their community, including restaurants, supermarkets, and nightclubs, as well as a Spanish-language radio station, KGLA-AM. By 1962, New Orleans had the largest Honduran population in the United States, a distinction later taken by New York City, in the 1980s.

Between 1970 and 1980 the Honduran community doubled in size but remained below 10,000. In the 1970s Hondurans began out-migrating to the suburbs, primarily Kenner, Gretna, and Terrytown, following a trend initiated by white residents of the Crescent City. In relative size, Hondurans remained the largest Hispanic group in the New Orleans area until the arrival of Mexican immigrants following Hurricane Katrina.





D. **New Orleans Mayor deLesseps Morrison “Chep” Morrison at a banquet in Cienfuegos, Cuba**

1954
by La Madrileña Fotografía
gift of Lin Emery, 1988.161.35

E. **St. Theresa of Avila Church**

between 1948 and 1958
by Charles L. Franck Photographers
The Charles L. Franck Studio Collection at
THNOC, 1979.325.2454

Community life for these Catholic immigrants centered around the St. Theresa of Avila Church at 1401 Erato Street, which offered Spanish-language Mass. Here, Hondurans could celebrate the feast day of Our Lady of Supaya, the patron saint of Honduras. More Hispanic Catholic immigrants came to New Orleans during the 1950s, when Fidel Castro's rise to power in Cuba inspired many anticommunist Cubans to flee to the United States. Cubans and Hondurans both worshipped at St. Theresa of Avila, providing a space for the growing New Orleans Hispanic community to come together.

Cubans had been emigrating to New Orleans since the mid-19th century, but it wasn't until Castro took power in 1959 that Cubans began arriving to the city in large numbers. Miami was the number-one destination for Cuban émigrés, but the Catholic Church sought help from other cities to alleviate the burden, including New Orleans. In 1962, the Catholic Cuban Center began providing health care and resettlement services to these new immigrants, whose asylum status prevented them from accessing public assistance programs. Language barriers and issues with US employers not honoring foreign certifications also forced many Cuban professionals to take low-paying jobs.

In the 1950s and '60s, Mayors Chep Morrison and Victor Schiro understood the importance of Latin American trade connections and made efforts to strengthen these ties during their administrations. Morrison worked to preserve and develop New Orleans's commercial relationship with Cuba with goodwill trips and press junkets throughout his administration, which lasted from 1946 to 1961. In May 1959, Schiro, then a city councilman, accompanied Morrison and a delegation of 152 representatives to Havana to showcase Mardi Gras at Cuban Carnival. Schiro, who had spent part of his childhood in Honduras, spoke Spanish fluently. This skill allowed him to be an active member of the Latin American political and business spheres.

President Kennedy enacted a trade embargo between Cuba and the United States in 1962, which put an end to the commercial relationship Morrison and Schiro had worked so hard to maintain. During his administration in the late 1970s, Mayor Ernest N. “Dutch” Morial appointed the first Cuban American to municipal office, Tony Naranjo, in the newly created Office of Hispanic Affairs. In his second term, Morial created the Latin American Task Force to address the needs of the community.

As the New Orleans economy stagnated in the 1980s and '90s, immigration from Cuba slowed down, and the Hispanic population saw little to no growth until after Hurricane Katrina. Though many of the city's Cuban immigrants eventually moved to Miami, Cubans remain a visible part of New Orleans's Hispanic community. —EMILY PERKINS





IN MEMORIAM

Alfred E. Lemmon

In the last six months of his life, Alfred E. Lemmon, longtime director of the Williams Research Center, worked mostly from home. The ALS (Lou Gehrig’s disease) he had been diagnosed with in 2021 had progressed over the past year, and when a wheelchair became his primary means of mobility, he moved his office to his Uptown abode.

But his work never ceased. Work, for Lemmon, was a way of being. In the months leading up to his death, on August 26, 2023, he met with the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra to discuss the next edition of *Musical Louisiana: America’s Cultural Heritage*, the free concert series he helped start in 2007. He met with longtime collaborator and Senior Reference Associate Mary Lou Eichhorn about completing their research on Emile Johns, the first music printer in New Orleans. He checked in with Reference Associate Johanna Baker on developing a research guide to the Creole of color writer Victor Sejour, and oversaw progress on multiple databases and research tools, such as an inventory of Spanish colonial buildings in the Gulf Coast region. His upcoming speaking engagements included a talk on American Indian languages in Mexico City and a May 2024 visit to Harvard University’s I Tatti, the Center for Italian Renaissance Studies.

He did all this while in declining health, though if you asked him, he would say he’d never been more productive. That’s a testament to Lemmon’s life of the mind, a wild flock of ideas, ambitions, contacts, and inspiration, all girded by an insatiable drive to share historical knowledge with the public.

“The most tragic thing to Alfred was if something important wasn’t known widely,” says Daniel Hammer, who, before becoming president/CEO, worked closely with Lemmon at the WRC. “Alfred was really motivated to create mechanisms for sharing knowledge for

A. Lemmon pulls a bound manuscript from the stacks in 1983.

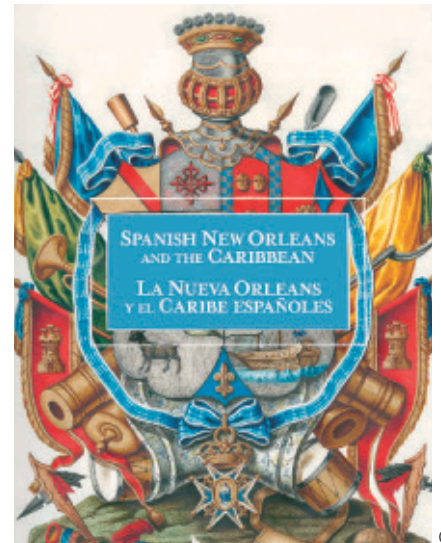


posterity’s sake. He would always talk about how unfortunate it was that people didn’t know this, that, or the other—whatever he thought was interesting. That was a constant refrain.”

