

# The Historic New Orleans Collection Quarterly

VOLUME XXXVIII  
NUMBER 3/4

SUMMER/FALL  
2021



**ALL-MEDIA:** The World of John Clemmer





## FROM THE PRESIDENT

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The Collection always has several pots on the stove—exhibitions, programs, web features, collections development, and the daily work of helping researchers in our reading room. But for this issue’s letter, I’d like to shine a light on our publications department, as they have had a banner couple of years. Over the summer, we celebrated two new THNOC books, continuing a string of high-profile releases begun in 2020 that have made “Pubs” busier and more prolific than ever before.

*Dancing in the Streets: Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs of New Orleans* came out in June, coinciding with the end of its companion exhibition. Author-photographer Judy Cooper spent a decade interviewing club members, attending second line parades, writing her manuscript, and working with THNOC’s editors to bring the 326-page book to life. The result is spectacular: a book honoring and showcasing one of New Orleans’s most important cultural traditions, full of beautiful images, the voices of club members, and a special epilogue discussing the effects of the pandemic on the second line community. In early August, we were deeply saddened to hear about the passing of Charles “Action” Jackson, who compiled that epilogue for the book and also contributed to the *Dancing in the Streets* exhibition. As “ambassador to the second line,” he made a tremendous impact, on both our work and New Orleans culture at large. His absence will be felt for a long time to come, and we are honored to have been able to collaborate with him before his untimely death.

The end of July saw the launch of *John Clemmer: A Legacy in Art*, an exploration of the renowned abstract artist’s life and work in celebration of what would have been his hundredth birthday. Son David Clemmer contributed an essay to the exhibition catalog, an excerpt of which appears here. Curated by Judith H. Bonner, the show also discusses the crucial influence of the Arts and Crafts Club of New Orleans on Clemmer’s work, featuring fellow club artists such as Paul Ninas and Enrique Alférez.

Books are but one way The Collection tells stories of New Orleans and the Gulf South, and this issue of the *Quarterly* features other important vehicles for history: From the Front Line, an oral history effort begun last year in response to the pandemic, has captured the perspectives and experiences of many first responders and frontline workers over the past 18 months. Social media campaigns such as #PiecesofYOURstory, featured in this issue, have invited the public to contribute their own reflections on cherished heirlooms. Whether crowdsourced, curated, or compiled into a publication, we will continue to seek out new ways of engaging with history. —DANIEL HAMMER

## ON THE COVER

**Circles—Homage to JMWt [Joseph Mallord William Turner]**

1973; oil on Masonite  
by John Clemmer  
courtesy of Kimberly and John Ed Bradley

OPPOSITE:

**Alligator shoes, Pigeon Town Steppers**

2011; photograph  
by Judy Cooper  
courtesy of Judy Cooper

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Recent Additions



# A Painter's Progress

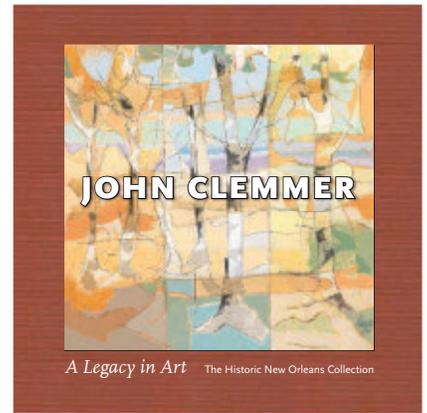
In this excerpt from *John Clemmer: A Legacy in Art*, the artist's son describes his father's many influences and styles.

For most of my life, I have been asked, "What kind of artist is your father?" It has long been my default response to describe him as an abstract painter. It's an admittedly simplistic answer to a complex question. But I do believe that the majority of people well acquainted with my father, John Franklin Clemmer, and his oeuvre would tend to characterize him the same way. Abstraction, with influences from cubism and other early to mid-20th-century non-objective movements, was at the core of his artistic practice. And yet, an overview of his eight-decade career reveals an exceptional diversity of styles, motifs, materials, and subject matter.

In addition to abstraction my father worked in portraiture, landscape, and still life. He used oil, acrylic, mixed media, watercolor, ink, graphite, collage, sandcasting, and assorted graphic media. He also worked in a variety of sculptural modes. In the early 1960s, he began to produce three-dimensional wall pieces utilizing the technique of sand-casting—a process he explored in great depth over the following two decades. He became exceptionally fluent with oxyacetylene torch and brazed metal techniques and utilized them extensively for sculptures he made throughout the 1970s, '80s, and '90s. He often used photographs—his own and those taken by family members—as source material for his work. He routinely culled pages from magazines and newspapers, keeping files stuffed with images that caught his eye and spurred his imagination.



Considering the completeness of his oeuvre, John Clemmer is admittedly a hard man to pin down. He had faith in his muse and followed it where it led him, daily manifesting his friend Mark Rothko's dictum that "the most important tool the artist fashions through constant practice is faith in his ability to produce miracles when they are needed." Clemmer adamantly resisted reductive labels, that of the "southern" artist in particular. "I'm not a southern artist," he would often say. "I'm an artist who works in the South." To wit, he worked extensively in the North (the upper Midwest, to be precise) as well, but was never labeled as such.



## NEW FROM THNOC

### *John Clemmer: A Legacy in Art*

with essays by Judith H. Bonner, John Ed Bradley, and David Clemmer  
hardcover · 148 pp.  
80 color images · 35 black-and-white images  
\$54.95

## EXHIBITION

### *John Clemmer: A Legacy in Art*

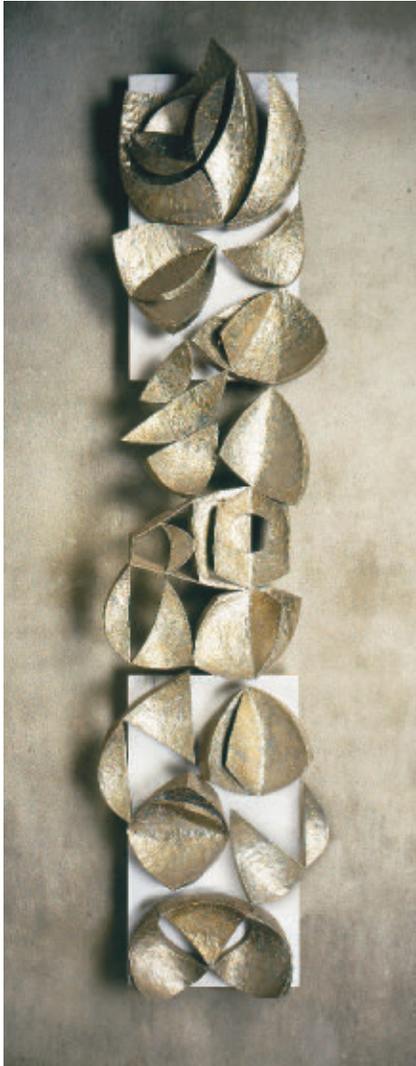
On view through November 7, 2021  
520 Royal Street  
Free

A. **John Clemmer with *Almedia* in his Foucher Street studio, New Orleans**  
ca. 1965

*John Clemmer archive; photograph by Milton Sheuermann Jr.*

B. ***Still Life***

1940; oil on canvas  
by John Clemmer  
courtesy of Don Fuson



**C. *Sculpture***  
1986; bronze and nickel silver on Monel  
by John Clemmer  
courtesy of Martha and Rick Barnett;  
photograph by Mark Wallheiser

**D. *Almedia***  
1962; oil and collage on panel  
by John Clemmer  
courtesy of David Clemmer



Regardless of where my father hung his hat (invariably, a black wool beret purchased on one of my parents' many trips abroad), his surroundings frequently inspired and infused themselves into his work, whether literally or through purely abstract ambience. An illustrative case is my father's large abstraction *Almedia* (1962). The mixed-media painting is titled after a hamlet upriver from New Orleans in St. Charles Parish; my father recounted that he noticed the name on a street sign while driving on Airline Highway one day. Completely devoid of any literal representation of the former plantation turned subdivision, the composition of cloudy red-brown forms and chevrons on a cream white ground incorporates a large photographic image of a shattered sculptural ear, torn from a copy of *Life* magazine and gessoed onto its surface. The word *Almedia* suggests "all-media" and the piece has always evoked for me dusty white shell driveways, tidal movement, and the hue of old growth cypress. The collaged ear perhaps reflects my father's love of classical music, or perhaps just the sense of sound. The combination of elements is enigmatic yet highly evocative.

For the generations of artists who came of age in the first half of the 20th century the influence of cubism—of Picasso in particular—was inescapable. Cubist-informed fracture of the figure and object can be seen in my father’s early work. By the mid-1950s the abstract expressionist school of New York-based artists was ascendant in the art world, and his work from this period reflects the move toward elimination of the distinction between figure and ground, toward an “all over” compositional sense. In the next decade, his work showed an even greater ability to synthesize his disparate influences. His interests in Paleolithic cave painting and the art and architecture of ancient Greece, Rome, Byzantium, the Middle East, and the Italian Renaissance found expression in his work from the 1960s onward.

Later in life, my father came to regard Pierre Bonnard as the greatest artist of the 20th century, finding endless fascination in the artist’s uniquely poetic balance of the pure materiality of paint with scenes of intimate domesticity. I recall a visit to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and my father standing in front of Bonnard’s *The Terrace at Vernonnet*, transfixed by the rich tapestry of color, pattern, and form, murmuring half to himself, “How does he *do* that?”

