

The Historic New Orleans Collection Quarterly

VOLUME XL
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SUMMER 2023



GRACE NOTES: The Sight and Sound of Music



MUSIC TO MY EYES

MATERIAL CULTURE OF SOUTHERN SOUND

THURSDAY–SUNDAY, AUGUST 3–6, 2023

Williams Research Center, 410 Chartres Street

Music history is full of big personalities and innovative sounds, but look closer and you'll find a rich world of objects and ephemera that connect those stories to the present day. At this year's New Orleans Antiques Forum, speakers will discuss music made in the home, material culture related to performance, New Orleans spaces and locations instrumental to southern sound, and much more.

Returning as forum moderator is Tom Savage, director of educational travel and conferences at Colonial Williamsburg, and this year the forum is pleased to welcome Dr. Nick Spitzer, producer of public radio's *American Routes*, who will premiere a short film about vernacular string instruments of Louisiana. Following Spitzer's presentation on Friday, a champagne reception will feature Grammy Award winner Andre Michot and friends.

For a full schedule of events, visit
hnoc.org/antiques.

REGISTRATION OPEN NOW

\$150 for single-day Friday/Saturday admission;
\$50 for single-day Sunday; or \$300 for the full forum.
Participants aged 21–30 enjoy half-price tickets for single-day admission.

SPONSORED BY



Country Roads, Hotel Monteleone, Hederman Brothers, History Antiques & Interiors, Keil's Antiques, LaFleur & Laborde, Moss Antiques, Arbor House, Premium Parking

ABOVE: Chris Owens's tambourine; between 1978 and 1980; gift of the estate of Chris Owens, 2022.0144.7

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

EXHIBITIONS

All are free unless otherwise noted.

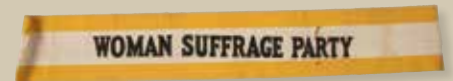
CURRENT

"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



UPCOMING

American Democracy: A Great Leap of Faith

June 17–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 THNOC's 2023 Bienville Circle, J. P. Morgan Private Bank, and WDSU-TV

The Trail They Blazed

September 2023

TEP Interpretive Center, 5909 St. Claude Ave.

This traveling exhibition is part of the collaborative initiative NOLA Resistance, led by THNOC, to preserve and share stories from the New Orleans Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s–1970s. Thanks to a National Park Service grant and additional funding from THNOC, it is available to host sites free of charge.

CONTINUING

French Quarter Galleries

520 Royal Street

GENERAL HOURS

520 Royal Street

Tricentennial Wing, French Quarter Galleries, Café Cour, and The Shop

Tuesday–Saturday, 9:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.;

Sunday, 10:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

410 Chartres Street

Williams Research Center

Tuesday–Saturday, 9:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

Appointments are encouraged. Please email reference@hnoc.org or call (504) 523-4662.



ON THE COVER

Panel for Music Room

1894

by John White Alexander
courtesy of the Detroit Institute of Arts,
Founders Society Purchase, Beatrice W. Rogers
Fund, Dexter M. Ferry Jr. Fund, et al., 82.26



FROM THE PRESIDENT

Summer in New Orleans is typically known as our slow season, but that couldn't be further from the truth for us this year at THNOC. On the heels of the opening of *"Yet She Is Advancing"* in late April, we are thrilled to host our first exhibition from the Smithsonian, *American Democracy*, which opens this month. The two shows work in tandem, each of them telling the epic, multilayered story of democracy in the United States. Purpose-built interactives in the exhibitions offer visitors, as well as staff, an extra level of engagement; check out On the Job in this issue and the next for looks behind the scenes. In these pages and online on our blog, First Draft, we have a slate of stories—some fun and breezy, others in-depth and meaty—to connect readers near and far to the people, places, and concepts explored in the two exhibitions.

Early August will bring one of our finest events of the year, the New Orleans Antiques Forum. If you know, you know: ever since its founding, in 2008, the forum has become more than a conference or symposium—it's a festival, a gathering of lovers of beauty and history that lets guests revel in their passion for decorative arts. This year the forum turns its attention to the material culture of music, from opera sets and elaborate music boxes to country-and-western costumes and player pianos. I look forward to seeing a lot of familiar faces, as well as meeting new enthusiasts.

But not all our summertime action is happening onsite. In the next couple months, we will unveil the website for NOLA Resistance, a long-term project done in collaboration with community members to tell the stories of New Orleanians involved in the Civil Rights Movement. This partnership has been deeply rewarding, and in the fall we look forward to debuting *The Trail They Blazed*, a NOLA Resistance traveling exhibition that will visit public spaces throughout Louisiana over the next two years. It has been an honor to work with civil rights leaders on this project, and we hope it continues the work of this summer's democracy-focused exhibitions. —DANIEL HAMMER

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Acquisition Spotlight: The Bunny Matthews Archive finds a home at THNOC.

Recent Additions



House Music

Before the broadcast era, people heard music at balls, on the street, and, to a large extent, at home. That history will come to life at the 2023 Antiques Forum.

Today, one can spend virtually every moment with a soundtrack of recorded music. In addition to personal music libraries, consumers have access to algorithm-fed playlists to match every conceivable mood, location, time of day, or activity. On social media platforms like TikTok, users can collaborate across the world to remix favorite songs. Many people even rely on recorded sounds to sleep, using white noise apps to blanket the unconscious.

In this 21st-century valley of aural plentitude, it can be jarring to survey the landscape of musical life before the advent of home stereos, CDs, and Spotify. Until the invention of the phonograph, live music was the primary means of listening to music. Balls, operas, and other public entertainments were wholeheartedly embraced in New Orleans, but equally important was music made and enjoyed in the home. The theme of this August’s 2023 New Orleans Antiques Forum is “Music to My Eyes: Material Culture of Southern Sound,” and the first day will focus on the domestic register, from parlor music and *soirées musicales* to player pianos, music boxes, and the early “talking machines.” Subsequent days will explore antiques and ephemera related to performance, such as a lecture on country-and-western costumes, and the material culture of New Orleans music, from Congo Square to jazz landmarks. A preconference activity will offer participants a private show-and-tell

NEW ORLEANS ANTIQUES FORUM

“Music to My Eyes: Material Culture of Southern Sound”

Thursday–Sunday, August 3–6
Williams Research Center, 410 Chartres St.

\$150 for single-day Friday/Saturday admission; \$50 for single-day Sunday; or \$300 for the full forum

Registration open now; visit www.hnoc.org/antiques

of THNOC’s music-related holdings, as well as a private tour of the New Orleans Jazz Museum at the Old US Mint.

Throughout the 19th century, homemade music transcended class, but for middle- and upper-class women it provided a particularly pronounced structure and purpose to their days. For middle-class women, as well as men, proficiency in music was a path to economic security—as music teachers. For upper-class young women, playing an instrument was an important cultivation, making them more “accomplished” and therefore more salable on the marriage market.

