

# The Historic New Orleans Collection Quarterly

VOLUME XL  
NUMBER 4

FALL 2023



LENS TRANSITIONS: 175 Years of Louisiana Photography

## EVENTS

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For a full calendar of events, visit [my.hnoc.org](http://my.hnoc.org).



**2023  
FOOD FORUM**

**Pig Tales**

**NOVEMBER 4**

WITH DR. JESSICA B. HARRIS,  
WRITER AND FOOD HISTORIAN

**LEARN MORE AND REGISTER**

[hnoc.org/foodforum](http://hnoc.org/foodforum)

## GENERAL HOURS

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520 Royal Street

Tricentennial Wing, French Quarter Galleries,  
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](mailto:reference@hnoc.org) or call (504) 523-4662.

## EXHIBITIONS

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All are free unless otherwise noted.

### CURRENT

***American Democracy: A Great Leap of Faith***

Through October 8, 2023

520 Royal Street

*Developed by the National Museum of American History and adapted for travel by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES). Presented with support from The Historic New Orleans Collection's 2023 Bienville Circle, JPMorgan Private Bank, and WDSU-TV.*

***"Yet She Is Advancing": New Orleans Women and the Right to Vote, 1878–1970***

Through November 5, 2023

520 Royal Street

*Sponsored by WDSU-TV and presented in collaboration with the Tate, Etienne, and Prevost (TEP) Interpretive Center and the League of Women Voters New Orleans*

***The Trail They Blazed***

Through November 12, 2023

TEP Interpretive Center, 5909 St. Claude Ave.

*This traveling exhibition is part of the initiative NOLA Resistance, led by THNOC, to preserve and share 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

***Freemasonry in New Orleans***

December 8, 2023–May 10, 2024

520 Royal Street

***Mystery and Benevolence: Masonic and Odd Fellows Folk Art***

February 16–May 10, 2024

520 Royal Street

*A traveling exhibition of objects from the American Museum of Folk Art in New York via the International Arts and Artists organization.*

***A Vanishing Bounty: Louisiana's Coastal Environment and Culture***

Opening March 15, 2024

520 Royal Street

### CONTINUING

***French Quarter Galleries***

520 Royal Street



## FROM THE PRESIDENT

Collaboration and partnership are key to our success at THNOC, and I always get excited when people let us know that what we do helps them achieve their goals. More and more, we hear from or are visited by public officials and dignitaries, companies, scholarly groups, and local organizations who find in our work something relevant to theirs. In May we hosted a team of Disney Imagineers, accompanied by a troupe of Disney-junket journalists and content creators. This was the Imagineers' third visit to THNOC over the past year as they work to develop a new attraction based on *The Princess and the Frog*. The group toured the French Quarter Galleries and attended a show-and-tell at the Williams Research Center of objects that inform the historical and cultural context of Disney's Princess Tiana character, who is inspired by New Orleans's real-life civil rights hero and culinary icon, Leah Chase.

In June we welcomed guests from the Black Administrators of Opera Symposium, a gathering of arts professionals from all over the country, and WRC staff hosted another show-and-tell, this time of objects related to the history of opera in New Orleans. As the term implies, show-and-tells are fun and casual, but, as with any handling of historic objects and their interpretation, a lot of care and effort goes into them. Hats off to the catalogers, processors, reading room staff, and editors who come together to produce these events.

Other recent notables to visit our campus include Susan Harper, Consul General of Canada in Dallas; a delegation of Haitian entrepreneurs and tourism officials; and members of the Council of Library and Information Resources, the Furniture Society, the League of Women Voters, and the National Council of Jewish Women—not to mention a few hundred students from local universities getting oriented at the start of the fall semester.

The Historic New Orleans Collection is one of the French Quarter's greatest assets, and I never tire of showing off our galleries, research center, historic buildings, and staff. During these tours, there's always a point when a visitor's face registers amazement at the scale and quality of our endeavors, which not only fills me with pride but reminds me once again of our remarkable growth over our 57 years.

Last, I want to share some sad news. On August 26 we lost one of The Collection's longest-serving stewards and greatest friends with the death of Alfred E. Lemmon, director of the Williams Research Center. Alfred was nobly and passionately dedicated to his work, producing some of our best exhibitions and programs and providing pivotal leadership in the development of our collections. There is much more to say about Alfred's life and legacy, which we will explore in the winter issue, but for now, I'll keep it simple: *Au revoir*, Alfred, *et merci*. —DANIEL HAMMER



## ON THE COVER

Image from *Photographic Views of Red River Raft* (detail)  
1873; hand-colored albumen print  
by Robert B. Talfor  
2018.0141.7

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## BOOKS

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### ***Early Morning on a Plantation*** (detail)

circa 1889; albumen print

by George François Mugnier

gift of N. West Moss, 2016.0386.1.1.65





# View Finders

In THNOC's new publication *Louisiana Lens*, emeritus curator John H. Lawrence traces Louisiana history through photography.

Men stand atop felled trees on glassy water, clearing a logjam in 1873. A child's gaze centers a teeming barnyard scene at a plantation. Light streams in through a window, hazing the view of St. Louis Cathedral beyond. The images emerge from the past and greet us in the present, portals to a landscape spanning 175 years of Louisiana history. They tell the ever-evolving story of a medium of frozen moments and an institution's dedication to their preservation.

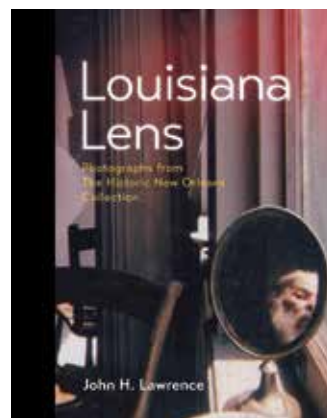
*Louisiana Lens: Photographs from The Historic New Orleans Collection*, by John H. Lawrence with a foreword by Jeff L. Rosenheim of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, is a journey through time as seen through photographers' instruments, eyes, and darkroom techniques. The 175 images in its pages range from bayou to boulevard to studio. They capture bygone events, people, and places—a prize fight in 1882, child workers at a New Orleans cotton mill in 1913, a trapper's camp in 1939—but ever present is the spark of life. It can be seen in the eyes of Shakespeare, a Jamaican man looking toward the horizon in an 1871 portrait. It's in the vibrant composition of a Walker Evans streetscape. It's in the rapture of worship seen in a 1979 Michael P. Smith image taken at the Holy Family Spiritual Church.