My father was an avid fan and scholar of classical music, and references to various compositions and composers began to appear in his work from the mid-’80s onward. He invariably listened to classical music while he worked, and in the late 1990s he



E

**E. Clemmer at one of his early solo exhibitions**

1949  
gift of John F. Clemmer, 1993.36.9

**F. Clemmer at the Temple of Poseidon, Cape Sounion, Greece**

ca. 2006  
John Clemmer archive

**G. Temple of Poseidon I**

1992; mixed media on canvas  
by John Clemmer  
courtesy of the New Orleans Museum of Art; photograph by Judy Cooper



F



G



H. John Clemmer and David Clemmer with *Coleman Fountain* (in progress) at his Magazine Street studio, New Orleans ca. 1973

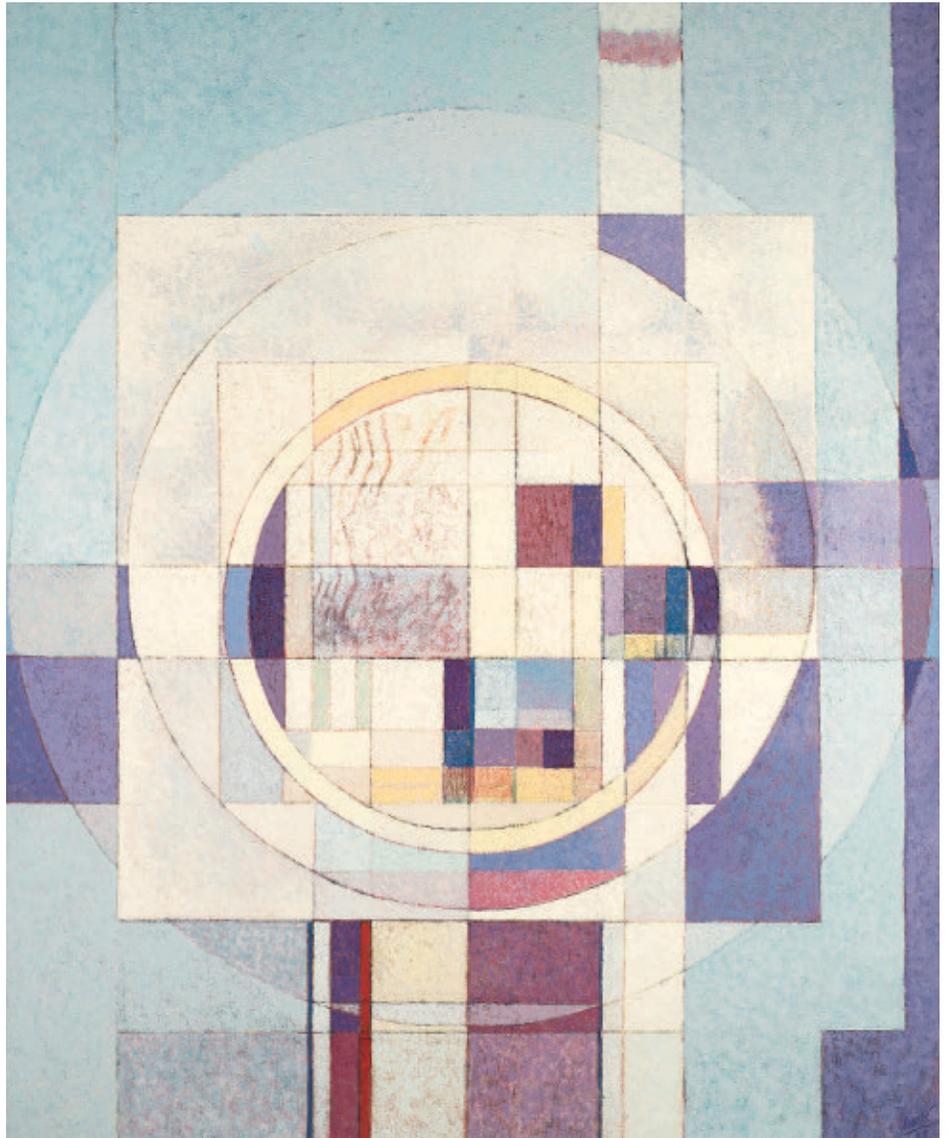
*John Clemmer archive; photograph by Harold Trapido*

I. **Painting—Sandcasting (*Ten-Piece*)**

1975; oil on canvas with bronze and Portland cement by John Clemmer  
2020.0015.1.6

J. **Topographia V—*Capricorn***

1973; oil on canvas by John Clemmer  
*courtesy of Jonathan Clemmer and Michael Barnes, Royal Oak, MI*



executed a series of more than 30 intricate ink drawings depicting scenes and characters from his favorite operas.

Though my father's formal education extended no further than his high school diploma, his knowledge of art history and the modernist enterprise was extensive. He was possessed of a keen and relentlessly inquiring intellect and was a voracious reader. He was well aware of how his modest background and lack of a college degree might color him in the eyes of others as he progressed through his four-decade career in academe, but he was not afflicted by self-doubt or anxiety regarding his abilities. Rather, he had the confidence born of knowing that his accomplishments were honestly earned and not conferred upon him by dint of pedigree or privilege.

Like any artist of substance and originality, my father was much more than the sum total of his influences. Central to his genius was the ability to acknowledge and absorb the myriad influences that informed his personal aesthetic preferences while remaining very much his own man at the easel. Once he began to come into his own, his work less and less resembled that of anyone else. Biased though I may be, I feel that his work possesses an undeniable gravitas. This trait was equally manifest in the man himself: a quality of solidity and intellectual integrity that continues to speak eloquently across the decades.

—DAVID CLEMMER



K

**K. Self-Portrait**

2003; oil on canvas  
by John Clemmer  
courtesy of 3618 Studio, LLC, New Orleans, LA

**L. John Clemmer in his Laurel Street studio,  
New Orleans**

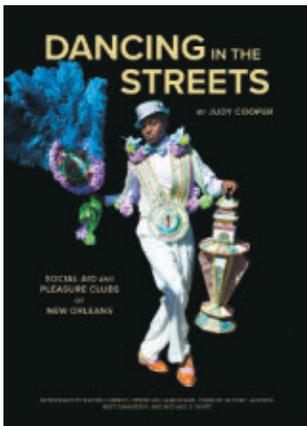
2010  
courtesy of 3618 Studio, LLC, New Orleans, LA;  
photograph by David Clemmer



L



A



### NEW FROM THNOC

#### ***Dancing in the Streets: Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs of New Orleans***

by Judy Cooper, with essays by Rachel Carrico, Freddi Williams Evans, Charles "Action" Jackson, Matt Sakakeeny, and Michael G. White

hardcover • 326 pp. • 317 color images • 19 black-and-white images

\$49.95

## Styling Out

**An excerpt from the new book *Dancing in the Streets* explores the planning and artistry behind social aid and pleasure clubs' finery.**

Brightly colored suits, matching hats, fancy shoes, streamers, fans, and umbrellas—the outfits, accessories, and regalia of New Orleans's social aid and pleasure clubs express both the originality of each club as well as the African American tradition of creativity and commentary through dress. As Wardell Lewis Sr., a founder of the Scene Highlighters and the Original New Orleans Buckjumpers put it, "We are bringing beauty to the streets."

This beauty is the result of a year's worth of planning, deliberation, fundraising, and coordination. It all starts with the annual choice of colors—usually two, sometimes three—which remains a closely guarded secret until the day of the parade. According to Linda Green of the Lady Rollers, "A lot of people don't know how to coordinate colors, but when you do it right, the colors *shout*." Each organization has a club color combination that they typically reserve for special anniversary years.

With some clubs, the choice of color is a democratic, sometimes difficult one made at a regular club meeting, often soon after the current season's parade is done. "We butt heads," said L. J. Goldstein, member of Tremé Sidewalk Steppers. With other clubs, the decision is made by one member, usually the president. For their inaugural parade in 2006, the Men of Class wore peach, cream, and lime. Anthony "Tony" Hookfin chose the combination, which, he said, some of the members didn't like. "You can't be scared to wear color in a second line parade," Hookfin told them.

Almost all of the club members wear hats—men, women, and even the children. The dominant source has long been Meyer the Hatter, located just off Canal on St. Charles Avenue. Founded in 1894, it is the oldest family-owned haberdasher in the country, the largest in the South, and the first to cater to both whites and African Americans. According to Sam Meyer, grandson of the shop’s founder, the male clubs typically prefer pinch-front, snap-brim fedoras in felt or beaver. “They are not cheap hats,” he said.

But a club’s regalia is never complete without specially selected shoes. They are “the first thing [people] see when you come out the door,” said Joe Stern of Prince of Wales. Alligator shoes, or “gators,” as they’re called, are the gold standard. Local purveyor Rubensteins orders from shoemakers in Spain and Italy, brands such as Mezlan and Mauri. The shoes are custom made according to the club’s own design, sometimes featuring intricate patterns and more than one color, such as the Men Buckjumpers’ three-toned boots they sported in 2016, when they proclaimed themselves “Alligator Shoe Kings,” or the eight-toned pairs the Uptown Swingers wore in 2015. Such fancy footwear is, understandably, expensive: one pair can cost over \$1,000. The shoes are also time consuming to produce—overseas orders take at least two months to arrive, leading more than one parade to be postponed because the shoes didn’t arrive in time.

Unlike the men, many of the female clubs cover the miles of their parade routes in heels. In 2010, the boots worn by the Ladies of Unity had such pointed heels that they got stuck in cracks in the street. The boots had to be abandoned before the parade had gone two blocks.