The most common way to display one’s musical accomplishments was through parlor music, explains Dr. Candace Bailey, who teaches musicology as the Neville Distinguished Professor at North Carolina Central University. “It’s the age of visiting—calling cards and calling hours—and so some people would take their music with them, so when they’d drop in, they would say, ‘Would you like to hear what I’ve been working up?’ Or, maybe you’re hosting, and you’d want to play the piano while other people danced the latest dance.”

In 19th-century New Orleans, “French pieces, French opera, French everything” was the most popular, Bailey says. Because of the free time available to young women of the leisure class, “the level of musical expertise that women achieved was much higher than we give them credit for. Particularly for wealthy women, because they had more time for practice and lessons, they were playing the same pieces as the professionals.”

For people who were accomplished enough, another opportunity to showcase their skills was the salon or *soirée musicale*, private concerts typically hosted by society doyennes at their residences. There, a talented hobbyist could perform alongside a visiting professional. In New Orleans, it was common for professional musicians and composers to share patron-meets-muse relationships with society ladies, Bailey says. Rose Kennedy, for example, the daughter of a US Mint executive (not to be confused with the mother of John F. Kennedy), wowed Louis Moreau Gottschalk with her playing of his famed *Bamboula*. Two different composers dedicated pieces to her, including the Irish composer William Vincent Wallace, who attached her name to his *Grande polka de concert*.



A. *Unsere Stube in Dauphine Street 67, New Orleans*

1859; watercolor
by Carl Frederick Schwartz
1999.39

B. Horace Waters & Co. square piano
courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

C. Parlor scene

between 1820 and 1840; sepia watercolor
by Pierre Paul Emmanuel de Pommayrac
The L. Kemper and Leila Moore Williams
Founders Collection, 1962.1.8.3





D. German inlaid rosewood and mahogany music box with discs between 1890 and 1900 by Polyphon, manufacturer (Leipzig, Germany) 2023.0044.2.1

E. *A Family Musicale, New Orleans* 1895; photograph by C. Milo Williams 1974.25.25.8



Wealthy people with large parlors or dedicated music rooms could afford grand pianos, but for many households, compact square pianos were the answer. They ranged in size and scope—the number of keys depended on how much one could pay—and could be modest Shaker designs or feature gilding, inlay, or hand-painted ornamentation. From the early days of the American republic through much of the 19th century, “Americans *love* the square piano,” says NOAF speaker Alexandra Cade, an adjunct curator at the Sigal Music Museum in Greenville, South Carolina. “They’re more affordable, so more people can buy them. . . . Until the late 19th century, there were more square pianos produced in the United States than there were grands.”

What supplanted the square piano in the late 19th century was the upright piano. And for many consumers, that upright was a player piano. Automatic instruments and musical machines had existed for centuries, going back to the musical clocks that came out of central Europe in the 16th century and spread to town squares and church steeples across the continent. “The technology became a consumer good with the industrial revolution, in the early 19th century—with the ability to miniaturize the mechanisms,” explains Robert “Bobby” Skinner, a New Orleans musician and restoration specialist of automatic instruments. “The Swiss were geniuses at manufacturing these. They evolved out of cuckoo clocks, and then they put them in music boxes, watches, mechanical birds—just ridiculously small pieces.”

The innovations in technology also spawned automatic instruments of enormous size. “Some of them played small orchestras—a small bass drum, a snare drum, a woodblock, triangle, castanet, a small set of organ pipes,” Skinner says. “All of this stuff was wrapped in a luxurious, extremely elaborate case. . . . In a residence, this would have been the focal point of a music room.”

Player pianos, which debuted in the 1890s, offered a twofer to consumers: a playable instrument as well as an automated one. Later models known as reproducing pianos brought a then-unparalleled level of fidelity and nuance to the music being recreated. The perforations on the paper rolls inserted into the piano captured the original performer’s dynamics, expression (lightness or heaviness of touch), pedal phrasing, and tempo changes. For the ultra-wealthy, there were reproducing pipe organs, such as the original, 703-pipe Aeolian on view in THNOC’s Seignouret-Brulatour Building. Composers such as Sergei Prokofiev, Jelly Roll Morton, Eubie Blake, and George Gershwin all recorded piano rolls, to name a few.

In New Orleans, D. H. Holmes department store and Werlein’s were the main suppliers of both player pianos and piano rolls, which people amassed by the hundreds. “It was typical for you to get a subscription to receive rolls—a dozen or so every month—upon purchase of a piano,” says Skinner, who himself is in possession of “thousands” of rolls collected by his grandmother.

Around the same time that player pianos were flooding department stores, phonographs began to enter the market. In the 1870s Thomas Edison had invented a sound recording device that operated from a cylinder with tiny pegs, similar to the mechanism in a music

box, but it was bulky. Moreover, Edison did not see the full potential of recording technology. “He had a failure of imagination,” says music historian John McCusker, who will speak at the forum about the introduction of the phonograph. “You don’t have to explain to the public why you need a lightbulb. You never have to explain why you need a telegraph. He misses the crucial importance of sound recording: it’s not the invention, it’s the content.”

Two men who did see that potential were Emile Berliner and Eldridge Johnson. Berliner, a German inventor who emigrated to the United States as a young man, had been experimenting with sound recording using a flat-disc process. In 1894 he introduced the Berliner Gramophone, which played records via a hand-cranked motor. Berliner’s technology caught the attention of Johnson, an engineer and manufacturer of bookbinding machines. Upon learning of the Gramophone, Johnson developed a spring-driven motor to play the discs, and in 1901 he founded the Victor Talking Machine Company. “Flat records easily bury cylinders in the market because flat records are easier to produce,” McCusker explains. “You can work from a master, usually ‘wax,’ or metallic soap. . . . From that you craft a metal stamper impression, and that stamper you stamp into the shellac that you use to make records.” The 78 rpm record was born.

“Between 1910 and 1920, that is the equivalent . . . of the ’80s when everybody got a VCR,” says McCusker. “Everybody got a phonograph in that decade.” One important factor was the introduction of the Victrola, a Victor-model phonograph that offered users a more attractive, compact cabinet, as well as greater control over the volume. Previously, the only way to change the volume of a phonograph was to get a larger or smaller “horn,” the acoustic amplifier used to emit sound. Another development was the first hit record, “Crazy Blues,” recorded by Mamie Smith in 1920. “It’s the first number-one record with a bullet, as they say,” McCusker says. “It sells hundreds of thousands.”

The recording industry was off and running. Over the 1920s, radios became common home furnishings, and the broadcast era began. “Radio killed off the player piano,” Skinner says.