Lemmon put that passion to work early in his career with The Historic New Orleans Collection. He was hired as a docent in 1981, fresh off the completion of his PhD in Latin American studies from Tulane University. A native of Lafayette, Louisiana, he also earned an MA in music history from Tulane and a bachelor of music from Loyola University. As a cataloger in the manuscripts division, Lemmon quickly distinguished himself, becoming the head of special projects for the division in 1984. In graduate school, he had familiarized himself with the global network of archives and institutions that house records



B



C

related to colonial Louisiana. It wasn't long before he set about connecting THNOC to these resources.

At the Archive of the Indies, in Seville, and at the Archives nationales de France, he coordinated the microfilm reproductions of rare government documents and other important primary sources. "Those microfilms get accessed a lot—weekly, if not daily," says Rebecca Smith, who has succeeded Lemmon as director of the Williams Research Center. "We're the only place in the US that has some of them, so they're really important."

Using his vast professional network of archivists, organizations, and rare manuscript dealers, Lemmon also spearheaded the acquisition of several landmark collections. THNOC has the most thorough archive of materials related to John Law, the Scottish financier who gambled France's fortune on Louisiana in the colony's first two decades. That's all because of Lemmon and his frequent collaborator Howard Margot, curator, who translated and researched many of the Law documents. Lemmon was an acquaintance of jazz historian and composer Bill Russell, and he steered Russell's large collection of photographs, scores, ephemera, records, and personal papers to THNOC in 1992.

Hammer and Lemmon shared an interest in German American history, and when the former was new to The Collection, Lemmon devised a project for him inventorying German-language collections. "That was all Alfred piecing together things so that I could have a job," Hammer says. THNOC currently has the largest assemblage of archival materials related to German New Orleans history.

The 2022 bilingual exhibition and book *Spanish New Orleans and the Caribbean / La Nueva Orleans y el Caribe españoles* were the culmination of Lemmon's extensive networking and years of scholarship, featuring an array of loan items from overseas institutions to illuminate what he saw as one of the most unrecognized aspects of New Orleans history—its Spanish influence.

Lemmon was gregarious and chatty, always ready to jump into conversation about music, history, or New Orleans. This trait endeared him to many people in The Collection's orbit, including attendees of THNOC's Study Tours. These annual international trips are another of Lemmon's legacies. "They were his baby," Hammer says. "He had a real sense for creating rarefied experiences. A lot of the trips would feature special tours of collections, based on his relationships with archivists and curators—sometimes including access to private collections and families."

Alfred E. Lemmon devoted his life to history and to The Historic New Orleans Collection, and as a final act, he bequeathed his estate to THNOC. Through this endowment and his many works, Lemmon will continue to help The Collection live up to the high expectations he had for himself and others. —MOLLY REID CLEAVER

B. Lemmon, in 1999, with François Bujon de l'Estang (center), France's former ambassador to the United States, and Catherine Troutmann, the French minister of culture at the time.

C. The bilingual exhibition and book *Spanish New Orleans and the Caribbean* (THNOC 2022) was a culmination of Lemmon's years of research into Spanish colonial history.

SUPPORT

Donate in Memory of Alfred E. Lemmon

Alfred E. Lemmon was a champion of The Historic New Orleans Collection's mission to preserve and steward the history of New Orleans and the Gulf Coast region. Donations made in Lemmon's name will allow us to fulfill this mission, by extending our outreach, developing public programs, and adding to our collections of historic documents and objects.

To donate, scan the QR code or visit hnoc.org/support/make-donation.





ON THE JOB

Ishmael Ross

POSITION: Collections cataloger, on staff since 2022

ASSIGNMENT: Catalog historic objects from the original company store of Whitney Plantation

In the rural South, plantation operations continued well after emancipation, with many newly freed workers resuming their duties soon after the war. The plantation system, however, still bent toward economic exploitation, especially through the plantation store. I recently explored the workings of this system when I joined a team of THNOC catalogers to document objects from an original store on-site at Whitney Plantation, an unconventional museum and former sugar plantation located 40 miles upriver from New Orleans.

When the Whitney museum opened in 2014, it broke the mold of plantation tourism by centering the experiences of enslaved people and their descendants, rather than those of the owners. Most plantations still in operation rent out their grounds for events, and those that offer tours often serve watered-down stories of benevolent owners, focusing on beautiful furnishings and bucolic grounds. At Whitney Plantation, folks are welcome to visit the big house and hear about the Haydel family, who owned and operated the sugar plantation for its first 100 years. But the primary narrative belongs to the enslaved workers and their spaces—the domestic servants in the big house; the field workers, who stayed in tiny cabins (Whitney refers to them by their historical name, slave quarters); and the cooks and farmhands who ran and supplied the outdoor kitchen.

The plantation store at Whitney was constructed around 1890, one of many built in the South during and after Reconstruction. By this time, the Haydel family line had come to an end, and a new owner had taken over, employing a workforce comprising 30 percent of the plantation’s previously enslaved laborers.

The store was a central part of the new plantation economy. Landowners stopped providing clothing, food, and medical supplies to workers, who now had to buy their own supplies from their employers at elevated prices. Groceries and general stores weren’t easily accessible, so workers had to pay the plantation store’s inflated rates, which were deducted from their paychecks. Expensive goods and inadequate wages kept workers permanently indebted.

The store remained in operation until 1973, then became an all-purpose storage area. In August 2021 Hurricane Ida tore through the region, ripping off portions of the store’s roof. Executive Director Ashley Rogers secured a grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation to restore the structure, but the fate of its contents was still uncertain. Whitney’s

former director of education, Amber Mitchell, sounded the alarm to the New Orleans archival community, asking for help with collections management. THNOC answered the call, agreeing to assist with rehousing, cataloging, and moving all the objects to safety before construction started.

In April 2022 I joined my colleagues Kristin Hébert Veit and Katherine Jolliff Dunn, both curatorial catalogers, in documenting the store’s collections. We drove to Whitney twice a month, creating a detailed spreadsheet of the objects, which ranged from spinning wheels to fire extinguishers and even a book press. Some were original to the plantation, like the safe, wheelbarrow, and vintage Coca-Cola bottles.