Lawrence's accompanying text limns not only the subjects of the images but also the photographic processes that allow us to see these scenes and faces today. The story unfolds chronologically, beginning circa 1843 with a dramatic daguerreotype of a church organ in shadow against the white vaulted ceiling of St. Patrick's Church—the oldest photograph in THNOC's holdings—and concludes with a coastal landscape from 2018.

Lawrence retired in 2020 after 46 years with The Historic New Orleans Collection, where he spent decades building the institution's photographic holdings. As head of curatorial collections, he oversaw pictorial and object holdings numbering in excess of 500,000 items. As director of museum programs, he was responsible for planning and implementing exhibitions, lectures, seminars, and related activities.

From that trove of knowledge comes *Louisiana Lens*. As Rosenheim writes in his foreword, "Leave it to Lawrence to construct a publication as dynamic and eccentric as the city itself."

—THNOC STAFF



## NEW FROM THNOC

### *Louisiana Lens: Photographs from The Historic New Orleans Collection*

by John H. Lawrence with a foreword by Jeff L. Rosenheim

available November 1, 2023

hardcover • 9" × 11.5" • 288 pp.

44 color, 131 b&w images

\$49.95

# 1843

## Organ case and organ, St. Patrick's Church, New Orleans

1843?; daguerreotype  
by an unknown photographer  
*acquisition made possible by Ann Masson, MSS 1059.3.3*



# 1871

## Shakespeare, New Orleans, a Jamaica Negro

1871?; tintype  
by an unknown photographer  
*The L. Kemper and Leila Moore Williams Founders Collection, 1965.90.268.3*

1840–1860: METAL PAPER GLASS

1861–1889: PRINTS ON PAPER



# 1856

## James Curtis Waldo and his wife, Margaret Mary Woods

1856; daguerreotype  
by an unknown photographer  
1982.198



# 1882

## The Sullivan-Ryan Prize Fight

1882; albumen prints, mounted  
by Gustave A. Moses and Edward J. Souby  
1978.85.1



## 1888-94

**Page from *Views of the Ursuline Convent***  
 between 1888 and 1894; albumen print  
 by Mother Marie de la St. Croix  
 2018.0242.30



## 1915

**[Booker T. Washington]**  
***Speaking during His Last***  
***Educational Pilgrimage in***  
***Louisiana***

1915; gelatin silver print  
 by Arthur P. Bedou  
 2010.0297

### 1890-1935: FROM AMATEURS TO PROFESSIONALS

## 1910

**Bartels' pet store and**  
**Weingart's office of the**  
**Southern Fireworks**  
**Manufactory, Chartres Street**  
 ca. 1910; cyanotype, mounted  
 by an unknown photographer  
*gift of Audrey Moulin Stier,*  
 2003.0167.2



## pre-1939

### Trapper's cabin

no later than 1939; gelatin dry plate negative

by Eugene A. Delcroix

gift of Joel Jergins and Mrs. Eugene Delcroix, courtesy of the New Orleans Museum of Art, 1984.189.1569, © Eugene A. Delcroix Estate



## 1961–63

### Bourbon Street

between 1961 and 1963; gelatin silver print

by Norman Thomas

1998.107.20

## 1936–1999: EXPRESSION AND DOCUMENTATION

## 1953

### Camp Street Postman

1953; gelatin silver print

by Beatrijs Kuyck-Hechtermans

gift of Beatrijs Kuyck-

Hechtermans, 2013.0213.2.5



## 1973

### Holy Family Spiritual Church

1973; gelatin silver negative

by Michael P. Smith

© THNOC, 2007.0103.1.302.1



# 1970s

## Sunset, North Shore

1970s; gelatin silver print  
by Donald Muir Bradburn  
gift of Anne S. Bradburn, 2015.0035.1.2.1



# 2005

## Napoleon Avenue fire

2005; digital image  
by Chris E. Mickal  
gift of Chris E. Mickal, MSS 571.7.40.701,  
© Chris E. Mickal, NOFD Photo Unit

## 2000–PRESENT: A DIGITAL EXPLOSION



# 1991

## David Duke and Edwin Edwards meet in the Superdome

1991; chromogenic negative  
by Rusty Costanza  
donated by NOLA Media Group, 2015.0437.4.1, original  
materials © Rusty Costanza / The Times-Picayune



# 2016

## Money Wasters member Armad Rickmon

2016; inkjet print  
by Charles Muir Lovell  
gift of Charles Muir Lovell, 2019.0393.8,  
© Charles Muir Lovell

OFF-SITE EXHIBITION

**The Trail They Blazed**

Through November 12, 2023  
TEP Interpretive Center, 5909 St. Claude Avenue

Free

[nolaresistance.hnoc.org](http://nolaresistance.hnoc.org)

*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.*

A. Federal Marshal Wallace Downs rides with Gail Etienne to McDonough 19 Elementary School in New Orleans Louisiana



# In Their Own Words

The people who powered the New Orleans Civil Rights Movement share their stories in a new traveling exhibition, *The Trail They Blazed*.

“It looked like they wanted to kill us,” says Gail Etienne-Stripling, remembering the day in 1960 when she, Leona Tate, and Tessie Prevost faced down the crowds of angry white parents protesting their integration of McDonogh 19 Elementary School. Only six years old, the three girls had already joined the front lines in the fight for Black civil rights in New Orleans. More than six decades later, that same school building now bears their names. The rechristened Tate, Etienne, and Prevost (TEP) Interpretive Center is the inaugural host site of THNOC’s new traveling exhibition, *The Trail They Blazed*, which tells the story of desegregation in New Orleans along with six other narratives from the New Orleans Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s–70s.

Etienne-Stripling shared her firsthand account of that harrowing day in an oral history interview with Senior Historian Mark Cave in 2017 as part of NOLA Resistance, a THNOC initiative funded in part by the National Park Service’s African American Civil Rights grant program. Over a three-year period, Cave conducted 30 interviews with current and former civil rights activists, which formed the foundation of *The Trail They Blazed*.

To develop the narrative of the show, THNOC collaborated with an advisory council that included many of the same people who shared their oral histories with Cave. Also involved were representatives from peer institutions such as the Amistad Research Center, the TEP Center, the Ashé Cultural Arts Center, Friends of the Freedom House, and the New Orleans African American Museum. Additionally, a focus group of 15 local students provided invaluable feedback.

“From the outset, we designed *The Trail They Blazed* as an extension of the NOLA Resistance oral history project and a collaboration with the people who participated in and bore witness to the Civil Rights Movement in New Orleans,” said Eric Seiferth, who co-curated the exhibition with THNOC colleagues Aimee Everett and Heather Green. “The result is a richer exhibition built around these stories and storytellers.”