“This is the first time that a house that wasn’t musical, that didn’t have musical instruments or people who play them, could be a musical house,” McCusker says. “I don’t think there’s any way to overstate how important that was.”

Fortunately, New Orleans never entirely lost its love of live, homemade music. The city’s musical culture birthed jazz. Three girls from New Orleans raised in the classical tradition took their love of jazz and their prodigious home training to become the Boswell Sisters, some of the first stars of the radio age. As long as there are musical homes, New Orleans will remain a musical city. —MOLLY REID CLEAVER



F. *The Mandolin Player and His Accompanist*

between 1890 and 1910; photograph from a glass-plate negative by C. Milo Williams 1974.25.25.16

G. *The Phantom Gramophone*

between 1965 and 1975; photograph by Clarence John Laughlin *The Clarence John Laughlin Archive at THNOC, 1983.47.4.9364*





J O I N, or D I E. ^A

EXHIBITION

American Democracy: A Great Leap of Faith

June 17–October 8, 2023

520 Royal Street

Free

Developed by the National Museum of American History and adapted for travel by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service. Presented with support from THNOC's 2023 Bienville Circle, J. P. Morgan Private Bank, and WDSU-TV.

Uniting the States

As the young republic formed and took its first steps, print media served a crucial role in uniting the nation.

American Democracy: A Great Leap of Faith, a traveling exhibition from the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service, examines the continuing evolution of America's experiment in government "of, by, and for the people." One of the highlights of the show is a wide selection of reproduction print materials from the period of the American Revolution. These examples of patriotic symbols, political cartoons, colonial newspapers, and political pamphlets demonstrate the crucial role of print media in building support for United States independence. Print media circulated political ideas, fomented popular rebellion, and encouraged colonists from different regions to identify with the imagined community of a new nation.

Widely published images such as woodcuts and cartoons could express political sentiments in vivid and memorable terms, becoming powerful symbols of resistance and national identity. One of the most enduring symbols of American unity in the colonial era is Benjamin Franklin's *Join, or Die* woodcut. Franklin, a printer by trade, originally designed the image and published it in his newspaper, the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, in 1754 in support of colonial unity against foreign enemies during the French and Indian War. He later repurposed it in the 1760s and 1770s to urge united colonial opposition to the British Crown and Parliament.

Inequality with respect to their peers in Great Britain, coupled with the imposition of a series of new taxation policies, fueled tensions in the original 13 colonies. Opposition in the 1760s crystallized around tariffs that bypassed elected assemblies in the colonies. Americans argued with increasing agitation that legislators who enacted colonial laws should be chosen by colonial voters and share basic interests with their constituents. The 1765 Stamp Act levied a direct tax on newspapers, pamphlets, and legal documents. As colonial legislatures submitted petitions of protest to Britain, popular outrage expressed itself in the streets. One illustration from 1784 shows a crowd burning tax stamps in Boston in August 1765.

A. *Join, or Die* (reproduction)
1754
by Benjamin Franklin
courtesy of the Library of Congress

N. E.

British officials and troops were dispatched to enforce the unpopular laws, leading to intense confrontations between soldiers and civilians. On March 5, 1770, British soldiers in Boston fired into a crowd, killing five men. Paul Revere, a patriot activist and silversmith by trade, created prints of the event, which became known as the Boston Massacre, to fuel popular unrest.

While printed images stirred passions, colonists also had access to more intellectual appeals for independence. Pamphlets, inexpensive and easy to print, brought political theory into the hands of everyday people, who discussed and debated ideas in taverns, crucial sites of social communication and mobilization. Taverns frequently contained reading rooms stocked with an array of newspapers and political tracts, and speakers would often read aloud the latest news for possibly illiterate members of the colonial public. A litany of rum toasts denouncing British tyranny might be followed by a reading from Thomas Paine's 1776 *Common Sense*, the wildly popular essay that makes an impassioned appeal for egalitarian government, praising the common sense of the common people to rule themselves free of monarchs and aristocrats.

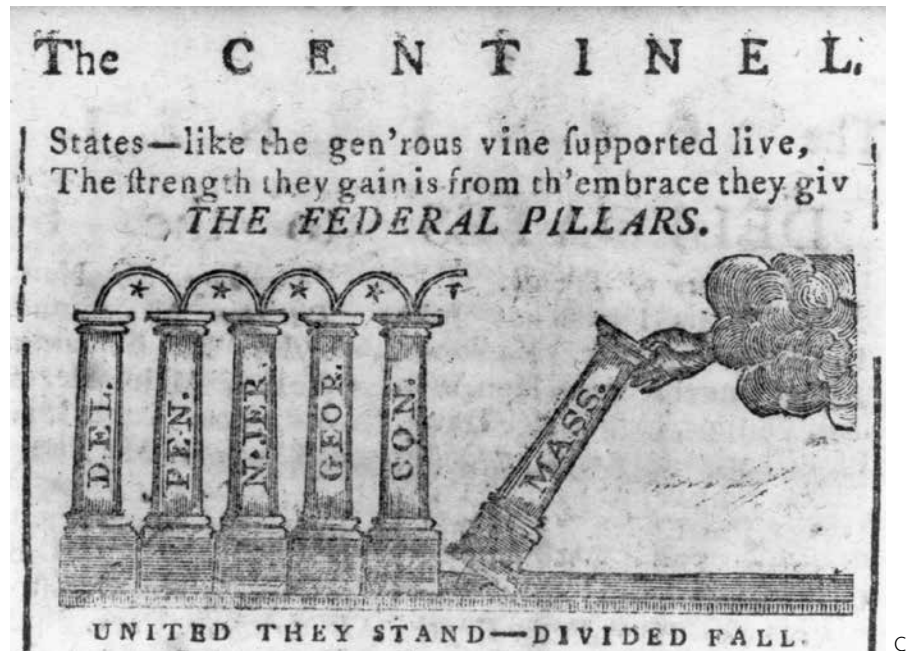
"Nothing but a newspaper can put the same thought at the same time before a thousand readers," wrote Alexis de Tocqueville in volume two of his study *Democracy in America* (1840). Visual representations of momentous events moved fast through an impressive

B. **Burning of Stamp Act, Boston**
(reproduction)
1784
by Daniel Chodowiecki
courtesy of the Library of Congress



C. "The Federal Pillars" political cartoon (reproduction) from the *Massachusetts Centinel*, January 16, 1788 courtesy of the Library of Congress

D. *The Bloody Massacre* (reproduction) 1770 by Paul Revere courtesy of the Library of Congress



network of colonial newspapers and printers. Newspapers also spread written accounts of protests and legislative debates to geographically dispersed readers, allowing people from Massachusetts or Georgia to see themselves in a common political struggle. While colonies often had divergent social and economic interests, newspapers presented issues that united them.