“The office still had its file system, a safe where they kept the cash—even the deli counter was still there,” Dunn recalls. Intern Samira Bechara processed a lot of the financial records, organizing them in chronological order and rehousing them into labeled folders.

A. The Whitney Plantation store as seen in the 1940s. Image courtesy of Mary Zeringue and Whitney Plantation



A

By August, we had inventoried over 240 objects. Among the last items we cataloged were receipts, remnants of an inventory book, and other administrative and financial documents. There were invoices, account books, and records of individual debts and payments, including those of the employees who worked there. It soon became clear that these papers were telling the heart of the story.

The payrolls clearly showed a small portion of workers being paid almost double that of the vast majority. As Rogers explained, white men were paid far more than their Black counterparts, even though they were often working fewer hours. Examining these records, I could see the economic abuse that Black folks experienced during slavery still being practiced on their descendants.

One day, as we were measuring a file cabinet, Dunn and I were greeted by two white gentlemen. They had grown up in the area and fondly recalled buying candy and Coke at the store. Later, Rogers pointed out that local Black elders had expressed quite different feelings about the store: they had likely patronized it out of necessity, not leisure. While white people tended to see the store as a tool that served them, Black folks saw themselves as tools exploited by it.

Throughout my days at the Whitney, I often thought of my great-grandmother Clara Schexnayder, who lived not too far from the plantation. Though she did not work at the Whitney, my experience with the plantation store showed me why she and other rural people of color moved to New Orleans to find work during the first half of the 20th century.

We're now digitizing these payroll documents, as they hold great value for future research and exhibitions. Katherine Dunn and I were able to share our collaboration with the Whitney at the 2022 Annual Meeting for the Louisiana Archives and Manuscripts Association, where we focused on the plantation store materials and the ways in which this partnership informs THNOC's larger strategic plan.

The Whitney plans to reopen the store as part of its museum, using the space to focus on the post-Reconstruction and Jim Crow eras. Just recently, Rogers shared on social media that Whitney staff had found "charred pieces of wood left over from when the workers set fire to this store after Martin Luther King's assassination," she said. "This place is rich with history, and I can't wait to share it with everyone!" —ISHMAEL ROSS



B

B. Ishmael Ross (far left) works with THNOC and Whitney staff and interns to move a bookcase from the store in July 2022.

C. The store contained many pieces of original furniture and equipment, including (left–right) a stove, a painted oak-and-cypress trunk, a Clipper fanning mill, and a metal grain mill.



C

STAFF NEWS

New Hires

Emma Barnes, cafe manager. Courtney Chartier, retail manager. Roux Fernandez-Melguizo, Visitor Services assistant. Kira Kikla, database manager. Jeri Lantz, facilities manager. Thalita McConnell, kitchen manager.

Title Changes

Peter Hoffman is now preparator. Jari C. Honora, family historian.

Continuing Education

Interpretive Training Coordinator Libby Neidenbach received Interpretive Trainer certification from the National Association for Interpretation.

Manuscripts Cataloger Ishmael Ross is now a certified archivist, after passing the 2023 exam of the Academy of Certified Archivists.

Publications

Collections Cataloger Kevin T. Harrell wrote an encyclopedia entry for *64 Parishes* on the topic of Indigenous slavery in the Lower Mississippi Valley.

Speaking Engagements

Decorative Arts Curator Lydia Blackmore spoke at the “Beautiful Spaces” symposium presented by the Historic BK House and Gardens in September and at the American Society of Appraisers conference in October.

Kevin T. Harrell gave a presentation on the Creek Indian Nativist prophet Josiah Francis to the Chalmette Chapter of National Society United States Daughters of 1812.

In May Visitor Services Assistant Winston Ho gave the keynote address to the New Orleans VA Medical Center’s commemoration of Asian American Month. In July, he presented on the history of yaka mein to the New Orleans Tour Guide Association, and in October he spoke to the Lakeshore Women’s Club about Chinese American history in New Orleans.

“Science Fiction and Fantasy” was the theme of the 2023 Provincetown Tennessee

Williams Theater Festival, and Senior Editor Margit Longbrake served as an invited scholar at the festival’s Tennessee Williams Institute. There, she talked with graduate students about the *Tennessee Williams Annual Review*, THNOC’s Williams-related holdings, and vampires, ghosts, and zombies in *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

Senior Reference Associate Robert Ticknor gave a talk to the Friends of the Cabildo about Louis Joseph Fortier, a Gretna native who served as a brigadier general during World War II.

Digital Assets and Initiatives Manager Kent Woynowski, WRC Director Rebecca Smith, and Collections Manager Jennifer

Rebuck Ghabrial presented a talk on The Collection’s new cataloging system at the annual conference of the Association of Registrars and Collection Specialists.

In the Community

Exhibitions Coordinator Matt Farah has joined the SEMC Exhibition Competition Committee.

Director of Public Programs and Interpretive Services Amanda McFillen has joined the board of the Plessey and Ferguson Initiative.

Curator/Historian Eric Seiferth has agreed to serve on the Public History Committee of the Organization of American Historians.

AWARDS

In October the Press Club of New Orleans announced the winners of its 2023 awards, and THNOC took home eight honors.

Best in Digital Media

First Place: “In Conversation with Big Chiefs: Traditions and Music of Mardi Gras Indians,” by Manager of Programs Amy Williams, Programming Coordinator Brian Moore, and Director of Public Programs and Interpretive Services Amanda McFillen

Second Place: “Tennessee Lived Here,” by Media Producer Xiomara Blanco

Third Place: “North Side Skull and Bone Gang History,” by Xiomara Blanco

Best Lifestyle Reporting

Second Place: “The Downtown Club with Uptown Ideas,” by Editor Nick Weldon

Best Environmental Reporting

Third Place: “A Pandemic of Pigs? Feral Hogs are Threatening Cities from New Orleans to Hong Kong,” by Nick Weldon

Best Podcast

First Place: “NOLA Life Stories,” by Senior Curator Mark Cave,

WWNO-FM producer Sarah Holtz, and WWNO-FM producer Joe Shriner

Best Digital Special Section

Second Place: First Draft, by Senior Editor Molly Reid Cleaver, Associate Editor Terri Simon, and Nick Weldon

Best Magazine

Third Place: *The Historic New Orleans Collection Quarterly*, by Molly Reid Cleaver, Alison Cody Design, and Head of Photography Keely Merritt



In September The Historic New Orleans Collection received the 2023 Museum of the Year Award from the Louisiana Association of Museums, given in recognition of outstanding work interpreting, presenting, and preserving Louisiana history. In addition, Education Specialist Kendrick Perkins was honored with the Sadie Roberts-Joseph Excellence in Community Outreach Award.