*The Trail They Blazed* will travel across New Orleans, bringing the history of the Civil Rights Movement in the city directly to local audiences. After its initial tour, curators hope to send it to other sites in Louisiana and further afield to help shine a light on the important role New Orleanians played in the national Civil Rights

A Movement.



The show comprises seven primary narratives: public school desegregation, voter registration drives, the Congress of Racial Equality, boycotts, the 1963 march on city hall, support networks that sustained the movement, and activism in the Desire housing project. Panels guide visitors through each of these topics using excerpts from the oral histories, audio clips, and archival images.

Throughout, a series of questions guides visitors through the history. “What was the problem?” asks one panel discussing the segregated facilities and employment discrimination that led to the 1960 boycott of the Dryades Street commercial corridor. “Who stepped up and what did they do?” asks the next panel, which notes that boycotts and sit-ins were led, in part, by Black students from local schools including Xavier, Dillard, and Southern University at New Orleans. “We were just young people ready to go,” says Doratha “Dodie” Smith-Simmons, who was a student at SUNO when she got involved.

The NOLA Resistance team wanted to highlight student activists of the past not only to tell civil rights history but also to give young people a roadmap for effective advocacy today, as *The Trail They Blazed* is expected to travel to schools over time. In the narrative about boycotts and sit-ins, Ronnie Malcolm Moore talks about being expelled from school for desegregating lunch counters. Don Hubbard describes a particularly tense moment at a sit-in, when Oretha Castle confronted a man who threatened to spit on her. Smith-Simmons was sent to jail for protesting at the Loew’s theater on Canal Street, and her audio is accompanied by a photo of her arrest. As a result of these boycotts, local institutions began implementing fairer hiring practices and integrating their facilities.

Throughout the exhibition, reflection questions give visitors a chance to consider how these themes might manifest in their own lives. “Do people in your school look like the people in your neighborhood?” “When have you stood up for something you believed in?” Pencils and sticky notes are provided for visitors to add their responses, while QR codes prompt those with smartphones to share additional thoughts on social media.

**B. “Don’t Buy at Woolworth” flier**  
1960  
by the Congress of Racial Equality, publisher  
2020.0129

**C. Integrated lunch counter at Walgreens on Canal Street**  
1962  
2021.0205



At [nolaresistance.hnoc.org](http://nolaresistance.hnoc.org), online visitors can apply to host *The Trail They Blazed*, learn more about the oral history project, watch video segments that expand on the stories told in the exhibition, listen to more audio, read transcriptions of interviews, access lesson plans and other educational resources, and more.

Leona Tate, founder and executive director of the TEP Center, sees bringing this exhibition to the very building she helped to integrate six decades ago as a “full-circle” moment. “It still feels like a dream,” she said. “I don’t really believe I’m doing all this. I’ve been family to The Historic New Orleans Collection for quite some years. I love them wanting to partner with us, and I think this exhibition will be a wonderful educational opportunity for so many people.” —NICK WELDON

**D. A segregated New Orleans streetcar**  
1956  
1974.25.37.65

**E. Attack on CORE picketers in Bogalusa, Louisiana**  
1965  
2021.0081

**F. Rev. A. L. Davis (center) and Rev. Avery Alexander (left of Davis) lead a Consumers' League picket of the Claiborne Shopping Center**  
1960  
donated by NOLA Media Group, original materials © the Times-Picayune, 2015.0437.27



OFF-SITE

# Oblique Exposures

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

Two Clarence John Laughlin photographs will appear in the book **A Long Arc: Photography and the American South since 1845**, due out this fall by Aperture Press. The book accompanies an exhibition of the same name at the High Museum of Art in Atlanta, running September 15, 2023–January 14, 2024.



**The Masks Grow to Us**  
1953; gelatin silver print  
by Clarence John Laughlin  
*The Clarence John Laughlin Archive at THNOC,*  
1981.247.1.799



**Time Phantasm**  
between 1941 and 1975; gelatin silver print  
by Clarence John Laughlin  
*The Clarence John Laughlin Archive at THNOC,*  
1981.247.1.915

The **West Baton Rouge Museum's** retrospective of an influential Louisiana artist continues, with *Angela Gregory: Doyenne of Louisiana Sculpture, Part II*, on view through August 11, 2024. The show includes five artworks from THNOC's holdings.

**Portrait of a woman**  
1928; pencil on paper  
by Angela Gregory  
*gift of the estate of Angela Gregory,* 2005.0237.259



**Fanny**  
1941; graphite on paper  
by Angela Gregory  
*gift of the estate of Angela Gregory,* 2005.0237.276



The **New Orleans Jazz Museum** at the Old US Mint has borrowed one musical instrument for display in “*New Orleans Stomp: The Centennial of King Oliver’s Groundbreaking 1923 Recordings*,” an exhibition on view through April 8, 2024.



**Johnny Dodds’s clarinet**  
manufactured between 1910 and 1930  
by Buffet Crampon Compagnie  
*gift of Dr. S. Frederick Starr,* 2012.0260



An image of a produce vendor was provided for use in the Netflix program **High on the Hog**, a documentary series about Black food traditions.

**Street Vendor, New Orleans**  
ca. 1940; photograph  
by Frances Benjamin Johnston  
1974.25.20.150



ON THE JOB

## Candy Ellison

**POSITION:** Interactive developer/designer, on staff since 2018

**ASSIGNMENT:** Create digital interactives for “*Yet She Is Advancing*”

As THNOC’s developer of interactives, my job is to design touchscreen experiences, installed in the galleries, that build on an exhibition’s themes and give visitors a direct connection to the subject matter. For the exhibition “*Yet She Is Advancing*”: *New Orleans Women and the Right to Vote, 1878–1970*, the goal was to help visitors experience the challenges that women—particularly Black women—faced in gaining the right to vote in Louisiana.

Working collaboratively with the show’s curator, Libby Neidenbach, along with Exhibition Designer Cecilia Moscardó and Senior Editor Mary M. Garsaud, I developed three interactive kiosks—one putting visitors in the room with activist Sylvania Williams as she gives a speech, another showing the changes in voter registration rates pre- and post-Civil Rights Movement, and a third replicating a voter registration test.

The first step in creating digital interactives is brainstorming. Individually and as a group, we come up with ideas, continually asking ourselves, what is the purpose of this interactive? What information is best suited for a digital combination of touch, sound, images, and words? Nearly a year before “*Yet She Is Advancing*” opened, I was already storyboarding narratives, learning software packages, and weighing the constraints of available hardware.