After the military defeat of the British, newspapers helped spread information about the conventions and debates surrounding the form the new American government would take. In the summer of 1787, delegates to the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia met in private, forbidding press coverage of their debates and decisions. In September 1787 Americans had their first chance to see a draft of the proposed constitution, when it was published in the *Providence Gazette*, *Boston Gazette*, and other papers around the nation.

A great debate ensued—much of it playing out in newspapers—as to whether the colonies should ratify, amend, or throw out the document. The *Massachusetts Centinel* published a series of cartoons in which each state is depicted as a pillar on which the new nation will stand. One print from 1788 shows the first five states to ratify the constitution.

The constitution was formally adopted on June 21, 1788, when New Hampshire became the ninth state to ratify it. Newspapers and other forms of print had brokered this compact, but in the years that followed, their relationship with the federal government was often fraught. In 1798 the John Adams administration passed the Alien and Sedition Acts, intended to suppress criticism of the government by the press. Intense controversy around these laws led to their repeal in the early 1800s.

As the United States emerged as a young republic on the world stage, print media played the critical role of constructing popular support for rebellion, building a sense of collective purpose, and providing people with necessary information by which to exercise their new political power. —DYLAN JORDAN



OFF-SITE

Women's Work

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

Twenty images were provided to Hermann-Grima + Gallier Historic Houses for use in the exhibition *Entrepreneurial Pursuits of Women in New Orleans, Then and Now*, which is now on view.



In the French Market
by E. W. Kemble, illustrator
1974.25.20.127



Milliner's Shop, Woman Sewing Baby Bonnets
1934 or 1935; oil on canvas
by Josephine Marien Crawford, painter
bequest of Charles C. Crawford, 1978.23.69



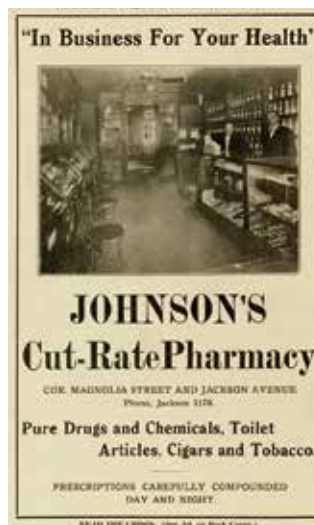
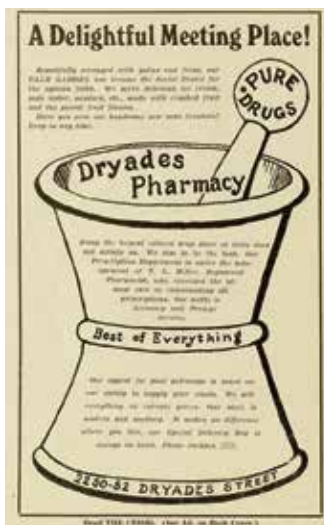
A run of concerts in February featured music from THNOC's Ursuline music manuscript, a collection of hand-notated sacred songs that remains the oldest surviving musical document in the Mississippi River valley. The manuscript, which was notated in 1736 and sent to the Ursuline nuns of New Orleans in 1754, was reproduced in *French Baroque Music of New Orleans: Spiritual Songs from the Ursuline Convent (1736)*, published by THNOC in 2014 for use by musicians and music scholars. The concert series, called "**Virtue and Vice**," was a collaboration between the chamber group Filament and vocal ensemble Variant 6. Performances took place in New York City, Philadelphia, and Wilmington, Delaware.

Ursuline manuscript copy of *Nouvelles poésies spirituelles et morales*
1736; manuscript sheet music
98-001-RL.58



Louisiana Public Broadcasting was provided with 25 images for use in its documentary *Why Louisiana Ain't Mississippi . . . or Any Place Else!* The four-hour film aired on LPB stations over two nights in December.

Cathedral and Court Houses
1873 or 1874; wood engraving
by John William Orr
L. Kemper and Leila Moore Williams Founders Collection, 1951.41.30



Advertisements for Dryades Pharmacy and Johnson's Cut-Rate Pharmacy from *Woods Directory*
(New Orleans: Allen T. Woods, 1914)
gift of the New Orleans Public Library, 71-23-L.7

Seven images from *Woods Directory* were provided to the **New Orleans Pharmacy Museum** for inclusion in a new exhibition about the history of African American pharmacies and pharmacy education in New Orleans.



Beauty and the Ballot

Civil rights activist Katie E. Whickam was a beautician and civil rights organizer who helped thousands of Black Americans access their right to vote.

EXHIBITION

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

Through November 5, 2023

520 Royal Street

Free

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

A. Katie E. Whickam in front of Katie's School of Beauty Culture and Barbering

ca. 1970

courtesy of SCLC New Orleans, SCLCnola.org

In January 1955, a group of African American women gathered at 2100 Dryades Street to form the Metropolitan Women's Voters League (MWVL). Their purpose, as stated in the *Louisiana Weekly*, was to register “every eligible woman who desires to become a voter.” The meeting took place at Katie's School of Beauty Culture and Barbering, and the group appointed the owner, Katie E. Whickam, as chair. Under her leadership, the MWVL launched a voter registration drive, canvassing door to door and running voter education workshops. They were supported by the National Democratic Committee and hoped to register 100,000 Black voters in New Orleans and across the state. The *Louisiana Weekly* predicted that “women of the community are going to participate like never before.”

A beauty school might seem an unlikely place to launch a Black women's voting league, but historian Tiffany Gill explains that African American beauticians were “key political mobilizers” in the modern Civil Rights Movement. Gill argues that as independent operators who relied solely on African American customers, Black beauty culturists (as beauticians were often called) remained outside of the control of white employers. Their salons and schools offered women a place to speak freely and organize safely. Katie's School of Beauty Culture and Barbering, at the corner of Dryades and Josephine Streets, provided exactly that kind of space to Whickam and the founding members of the MWVL.

The intersection of Whickam's professional life and political activism extended beyond founding the MWVL. In 1957 she became president of the National Beauty Culturists' League (NBCL), a professional organization for Black beauticians based in Washington, DC. Whickam used this platform to encourage Black women in the industry to advocate for access to the ballot and for civil rights. As NBCL president, she built relationships with

A

Martin Luther King Jr. and other civil rights leaders and Democratic Party politicians, including John F. Kennedy. Through her efforts in New Orleans and beyond, Whickam exemplifies the vital role beauticians played in the Black freedom movement.