A

THNOC STUDY TOURS

Journeys Through History

One of the many things THNOC’s late Williams Research Center director, Alfred E. Lemmon, gave to the institution was its Study Tours program. Since 2005, The Collection has organized an annual international trip for members and friends interested in a historically focused travel experience. Lemmon was never content with waiting for others to discover a favorite subject or figure from history: he wanted to bring people straight to the source.

“Over 20 years ago, Alfred Lemmon started the Study Tours with the goal of connecting the history of New Orleans to cities all over the world,” says Director of Public Programs and Interpretive Services Amanda McFillen. “Since then, THNOC travelers have visited many destinations, including France, Spain, Portugal, Nova Scotia, Ireland, Japan, and more.”

The trips are planned with history enthusiasts in mind, taking people to world-class museums, historic sites, private residences, beautiful natural landscapes, and fantastic restaurants and accommodations. “Of course, we also leave plenty of free time for our travelers to relax, shop, or visit more cultural sites on their own,” she says. “Each tour features several THNOC colleagues and a tour leader from the educational travel company that we work with. Travelers will also hear from local tour guides and museum professionals.”

Early on, Lemmon leveraged his extensive network of archivists and historians to shape these experiences, gaining exclusive access to private collections and historically significant individuals.

“We get into places that the general public wouldn’t have access to, such as museums during off-hours or even private homes,” says Mimi Schlesinger, 2023 Bienville Circle cochair. Schlesinger first attended the 2017 Study Tour, which focused on Louisiana’s connections to the Netherlands.

For Schlesinger, Dutch tulips were the initial draw—they were “exceptional,” she says—but what left a lasting impression was the blend of local history with international travel. “The locations and the people brought the history to life.”

In 2018, the “Paris and New Orleans: 1718–2018” tour explored the political and cultural ties that have bound the two cities for three centuries, taking participants to châteaux, the restored Opéra Comique, and the Musée Nissim de Camondo. The following year, travelers surveyed the grandeur of Budapest

2024 STUDY TOUR

“Springtime German Treasures: Berlin, Leipzig, Munich”

May 29–June 7, 2024

To download the brochure, visit hnoc.org/programs/study-tours or scan the QR code below.



THNOC members get priority access to registration, which is open now.

A. Red poppies dot the landscape at the gardens of the Villa Cimbrone, which travelers visited as part of the 2023 Study Tour to Italy. *Image courtesy of Eugenia Uhl*

B. The Italy tour included access to a private art restoration laboratory in Rome, where participants got a first-hand look at the process of cleaning and restoring antique paintings. *Image courtesy of John Crane*



B



Eugenia Uhl and Robin Ruiz enjoy refreshments at an outdoor cafe in Italy. *Image courtesy of John Uhl*

and Vienna, traveling between the two cities aboard a luxury train line. More recent trips focused on Spain (2022) and Italy (2023), the latter of which included a cruise along the Amalfi Coast on a chartered yacht.

The 2024 Study Tour, set for May, will take members to Berlin, Leipzig, and Munich to explore the connections between New Orleans and Germany. In Berlin, travelers will explore Schloss Charlottenburg, commonly heralded as Berlin’s largest and most magnificent palace. Architecture aficionados will enjoy the neo-Renaissance structure of the historic Reichstag Building, as well as the avant-garde interiors of the DZ Bank building, designed by Frank Gehry.

In Leipzig, travelers will tour Thomaskirche, where Johann Sebastian Bach served as the choirmaster for 27 years. In Munich, the spotlight will shift to the history of Bavarian royalty, with stops at several monarchical properties, including the Herrenchiemsee Palace and Park, built to rival the splendor of the Palace of Versailles.

“These trips are learning experiences, but first and foremost, they’re fun,” says President/CEO Daniel Hammer.

—SARAH DRAGO



A yacht took guests on a sunset cruise of the Amalfi Coast. *Image courtesy of Amy Crane*

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YEAR-END APPEAL

Support Our Interns

The Historic New Orleans Collection’s internship program provides valuable hands-on experience to emerging historians, archivists, and researchers, while connecting our staff with new perspectives and assistance fulfilling our mission. Our interns play an important role in preserving historical voices and events for the benefit of future generations.

THNOC's 2023 interns have helped catalog the Cane River Collection, which documents a Creole community founded



in the 1700s by a formerly enslaved woman, as well as the Antoine’s Collection, dedicated to the history of the famed French Quarter restaurant. Other notable projects include the Captive State Research Project, which examines the interconnected histories of Louisiana’s carceral and slave systems, as well as contributions to the Black Craftspeople Digital Archive, dedicated to preserving the stories of Black artisans.

Your generous support ensures that all eligible students can access these opportunities. **To donate, call (504) 598-7172 or scan the QR code on page 19.**

For more information on internships at THNOC, contact Sydney Wessinger at sydney.wessinger@hnoc.org or (504) 598-7117.

Undergraduate interns Mikayla Weary (far left), Jane Hill (center left), and Sophia Swoboda (right), assigned to the Fall 2023 Photographic Preservation and Collections Management Project, work with Cataloger Catie Sampson (center right) to catalog prints from the Harold F. Baquet Archive.

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Donations are used to purchase books that will be marked with a commemorative bookplate.

Kim Lynn Rodrigue in honor of Malinda Breaux Rodrigue—*Cajun Document: Acadiana, 1973–74*, photographs by Douglas Baz and Charles H. Traub (New Orleans, LA: The Historic New Orleans Collection, 2020), 2020.0005.1

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There has never been a better time to join The Historic New Orleans Collection. All THNOC members enjoy the following benefits for one full year:

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HOW TO JOIN

Visit www.hnoc.org and click the **Support Us** link or complete and return the enclosed envelope.