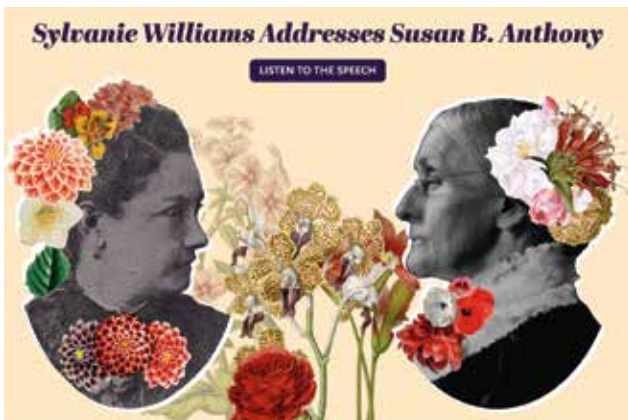
The next step is a design mockup. In her research for this exhibition, Cecilia had discovered that the suffrage movement had a visual scheme, usually incorporating purple and gold and sometimes using flowers. I used Cecilia’s chosen fonts and colors when designing the screens and the flow of information. We then reviewed the mockups together and tweaked the design.

Once mockups are approved, it’s time for my heaviest lift: coding the interactives for functionality and presentation. I have to translate the idea and design into markup code that will respond to touch, calculate visitor responses, and deliver a result. It’s complicated behind-the-scenes work that, if I do it right, becomes invisible.

Finally, before the interactives are mounted on the kiosks, the team tests their functionality on our computers, to make sure they behave properly and make sense. We always have

A. Ellison paid homage to the floral motif of the original suffrage movement in her design for this interactive, in which users listen to a speech given by Sylvania Williams addressed to Susan B. Anthony.

B. Ellison installs interactives in the “*Yet She Is Advancing*” galleries.



A



B

to revise several times to get the results, code, text, and design just right.

My goal for any screen a visitor touches is for it to make the user walk away educated, entertained, and emotionally engaged. “Test, test, test” is the adage, and it really hit home working on this project!

The first kiosk needed to deliver a lot of dense information compellingly. How, for example, could we show, not tell, viewers that requiring voters to register at the sheriff’s office dramatically discouraged Black women’s participation? We chose a touchable timeline: as you tap color-coded buttons, icons representing registration percentages grow or shrink, and details of relevant legislation and events appear, revealing patterns of causality. To increase emotional investment, we included personal narratives of activists working to register Black voters and fight segregation.

The second kiosk challenged me to make audio-only material dynamic. In 1903, Black suffragist Sylvania Williams delivered a speech to Susan B. Anthony after Black women had been barred from attending the National American Woman Suffrage Association convention in New Orleans. My resources were a recording of a colleague reading the speech aloud and one photograph of Williams herself, but the lack of visual material became a fun puzzle. The splash screen is an animation of Victorian illustrations of flowers “blooming” between profile images of Williams and Anthony, resulting in what I like to think of as a visual haiku accompanying the audio.

For the interactive voter registration test, we used questions taken verbatim from a 1963 test designed to discourage (mostly Black) people from registering. Libby, the curator, wanted visitors to experience the frustration and absurdity of taking a needlessly difficult test. For example, applicants were asked to calculate their age in years, months, and days. Another question asked whether one had ever had a child out of wedlock; answering “yes” resulted in immediate disqualification. Recreating these indignities, however, made designing

the interface tricky: the test needed to be off-putting without driving users away. How do you give someone the experience of taking a test full of invasive personal questions without asking them invasive personal questions?

It’s rare for an institution of our size to have an on-staff interactive developer, and I am grateful that THNOC does. We hope these tools elicit emotional responses from visitors in addition to imparting knowledge.  
—CANDY ELLISON

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## STAFF NEWS

### New Staff

**Jackie Darenbourg**, security officer. **Kelsi Dougherty**, human resources assistant. **Sarah Drago**, membership and annual giving coordinator. **Amanda Frentz**, communications strategist. **Kylie Hewitt**, associate registrar. **Lillian Johnson**, sales associate. **Nick Porter**, sales associate.

### Awards

**The Shop at The Collection** received two awards, Best Marketing/Advertising Campaign and Best Museum Store Sunday, from the National Museum Shop Association at its conference in May. Congratulations to the Shop team!

THNOC’s 2021 book *Monumental: Oscar Dunn and His Radical Fight in Reconstruction Louisiana* continues to garner accolades. The graphic history, co-created by Editor **Nick Weldon**, received the 2023 Louisiana Literary Award from the Louisiana Library Association in July.

### Speaking Engagements

Decorative Arts Curator **Lydia Blackmore** presented to the Furniture Society about Creole furniture in Louisiana.

Senior Historian **Mark Cave** gave a presentation on the application of oral history in environmental research at the biennial conference of the International Oral History Association, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Visitor Services Assistant **Winston Ho** made several appearances on the lecture circuit and in the media: he talked about cultural appropriation and Orientalism for the New Orleans Opera Association and spoke to Save Our Cemeteries about Asian American society tombs in the city. He also gave an interview to Sula Kim of WDSU-TV on New Orleans Chinatown,

part of a monthlong series on Asian American history. The series can be viewed online at WDSU.com.

**Heather L. Hodges**, director of external and internal relations, sat on the panel “Executive Career Paths in Arts Administration” presented at the Black Administrators of Opera Symposium, held in New Orleans.

Curatorial Cataloger **Emily Perkins** talked about yellow fever and bananas at the University of New Orleans alumni center for the lecture series Learning Before Lunch.

**Anne M. Robichaux**, CRM specialist, presented “Documenting Your Tessitura System” at the 2023 Tessitura Learning and Community Conference in Orlando.

Senior Reference Associate **Robert Ticknor** gave a talk to the New Orleans Spring Fiesta Association on the topic of the Spring Fiesta townhouse and Marie Laveau’s home.

**Nick Weldon** had two speaking engagements related to *Monumental*, one at the East Baton Rouge Parish Main Library and the other for the staff of Peter Mayer Advertising.

### In the Community

**Rebecca Smith**, associate director of the Williams Research Center, has volunteered to be chair of the New Orleans Preservation Coalition, a nonprofit dedicated to preserving the city’s cultural heritage through disaster-response and emergency-management services.

**Nick Weldon** has been appointed to a committee organized by the Mayor’s Office of Cultural Economy that is planning the future of Oscar Dunn Park in the French Quarter.