Though what clubs wear is important, what they carry as “decorations”—fans, baskets, canes, and more—sets club finery apart from any other style of dress. Today’s clubs have created many variations of the traditional basket, some so ornate and sculptural that they hardly resemble baskets at all. They’re especially important to Sudan’s decorations, even appearing as part of the club’s logo. The club incorporates several different basket designs



B

**A. Lynelle “VIP” Jones, queen of the Revolution, flanked by parade dukes Kevin Jones and Val Valentine**

2010  
by Judy Cooper  
courtesy of Judy Cooper

**B. Sam Meyer of Meyer the Hatter**

2014  
by Judy Cooper  
courtesy of Judy Cooper

**C. Janitra “Chi” Miles, Divine Ladies**

2015  
by Pableaux Johnson  
courtesy of Pableaux Johnson

**D. “Alligator Shoe Kings,” Men Buckjumpers**

2016  
by Judy Cooper  
courtesy of Judy Cooper



C



D



E



F



G



H



for each parade, all made by Adrian “Coach Teedy” Gaddies, who also makes decorations for the Dumaine Street Gang and is part of a network of makers who have shared and passed on their expertise. He learned from Melvin Reed, designer for the Black Men of Labor, and Reed got his start with Jerome Smith of Tambourine and Fan and the Bucket Men. Both Smith and Reed learned from Allison “Tootie” Montana, the legendary Mardi Gras Indian.

The Ole & Nu Style Fellas have made fanciful variations on canes their signature decoration. Tyrone “Trouble” Miller Jr. is responsible for the designs, but all the club members



pitch in to help construct them—usually three or four different versions for each parade. “We are up all night for days before our parade,” said club cofounder Sue Press. The canes are all designed to stand alone, so that members can dance without them falling. (Press’s husband, cofounder Darryl Press, often rests his beer can in the top of his cane.) For the 2016 parade Miller took inspiration from the world of technology: on top of each cane was a life-size replica of some kind of camera, from antique models to modern video cameras. He fashioned the replicas out of cardboard, then covered them with silks and brocades and studded them with rhinestones.

While downtown clubs tend to feature three-dimensional decorations—baskets, umbrellas, and canes—the uptown clubs favor more two-dimensional elements, such as streamers and fans. According to

**E. Anthony “Tony” Hookfin with Queen Sametta “Deedy J” Hawkins, Men of Class**

2014  
by Judy Cooper  
*courtesy of Judy Cooper*

**F. Sue Press and brother Gus Lewis, Ole & Nu Style Fellas**

2017  
by Judy Cooper  
*courtesy of Judy Cooper*

**G. Darryl Press’s beer-can-holding cane and coordinating outfit, designed by Tyrone “Trouble” Miller Jr., Ole & Nu Style Fellas**

2016  
by Judy Cooper  
*courtesy of Judy Cooper*

**H. Ferdinand Snyder comes out the door, Original Big 7**

2009  
by Judy Cooper  
*courtesy of Judy Cooper*

**I. Sudan members in prayer**

2015  
by Ryan Hodgson-Rigsbee  
*courtesy of Ryan Hodgson-Rigsbee*

**J. Denzel Audrey, Ole & Nu Style Fellas**

2017  
by Judy Cooper  
*courtesy of Judy Cooper*



K

Kevin Dunn, one of the primary decorations craftsmen on the scene, today's streamers evolved from a simple ribbon sash bearing the club name or logo. Most modern streamers are distinguished by large medallions featuring the club logo and/or motto for the parade. Dunn's streamers incorporate velvet, satin, a lot of ribbon, embroidery, and sequins, sourced from Jefferson Variety Store, the family-owned business that has long serviced New Orleans's SAPCs and Mardi Gras Indians.

Use of ostrich feathers for the fans is another practice

borrowed from the Mardi Gras Indians, also known as Black Masking Indians. When a parader first comes out the door and pauses for effect and admiration, he holds his fans high, the giant plumes forming a majestic crown. As he dances down the street, he waves in coordination with his steps—so much so that, at a distance, a second line parade is often heralded by the flash of colorful feathers in the air.

Though clubs unofficially compete to make the biggest impression when they come out the door, each display of style and flair reinforces the cultural power of the entire SAPC scene. With their colorful extravagance, second line parades allow each member to shine, both for him- or herself and for the tradition. "You parade up the street, and everybody's calling your name, wanting to take a picture with you with your fancy suit," writes Ronald W. Lewis in *The House of Dance and Feathers*, the book he published with the Neighborhood Story Project in 2009. "A cigar in your mouth, hat ace deuce. Stick your feet out and show them a beautiful pair of shoes. You are signifying, *Before I go back to the normal life, I am the big shot for a day.*" —JUDY COOPER

**K. Lonzell Stirgus, *Nine Times***

2018  
by L. A. Reno  
courtesy of L. A. Reno

**L. *Black Men of Labor***

2013  
by Judy Cooper  
courtesy of Judy Cooper



L



# On the Map

A new exhibition presents highlights from THNOC's extensive cartographic holdings.

General L. Kemper Williams, who cofounded The Historic New Orleans Collection with his wife, Leila Williams, was an enthusiastic and discerning collector of maps. The institution's very first accession, numbered 00.1, is an early 17th-century map of America by the Flemish publisher Jodocus Hondius. General Williams collected early continental and coastal maps, as well as 18th- and 19th-century military and political maps, along with modern survey, economic, and tourist maps highlighting New Orleans, Louisiana, and the Gulf South. A new exhibition at the Williams Research Center presents a modest selection of noteworthy maps originally collected by General Williams prior to his death in 1971, and pairs them with thematically related examples acquired over the following 45 years by THNOC curators.

Maps, of course, aren't simply cartographic objects but are lenses through which to study a number of historical topics, including early European exploration of the New World, Native Americans, colonial development, warfare and diplomacy, maritime and river navigation, economic development, and travel. For example, the show includes

## EXHIBITION

**Cartographic Legacies: Historical Maps at the Williams Research Center**

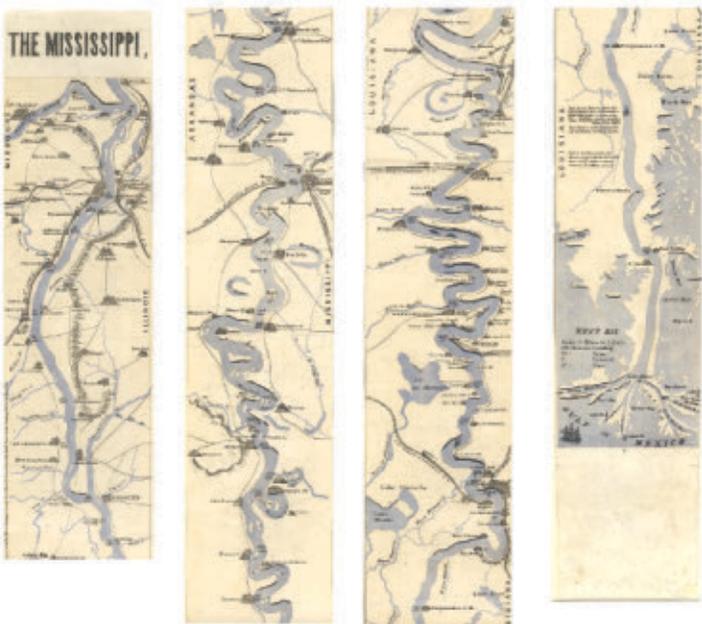
On view through November 28, 2021  
Williams Research Center,  
410 Chartres Street  
Free

A and B. **Ribbon Map of the Father of Waters**

1866; color lithograph on linen in wood and metal case  
by Colony & Fairchild, publishers  
2019.0296



B



C. **Sketch of the Position of the British and American Forces during the Operations against New Orleans...**

1815; ink and watercolor  
by or after John Peddie, delineator  
The L. Kemper and Leila Moore Williams  
Founders Collection, 1949.18

D. **Orleans**

1815; pen and ink manuscript  
possibly by Isaac McKeever, delineator  
2018.0462.2.5

E. **The Mississippi: Alton to the Gulf of Mexico as Seen from the Hurricane Deck (details)**

1861; color lithograph  
by Schönberg & Co., publishers  
The L. Kemper and Leila Moore Williams  
Founders Collection, 00.20

two hand-drawn maps connected to the 1814–15 Battle of New Orleans. One, from the British perspective, was acquired by General Williams from the papers of Robert Saunders Dundas, 2nd Viscount Melville, First Lord of the Admiralty at the time of the battle. The other comes from the American perspective and is believed to have been drawn by a young US Navy lieutenant named Isaac McKeever. A curious feature of this map is that it includes a reference to the future Faubourg Marigny neighborhood as “St. Margareta.”

Other highlights include a 1716 manuscript coast chart from a French marine pilot named Soupart that informed and influenced subsequent 18th-century printed maps of Louisiana that were produced in Paris by France’s leading cartographers. Two “ribbon” maps—measuring 10 and 12 feet in length—provide an alternative way to show points of interest along the Mississippi River. The more compact version fits in a pocket-sized spool but includes the entire length of the river, from its delta to its source at Lake Itasca, a distance of 2600 miles. *Cartographic Legacies* surveys The Collection’s diverse and extensive cartographic holdings, as well as the surprising physical forms that maps can take.

—JASON WIESE

OFF-SITE

## The King's Bag of Tricks

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



Online magazine *The Bitter Southerner* reproduced six images of songwriter Earl King for the feature "Earl King: Poet Laureate of New Orleans," published in February 2021.

### Earl King performing at the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival

1975  
by Michael P. Smith  
photograph by Michael P. Smith ©  
The Historic New Orleans Collection,  
2007.0103.4.662

The **Holocaust Memorial Resource and Education Center** in Orlando, Florida, was provided with an image of David Duke for use in *Uprooting Prejudice: Faces of Change*, an exhibition on view through May 2022.

### David Duke addressing the crowd at a KKK rally

1979  
by Michael P. Smith  
photograph by Michael P. Smith ©  
The Historic New Orleans Collection,  
2007.0103.4



David Duke addressing KKK Rally

Michael P. Smith, 1979

**Virgin Hotel New Orleans** has licensed three images of New Orleans musicians to be reproduced 29 times throughout the hotel's guest rooms.