For more information about membership levels, please contact THNOC's development office at (504) 598-7172 or visit www.hnoc.org/support/membership.

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Members at the Merieult level and above receive reciprocal benefits at more than 1,200 member institutions across the US, Canada, and Latin America. For more information, visit www.narmassociation.org.

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(ages 21–45)

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- invitations to exclusive events throughout the year (both at The Collection and off-site)

The Caillot Circle is generously sponsored by New Orleans Auction Galleries.



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- invitation to annual gala evening and private patron event

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- NARM benefits at more than 1,200 member institutions
- private, guided tours of THNOC collections and exhibitions (by appointment)
- special members-only experiences
- invitation to annual gala evening and private patron event
- annual recognition as sponsors of a premier exhibition



Members of the **Caillot Circle** attended a private auction at Elysian Bar. Members sipped signature cocktails and browsed auction items before the bidding began.

A. Mallery Morvant and Stephen Haddad

B. Amelia Schussler, Taylor Eichenwald, and Sylvia Burn of New Orleans Auction Galleries, official sponsors of the Caillot Circle

C. Daniel Hammer holds an original Michael P. Smith photoprint of James Booker, donated by THNOC for auction, as Rachel Riezman, Amelia Schussler, and Ryan Altobello look on.



ON THE SCENE

New Orleans to Washington and Beyond



A



B



H

As a tie-in to the exhibition *American Democracy*, the panel discussion **“Hail to the Chief: New Orleans and the American Presidency”** (September 14) explored the city’s ties to the White House throughout history.

A. Before the lecture, guests enjoyed an archival show-and-tell in the Williams Research Center reading room.

B. Speakers C. W. Goodyear, Richard Campanella, and Ted Widmer



I



C



D



J



E



F



K

The 2023 **Food Forum** went hog wild, with “Pig Tales,” held November 4. The daylong event, moderated by food historian Dr. Jessica B. Harris, included porcine presentations on barbecue, Cajun boucheries, and the history of pork in the Americas.

C. Lolis Eric Elie, Glen Duncan, Director of Communications Dave Walker, and Judy Walker

D. Ryan Mitchell and Dr. Zella Palmer

E. Chef Tiger León carves a roasted pork shoulder.

F. Mark Essig and Dr. Jessica B. Harris

G. Food historian Melissa Guerra demonstrates how to prepare carnitas at the New Orleans School of Cooking.



G

On September 16 The Collection celebrated the opening of the traveling exhibition **The Trail They Blazed** at the Tate, Etienne and Prevost (TEP) Center.

H. Malik Rahim

I. Dr. Julie Morial, Sybil Morial, and Lisa Jackson

J. Tremaine Knighten-Riley and Erica Badowski

K. Judge Edwin A. Lombard and Don C. Hubbard



On October 5 THNOC celebrated its longest-running member group at the annual **Laussat Gala**, hosted by Anne and Sandy Villere III at their Uptown home.

- L. Gracia and Barry Siegel
- M. Terry and Rand Voorhies
- N. Anne Villere and Sweet Dupuy
- O. Kenya and Tod Smith
- P. President/CEO Daniel Hammer, Sandy Villere III, and Sandy Villere II



THNOC's Caring for Your Collection series continued with the sold-out **"Caring for Your Family Tree,"** a primer on genealogical research presented by Family Historian Jari C. Honora.

Q. The Louisiana Creole Research Association (left–right): Lynette D. Johnson, Eugenia F. Adams, Bernice A. Bennett, Jari C. Honora, Jennifer Quezergue, Kathryn Labat, Victor Labat, and Chantell Nabonne

R. A full house occupied the Boyd Cruise Room for the daylong workshop.



At the 2023 **Morrison Lecture**, held September 9, author Simon Woodward talked about the challenges facing heavily touristed cities around the world and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on tourism.

- T. Russell Rocke, Jan Katz, and Jim Derbes
- U. Walt Leger III, president/CEO of New Orleans and Company, in conversation with Simon Woodward, international tourism consultant



S. In early November Daniel Hammer and Curator/Historian Eric Seifert traveled to Washington, DC, to watch civil rights activist Leona Tate (center right, with Tremaine Knighten-Riley) accept the Richard H. Driehaus Foundation National Preservation Award from the **National Trust for Historic Preservation**, for her work on the Tate, Etienne and Prevost (TEP) Center in New Orleans.



ACQUISITION SPOTLIGHT

A Revolutionary's Life in Letters

Dr. Louis Charles Roudanez Papers

2023.0196

Collections items featured in Acquisitions might not be immediately available to view online or in the Williams Research Center reading room. Researchers can inquire about availability by emailing reference@hnoc.org.

Since 2015 THNOC has sought to acquire a collection of essays and family papers related to Dr. Louis Charles Roudanez, the Creole physician and newspaperman who became a leader of the Reconstruction-era civil rights movement in New Orleans. This summer, they arrived at The Collection following a lengthy trip from France, where they had been passed down through the Roudanez family to Dr. Catherine Jouve, his great-granddaughter.