**Barry Martyn performing with the Legends of Jazz at the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival**

1974; photograph by Jules L. Cahn  
*Jules Cahn Collection at THNOC, 2000.78.8.104*



**IN MEMORIAM**

**Barry Martyn**

Two pillars of THNOC’s holdings are the Jules Cahn Collection and the John Bernard Collection, both of which document New Orleans jazz culture and Black parading traditions, and for many years curators worked with Barry Martyn to build records related to these materials. Martyn was a London-born jazz drummer who played and studied the traditional New Orleans style from his beginnings as a musician, in the 1950s, through the rest of his life. He performed and recorded with countless jazz greats, founded his own record label, and served as a bandleader and producer. After visiting New Orleans many times and touring with New Orleans musicians since the 1960s, he settled permanently in the city in 1984, working with the George H. Buck (GHB) Jazz Foundation to reissue recordings originally made under Bill Russell’s American Music label. He produced a number of books and videos on jazz history for GHB’s publishing arm, Jazzology Press. Martyn passed away on July 17 at the age of 82.

Martyn, second from right, performed with the New Orleans Jazzman Band at the 2012 Bill Russell Lecture, which focused on the legacy of Sidney Bechet.



Martyn generously volunteered his time and expertise to help identify people, places, and events depicted in THNOC’s jazz-related holdings, working closely with former photographic curator Jude Solomon. “Barry said one of the reasons he could ID so many of the musicians, even when their backs were toward the camera, was that he recognized them by how they wore their hats, because, as a drummer, his position onstage would have placed most of the musicians in front of him,” remembers John H. Lawrence, who oversaw THNOC’s photographic curation at the time. “His concern and enthusiasm for preserving the lives and work of first- and second-generation jazz musicians, to my mind, rivaled Bill Russell’s—and, of course, he knew so many of those in the photographs personally over many years.” Martyn performed at a number of THNOC events over the years, particularly the annual Bill Russell Lecture. He will be missed.

—MOLLY REID CLEAVER



## FOCUS ON PHILANTHROPY

# Nancy B. Sorak

When Nancy B. Sorak welcomed guests to her old French Quarter apartment, she would direct them to nearby Fifi Mahoney's to buy and don a wig before entering. Nowadays, she introduces underdressed visitors to her costume closet, which is how two recent guests from THNOC found themselves wearing masks—a bewhiskered old man and a furry red fox, to be exact—during their visit to Sorak's St. Charles Avenue condo. The former judge, it turns out, prefers a bit of disorder in her court.

Sorak's penchant for clever icebreakers follows a career spent shattering glass ceilings. Voters in Memphis, Tennessee, made her the city's first woman elected as a judge,



in 1979. Before that, she'd gained acclaim for forming the state's first all-female, biracial law firm with Veronica Coleman-Davis and Karen Williams. Blazing those trails did not come without a cost. "When I went to law school, it was a rarity for a woman to be there," Sorak says. "I was accused of taking a man's place."

"Now," she says with a grin, "women own law school, baby."

While she was on the bench, Sorak avoided the public eye whenever she could, which led her to New Orleans. "I started to come down here to hide out," she says. "Maybe wearing a green wig in Memphis, Tennessee, wouldn't be a good idea. . . . You were always aware that people you didn't know knew you."

New Orleans not only gave Sorak and her husband, Richard, a place to get away; it awakened a creative passion burnished during her childhood in Clearwater, Florida, when she used to sleep in her grandmother's art studio and developed a love of painting. Her mother was a Pinellas County political operative—"before they called them that," she says—planning political campaigns upstairs while her grandmother painted downstairs. An only child, she observed both of these spheres with a curious eye, the external world of public affairs and the internal realm of the creative. "I didn't know anybody that wasn't an artist or a writer or something like that," she says.

Sorak initially took those experiences into the classroom, where she taught high school art history and Communist theory, a required course at the time. ("Florida's always been weird," she says with a laugh.) She never developed a passion for teaching, though, ultimately enrolling in law school at Florida State University. She met Richard, an ex-fighter pilot, around this time, and

followed him to Memphis when he got an offer to fly planes for FedEx. After he died in 1992, she decided to make a permanent move to New Orleans.

"New Orleans is my favorite city," she says. "There are prettier cities. Scarier ones. Bigger ones. But there are none that have that—it's not a melting pot, really—it's a kind of gathering together. There's room for creativity here, for diversity, for different points of view. I've met people here that I never would've met anywhere else."

One of those people is her good friend Nina Kelly, who introduced her to some of her favorite cultural institutions in the city, including The Historic New Orleans Collection, which she joined in 2017. Now part of the Bienville Circle, THNOC's highest donor level, Sorak says she appreciates The Collection's holistic approach to history. "It's the only place that covers all aspects of New Orleans," she says. "It's like a humanities class. It's not just focused on one portion of the population, but all of it, from Bourbon Street to Old Metairie. And there's no expense involved. It's provided for your education and pleasure."

On the mention of Bourbon Street, Sorak calls attention to THNOC's recent acquisition of materials from the estate of legendary performer Chris Owens. "Some locals may not consider those materials worth archiving," she says, "but 50 years from now people are gonna go, 'Wow, check this out!'"

Sorak now divides her time between her condo in the Central Business District and her art studio in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, but the French Quarter, once and always a refuge, still tugs at her heartstrings. THNOC provides a link back to her old stomping grounds. Its gift shop is one of her favorites in the neighborhood, a place where you can "bring home a memory." She fondly remembers being introduced to the music of Dr. Michael White at a THNOC event. The catalog for the recent bilingual exhibition *Spanish New Orleans and the Caribbean* occupies a conspicuous position on a living room table.

In a neighborhood known for its hidden gems, she says, "THNOC is the Hope Diamond." —NICK WELDON

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ON THE SCENE

# Leaping Forward, Looking Backward



A



B



C



D



E

A June 15 reception feted the opening of **American Democracy: A Great Leap of Faith**, a Smithsonian traveling exhibition.

A. Ed Bush, Monroe Kelly, Dawn Wheelahan, and Leo Watermeier

B. Karen Delery and Sandra Green Thomas

C. Vladimir Laborde, Gaëlle Delaquis, and Malcolm Eustache

D. President/CEO Daniel Hammer with Régine and Jean-Marc Villain

E. Alicia and Joseph Vial

Patrons of The Collection's highest membership level, the Bienville Circle, gathered in June for the annual **Bienville Dinner**. The event was hosted by the group's 2023 honorary chairs, Claude and Mimi Schlesinger, at their home in Metairie.

F. Dr. Julie Morial and Daniel Hammer

G. Klara Hammer, Jolei Parrott, and Terry Voorhies

H. Amanda McFillen, director of public programs and interpretive services, with Alice and Terry McFillen

I. Claude and Mimi Schlesinger, 2023 Bienville Circle honorary chairs

J. Board chair Bonnie Boyd, Sandy Villere, and board member Mayra Pineda



F



G



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J



K



L

More than 30 journalists accompanied a team of **Disney Imagineers** on a visit to The Collection in May, spurring hundreds of national news articles and mentions in social media. The Imagineers—responsible for designing attractions and innovations at Disney theme parks—have been conducting research on New Orleans history to inform Tiana’s Bayou Adventure, an upcoming Disneyland ride based on *The Princess and the Frog*. In addition to touring the galleries, the group attended a show-and-tell at the Williams Research Center featuring items related to New Orleans and Creole culture.