### Etta James performing at the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival

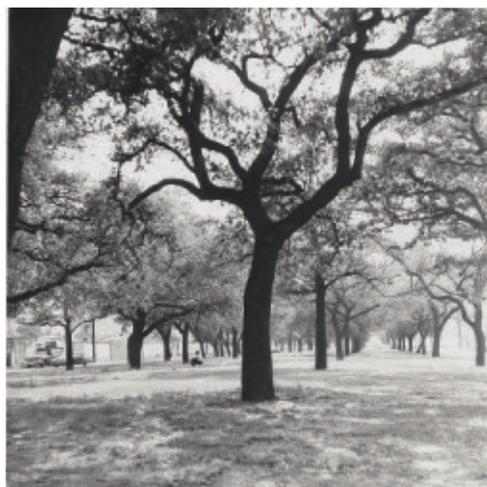
1979  
by Michael P. Smith  
photograph by Michael P. Smith © The Historic  
New Orleans Collection, 2007.0103.2.249



### Allen Toussaint performing at the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival

1988  
by Michael P. Smith  
photograph by Michael P. Smith © The Historic  
New Orleans Collection, 2007.0103.4.750

The **Louisiana Office of Tourism** was provided with two images for use on the website of the recently launched Louisiana Civil Rights Trail, on view at [www.louisianacivilrightstrail.com](http://www.louisianacivilrightstrail.com).



### Claiborne Avenue, looking uptown from St. Louis Street

1967  
The William Russell Jazz Collection at  
The Historic New Orleans Collection,  
92-48-L.331.1337

### North Claiborne Avenue at St. Bernard Avenue, with partial view of Circle Food Store and St. Bernard Market

1954  
by Charles L. Franck Photographers  
The Charles L. Franck Studio Collection  
at The Historic New Orleans Collection,  
1979.325.5138



A. Glass paperweight made by Leigh Checkman

B. Coffee table made by Henry Wells, a cousin of Jessica Dorman's, in the 1950s

## Prized Possessions

During the run of *Pieces of History*, THNOC asked people to talk about their own cherished heirlooms on social media via #PiecesofYOURstory. Here are some of the submissions.

### Paperweight, Leigh Checkman (Texas)

Years ago, I was a glassworker. I made perfume bottles, vases, ornaments, oil candles, pendants, and other objects in a production studio in New Orleans. A nice young fellow I'd just met at the synagogue two blocks from where I lived at the time came in to purchase a few paperweights, one for himself, one to send to his parents as a gift. This paperweight is one I made in 1997. Five years after the purchase of this hefty globe, I married the nice young fellow in that synagogue.

### Coffee table, Jessica Dorman (Louisiana)

I inherited this coffee table from my grandmother, and even though I grew up admiring it, only as an adult did I learn that it was the handiwork of my Grama's cousin, Henry Wells. Like my grandparents, Henry was born in Vienna in the early 20th century. The rise of Nazism ripped his world apart; family members, including two of my great-grandparents, would lose their lives in the Holocaust. In a fateful twist, Henry escaped Hitler thanks to the intervention of another historical monster, General Rafael Trujillo. It's a complicated tale, beautifully told by my cousin Allen Wells in his book *Tropical Zion*. Suffice it to say that Trujillo—motivated by a perverse blend of egotism and racism—welcomed Jewish refugees to the Dominican Republic at a time when virtually no other world leaders were willing to do so. Henry settled in the agricultural commune of Sosúa in 1940; here, among other labors, he apprenticed as a cabinetmaker.



Henry left Sosúa in 1947 and emigrated to New York. For decades he ran a custom-built furniture shop on Long Island. My table is typical of his work from the 1950s. Even in its slightly scuffed shape—the veneer needs restoration—I treasure it beyond measure.

### Quilt, Molly Reid Cleaver (Louisiana)

Two days before my husband and I got married in 2012, my mother-in-law, Suz Cleaver, presented us with this gorgeous quilt made by more than 20 family members and friends based in northwest West Virginia and Lancaster, Pennsylvania, the two areas where my husband grew up. Suz coordinated the entire project: inspired by Gustav Klimt's *The Kiss*, she selected fabrics in rich gold, yellow, black, white, gray, and brown. She provided the fabrics to far-flung participants and hosted sewing meetups with local friends in West Virginia. Each person made a quilt square, and Suz assembled them all together into the final product.

Receiving that quilt on the eve of the wedding festivities set the stage for the big event: "This is really happening!" It made me feel tied to history, to the old ways of community-based support for newlyweds. Being able to hold a material representation of those friends' support meant—still means—the world to both of us. Moreover, the quilt is stunningly beautiful! It's a style and color palette I would never think to select for myself, which makes its beauty even more of a gift.



C. Wedding quilt made by Suz Cleaver and friends

### Mixing bowl, Leslie Smith Everage (Louisiana)

My grandmother, Lettie Boseman—known as Momma to me and my cousins—loved to bake tea cakes, a cookie that is tradition to many African American families. She baked them for her nine children and would continue to bake them for the large tribe of grandkids that would follow.

My thoughts are that she learned this gift of baking from the workers at Nottoway Plantation in White Castle, Louisiana. She and her mom, Louvenia (my great-grandmother), lived there for a period of time. I was exceptionally close to Momma and loved to listen to her stories and watch her cook. Luckily for me, my family lived just around the corner from her. When she got the urge to bake and the tea cakes came out of the oven, that sweet phone call would come across the line. "Les, I baked tea cakes." Off I went to retrieve my stash.

They would usually be awaiting me in the large yellowware bowl on the Formica kitchen table. I would grab a brown paper bag and stuff as many as I could in it for me and my three siblings. No two batches were ever the same. There was no need for fancy



D. Mixing bowl passed down from Lettie Boseman to her granddaughter Leslie Smith Everage

E. Jenny Lind souvenir bust purchased by Laura Lee Jaworski's great-great-grandfather

cookie cutters in her kitchen. She usually grabbed whatever glass was nearby to cut out the dough. If there was a bottle top available, you might find that shape pressed onto a tea cake as decoration. The warmth would leave spots of butter stains on the bag. I could never resist eating a few on my slow walk home. I admit to my selfish consumption and clearly not dividing the batch evenly. But how would they know?

After Momma's passing in April of 1998, I felt a need to honor her memory and those wonderful batches of tea cakes. Of course, upon her answering God's call, the one item of hers that I had to have was that old, worn yellowware tea cake bowl. Following tradition, I've been known to whip up batches of

tea cakes on a whim to share with my family and friends on special occasions. To represent the love I will always hold in my heart for my grandmother, the odd shapes have been replaced with a different shape—a heart.

### Jenny Lind bust, Laura Lee Jaworski (Virginia)

When Jenny Lind, the Swedish opera singer brought to America by P. T. Barnum, came to New Orleans, my great-great-grandfather was there to hear her. As with modern concerts, they were selling memorabilia—or “merch,” as the kids today refer to it. My great-great-grandfather was smitten with the Swedish beauty and purchased a plaster bust, a lithograph, and a jewelry box of her likeness. These items were passed down in our family along with the belief that the bust was very valuable. At times of financial lows, the family was always comforted by this belief. It was said to all the generations, if things get really bad, you can sell the Jenny Lind bust to help you get through the rough times.

In the early 1990s, my great-aunt was the keeper of the Jenny Lind items. She was in the early stages of Alzheimer's and had come to live with our family in Alabama and, of course, she brought Jenny with her. Sotheby's of London was presenting an antiques appraisal at the local library, so with great care, wrapped in multiple layers of protection and held in my mother's lap, Jenny went to be appraised. The verdict was that the items would have sold for about one dollar at the time. The 1990 value was around \$100. So much for Jenny helping the family in times of financial woe.

We never told my great-aunt about the appraisal. The true value of Jenny was the financial comfort she brought to a family during the Depression and other times of economic downturn. The story of Jenny is much more valuable than Jenny herself.



# Battle Weary

**From the Front Line, THNOC's newest oral history project, documents the watershed period still unfolding as New Orleans reckons with the pandemic.**

In May 2020, soon after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, The Collection set about documenting this critical episode in world history as it was emerging locally. One result was the oral history series *From the Front Line: Narratives of the COVID-19 Pandemic in New Orleans*, which, to date, has gathered over 50 audio interviews from nurses, doctors, paramedics, epidemiologists, public officials, morticians, spiritual leaders, business leaders, and artists, with more to come. The oral histories have been cataloged and are available to listen to, in full, through THNOC's online catalog; videotaped excerpts are available to watch on The Collection's website.

The project "provides historians the emotional perspective of frontline workers in New Orleans as they confronted the worst of the pandemic," said Mark Cave, senior historian and director of THNOC's oral history programs. "As work continues we will focus on stories that relate to longer-term social and economic changes brought about by the pandemic."

Here are some excerpts from interviews in the series, their urgency and gravity serving as an everlasting reminder of our vulnerability—and our strength.

**Dr. Jennifer Avegno**, director of the New Orleans Health Department, has been at the center of the COVID-19 crisis from the start. Born and raised in the New Orleans area, she has been the public face of the city's response to COVID-19 and has been responsible for orchestrating the city's efforts in establishing safety protocols and testing centers. *Interview recorded November 11, 2020*

It was a Monday at noon. I think I still have the sticky note that I wrote it on, and I got the call from Joe Kanter, and he said, "We have our first case." [. . .] It seems, from the data we have, that the virus that came to Louisiana came from the north-east. Was there one person who brought it? Maybe. Were there 50 people who brought it? Maybe. And then that big ol' superspreader event that is Mardi Gras just made it explode. I said, "We are behind. This is the tip of the iceberg. This is not going to show up on a plane—it is already here." [. . .]

There's nothing soft about public health. You have to have a backbone. You have to use hard data and science to make really complex, difficult decisions. You gotta do



## ONLINE

**From the Front Line: Narratives of the COVID-19 Pandemic in New Orleans**

Visit [www.hnoc.org/research/oral-history](http://www.hnoc.org/research/oral-history) and click "From the Front Line"

*made possible by the generous sponsorship of the 2020 and 2021 Bienville Circle*

it quickly; you gotta be decisive. When the Feds called and said, we're going to do these drive-through testing sites in a couple of cities, do you wanna be one, we said yes right away, and within three days we got it up and running.