Born in Assumption Parish on March 12, 1903, Katie Ethel Whickam was the daughter of Minerva Pleasant Whickam and Rev. John C. Whickam. As a teenager, Whickam worked as a cook for a family in Assumption Parish. By 1930, she was married and living in New Orleans. Over the next decade, Whickam's marriage ended in divorce, and she left New Orleans to train as a cosmetology teacher at the Orchid School of Beauty Culture in New York City. She returned to New Orleans to teach beauty school, where she graduated from Gilbert Academy's evening school in 1942. Three years later, she married Leonard Chapman. Whickam also studied abroad, graduating from the L'Oréal Beauty School in Paris in 1957 and obtaining further instruction in Rome. In 1959, she received an honorary doctorate degree from Leland College, after which time she was often referred to as Dr. Katie E. Whickam. She raised three adopted children.

When she founded the MWVL in 1955 Whickam had been an established beauty school proprietor for more than a decade. Her school, which opened in 1942, offered day and evening classes in a variety of skills, including hairstyling, cutting, and coloring, as well as special workshops. The numerous graduates of Katie's School of Beauty Culture and Barbering remained in contact through their own alumni association.

On top of teaching and running a successful business, Whickam was actively involved in furthering the beautician profession for Black women. In 1947, she helped found the Louisiana State Beauticians' Association (LSBA) and served as the organization's first president. In addition to holding workshops and an annual convention, the LSBA had a political purpose. In the 1930s, states had begun to regulate hair-care businesses, requiring state licenses, certifications for beauticians, and regular approval from boards of inspectors. Organizations like the LSBA worked to provide Black beauticians with a voice in government oversight of their industry, pushing for representation on state inspection boards. This was important because the beauty-culture sector as a whole was segregated along racial lines. In many states, Black beauticians outnumbered their white counterparts. Gill explains that organizations like the LSBA "saw the need for individual representation on state beauty boards as a way for them to begin to challenge discrimination in state and local governments more generally."

Whickam's work with the LSBA served as an entrée into politics. In 1956 she became one of four Black Louisianians named as state inspectors. Within six months, however, Gov. Earl Long cut the positions, citing a lack of funds. In 1959 Whickam joined 200 fellow LSBA members in picketing the state capitol. The beauticians complained that Gov. Long had not fulfilled his



B

B. "Black Folk Must Vote" button

ca. 1965

courtesy of the Collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, gift of Kenneth A. Smaltz Jr.

C. Advertisement for Katie's School of Beauty Culture and Barbering

from the *Louisiana Weekly*, September 2, 1961
courtesy of Newspapers.com

**KATIE'S SCHOOL
BEAUTY CULTURE & BARBERING**

2100 DRYADES STREET
New Orleans 13, Louisiana

**High School Graduates – Why Not Take
Advantage of this Offer? ENROLL TODAY!**

In a course of Beauty Culture or Barbering. Let the summer months prove profitable to you. Our modern and latest methods assures you success as a Barber or Beautician.

If you are planning to attend college in the fall you can attend our day classes and then complete your training in the fall by attending our evening classes. Many of our graduates have sent themselves to college by entering this most lucrative field.

Our prices are reasonable and cover the cost of the entire course, including textbooks and tools.

Beauty Culture	\$300.00	Terms can be arranged to suit you.
Barbering	\$500.00	

DAY CLASSES 9 A.M. – 3 P.M.
EVENING CLASSES 5 P.M. – 11 P.M.
(We also offer you part-time training)

FOR FULL INFORMATION – You may consult any member of our faculty or call the Registrar: 529-1484 or 523-0266
DR. KATIE E. WHICKAM, Owner

* KATIE'S SCHOOL OF BEAUTY CULTURE & BARBERING *
* 2100 Dryades St. *
* THIS COUPON *
* Is worth \$15.00 to the first 10 students that register or \$10.00 *
* to any student that register by July 1, 1961 *
* * * * *

C

D. Officials of the Kennedy-Johnson Voters League (from left: A. P. Tureaud, Rev. Avery Alexander, Ellis Hull, Katie E. Wickham, unidentified, and Jackson V. Acox)

1960

by Marion James Porter, photographer
courtesy of City Archives and Special Collections,
New Orleans Public Library

E. Madam C. J. Walker Beauty College (Dallas, TX) teachers and students participating in voter registration

ca. 1960

courtesy of the Stuart A. Rose Manuscript,
Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory
University



campaign promise to appoint Black state inspectors. They also accused the Louisiana Board of Control of Cosmetic Therapy of failing to investigate unauthorized businesses, whose existence was hurting licensed practitioners and shop owners. For Wickham, the solution to these issues lay with the ballot box. She told the crowd of protesters, “Just go home, and work on your registration at the polls. If [Long] runs again, we’ll fix him.”

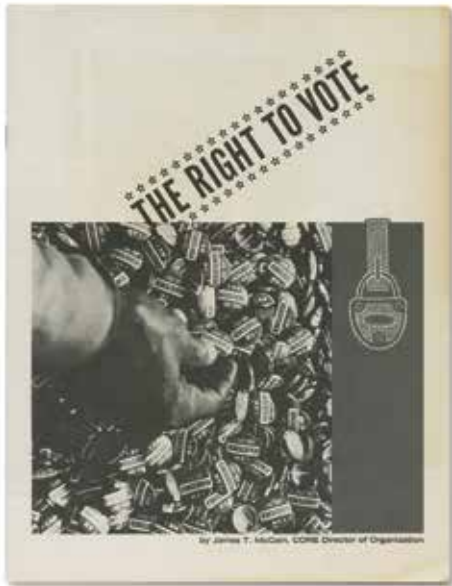
The importance of voting rights and participation at the polls was a message Wickham would relay time and again—locally, as president of the MWVL, and nationally, as president of the NBCL, a position she held for two and a half decades. The role of the NBCL, she

understood, went beyond supporting Black business professionals; it was about helping achieve first-class citizenship for all Black Americans.

“Beauticians should register and vote and make an effort to have every customer a registered voter,” Wickham declared in 1957, as part of her opening remarks to the NBCL annual convention, held in New Orleans. Her directive set the stage for the convention’s civil rights program, which featured Daniel Byrd of the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund; Rev. A. L. Davis, founder of the Orleans Parish Progressive Voters League; and Clarence Laws, NAACP field secretary. Laws spoke passionately about the right to vote as “a great fundamental right which must be defended to the fullest measure of our devotion.”

The highlight of the convention was an appearance by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., who had successfully led the





Montgomery bus boycott the previous year and had recently founded the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). King spoke about the hard work that integration would require. “I am not so optimistic as to believe that integration is ‘just around the corner,’” King said. “We have come a long, long way, and we still have a long way to go, but we must keep moving in spite of delay tactics used by segregationists.” He argued for the necessity of legislation to end segregation, saying it was essential that “all participate in the struggle for freedom and gain the use of the ballot.”