The 41 items in the collection comprise 27 undated manuscript essays written by Roudanez, likely for publication in the two newspapers he cofounded in the 1860s, *L'Union* and *La Tribune*; Roudanez family correspondence dating 1880–90, during the last decade of his life; and one photograph of daughter Louise Roudanez as a child. Together, this

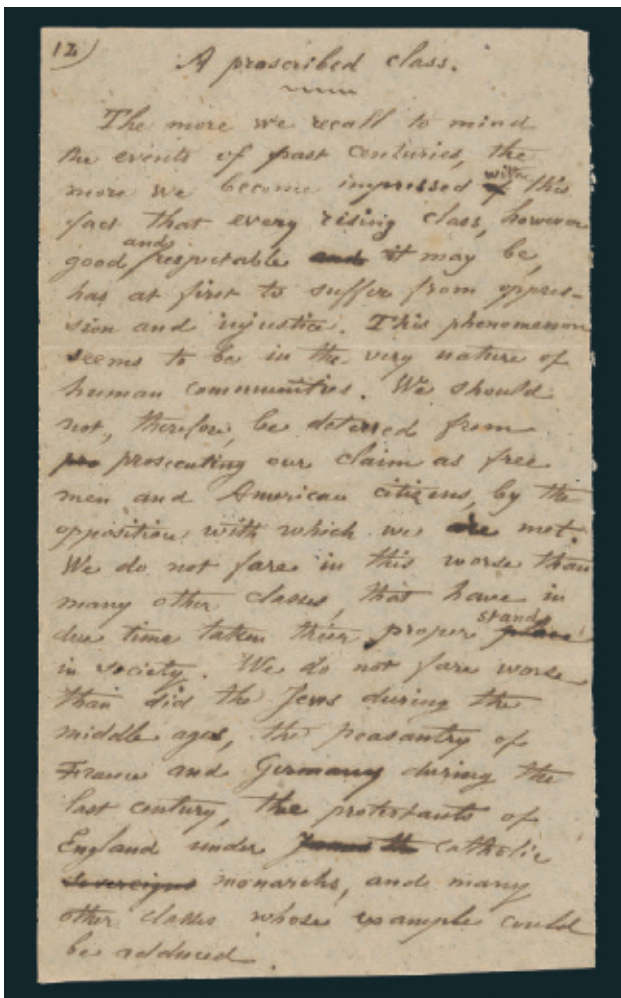
substantial collection offers a thrilling look at one of the most influential people in the early struggle for African American civil rights in Louisiana.

Dr. Louis Charles Roudanez (1823–1890) was born in St. James Parish in Louisiana. His parents, a white Frenchman and a free woman of color, were both immigrants from Saint-Domingue (Haiti). Roudanez studied medicine in France in the late 1840s and was inspired by the uprisings of that period, manning the barricades in Paris during the Revolution of 1848. He returned to New Orleans in the mid-1850s to open a medical practice in the French Quarter.

During the American Civil War, following the capture of New Orleans by the Union in 1862, he cofounded *L'Union*, the first Black newspaper in the South. Published in French, with an English edition added in 1863, it advocated for abolition, voting rights, and Black participation in the military. When *L'Union* ceased publication after just two years, Roudanez founded another newspaper, *La Tribune*. As Clint Bruce writes in his introduction to *Afro-Creole Poetry in French from Louisiana's Civil War-Era Newspapers* (THNOC 2020), the newspapers' blend of politics and poetry “brought the Creole poets' francophone worldview . . . to bear on the turbulent but promising circumstances of the Civil War and Reconstruction.”

Roudanez also became chairperson of the Unification Movement, a group dedicated to building a multiracial community in New Orleans. As Reconstruction ended and white supremacy reemerged, that dream died. Life became increasingly difficult for people of color in the city, so in 1879 Roudanez sent his wife and children to live in Paris. He died in New Orleans on March 11, 1890, and is buried in St. Louis Cemetery No. 1.

The essays are all six to eight pages in length. About half are written in French, half in English, and the bulk deal with Republican party politics during Reconstruction. Titles include “The Last Step toward Civil Equality,” “Chacun est le fils de ses oeuvres” (We are all the children of our works), and “Soyez de votre temps” (Be a person of your era). The essays





are undated, but references to Reconstruction-era figures such as Governor Henry Clay Warmoth, in “The Executive’s Course,” suggest that they were written in the late 1860s and ’70s, during the run of *La Tribune* (1864–77).

Roudanez was a leader of a Republican faction that represented the interests of newly enfranchised Black voters. In his essay “Some of the Proscribed Castes,” he remarks on the promise made by the 15th Amendment, which grants suffrage to men regardless of race.

“This community is just emerging from slavery. We do not speak only of the slaves but of the masters, upon whom the blighting effects of holding men and women in bondage are highly discernible. . . . Let us therefore persevere and march on. . . . Let us have equality, justice, peace, and union among our citizens. The time has come for it. Let persecutions, injustices, silly distinctions, and above all bloodshed and violence, be repudiated forever.”

The two other factions within the Republican Party were less egalitarian in their motives, and party infighting presented urgent barriers to progress during Reconstruction, which Roudanez addresses in the essays “Planks XII and XIV” and “The Safety of the Republican Party,” among others.

In addition to the 27 essays, the acquisition includes a group of letters from Roudanez in New Orleans to his family in Paris, after they fled the worsening racial climate in the United States. Roudanez and his wife, Célie, had 10 children—five boys and five girls. Three died before reaching adulthood, including Louise Roudanez (see image above), who passed away two months shy of her 12th birthday.

The letters show Roudanez to be a doting father, proud of his children’s accomplishments but more invested in the development of their minds and characters than in achievement alone. “I admire Chiffon’s and Emma’s intention to return courageously to their studies, but I really hope this will not be studying for any upcoming exam,” he writes in a letter dated January 5, 1880. “I will be devastated to learn in the future, that they study for anything other than to learn. When they are well educated, there will be more than enough time to take exams. Do not believe that people who constantly take exams are the most learned.”

In the same letter, he grows sentimental about the separation from his family: “I’m acting like a Grandmother at the moment. I have, eyes closed, so many memories of my dear children.”

The letters indicate that he was dearly beloved in return. In the months leading up to his death, Roudanez downplayed the unspecified illness that took his life, telling the children not to worry. On May 22, 1890, two months after his death, Célie wrote to officially share the news. “My dear, poor children, It is useless to hide from you any longer our great misfortune. Alas, my dear children, our best Friend, our help, our support, is not among us today. . . . a loss which brings us to tears and more by the emptiness which it leaves around us. How used we were to letting ourselves be guided and directed by our father who was so loving, so good, so devoted.” —MARK CAVE AND MOLLY REID CLEAVER

Letter excerpts translated from the French by Howard Margot. Roudanez genealogical research by Jari C. Honora.