The first testing site was the federally supported drive-through testing. This wasn't gonna cut it for a lot of people. The first person you saw was a guy in fatigues with a gun. Early on, we pushed back with the Feds, saying this wasn't going to work, let us do it locally, and eventually they did. We realized that the virus was disproportionately hitting residents of color, generally on the lower income end, so we had to bring the testing to them. We devised a way to do that really quickly. I think the Feds, at first, were a little taken aback or maybe a little offended that we didn't necessarily like their method, and they sort of said, "OK, good luck." And I showed up at Xavier and I almost burst into tears, because there was a line around the block an hour before we opened. One of the women was an 80-year-old woman who had walked a half a mile to be tested, and I knew that she wasn't gonna be able to get a test any other way. And I thought, if she's the only lady I've done something for, this is already a success. And then, pretty soon thereafter, this is what everybody in the country is doing, because it's the right thing to do.



COVID-19 took a heartbreaking toll in New Orleans. The death rate and the isolation caused by the pandemic made it difficult to pay proper respect to those who passed away. Local embalmers like **Stephanie Simon** of Rhodes Funeral Home faced long hours, loneliness, and exhaustion as they confronted a crisis that seemed to have no end. *Interview recorded December 21, 2020*

Before COVID, I would embalm maybe two or three cases a day. And then once the COVID cases started coming in, I was bombarded with cases. Sometimes I would embalm six cases a day and still have five or six for the next day. Sometimes I would work 14 days in a row without getting a day off, and that was kind of difficult. [ . . . ] Most of the cases we received from the hospitals, if the patient was on a ventilator, we received them with all the IV

lines still in. It was believed that COVID could spread once the tubing was removed, so we had to be very cautious. [ . . . ] It's still difficult, not being able to see family members and friends. Right now my life consists of going to work and going home, and it's been like that since March [2020]. We're all looking, people always say, we can't wait until we go back to normal. It seems to be that this is our normal.

During the pandemic many New Orleanians have experienced that terrifying moment when a loved one was loaded in the back of an ambulance and taken away. Paramedics with the New Orleans Emergency Medical Services needed to tread carefully and swiftly, with compassion. Director **Dr. Emily Nichols** talks about the experience of New Orleans EMS workers. *Interview recorded October 27, 2020*

I recall one of the first calls having nothing to do with the symptoms that had been reported at that point in time, so we were finding individuals who had complaints for their knee or their back, who we happened to check their oxygen levels and noticed them to be low. And that was scary, because our providers weren't in the habit of protecting themselves fully if you had knee pain. No one was suspecting that you would have COVID-19 with complaints of knee pain. There was one case, and then there were three cases, and the doubling rate was faster than it had been in most other regions at that point. And there was so much that we did not know about this virus. We were making decisions on the fly with presumptions about what this virus might become. This is scary;

we don't know what this might become. And there was some pushback, like, "You can't use all your PPE on everyone," and I said, "We're going to do that."

Oh, goodness, there were such highs and lows. It was all word of mouth of, "Hey, we heard about a stash here," well let's go check it out. And, you know, you heard it was an N95 but it was actually a surgical mask, so it was a little bit of a downer, but it was still more than we had two days ago. Any little donation would help us, even if it just got us through another 24 hours of service, every little win was monumental. It was just so touching, though—the emotions were so on the surface, because we genuinely did not know what the next 48 hours would look like.



When the pandemic first hit, **Josh Wingerter** decided to try to stick to his daily routines. So he went to Frenchmen Street, where he had sold his artwork. He found all his old haunts boarded up with plywood. Rather than see the plywood as a grim reminder of the unfolding crisis, he viewed it as a challenge to the artist inside him. Wingerter's street art on Frenchmen inspired New Orleanians during some of the pandemic's darkest hours. *Interview recorded October 27, 2020*

I just started painting, because that's kind of what I do, and kept painting and kept painting, and more people asked me to paint more places, to the point where people are following me out to the spot. [ . . . ] This was never meant to make money, at least not for me. I was just doing what I've always done, and the city responded to it. [ . . . ] Every day we have opportunities to do good things. The first shop that I started at, the Who Dat Cafe, they were already doing things like giving plate lunches to people, helping people with their rent. You just help out as many people as you can.



### FROM THE FRONT LINE ADVISORY GROUP

*Nina Compton*, chef/owner, Bywater American Bistro and Compère Lapin

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*Kelli Saulny*, campaign manager, Campaign for Equity: New Orleans (CENO)

*David Lee Simmons*, deputy communications director to Mayor LaToya Cantrell

*Melanie Talia*, president and CEO, New Orleans Police and Justice Foundation



ON THE JOB

Margit Longbrake

**POSITION:** Senior editor, on staff since 2014

**ASSIGNMENT:** Produce videos of New Orleans poets responding to Civil War–era Afro-Creole protest poetry

*don't you smell the ashes  
of freedom rising?*

—Kelly Harris-DeBerry, “We Are the Holy Ones” (2021)

In 2010, I attended a conference where scholar Clint Bruce read his translations of 19th-century Afro-Creole protest poetry, and my first thought was, “These poems could have been written today—why haven’t I heard them?” I am an editor, so my second thought was, “This needs to be a book.” I introduced myself, and after 10 years of working with Clint, in May 2020, THNOC brought these remarkable voices back to life in *Afro-Creole Poetry in French from Louisiana’s Radical Civil War–Era Newspapers: A Bilingual Edition*.

*Kissed by thieves  
We count our teeth*

—Mona Lisa Saloy, “Erase Tyranny of Today” (2021)

Kelly Harris-DeBerry recites “We Are the Holy Ones” in THNOC’s Williams Residence courtyard while a film crew captures the performance.



Shortly after the volume was published, George Floyd was killed by a white police officer. The resulting outcry and the resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement threw a spotlight on police brutality and the United States’s long, unresolved history of racism. Today’s outrages echo problems confronted 150 years ago by the activist writers in this collection, whose poems describe white police officers killing peaceful Black protesters in 1866 and have titles such as “Blacks’ Right to Vote.” “These poems,” Clint pointed out, “have not finished their work.”

I had not finished my work either. Clint’s sensitive, musical translations had resurrected the voices of the 19th-century poets, but the conversation needed to continue, and not just among scholars. It needed poets.

Fortunately, the esteemed New Orleans poets Kelly Harris-DeBerry, Kalamu ya Salaam, and Mona Lisa Saloy accepted my invitation to choose a poem from the volume and write a poem in response. Almost all the original 19th-century works have authors’ names attached to them, so I got goosebumps when I realized that, against the odds—and without consulting each other—Kelly, Kalamu, and Mona Lisa had all chosen anonymous poems. Thanks to the three of them, conversations begun a century ago by people who felt they could not sign their protest in public would now have names attached.

*Every tomorrow is what we make when we escape  
the chains of our yesterdays.*

—Kalamu ya Salaam, “The War and Our Future” (2021)



In addition to writing poetry, Kelly, Kalamu, and Mona Lisa are expert performers, and I knew when we commissioned the works that audiences would want to see and hear them give their words life in air and sound. Colleagues supported the idea of filming the poets. And that’s how I ended up in a THNOC courtyard one Saturday in February, hoping the calliope on the *Natchez* riverboat would hurry up and finish playing “Good-bye, My Coney Island Baby” so we could squeeze in the rest of the filming between the steady intrusions of helicopters and rain.

I had never been involved in a film project before, and while I was expecting a steep learning curve, the whole process, from scouting locations and scriptwriting to proof-reading subtitles, felt more like an 89-degree learning wall. Thankfully, I had support every step of the way from Marketing Associate Eli A. Haddow and Manager of Public Programs Amanda McFillen. They engaged a great New Orleans film production company, NOVAC; found a perfect actor, Ivan Griffin, to read the source poems in English and French; and negotiated budgets and specs. And then everyone looked at me, as though I knew how to begin.

I did not know. I was supposed to storyboard? I had never storyboarded. I am an editor:

I spend my time thinking about whether the verb *to storyboard* requires a direct object. Questions abounded. What do you mean there won’t be enough time in the video to include both the French and the English source poems in their entirety? How will we keep the French language present? (Answer: record the actor reciting in both languages, ask the editor to fade the shot from French to English, and then add French subtitles.)

Eventually I stumbled my way through storyboarding and scripting, and Eli did the scouting. Now we had exactly one day to shoot all three poets and Ivan—outdoors, owing to pandemic distancing rules.

Kelly’s shoot was first and went so smoothly that I began to hope nothing would go wrong all day. Her reading took everyone’s breath away, and you should go right now and watch her video to hear her voice when she asks, “What is the color of free? What is the color of human?”



Kalamu ya Salaam recites his poem “The War and Our Future,” written in response to the 1862 “The War and the Future,” alongside his daughter Asante Salaam.

Performer Ivan Griffin recites one of the historical poems from THNOC’s *Afro-Creole Poetry*.

Next to be filmed was Ivan, who faced more obstacles—starting with the fact that the period costume we had rented for him fell through. He gamely raided his own closet that morning and arrived in a distinguished, suitably literary-looking jacket and bow tie. Ivan has a gorgeous and resonant baritone voice, and every wandering musician in the Quarter seemed to want to accompany him.

It was a privilege to watch each poet reinvent their own work in person, with all the attendant spontaneity and surprises. Mona Lisa, who was recently named poet laureate of Louisiana, read her poem’s final, powerful lines of hope and then burst into song, after which I immediately said to the film crew, “You got that, right? Please make sure the editor puts it in!” Kalamu, whose poem keenly identified the lack of women’s voices among the Civil War–era poems, brought his daughter Asante Salaam to read with him, and to watch their gorgeous performance you would never know they were grappling with church bells, a tricky teleprompter, and fading light.