K. Decorative Arts Curator Lydia Blackmore talks about the Mardi Gras Indian suit on display in the French Quarter Galleries.

L. Visitor Services Interpreter Kurt Owens (left) shows the Imagineers early maps of New Orleans.



M



N

Over one weekend in June THNOC participated in the **Up Stairs Lounge 50th Anniversary Weekend**, a slate of events commemorating the deadly 1973 arson that killed 32 people at a gay bar in the French Quarter. THNOC served as a community partner in the project, led by the LGBTQ+ Archives Project of Louisiana, and hosted the kickoff event “Remembering the Up Stairs Lounge Fire,” which featured a panel discussion and reception.



O



P



S

The first weekend of August belongs to the **New Orleans Antiques Forum**, and this year’s iteration did not disappoint. “Music to My Eyes: Material Culture of Southern Sound” brought together decorative arts studies and music history.

M. Dr. Joyce Marie Jackson and John McCusker

N. Monet Leckert and Lawson Shaw

O. Dr. Charlotte Bentley, Alexander Kolassa, Dr. Candace Bailey, and Julian Prosser

P. Jessica and Ben Chapman

Q. Robert “Bobby” Skinner and Larry Jones

R. Ashley and James Fox-Smith



Q



T



R



U

S. Robert Fieseler, Clayton Delery, and Johnny Townsend

T. Todd Callender, Jim Meadows, and Tomy Acosta

U. Monet Brignac and Monique Sullivan

Related Holdings



**“Papa” John Joseph at Preservation Hall**  
ca. 1960  
by Jules Cahn, photographer  
*Jules Cahn Collection at THNOC, 2000.78.8.30*



**“Sweet” Emma Barrett and the Preservation Hall Jazz Band at WDSU studios**  
1963  
by Charles F. Weber, photographer  
*2012.0208.2.27*



**Steve Angrum**  
1952  
by John Bernard, photographer  
*1999.41.1.1.10*



**Doc Cheatham and Nicholas Payton at the Palm Court Jazz Café**  
1995  
by Michael P. Smith, photographer  
*gift of Master Digital Corporation, 2011.0307.21*

ACQUISITION SPOTLIGHT

John E. Kuhlman Collection

2023.0096

For many years in the mid-20th century, New Orleans photographer John E. Kuhlman (1919–1978) documented the local traditional jazz scene on top of his regular for-hire work, shooting concerts and clubs in addition to families, weddings, and special events. Kuhlman was a talented photographer and longtime member of the Louisiana Professional Photographers Association, serving as president starting in 1960 and then as executive manager, a role he held until he passed away in 1978. Following his death, his photographic archive, consisting of thousands of negatives, was passed down through family members.

THNOC has acquired 2,300 of those negatives, almost all of them related to Kuhlman’s sideline career as a jazz photographer. Spanning 1948 to 1970, the collection was of great interest to THNOC because, in addition to the quality of the images, the midcentury time period bridges the gap in our holdings between early jazz history (best represented by the William Russell Jazz Collection) and Black parading culture and brass band music of the 1960s onward (as seen in the Jules Cahn and Michael P. Smith Collections).

Among many performers featured in the collection are Paul Barbarin (below), Lizzie Miles (next page), Alcide “Slow Drag” Pavageau, the vaudevillian duo Pork Chop and Kidney Stew, “Papa” Jack Laine, and a very young Pete Fountain. There are interior views of jazz venues such as Lenfant’s, in Lakeview; the Municipal Auditorium; and a number of French Quarter spots—the 500 Club, the Paddock Lounge, Sid DaVilla’s Mardi Gras Lounge, and El Morocco, to name a few. Also featured are events and performances put on by the





New Orleans Jazz Club, an organization of fans and researchers founded in 1948. In a photograph commemorating the club's 1961 opening of the New Orleans Jazz Museum, assistant curator and banjo/guitar player Danny Barker stands with trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie, blues singer Cousin Joe, and cornetist George Finola.

Kuhlman photographed with a large-format camera, most likely a handheld press camera. Commonly used in the 1950s, these cameras could capture lively scenes without the need for a tripod or long exposures, and Kuhlman was especially skilled in using them. He applied superior knowledge of interior lighting, composition, and technique to his work, and the quality of his images stands apart from anything THNOC currently has in the format.

The Kuhlman photographic collection is an important archive that will be of great interest to jazz researchers. THNOC plans to digitize the entire collection, which will eventually be made available on our online catalog. —MALLORY TAYLOR



## RECENT ADDITIONS

# Law's Last Days, the Last Island, and Bourbon Street's Jezebel

### John Law Collection additions

2023.0082, 2023.0083

THNOC has built a large collection of materials related to John Law (1671–1729), the Scottish gambler, banker, and monetary theorist. From 1717 to 1720 he attempted to eliminate France's crippling national debt by creating a central bank that issued paper currency exchangeable for shares of stock in the nascent Louisiana colony. That attempt, dubbed Law's "System," failed spectacularly, resulting in the collapse of the "Mississippi Bubble" and bankruptcy for much of France's investor class. However, it also enabled the founding of the city of New Orleans.

Two significant additions to THNOC's John Law Collection provide a rare look at the final days of the bubble and the aftermath of its demise. One is a bound *recueil* (collection) of documents related to Law's banking system, and the other is a group of 19 *arrêts* (official state edicts) enacted between April and November of 1720, during the last eight months of the System's existence.

Both acquisitions are extremely rare. The *recueil* is one of only two copies known to exist, and 11 of the 19 edicts have never been documented in the literature. *Acts of French Royal Administration Concerning Canada, Guiana, the West Indies and Louisiana Prior to 1791* by Wroth and Annan (1930), which remains the definitive resource, lists only four of the items. Marmont du Hautchamp's *Histoire du système des finances sous la minorité de Louis XV* (1739) lists four others.

Shares in John Law's Company of the Indies, which ran the Louisiana colony, peaked in December 1719 at over 10,000 *livres*, 20 times their original value—and almost 50 times what early investors had actually paid for them. In January 1720 Law was named controller-general of finances—de facto prime minister of France. During a two-year-long bull market, France had made long-overdue investments in its navy and colonial infrastructure. The establishment of New Orleans as Louisiana's future capital, in 1718, was an essential part of the upgrade. But France's share-buying frenzy had been stoked by official propaganda painting Louisiana as a paradise where planters and traders made their fortunes with ease. By 1720, failed colonists were returning to France with tales of famine, disease, and an insufferable climate, and some big investors began cashing in their shares.