Dr. King understood the organizing potential of beauticians in the fight for civil rights, especially when it came to “get[ting]

F—G. *The Right to Vote*
1960; pamphlet
by the Congress of Racial Equality, publisher,
with photographs by Bob Adelman
2019.0032.3





H. Voter registration school at the Scottish Rite Temple

1964
courtesy of the Amistad Research Center

I. Katie E. Whickam speaking at the National Beauty Culturists' League annual meeting in New Orleans

1971
by Louise Martin, photographer
courtesy of Libby Neidenbach

folk out to vote.” He connected Whickam to Ella Baker, the associate director of the SCLC, and in October 1958 Whickam was elected to the SCLC’s executive committee. The following year, she became the first woman elected to a staff officer position. “This is in keeping with the expressed need to involve more women in the movement, and we believe that Mrs. Whickam will bring new strength to our efforts,” Baker wrote in announcing Whickam’s position.

Whickam’s national leadership role did not detract from her continued activism on the local level. As president of the MWVL, she spoke at rallies, oversaw voter registration drives, and operated a voter registration school. Between 1960 and 1962 Louisiana legislators passed new laws that made registering to vote more difficult. Registrars used these new rules, such as a multiple-choice “citizenship test,” to reject Black applicants. Voter registration schools

prepared Black New Orleanians to navigate these hurdles. In the early 1960s, the MWVL operated a voter registration school in Katie’s School of Beauty Culture and Barbering.

In addition to voter registration, Whickam and the MWVL were involved in electoral politics through the endorsement of candidates. In 1960 the MWVL joined with three other Black voter organizations in the city to create the Kennedy-Johnson Voters League, which campaigned for the Democratic presidential ticket in the city and across the state. Whickam served as secretary for the group—the only woman in a leadership position.

Whickam’s strong support for John F. Kennedy, whom she met as a senator in 1959, led to her appointment as a consultant to the Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization in 1961. Two years later she was one of several hundred women invited



to the Kennedy White House to discuss civil rights issues. President Kennedy urged the women and their constituents to support his civil rights bill and to participate in interracial human relations groups in their local communities. Following Kennedy's assassination, Whickam continued to support Lyndon B. Johnson. She was invited to the White House for a conference after Congress passed the 1964 Civil Rights Act and was called upon to encourage NBCL beauticians to campaign for Johnson later that year.

Throughout the 1960s, Whickam continued to lead the NBCL with a focus on civil rights. At the organization's 1964 convention, Whickam again urged attendees to foster voter registration. "In this way," she said, the NBCL "will directly touch and advise nearly two million Negro women in the nation." In response to the numerous riots that erupted in urban centers throughout the summer of 1967, she held up "proper use of the ballot," not violence, as the solution.

Whickam served as NBCL president for 27 years. When she was reelected again in 1981, she told the *Times-Picayune* that the position was "a full-time, nerve-wracking job that has become a part of me. I love it." During her tenure, Whickam grew the league's membership from around 9,000 to over 40,000 beauty culturists. She oversaw the multimillion-dollar construction of a facility for the National Institute of Cosmetology and the NBCL headquarters, both in Washington, DC. Whickam became president emeritus in 1984. She passed away at age 87 on February 2, 1988.

Dr. Katie E. Whickam never wavered in her belief that "you can cure all evils with the almighty ballot." As a beauty culture leader, Whickam left a legacy of activism and advocacy for full political participation by all American citizens. —LIBBY NEIDENBACH



J. Katie E. Whickam with George Johnson, a speaker at the meeting of the National Beauty Culturists' League

1979
courtesy of the Amistad Research Center

K. Women registering to vote

1983
by Harold Baquet, photographer
gift of Harold F. Baquet and Cheron Brylski,
2016.0172.1.204.1





ON THE JOB

Chris Deris

POSITION: Preparator, on staff since 2015

ASSIGNMENT: Design and build a kinetic ballot box for exhibition visitors to use to cast votes

When the “*Yet She Is Advancing*” exhibition team requested an old-school ballot box with moving parts that visitors could use to cast votes, I jumped at the chance to create it. Kinetic objects are my favorites—especially when they incorporate play.

As a museum preparator, I’m usually making housings for static objects. Every exhibition requires a number of custom-designed mounts or displays, which protect items while enabling visitors to see them close up. Interesting challenges abound—clothing, manuscripts, and paintings all have different needs—but the goal is always to highlight the artifact. The preparator’s work succeeds by being invisible. In building an interactive exhibition object, however, the preparator joins the storytelling.

Crafting an object with moving parts allowed me to tap into skills I don’t often use at work. Back when I majored in painting at the Rhode Island School of Design, I was drawn to a toymaking course. Toys offer unique access to audiences: viewers don’t always know how to engage with a painting, but they know instinctively how to engage with a toy.

The show’s curator, Libby Neidenbach, wanted attendees to feel invested in the act of voting. Enjoyment is a powerful tool for getting people invested: Libby wanted visitors to have the mental and physical satisfaction of casting a vote, and she wanted the act to take them back in time.

I brainstormed with the exhibition team, researched historical voting mechanisms, and eventually invented an apparatus that combines elements from several eras. Its dark-stained wood and ballot-box design have a 19th-century look, but the handle you pull suggests 20th-century metal gear-and-lever machines.

It was important to me that my interactive offer a payoff. The box I designed has slots into which the visitor places a token, and when the voter pulls the lever, doors on the box swing open to show the token dropping down into one of two piles.

I built a small-scale prototype to work out the mechanics before constructing the final model out of plywood. Painting the finished piece would have been easiest, but Libby wanted the old-fashioned look of stained wood, which required careful craftsmanship.

One of the hardest parts was building an inviting-looking box that would stand up to repeated wear. Kinetic objects mature over time, and I always build them to be adjustable, since the moving parts have to be constantly fine-tuned. I visit my creations regularly, and eventually each develops its own personality. I get to know its weak points and what disturbs it—vibrations, temperature, or an uneven floor. Usually, I like to build exposed mechanisms to allow people to witness the workings that bring a toy to life. Designing the ballot box presented a different challenge—to hide the mechanics, so they don’t distract from the dropping token. But I know that hidden inside, there exists a small world of interrelated parts creating the magical movement. Things

A. Deris makes some final adjustments to the ballot box prior to the opening of “*Yet She Is Advancing*.”

B. Visitors to “*Yet She Is Advancing*” can experience historical vote casting with Deris’s purpose-built ballot box.

C. Deris made this interactive piece, *Penny Arcade No. 2*, in 2014. He fabricated the mechanics, and Karoline Schleh did the painting.



A



B

that move wear in interesting ways, and the connected parts become a metaphor for personal relationships—what fits together comfortably, where the tension points are. Small changes make big differences.