Once the raw footage was shot, my learning curve turned into a loop-de-loop as I rewrote credits, proofread French subtitles, and learned from the production company how film editing works. But I’m proud and gratified to say that the project and the results, available to watch on [www.hnoc.org/first-draft](http://www.hnoc.org/first-draft) under “Race and Ethnicity,” have been crucial—soul-sustaining, even—in this year of upheaval. A singularly talented scholar-translator and my generous, expert colleagues have enabled me to feel like a telephone over which New Orleans poets talk to each other across centuries, inspiring and encouraging each other to keep up the good fight. —MARGIT LONGBRAKE

*Even if, through these trials, my country,  
abused,  
Must writhe and wriggle, bloody and  
battered and bruised,  
In the end we’ll live to see this turmoil  
abate.*

—L. de P. (unknown author),  
“The War and the Future” (1862)

## STAFF NEWS

### New Hires

**Johanna Baker**, research associate. **Amber Johnson**, photography assistant.  
**ThaiBao Vu**, security officer.

### Changes

**Honore Aschaffenburg** and **Jacob Williams** are now full-time visitor services assistants. **Xiomara Blanco** is now media producer. **Jari Honora** is now a reference associate.

### In the Community

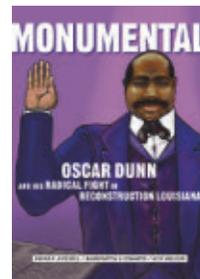
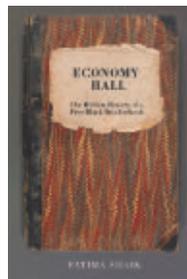
Collections Cataloger **Kevin T. Harrell** gave a talk at the Old State Capitol in Baton Rouge on July 21 titled “A Bridge to Be Crossed or a Bridge to Be Burned: The Infamous 1921 Louisiana State Constitution.” The talk was sponsored by the Friends of the Old State Capitol and Friends of the State Archives.

Communication Strategist **Dave Walker** was invited to join the board of the Louisiana Crafts Guild.



### Awards

The awards have been flowing in for THNOC books and authors! *Afro-Creole Poetry*, translated and introduced by Clint Bruce, was one of only four publications recognized by the American Association for State and Local History with its 2020 Leadership in History awards. *Economy Hall* author Fatima Shaik was awarded the 2021 Louisiana Writer Award by the Louisiana Center for the Book at the Louisiana State



Library. And THNOC’s graphic history *Monumental: Oscar Dunn and His Radical Fight in Reconstruction Louisiana*—by Brian K. Mitchell, Barrington S. Edwards, and THNOC Editor **Nick Weldon**—won a Phillis Wheatley Award from the Sons and Daughters of the United States Middle Passage.

## WOEST FELLOWSHIP

THNOC congratulates the 2020–21 recipients of the Dianne Woest Fellowship in the Arts and Humanities, whose projects reflect the breadth of The Collection’s institutional holdings and sustain the tradition of scholarly merit established by previous fellowship recipients.

**Dr. Thomas Adams** (University of Sydney), “Robert Charles’s Worlds: Labor, Migration, and the Political Economy of Jim Crow New Orleans”

**Philippe Halbert** (Yale University), “Louisiana Purchases: Consumption, Complexion, and Creolization in Colonial New Orleans”

**Kyle Jackson** (University of California, Berkeley), “The Gateway City: 19th-Century New Orleans and the Expansion of Pan-American Capitalism”

## RECENTLY RETIRED

# John E. Walker

After 32 years serving in various roles on the board of the Kemper and Leila Williams Foundation, including as its president and most recently as an emeritus member, John E. Walker has retired.

Walker's relationship with The Historic New Orleans Collection predates his appointment to the board in 1989. A native of Mississippi, Walker graduated from Tulane University before starting his career as a civil engineer and surveyor. His cartographical interests first brought him to THNOC as a researcher seeking to view maps and land surveys in the institution's holdings. At the time, the research library was housed at 533 Royal Street. "I remember I had to call ahead and tell them what I was interested in, and they would call me when they had the material," Walker said. "I still have fond memories of Florence Jumonville, the head librarian, and Alfred Lemmon," who was then a reference archivist.

"He was always a delight to deal with," said Lemmon, who has now been the director of the Williams Research Center for more than two decades. "The ideal gentleman scholar."

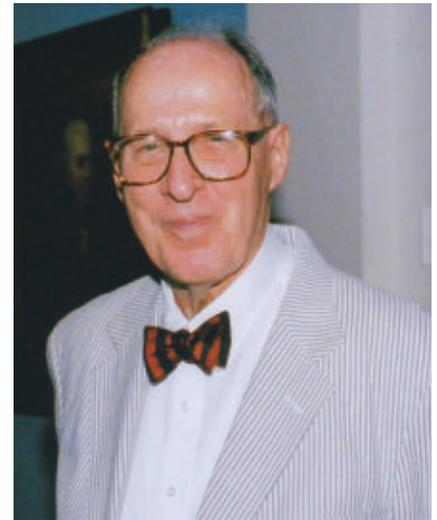
Walker's scholarly interests made him a natural fit for the board, as did his background as a longtime member of historical and civic institutions, including the Louisiana Historical Society, Louisiana Landmarks Society, and Friends of the Cabildo. He came to THNOC with an "amazingly deep" familiarity with the institution's land tenure records and surveyor sketchbooks, Lemmon said. As the chair of the board's acquisitions committee, Walker played a significant role in expanding THNOC's holdings, particularly in bringing in the William C. Cook War of 1812 in the South Collection in 2001. At the time of the acquisition, the *Quarterly* described the William C. Cook Collection as "the largest and most complete collection of War of 1812 and Battle of New Orleans materials in private hands." Walker, who served as the board's president from 2003 to 2007, also recalled the work that body did to expand THNOC's footprint internationally. "We took a number of trips to Canada and Europe," he said, "and we were proud of putting The Collection's situation in front of people in those places."

One of Walker's longtime research interests was charting the growth of New Orleans, and in his time on the board he witnessed a similar expansion of THNOC's footprint, far beyond the little research library he used to frequent at 533 Royal Street. He noted the significance of THNOC's acquisition of the Seignouret-Brulatour property at 520 Royal Street, and remembered visiting the restored building with his wife, Martha, when it opened in 2019. "We examined everything we could see in the new building," he said, "and we were very pleased."

Walker, 94, and Martha, his wife of 61 years, are enjoying retirement in Metairie, where she grew up. They're eager to see the return of local events such as the Metairie St. Patrick's Day Parade and are spending quality time with the families of their three nephews, including many grand-nieces. "We keep up with them, and they keep up with us," he said.

In three decades of service to THNOC, Walker left his mark as an excellent steward of its mission and a model colleague. "His devotion to the collection was always clearly evident, especially in acquisitions and fiscal responsibility," Lemmon said. "And he always treated everyone with the utmost respect. His demeanor enriched everyone's lives."

—NICK WELDON



John E. Walker with the board in 1991. Back row, left–right: Walker, Fred Smith, and Francis C. Doyle. Front row, left–right: Mary Louise Christovich and G. Henry Pierson Jr.



FOCUS ON PHILANTHROPY

## Kathy and Robert Zetzmann

Robert Zetzmann grew up in the Deep South, while Kathy Zetzmann lived in the Far North, but they share an abiding love of New Orleans and an appreciation of The Historic New Orleans Collection’s mission.

The Zetzmanns joined the Bienville Circle because of their conviction that the preservation of the French Quarter and the promotion of the city’s history are vital to New Orleans’s future. They encourage local friends to join as members, and when out-of-towners visit, a trip to the museum is *de rigueur*.

Kathy grew up in the small town of Mt. Carmel, Illinois, and her family relocated to Lake Minnetonka, Minnesota, during her high school years. “When I moved here 35 years ago, I knew little about New Orleans,” Kathy says, but through THNOC, “I’ve learned a lot about the history. That’s why I love it—I’m always learning something new.”

Robert’s family, on the other hand, traces its New Orleans roots back to a single Zetzmann immigrant named August, from Cologne, Germany. Robert notes, “Since my ancestor came in 1849, I’m interested in that period, to find out why someone would come here at 16 years old, who had no relatives here, all by himself.”

One reason Robert feels such an affinity for THNOC’s preservation efforts in the French Quarter is that he is part of the

third generation to work for the family business, Zetz 7-Up Bottlers, originally located at the edge of the historic district, on the present-day site of WWL-TV. The plant later moved to Montegut Street in Bywater, and the business was sold in 1992.

Kathy and Robert met at Southern Methodist University, and after Robert earned an MBA from LSU, they married and moved to New Orleans. Kathy suffered a disorientation common to many Crescent City transplants: adjusting to our unique approach to navigating the city.

“Do I go north, south, east, west?” she’d ask Robert.

“No, it’s lakeside, riverside, uptown, downtown,” her husband would respond.

“What do you *mean*?” she’d plead.



Robert Zetzmann’s family had its bottling-company headquarters here at the edge of the French Quarter, at 1028 North Rampart Street.

Kathy faced another challenge when trying to understand the locals’ way of speaking—especially when listening to the TV sportscast. In college she landed a job with ABC Sports and traveled the country covering events such as college and NFL football, PGA golf, and boxing. During *Monday Night Football*, Kathy worked alongside Howard Cosell, “Dandy” Don Meredith, and Frank Gifford.

After spending time in such heady company, when she turned on the TV in New Orleans, Kathy found Buddy Diliberto befuddling. When reporting on the Stanley Cup, she says, Buddy D admitted he had no idea how to pronounce some of the players’ names.

Kathy asked her husband, “Is this *Saturday Night Live*, or is this real?” She didn’t understand how Diliberto could have gotten on TV, let alone hold onto the job.

“Then when he died,” Robert says, “she cried.”

“I fell in *love* with him!” Kathy agrees.