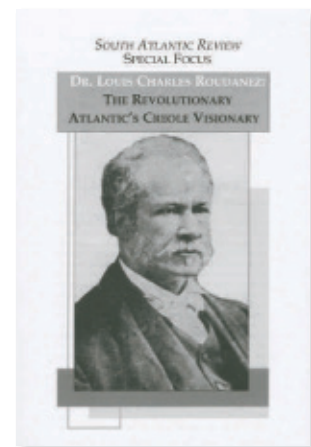
Related Holdings



Issue of *La Tribune*
March 8, 1866
gift of Karl Kabelac, 2003.0280



Portrait of Dr. Louis Charles Roudanez
ca. 1857; daguerreotype
gift of Mark Charles Roudané, 2017.0201



“Dr. Louis Charles Roudanez: The Revolutionary Atlantic’s Creole Visionary”
supplement, *South Atlantic Review*, vol. 73, no. 2 (Spring 2008)
gift of Dr. Erin M. Greenwald, 2008.0356

RECENT ADDITIONS

Homelands, Lost and Found



Viet Chronicle oral history materials

MSS 810

I am a Vietnamese guy and you are, surely, American, and we were together working in one project—and seeing the history of our people leaving the country from North to South, from Southern Vietnam to the United States. . . . I see that we were blessed by having, or God sent to us, a wonderful people, the American people, who sheltered us, who gave us opportunity to embrace, to grow, and to be ourselves, as well as to be Americans.
—Tinh Nguyen oral history (MSS 810.4)

In 2016 The Historic New Orleans Collection began an effort to record the life stories of Vietnamese people who resettled in the New Orleans area following the Fall

of Saigon in 1975. The project, called Viet Chronicle, has resulted in more than 30 oral histories of community members, comprising over 40 hours of recorded audio. These perspectives will form the basis of a 2025 exhibition, *Making It Home: From Vietnam to New Orleans*, to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Fall of Saigon.

The oral histories document the narrators' experiences of heartbreak, trauma, and hope as their world in Vietnam fell apart and they rebuilt their lives here in New Orleans. Many of the interviewees grew up in small villages in northern Vietnam and were children when the 1954 Geneva Accords partitioned the country. Lua Thi Tran remembered a raid of her predominantly Catholic village conducted by communist militants prior to partition, when she was 17:

“As soon as we heard the parish bells ring, everyone grabbed a knife, machete, or makeshift weapon and went into hiding,” she said. “But they searched everywhere, dragged people out of hiding, and buried them in the ground with only their heads sticking out above.” (MSS 810.8)

The war raged on for another decade, reshaping the lives of everyone it touched. “I was too young to get involved in the military,” said Toan Tran, “but as any citizen of Vietnam, we all experienced the war because we lived in the war. . . . The communists [would] shoot bombs and artillery into the town every day. And, as a matter of fact, in front of my house, there was a huge shell flying over and buried halfway. The shell was as big as my arms wrapped around, and it didn't explode. So, it stayed there. Every day,

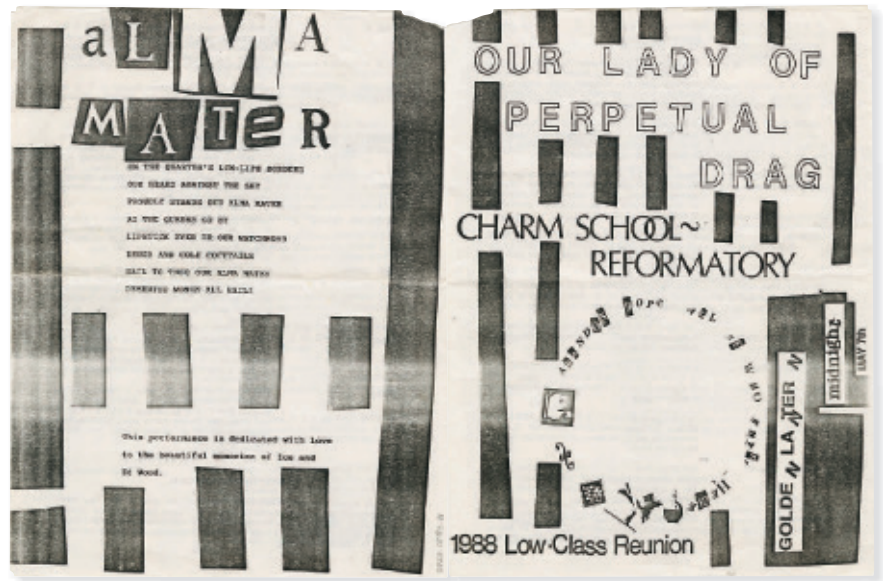
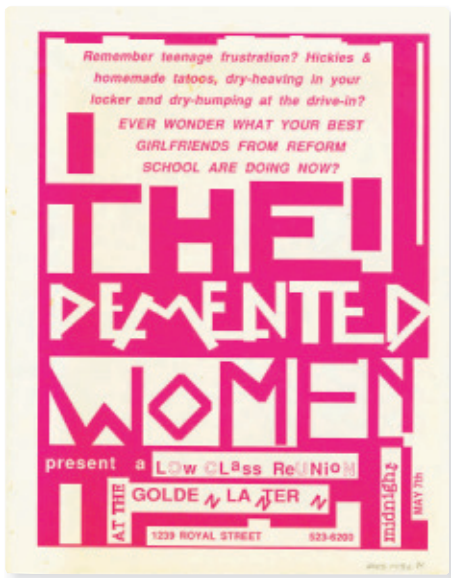
I touched the bottom of that shell. Well, now, thinking about it, I was afraid because, you know, if you touch some part of that, it might explode and the entire town will blow up.” (MSS 810.14.1)

The Fall of Saigon triggered the exodus of more than two million people from Southeast Asia. Each of the Viet Chronicle interviewees has their own harrowing story of fleeing the country and making their way to New Orleans. The stories include the loss of loved ones along the way, separation from family and friends, being robbed by pirates while at sea, being turned away from countries already overwhelmed by refugees, and surviving for months in detention camps.