Kinetics are bound by laws of nature: they have limits that paintings don't. The restrictions, however, become a source of inspiration, and in the act of problem solving I'm also engaging in play. And, unlike oil paintings or other kinds of artwork that don't have obvious points of completion, a kinetic object has an achievable goal: it needs to work. When it does, you enjoy both the satisfaction of having built something that functions and of knowing you are done. We hope the box's visitors will feel similar satisfaction, that they will associate it with voting and be encouraged to exercise that important right. —CHRIS DERIS



C

STAFF NEWS

New Staff

Dana Logsdon, Visitor Services assistant. **Allyce Sears**, cataloger. **Ryan Shekart**, sales associate.

Changes

Several staff members received promotions in the spring. Congratulations to **Heather Green**, head of reader services; **Kelley Hines**, associate curator; **Vasser Howorth**, head of technical services; **Lily Stanford**, institutional giving officer; and **Dave Walker**, director of communications and marketing.

Awards

Media Producer **Xiomara Blanco** received the Nancy Hanks Memorial Award for Rising Stars from the American Alliance of Museums. She accepted the award at the AAM's annual conference in May.

Publications

Collections Cataloger **Kevin T. Harrell** published an article on early 18th-century Creek Indian networks in the peer-reviewed journal *Native South*, published by the University of Nebraska.

Speaking Engagements

Heather L. Hodges, director of external and internal relations, participated in a panel on generative AI and racial justice at the 67th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, hosted in New York by United Nations Women.

Reference Associate **Robert Ticknor** chaired a panel on the juke joints of Natchitoches Parish at the Louisiana Historical Association's annual meeting.

Chief Curator **Jason Wiese** gave a presentation titled "Redcoats on the Mississippi" to the Friends of the Cabildo Walking Tour Guide class.

In the Community

Visitor Services Assistant **Winston Ho** gave a presentation on Orientalism and cultural appropriation to the New Orleans Opera Association in March. In addition, his research on yakamein was

featured in two newspaper articles, one for the *Houston Chronicle* and another for the *Lafayette Daily Advertiser*.

Heather L. Hodges was elected vice chair of the board of trustees of the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress. She was also invited to join the board of the NOUS Foundation, a nonprofit dedicated to promoting French and Creole culture.

Education Specialist **Collin Makamson** was appointed the Louisiana state coordinator for the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History's National History Teacher of the Year award program.

Interpretive Training Coordinator **Libby Neidenbach** has been named program committee chair for the Louisiana Historical Association's 2024 annual meeting, which will be held in New Orleans next March.

CRM Specialist **Anne M. Robichaux** is now co-chair of the Tessitura Women in Tech affinity group. She is also on the session-selection committee for the Tessitura Learning and Community Conference in August.

Cataloger **Catie Sampson** was made a board member for the New Orleans Photo Alliance. She also participated in her first juried show as a ceramicist, with the Clay Center of New Orleans's *Clay: A Southern Census*, which opened in May and will be on view through June 25. Her piece, below, is titled *Fragile*.



Robert Ticknor and Manager of Programs **Amy Dailey Williams** both joined the steering committee for the Up Stairs Lounge 50th Anniversary Commemoration.



FOCUS ON PHILANTHROPY

Katie and Caleb Izdepski

New Orleans is known as a coastal city, but for many residents living inside the protective levee system, coastal ecology is not part of their everyday life. This isn't the case for Katie and Caleb Izdepski, the newest chairs of the Caillot Circle, THNOC's member group for young professionals. Both Katie and Caleb work in and around coastal issues, Caleb as a lead coastal scientist for a wetlands-restoration company and Katie as a legal researcher for Liskow, a law firm specializing in Louisiana's energy sector and maritime trade. This knowledge base gives them a unique perspective on local history, one that they enjoy expanding through their relationship with The Collection.

"Broadly speaking, people come to live and grow in New Orleans with their own understanding of the city," Caleb says. "So for me, it's coastal issues—the geography of the city and the influence of the river and how that has affected the architecture and trade. But there's so

many other angles to the history of New Orleans, and I want to keep learning as much as I can about it."

The Izdepskis met through a local kickball league 12 years ago. Katie had grown up in New Orleans, attending Dominican High School, Loyola University for undergrad, and then Louisiana State University, where she earned a master's degree in library and information science. Caleb, a California native, had recently moved to New Orleans after studying coastal science at LSU. Kickball introduced them to "a very New Orleans" group of people, and the pair soon found they shared a love of sports and the outdoors. They married in 2015 and have two daughters, three-year-old Hattie and baby Cecile.

Caleb, one of eight children, had spent much of his childhood out of doors. "We lived among the back marshes of the San Francisco Bay, and our house opened up to the wild areas there," he says. "It's where I

felt most comfortable, with the curiosity of a child, looking at plants, looking at fish, looking at butterflies."

Once Caleb began his career, he spent much of his time outside on the water. "I was working one day out of three in a boat, studying the wetlands and the coastline," he says. Louisiana's ecology, he observes, is "not just different from the West Coast, it's different from anywhere in the country. It's a very new ecology. You can count it in generations. This didn't used to exist here; it was quickly built by the Mississippi River."

In her professional life, Katie manages the library of her law firm, helping staff find historical documents related to land use and oil and gas leases. A dedicated runner, she continued lacing up her sneakers into her 35th week of pregnancy. In April she ran the Crescent City Classic, two weeks shy of Cecile's first birthday.

The Izdepskis became members of The Collection in 2020. Though the pandemic soon put a stop to in-person gatherings, Caleb and Katie enjoyed the Caillot Circle's remote offerings, including lectures and virtual happy hours, such as a virtual *Cajun Document* book launch event that came with a home-delivered meal by Mosquito Supper Club. Now that those days have passed, they've enjoyed the annual Krewe de Jeanne d'Arc Caillot Circle party to kick off Carnival season, as well as a rooftop tour of the New Orleans skyline at the Hotel Monteleone. As chairs of the Caillot Circle, they look forward to leading events as fun as the fall Caillot wine tasting or the April rum tasting at Happy Raptor Distilling. Most of all, they say, they're excited to be a part of the many ways The Collection connects audiences with local history.

"Through the lens of The Collection, people can deeply explore different topics, through the perspective of the author or curator," Caleb says. "Nobody knows everything, from a historical perspective, so you jump into it with an open mind.

"The old parts of New Orleans, it's people's homes, but it's National Park quality. We don't have mountains, we don't have crystal clear ocean water, but we do have the city and the people of the city." —MOLLY REID CLEAVER

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ON THE SCENE

Talking Tennessee and Celebrating 533 Royal Street



A



B



C



D

The annual **Tennessee Williams Scholars Conference**, presented by THNOC, is the academic anchor of the Tennessee Williams and New Orleans Literary Festival. This year's conference, held March 24, brought together Williams scholars and enthusiasts from around the world.