In fact, coming from a “Midwestern-land” background, it didn’t take Kathy long to love everything about New Orleans. “It was the people, it was eclectic—it’s so different from what I grew up with. I just love New Orleans—the food, the history, the music, the culture, everything. I wouldn’t really want to live anywhere else.”

In addition to learning from THNOC’s exhibitions and programs, Robert says he likes reading Richard Campanella’s books, such as *Bienville’s Dilemma*, because they shed light on how and why the city developed as it did. Kathy enjoys tracing the history of the city’s growth through the interactive map on the massive touch table in the new welcome center of THNOC’s Brulatour building.

The Zetzmanns, along with the other Bienville Circle members, are currently funding THNOC’s oral history project, *From the Front Line: Narratives of the COVID-19 Pandemic in New Orleans*.

“We’re proud to be able to support The Historic New Orleans Collection,” Robert says. “We’re just thrilled to be part of it.”

“All you have to do is walk in and look,” Kathy adds. “It’s amazing.” —CATHE MIZELL-NELSON

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## Bookplates

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

Priscilla and John H. Lawrence in memory of Johnnie Harrell—*Dancing in the Streets: Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs of New Orleans* by Judy Cooper, with essays by Rachel Carrico, Freddi Williams Evans, Charles “Action” Jackson, Matt Sakakeeny, and Michael G. White (New Orleans: The Historic New Orleans Collection, 2021), 2021.0118  
 Malinda Rodrigue in memory of Kip David Rodrigue—*Delirious New Orleans: Manifesto for an Extraordinary American City* by Stephen Verderber, foreword by Kevin Alter (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009), 2011.0096.2

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A horn quartet from the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra “popped up” on the balcony of THNOC’s Seignouret-Brulatur Building in February for a surprise, socially distanced concert. From left–right: Mark Trotter, Kevin Winter, Josiah Bullach, and Mollie Pate

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In April, the annual Bill Russell Lecture was broadcast online, focusing on the history of New Orleans brass bands. In addition to historical discussion, the program featured performances by the Kings of Brass with special guests Gregg Stafford and Dr. Michael White. Left–right: Caleb “Shake” Windsay, trombone; Gregory “Chachi” Warner, trumpet; Adolph Sorina III, bass drum; Aurélien Barnes, trumpet; Gregg Stafford, trumpet; Desmond Provost, sousaphone; THNOC Visitor Services Assistant Douane Waples, saxophone; and Dr. Michael G. White, clarinet.

ON THE SCENE

# Stepping Out

THNOC and members of New Orleans's second line clubs celebrated the launch of ***Dancing in the Streets: Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs of New Orleans*** by Judy Cooper.

A. Exhibition co-curators Jude Solomon and Eric Seiferth

B. Sue Press of the Ole & Nu Style Fellas

C. Author Judy Cooper with (left–right) contributing photographer Eric Waters, Bruce Sunpie Barnes of the Neighborhood Story Project and Black Men of Labor, Fred Johnson of Black Men of Labor, and contributing photographer J. R. Thomason

D. Book designer Georgia Scott and THNOC Editor Molly Reid Cleaver

E. Essayist Dr. Michael White, Stan Taylor of the Prince of Wales, and Gregg Stafford of the Black Men of Labor



In July colleagues, friends, and past hosts of the **Decorative Arts of the Gulf South (DAGS)** project gathered to celebrate the exhibition *Pieces of History: Ten Years of Decorative Arts Fieldwork* and welcome this year's DAGS research fellows.

F. DAGS Coordinator Sarah Duggan and Mark Duggan

G. Christian Mounger and Ronald Harrell with Curator of Decorative Arts Lydia Blackmore

H. DAGS fellows James Kelleher and Elizabeth Palms

I. Charlotte Gregory, Sandy Haygood, and Tom Gregory

J. Katie Burlison of Hermann-Grima + Gallier Historic Houses, Mel Buchanan of the New Orleans Museum of Art, and Claudia Kheel of the Louisiana State Museum



On Friday, July 30, The Collection feted the opening of **John Clemmer: A Legacy in Art** and the launch of its accompanying catalog.

K. Martin Sachs and Melanie Cole

L. Jessica Dorman, director of publications, with project editors Siobhán McKiernan and Dorothy Ball and book designer Alison Cody

M. Essayist David Clemmer, Curator Judith H. Bonner, and President/CEO Daniel Hammer

N. Becky Landry Swindell, Beth Landry, and Ed Swindell

ACQUISITION SPOTLIGHT

# Rare City Map Shows 19th-Century Progress

***Plan of the City of New Orleans: A Guide for Citizens and Strangers and Shewing the Situation of the Fire-plugs and Pipes of the Commercial Water-works . . .*, 2021.0116**

The Collection recently acquired an extremely rare, likely unique 1837 map by Henry Möllhausen, a Prussian engineer who worked in the city as a surveyor. The folding map shows the city's three municipalities in color, marking the locations of fire hydrants, water mains, canals, railroads, and docks along the river, as well as public squares and some commercial landmarks. The Collection holds another rare Möllhausen-drawn map from 1845, titled *Norman's Plan of New Orleans and Environs* after its publisher. The *Norman's Plan* map exists in a handful of copies, but this

1837 map is rarer still: issued solely under Möllhausen's name, it is not known to exist in any other copy, anywhere. Curators found no other reference to it, neither by prior sale nor in bibliographies, indexes, or online collections of maps.

Möllhausen's 1837 map draws on earlier city plans by Jacques Tanesse (1825) and Francis Barber Ogden (1829), but he adds new information pertaining to the development of a water system by the Commercial Bank of New Orleans from 1833 to 1836. Möllhausen locates all of the fire hydrants then extant, as well as the newly installed water mains that fed them and the points at which water was drawn from the river (at Canal, Girod, and Richard Streets). This water system was a huge step toward the city's modernization, and the distributed network of fire hydrants would have

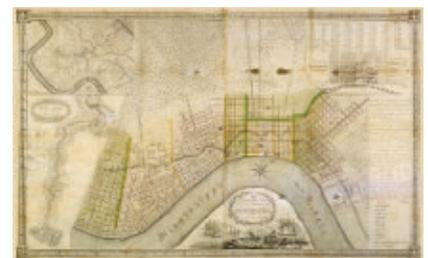
Related Holdings



***Norman's Plan of New Orleans and Environs***  
1845; hand-colored engraving by Henry Möllhausen, delineator, and Benjamin Moore Norman, publisher  
*The L. Kemper and Leila Moore Williams Founders Collection, 1949.7 a,b*



***Plan of the City and Suburbs of New Orleans from an Actual Survey Made in 1815 . . .***  
1825; hand-colored engraving by Jacques Tanesse, delineator; William Rollinson, engraver; Pierre Antoine Maspéro, publisher  
*The L. Kemper and Leila Moore Williams Founders Collection, 1946.2 i-xiv*



***City of New Orleans***  
1829; hand-colored engraving by Francis Barber Ogden, delineator; Peter Maverick, engraver  
*bequest of Richard Koch, 1971.21 i-v*





created additional confidence in the rapidly growing urban center.

The bold design and coloring of the map suggest that it may have served as an advertisement for Möllhausen's surveying and engineering skills. The lithography by Jules Manouvrier is of high detail and quality, while the contemporaneous hand coloring is tied to the palette of the printed key left of the title; different tones of blue give the appearance of depth to the Mississippi River.

Möllhausen's map is also an example of civic boosterism from a young, ambitious engineer who was fresh on the scene. A directory identifies foreign consuls who then represented the interests of European and Latin American countries with trade ties to New Orleans, including the Republic of Texas. A consular directory makes sense for a port city, particularly on a map created by a recent immigrant, as does the delineation of docks and railroads. The irregular placements and lengths of the docks suggest that they are not simply artistic embellishments, but representations of the actual docks that were built. Commercial infrastructure caught Möllhausen's eye, whereas Tanesse had been more attentive to architectural landmarks.

The map is in very good condition and retains the original covers with gilt stamping. It is of interest not only for its beauty and rarity but also because it contains information on New Orleans's infrastructure and built environment not readily found in any other source.  
—JASON WIESE

## RECENT ADDITIONS

## Black History in Art, Newspapers, and a Rare Book

### *Bourbon Street, New Orleans*

2021.0137

Caroline Spelman Wogan Durieux (1896–1989) is one of Louisiana's most celebrated printmakers and caricaturists of the 20th century. Known for her satirical caricatures, Durieux served as director of the Works Progress Administration's Federal Art Project for the State of Louisiana, and afterward she joined the faculty at Louisiana State University, where she experimented with various technical processes in printmaking. Over the course of her career, which spanned more than half a century, she produced paintings, drawings, lithographs, and etchings.

THNOC already has 29 Durieux artworks in its holdings, with subjects and styles varying from self-portraits to abstracts, but the newly acquired lithograph *Bourbon Street, New Orleans* introduces themes absent elsewhere in this group of works. Completed in 1941 and printed in 1943, the image depicts two African American women singing in front of white sailors in a nightclub. Commissioned for a traveling exhibition titled *Artists for Victory*, the lithograph was considered controversial when it was first displayed.



Bourbon Street was a popular entertainment destination throughout the mid-20th century, but under Jim Crow segregation, interracial interactions were sharply proscribed. Many of the Black musicians who worked on Bourbon Street were not able to freely access its businesses or even, at times, its public spaces, including the sidewalk.

In *Bourbon Street, New Orleans*, Durieux highlights this racial dynamic through her composition of the two Black singers under the gaze of white sailors—some smirking, some smiling, all taking in the performance. The stars on the foremost singer's sleeves allude to the performance of patriotism expected of entertainers at the time. The lithograph is considered one of her best satirical works of the period.