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](mailto:reference@hnoc.org).

As rumors of the colony’s struggles spread, share prices fell and the first of several sell-offs began. The Company’s stock office had to close its doors for several weeks that spring. When the office reopened, speculation was banned, but Law promised to buy back shares at a fixed price of 9,000 *livres*. At the same time, Law had to deal with his too-rapid expansion of the paper-money supply. In attempting to shore up share prices, his monetary policies became quixotic and self-contradictory, further eroding investor confidence. An edict of April 20 forbade banks from exchanging notes for large silver coins, even though France had previously mandated the replacement of coinage by paper money; now, Law needed to take notes out of circulation. On May 21, with share prices still falling and inflation running rampant, the government devalued both stock shares and bank notes, causing public outrage. Law was fired eight days later.

Law spent the next six months fighting to preserve his System, trying hybrid schemes involving traditional sources of revenue, such as bonds and annuities. His enemies at court were successfully lobbying to bring the old ways back, as seen in the edicts of June 10 and July 11.

By mid-August the crown—led by the king’s regent, Philippe, duc d’Orléans—decided to gradually retire and burn Law’s paper currency. Law introduced a few new financial instruments and received some investment in them, but not nearly enough to save the System—or himself. By December he was forced to quit France forever, giving up numerous châteaux and other properties and monies to pay off his debts. He would die in poverty, less than 10 years later, in Venice.

This brings us to the *recueil*. Published in 1723 by the Paris house Seneuze, it compiles the System’s monetary and banking regulations, accompanied by a



brief introduction. To today’s researcher, it presents a puzzle: why would any publisher release a straightforward compilation of banking laws for a system that had failed only two years prior?

The answer, according to Law historian Antoin Murphy, who connected THNOC to the *recueil*, is that Law’s exile was intended to be temporary. Despite the System’s demise, Law had retained the support of the duc d’Orléans, who planned to bring him back into the fold. The duke’s secretary at the time, Jean-François Melon, detailed the scheme in his 1734 *Essai politique sur le commerce*: with the regent’s support, Law planned to regain control of the Company of the Indies and introduce a new credit system “confined within safe limits.”

However, Melon writes, “Death finished his big plans.” Orléans died in December 1723, and with that, so too did Law’s planned comeback. The Seneuze *recueil* was never circulated, hence the rarity of the copy THNOC now has in its collection.

—HOWARD MARGOT AND ALFRED E. LEMMON

### *L’Isle Dernière*

2022.0178

For decades The Collection has sought to acquire artwork by the Swedish Louisiana artist Bror Anders Wikström (1854–1909),

who achieved renown as a painter, illustrator, and Carnival float designer. Of particular interest are his seascapes, and in late 2022 THNOC acquired its first such work, titled *L’Isle Dernière*. Completed in 1890, it depicts a foundering ship at low tide. Its title refers to a Louisiana barrier island that served as a popular vacation spot in the 19th century until it was destroyed by a hurricane in August 1856.

Born in a small town in Sweden, Wikström went to sea as a boy, spending nearly a decade as a sailor and eventually becoming a sea captain. After he became nearsighted, Wikström left seafaring and studied art at the Royal Academy in Stockholm, as well as in Paris under the tutelage of Rodolphe Julian and Filippo Colarossi. He became a magazine illustrator. In 1881 he illustrated a story about life at sea, which motivated him to begin painting marine scenes, particularly those featuring ships on the high seas.

After a year in Florida, Wikström relocated to New Orleans, which remained his home for the rest of his life. He contributed etchings to journals and painted portraits, historical and genre subjects, and landscapes. Wikström’s illustrations appeared on the magazine covers of *Mascot*, in 1883, and *Figaro*, in January 1884.

Wikström became a leader of the New Orleans art scene, teaching classes and



cofounding the Artists' Association of New Orleans in 1885. He later served as treasurer and then president.

After the death of his friend Charles Briton, a fellow Swedish-born illustrator who was well known for designing Carnival pageants, Wikström succeeded him as a designer of Mardi Gras floats and costumes. He became a favorite among the city's krewes, designing for Rex and Proteus throughout the 1890s. Wikström died in New York City on April 27, 1909, while working on a float design for a parade celebrating the Hudson River.

By the time Wikström painted *L'Isle Dernière*, the island had been destroyed for almost 35 years, but it was enshrined in memory. Lafcadio Hearn made it the subject of his 1889 novella *Chita: A Memory of Last Island*, and Wikström knew many people who had lost family members in the unnamed hurricane that swept through the island in 1856, killing approximately 200 people and injuring scores more.

Isle Dernière was 24 miles long and less than a mile wide, located about 14 miles south of Cocodrie at the bottom of Terrebonne Parish. In the 1840s, wealthy New Orleanians built more than a hundred summer homes on the island, but all were obliterated by the storm, which reduced the island's land mass to scraps.

The Collection is already in possession of a double portrait of Charles and James Muggah (2018.0073)—Charles owned a hotel on the island—as well as several daguerreotypes of other Isle Dernière denizens. Thirteen members of the Muggah family died in the storm, and it was one of the family's descendants, Bethany Ewald Bultman, who donated the portrait and who connected The Collection to the Wikström painting. —JUDITH H. BONNER

### Poodle's Patio pamphlet

2023.0004

Beginning in the 1930s, burlesque shows—variety showcases featuring striptease performers and other vaudevillian acts—stormed the country. By 1950, there were tens of thousands of people involved in the burlesque industry, including dancers,

musicians, actors, stage managers, and office personnel. This titillating form of entertainment found a home in New Orleans, with Bourbon Street its epicenter. At the height of the trend, in the mid- to late '50s, the city boasted more than 50 burlesque clubs. Some are still remembered today, such as the 500 Club and El Morocco, but many were forgotten by all but a few. Poodle's Patio was one such establishment, and The Collection has acquired a rare promotional pamphlet for it, shedding light on this bygone slice of nightlife.