But common among them all is the hope they felt when they finally made it to New Orleans. Quyan Nguyen comments on the comical circumstance of his family's arrival: “When we were in Thailand, everyone said it's going to be very cold when you get to America, so we acquired cold-weather clothing such as thick coats and jackets that the UNHCR [United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees] got for us. We stepped off the plane in New Orleans dressed in cold-weather clothing, and everyone laughed at us. It was so hot when we arrived.” (MSS 810.3)

With the aid of the federal government and agencies such as Catholic Charities, they reestablished themselves in New Orleans, only to once again rebuild their lives following Hurricane Katrina and the levee breaches.

In addition to the oral history narratives, THNOC has been actively collecting



photographs and ephemera documenting the development of this community in New Orleans and the impact Vietnamese Americans have had on the city. —MARK CAVE

Mario Dipietrantonio Collection
gift of William Scott Andrews, 2023.0093

In the early 1980s a small group of friends came together at the Golden Lantern, a French Quarter gay bar established in 1964, to form a drag group known as the Demented Women. The group held performances at locations around the French Quarter, and as the HIV/AIDS epidemic began to grow their performances took on a charitable focus. The shows raised money for community-based organizations that supported people living with and dying from the disease. At the time, limited treatment options were available, and fear, combined with poor public-health information about the virus, created intense social stigma around the disease. Newspaper write-ups of the period describe the Demented Women as “promoting charitable causes through camp entertainment.”

Mario Dipietrantonio (1954–2017) was a leader of the Jefferson Parish Library system, and in the 1980s he performed with the Demented Women as Sil Vous Plais. Scott Andrews, Mario’s husband, notes that they “were amongst the first groups to come together with others to raise money for

organizations that were addressing AIDS prevention and care issues in the city such as Project Lazarus, the NO/AIDS Task Force, and Belle Reve.”

The Mario Dipietrantonio Collection is small but significant in that it includes seven video recordings of Demented Women shows performed between 1983 and 1988. One notable recording captures a March 1, 1986, show held at St. Mark’s

Community Center for the benefit of Project Lazarus, which had been founded the previous year. It features a performance by Dipietrantonio as Sil Vous Plais alongside two others to the tune of Martha and the Vandellas’ “Dancing in the Street.” Also included are programs and ephemera related to the group and various French Quarter gay and lesbian venues, including the Golden Lantern and Charlene’s, as well



as newspaper clippings, a single photograph, and two issues of the New Orleans LGBT publication the *Rooster*. A 1988 issue of the *Rooster* shows the Demented Women featured prominently on the cover.

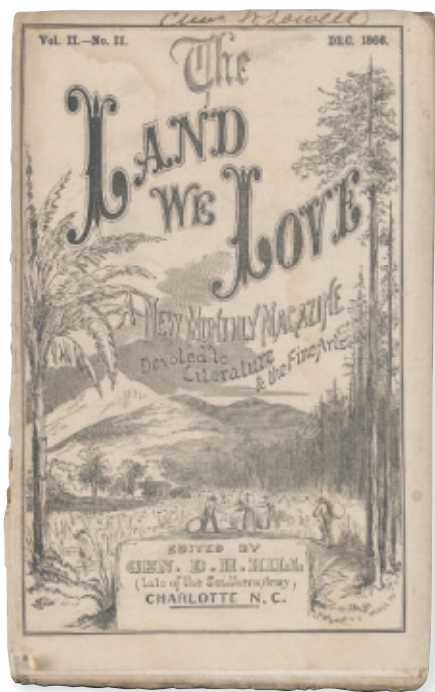
Kathleen Conlon, president of the LGBT+ Archives Project of Louisiana, was the lone female member of the Demented Women. She helped to facilitate the donation of this collection. The Collection has digitized the video recordings and will make them available to the public via THNOC’s online catalog, so that researchers and other interested parties can relive the joy and enthusiasm expressed through these performances.

—AIMEE EVERRETT

The Land We Love

2023.0097.3–4

The Land We Love was a magazine “devoted to literature and fine arts” published from May 1866 to March 1869 in Charlotte, North Carolina, by Daniel Harvey Hill (1821–1889), a math professor at Washington (now Washington and Lee) University who became a lieutenant general in the Confederate Army. Hill thought the problem with the South, and a main reason it lost the Civil War, was its lack of education in practical knowledge such as farming, mining, and



engineering, in favor of education in the classics for future politicians and other thinkers. As a result, *The Land We Love* published many articles on topics such as animal husbandry and household homopathy alongside works of poetry and fiction by southern writers such as Francis Orray Ticknor and Margaret Junkin Preston. Hill also insisted his publication become a sort of repository for war records and personal stories, which he used to populate the column “From the Haversack.” Hill was one of only a few publishers at that time to compensate his contributors, paying two to three dollars per page, which ensured he didn’t have to rely on amateur writers for content.

By December 1866, circulation of *The Land We Love* reached 12,000 and included subscriptions from Oregon, California, Pennsylvania, and New York. It was available in New Orleans at Blelock and Co. Booksellers, located on Canal Street, where two issues now in THNOC’s holdings were purchased by Charles Winthrop Lowell (1834–1877). Lowell was a lawyer from Maine who served as a commanding officer in the 80th Regiment of the United States Colored Infantry during the Civil War. He settled in New Orleans and purchased property north of the city after his military service ended in 1867. Lowell was elected to the Louisiana House of Representatives in 1868, where he served as speaker that year and again in 1872. His signature can be seen on both issues of *The Land We Love*, and one has a short Blelock and Co. catalog tipped into it.

It is curious that a former Union soldier and member of the Louisiana Reconstruction government would own issues of a magazine devoted to the South, and, indeed, given the condition of the two issues acquired by THNOC, it’s likely Lowell never read them. One issue in particular would have been impossible to read and remains so: owing to a production error, the folded “leaves” (large sheets of paper on which multiple pages are printed, to be folded and cut into individual bound pages) were never severed from each other. As a result, they remain in pristine, imperfect condition. —NINA BOZAK

Independent Order of Odd Fellows plaque

between 1850 and 1900; paint and gold leaf on wood
courtesy of the American Folk Art Museum, New York, gift of Kendra and Allan Daniel

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