Durieux produced her lithographs in limited editions, and *Bourbon Street, New Orleans* had a run of 10. This acquisition is one of only four remaining prints known to exist. —JUDITH H. BONNER AND ERIC SEIFERTH

### African American Newspaper Databases available at the Williams Research Center reading room

In early 2021 THNOC acquired subscriptions to two databases of historical Black newspapers covering nearly two centuries of history from an African American perspective. Hosted by Readex, a division of the newspaper archiving service NewsBank, the online databases contain local titles such as *La Tribune*, *L'Union*, the *Black Republican*, the *New Orleans Republican*, and the *Weekly Louisianian*, as well as other regional and national publications from Black publishers. Spanning 1827–1998, the newspapers comprise a national network of African American perspectives from the antebellum to the post–civil rights eras, providing

important cultural and historical context to events that might have been—and in many cases were—covered differently by the white press.

Newspapers are one of the best tools at a researcher’s disposal, not only for information about a particular event but also its framing: how was the event covered in the press at the time, and what does that say about the attitudes and politics of those publishers? Just as bias is present in the news today, it is also inherent in the historical record, and opinions or subtexts expressed in newspaper articles should not be taken as unwavering facts. Rather, the researcher must study historical newspapers with as wide a lens as possible, seeking out divergent accounts of the same event in order to gain a fuller picture of the past. Digital technologies can help facilitate these discoveries by making it easier to access multiple perspectives, as historians work to move marginalized stories to the center.

This is especially true in the case of historical events related to white supremacy and African American history. See, for example, the coverage of the tragedy at the Mechanics’ Institute in 1866, when a group of peaceful protesters for Black suffrage were shot by Confederate sympathizers. The event was dubbed a “riot” by the dominant newspapers of the day, a term that passively excused the killers of blame and invalidated the peaceful intentions of the protesters. By contrast, *La Tribune* referred to the event as a “massacre” and called the killers “assassins,” implying that their attacks were premeditated and stemmed from their support of slavery.

In addition to the two new Readex databases, The Historic New Orleans Collection’s reading room provides access to several other substantial resources for historical periodicals: America’s Historical Newspapers, another Readex database; the Louisiana Purchase Newspaper Collection (MSS 498), covering 1801–1805; and the Louisiana Newspaper Project, an index of historical newspapers assembled by LSU Libraries Special Collections. —EMILY PERKINS AND ROXANNE GUIDRY



The First Building Which Housed This Historic Congregation.

Erected at the Corner of Villere and Iberville Streets.

Charles C. Doughty, First Pastor and Organizer.

***A Century of African Methodism in the Deep South: History, Personalities and Program***

2020.0256

The African Methodist Episcopal Church was founded in Philadelphia in 1816 by free African American Methodist congregations that wanted to establish spiritual and economic autonomy from their white counterparts. The first A.M.E. Church established in the Gulf South was St. James Chapel in New Orleans, founded in 1844, and The Collection recently acquired a history of St. James A.M.E. published by the church itself and inscribed by its then-pastor, Rev. A. O. Wilson.

Despite the broad scope of its title, *A Century of African Methodism in the Deep South* focuses specifically on the rich history of St. James A.M.E., now called Historic St. James A.M.E. Church. Located almost since its founding at 222 North Roman Street in the Iberville neighborhood near the French Quarter, the church has been in operation since its establishment, save for a period from

1858—when the city ordered it closed because of rising fear nationwide of anti-slavery agitation—until 1862, when US troops occupied New Orleans.

In addition to discussing the history of the denomination and St. James A.M.E., the book also outlines the church’s influence on New Orleans history beyond religious life: during the Civil War, St. James served as the staging area to recruit soldiers for the First Louisiana Native Guard, and in July 1900, as white-supremacist violence swept the city in the wake of Robert Charles’s fatal shooting of two white police officers, the church’s reverend pled with Acting Mayor William Mehle to protect African American citizens from the roving mobs of vigilantes. The book is copiously illustrated with photographs, some historic and others contemporary to the era of its publication. Two images in particular stand out: that of St. James’s first home, on the property of blacksmith Charles C. Doughty, on the corner of Iberville and Villere Streets, and another of Doughty, who became the congregation’s first pastor. —NINA BOZAK

## EVENT CALENDAR

For more information on any of the following events, please email [events@hnoc.org](mailto:events@hnoc.org).

### FOOD FORUM: CELEBRATE THE SEASONS!

THNOC's 2021–22 Food Forum, organized with food historian Jessica B. Harris, will be presented over the following year in four quarterly events celebrating the “culinary seasons” of South Louisiana. The forum begins in November with a presentation on New Orleans street food, followed by explorations on king cake and bánh chung (winter), festival fare (spring), and frozen refreshments (summer). Each session will be pre-recorded and a link will be sent to registrants. We hope to celebrate each season with a reception pending COVID safety considerations.

#### Beginning Saturday, November 6

Presented online via Zoom  
\$5 minimum registration fee. To register, visit [my.hnoc.org](http://my.hnoc.org).

### JEAN LAFFITE REVEALED

Join Dr. Ashley Oliphant and Beth Yarbrough as they discuss their new book, *Jean Laffite Revealed: Unraveling One of America's Longest Running Mysteries*. The duo will discuss recently uncovered evidence indicating that Jean Laffite faked his death in the 1820s, hid for a time in Cuba, and then reentered the United States using the alias Lorenzo Ferrer.

#### Thursday, December 2, 7 p.m. CST

Online via Zoom  
Free; registration required. To register, visit [my.hnoc.org](http://my.hnoc.org).

### WILLIAMS LECTURE: ALFÉREZ



Katie Bowler Young, author of THNOC's recent monograph *Enrique Alferez: Sculptor*, will discuss intimate details of the artist's work.

#### Saturday, December 11, 11 a.m. CST

Online via Zoom  
Open to THNOC members only; to become a member, visit [www.hnoc.org/support/membership](http://www.hnoc.org/support/membership) or see the remittance envelope in this magazine. To register, visit [my.hnoc.org](http://my.hnoc.org).

## EXHIBITIONS & TOURS

All exhibitions are free unless otherwise noted.

### CURRENT

#### *John Clemmer: A Legacy in Art*

Through November 7, 2021  
520 Royal Street

#### *Cartographic Legacies: Historical Maps at the Williams Research Center*

Through November 28, 2021  
410 Chartres Street (by appointment only)

### CONTINUING

#### RECENTLY REOPENED!

#### History of the French Quarter Galleries

520 Royal Street

#### Virtual Field Trips

Virtual field trips are presented over Zoom and cover a range of topics, including Reconstruction, Louisiana Indigenous History, Exploring the Archive, and NOLA Culture Connections. Descriptions, a full schedule, and links to recorded versions of past tours can be found at [www.hnoc.org/programs/virtual-field-trips](http://www.hnoc.org/programs/virtual-field-trips).

#### Self-Guided Courtyard Tours and French Quarter Tours App

THNOC's three French Quarter courtyards are currently open to the public. Visitors can learn about the architecture and history of the spaces, then head out for a self-guided tour of the French Quarter using THNOC's French Quarter Tours app. With the app, users can build a customized walking tour or take one of eight themed tours to see significant sites in the historic city center. Themes include Free People of Color, Music, Bourbon and Beyond, Around Jackson Square, and Lower Quarter.

533 Royal Street, 520 Royal Street, and 722 Toulouse Street  
App available for download on the Apple App Store and Google Play

Check [www.hnoc.org](http://www.hnoc.org) for updates on gallery openings and closures.

### UPCOMING

#### Prospect.5 artist installations

THNOC will serve as a host site for the biennial exhibition of contemporary art installations that takes place throughout the city.

October 23, 2021–January 23, 2022  
410 Chartres Street, 533 Royal Street, and 520 Royal Street

#### Art and Artistry of Mardi Gras

January 6–May 8, 2022  
520 Royal Street

### CONTINUING SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

- Timed ticketing
- Masks or face coverings required
- Reduced capacity
- Enhanced cleaning protocols

#### NEW VACCINE MANDATE

Starting in September, The Historic New Orleans Collection is requiring everyone 12 years of age and older entering its facilities to provide proof of at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine or a negative PCR test result from the past 72 hours. Masks are required regardless of vaccination status.

#### Acceptable proof of vaccine:

- LA Wallet app SMART health card
- An original digital photo or photocopy of CDC vaccination card (both sides)
- An official vaccine record issued by another state, a foreign nation, or the World Health Organization (WHO)

#### Acceptable negative PCR test:

- Physical or electronic test results from a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) COVID-19 test indicating negative results within the past 72 hours
- Antigen tests will not be accepted.

## CURRENT HOURS

### 520 ROYAL STREET

Tricentennial Wing, Courtyard, Café Cour, and The Shop at The Collection  
Tuesday–Saturday, 9:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.;  
Sunday, 10:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

### 533 ROYAL STREET

Courtyard  
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 Reading Room  
Tuesday–Saturday, 9:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.  
By appointment only. Appointments must be made at least 24 hours in advance. Please email [reference@hnoc.org](mailto:reference@hnoc.org) or call (504) 598-7171 to speak with a staff member.

# The Historic New Orleans Collection Quarterly

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The Historic New Orleans Collection is a nonprofit institution dedicated to the stewardship of the history and culture of New Orleans and the Gulf South. Founded in 1966 through the Kemper and Leila Williams Foundation, The Collection operates as a museum, research center, and publisher in the heart of the French Quarter.



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ISSN 0886-2109

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## **San G. II**

1993; oil on canvas

by John Clemmer

gift of Susan Brill and Michael S. Hershfield,

2018.0025



The Kemper and Leila Williams Foundation

**The Historic  
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FROM THE SHOP

Keeping it light

Bring New Orleans flavor into your home with a scented candle from Wicks NOLA, now available at The Shop at The Collection. This locally owned boutique company makes candles that are natural and vegan-friendly, containing no parabens or additives. Available in evocative scents such as French Quarter Beignet, Creole Tomato Leaf, and After the Storm (light and airy), they're sure to glow up the ambiance of any room.



**The Shop at The Collection**  
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