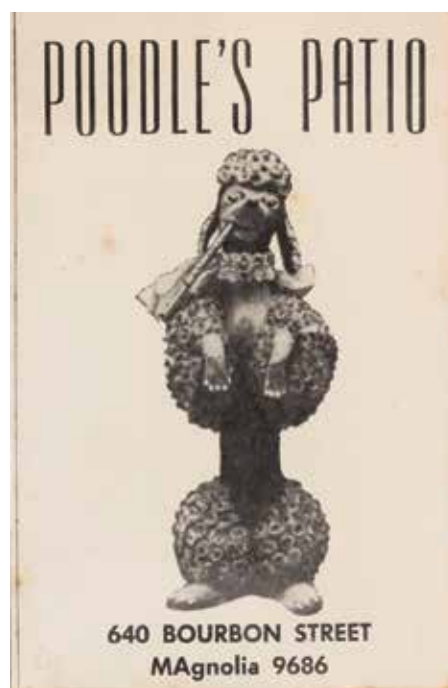
Poodle's Patio opened at 640 Bourbon Street in 1957. Said to have a fully pink interior, it is now known more for musicians who played there, such as Mac Rebennack—before he went by Dr. John—and John Leon Gross (a.k.a. Archibald), than for its burlesque performers.

One dancer who left a mark was Suzanne Robbins. A high school dropout from North Carolina, Robbins arrived in New Orleans in 1954 and started performing shortly after, first as Wild Cat Frenchie, “The Sadie Thompson of New Orleans,” and then as Jezebel, “The Artist with a Thousand Movements.” Considered one of the classiest acts on Bourbon Street, Robbins was featured in national magazines and in the 1963 B movie *Wild Is My Love*.

The Poodle's Patio pamphlet features Robbins as Jezebel; Galatea, “The Statue That Comes to Life”; singer Helen June; emcee Scotty McNeil; and three other exotic dancers—June Powell, Gail Lee, and Pat Patterson. There are also photographs of Jezebel and Galatea.

The pamphlet is undated, but it must have been printed before April 1964, when the club, along with neighbor Madame Francine's, switched its entertainment from strippers to a band and dancing. The venues had been targets of District Attorney Jim Garrison's raids that began in early August 1962, less than three months after Garrison took his oath of office. These raids were often dramatic: the first resulted in the arrest of Blaze Starr from El Morocco for “over-exposure” during her act, and Robbins was arrested onstage during her performance at Poodle's in January 1963.

Robbins retired from burlesque shortly thereafter. In a 2003 interview, she referred to Garrison as “that snake in the grass,” stating that she left the scene because “I didn't want to risk any trouble.” After a stint in California, she returned to New Orleans and served as manager of the Dauphine Orleans Hotel before marrying a man from Washington state and moving to Tacoma. —NINA BOZAK



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



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On May 20, members of THNOC's Laussat Society were invited to a show-and-tell featuring items from the recently acquired Bunny Matthews Archive.

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(Left–right) Richard Simmons, Elizabeth Nalty, Madeleine Crawford, and emeritus board member Hilton S. Bell look at original Vic and Nat'ly cartoons by Bunny Matthews.



**Moratorium to End the War in Vietnam,  
New Orleans** (detail)  
1969; gelatin silver print  
by Matt Anderson  
gift of Matt Anderson, 2002.12.5, © Matt Anderson

## The Historic New Orleans Collection

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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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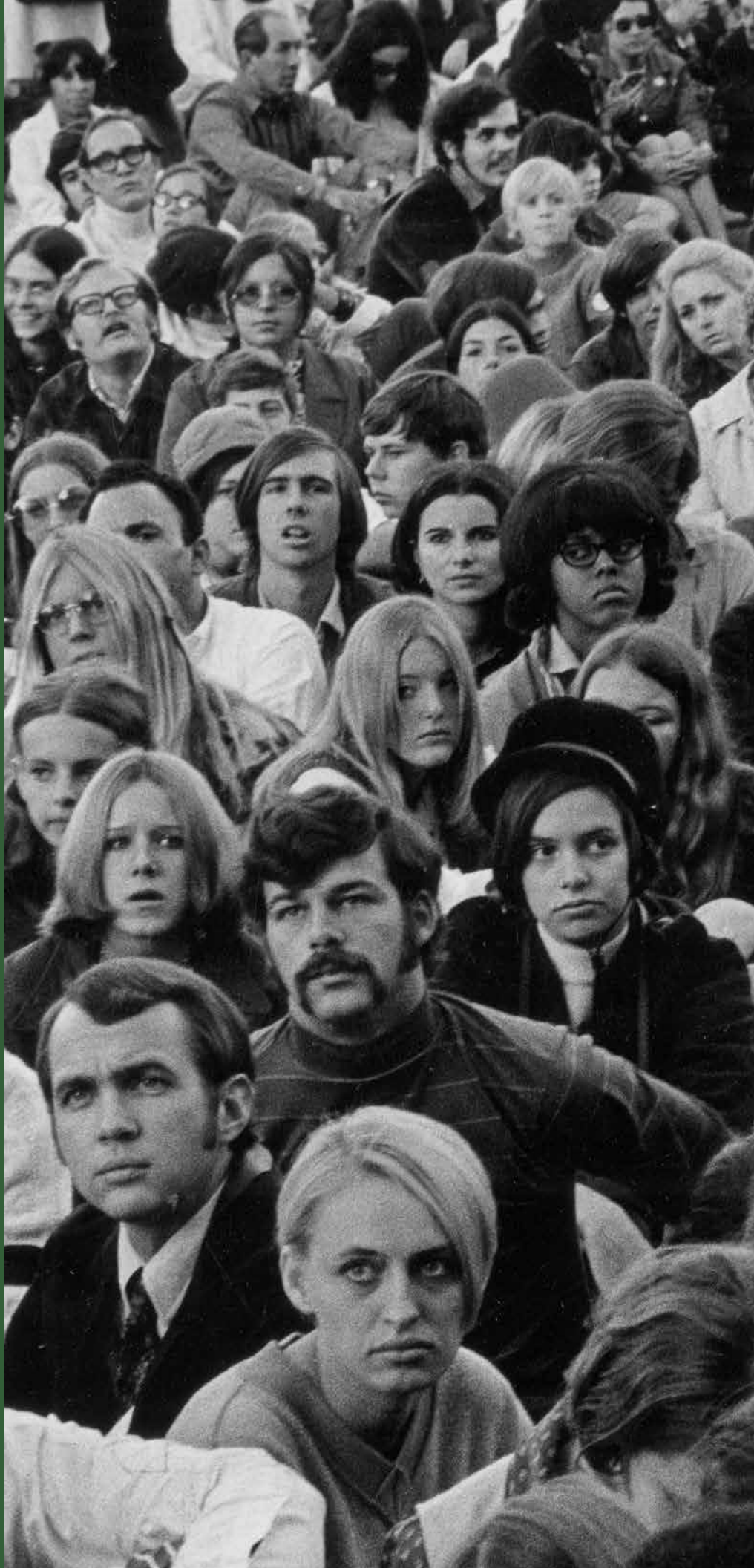
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