- A. John "Ray" Proctor
- B. Henry Schvey, Jaclyn Bethany, Thierry Dubost, John S. Bak, and Debra Caplan
- C. Robert Bray, founder of the scholars conference, flanked by THNOC Director of Publications Jessica Dorman and John S. Bak. Bray, who recently retired, was honored at this year's conference.
- D. Annette Saddik and Dirk Gindt

As part of the exhibition *Spanish New Orleans and the Caribbean*, THNOC presented a January 19 lecture on Spanish colonial governor Bernardo de Gálvez and his wife, Felicita, by scholar Gonzalo M. Quintero Saravia, PhD. Saravia is the author of a 2018 book on Gálvez, and the lecture, "**Felicita and Bernardo: The Power Couple of Spanish Louisiana,**" explored the rich partnership and genuine affection between the two of them.



E



F

- E. Gonzalo M. Quintero Saravia
- F. Maria Isabel Page, honorary consul of the Kingdom of Spain in Louisiana, and President/CEO Daniel Hammer

In April the team behind "*Yet She Is Advancing*" met with the **League of Women Voters** to enlist their support as community partners for the show.

- G. Rosalind Cook, Linda Walker, Libby Neidenbach, and Margaret Walker



G



H



I

To raise money for the maintenance of the historic Aeolian organ in the Seignouret-Brulatour Building, members were invited to a special concert by celebrated organist **Jens Korndörfer**. The organ, located in the Barbara S. Beckman Music Room, was originally installed as a home entertainment feature for then-occupant William Ratcliffe Irby. THNOC fully restored the organ in 2018 as part of the opening of 520 Royal Street.

- H. Hilton S. Bell and Madeleine Crawford
- I. Darryl Sabbath, Celeste Metoyer, Jens Korndörfer, and Caris Green
- J. Julian Mutter, Daniel Hammer, and Robert "Bobby" Skinner
- K. Korndörfer takes a bow.



J



K



L. Lenora Gobert and Keith Midkiff

M. Dr. Robert Fortier-Benson and Sylvia Benson

N. Marissa Canterbury and Ashley Tarleton

O. Gail Burke, Dr. Albert L. Samuels, and Dr. Andy Horowitz

P. Lamar Gardere, Rebecca Mowbray, and Dr. Pearson Cross

On April 1 THNOC's 2023 **History Symposium** focused on "Democracy in Louisiana." Speakers and panelists addressed topics ranging from the drafting of the first state constitution and the politics of enslavement to the women's suffrage movement in New Orleans and how Louisiana's environment impacts public policy.

The Collection closed its **533 Royal Street** complex to the public at the end of 2022, and in early March staff gathered to toast the flagship campus and meet the team of architects and preservation experts who will carry it into a new chapter.

Q. Emily Perkins, curatorial cataloger; Ishmael Ross, collections cataloger; Roxanne Guidry, library cataloger; Albert Dumas Jr., Visitor Services assistant/receptionist; and Heather Green, head of reader services

R. Libby Neidenbach, interpretive training coordinator, with Katy Blander and Aaron Goldblatt of Metcalfe Architecture and Design

S. Cecilia Moscardó, exhibitions designer; Joe Shores, head preparator; and Susan Eberle, registrar

T. Curator/Historian Eric Seiferth and Jason Manning of Metcalfe Architecture and Design

U. Decorative Arts Curator Lydia Blackmore, CFO/COO Michael Cohn, and board member G. Charles Lapeyre



The 24th annual **Bill Russell Lecture** paid homage to the banjo, featuring musician and educator Don Vappie in conversation with historian Laurent Dubois, author of *The Banjo: America's African Instrument*.

V. Before the lecture, guests enjoyed a show-and-tell of THNOC holdings related to the banjo.

W. Don Vappie and Laurent Dubois



ACQUISITION SPOTLIGHT

Vic and Nat'ly Move to the French Quarter

The Bunny Matthews Archive

acquisition made possible by the generosity of the 2023 Laussat Society, 2022.0218; gift of Jude Matthews, 2022.0224

In March The Historic New Orleans Collection acquired the archive of Bunny Matthews, the cartoonist and writer best known for his iconic characters Vic and Nat'ly. The 800-plus items in the collection provide a thorough look at the artist's work from different stages of his professional career. Matthews's drawings, both in color and black and white, cover a wide range of topics of local interest, including politics, language, and the New Orleans Saints, as well as local traditions associated with holidays, festivals, and the recovery from Hurricane Katrina. In addition to around 600 pieces of finished artwork, the collection includes over 200 unfinished drawings, some of them related to Matthews's family and advertising work, as well as ephemera, notebooks, correspondence, and a scrapbook.

Not only is this archive a significant addition to our collection of 20th-century art; it will also anchor a forthcoming THNOC publication—a Bunny Matthews monograph, coauthored by Alison Fensterstock and Michael Tisserand. In addition to discussing Matthews's work as a cartoonist, the book, provisionally titled *Over the Line: The Life and Art of Bunny Matthews*, will also cover his years as a music journalist and promoter, as well as his capacity for courting controversy.

Will Bunn "Bunny" Matthews III (1951–2021) grew up in Metairie, went to the University of New Orleans, and worked at Jim Russell Records in the Lower Garden

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.

District and the Mushroom record shop near Tulane University before devoting himself to work as a freelance writer and cartoonist. Matthews's first cartoons appeared in an alternative newspaper called *The Word* in the late 1960s. He eventually achieved local and national renown with his characters Vic and Nat'ly Broussard, outspoken residents of New Orleans's Ninth Ward. The first published appearance of Vic and Nat'ly was in *Dixie*, a weekly supplement to the *Times-Picayune*. An earlier comic strip called *F'Sure* appeared in the 1970s and early '80s and featured what would become Matthews's characteristic unsanitized views of life in New Orleans. *F'Sure* ran in the weekly *Figaro* newspaper. Matthews also had regular comic strips in *Gambit*, *OffBeat*, and *Wavelength*, and he was a fixture on the local public television show *Steppin' Out*.

His artwork spiced up local advertising, most notably in print and on bread trucks for the Leidenheimer Baking Company. Matthews also contributed to public art, such as a prominent mural in the New Orleans Pavilion at the 1984 World's Fair. According to *Times-Picayune* art critic Doug MacCash, "He was part of the circle of 1980s New Orleans artists, including George Febres, Douglas Bourgeois, and Jacqueline Bishop, who favored highly detailed, recognizable renderings." These artists, along with Ann Hornback, Andrew Bascle, Charles Blank, and Dona Lief, are members of a group known as the Visionary Imagists; all are represented in THNOC's holdings. Their artworks address cultural and social issues and environmental concerns. Matthews's work differs in its deliberate focus on working-class locals. Although the Visionary Imagists achieved renown in the local art world, Matthews's work found broader popular appeal—Vic and Nat'ly are immediately identifiable and well known in New Orleans and the surrounding region.

As beloved as Vic and Nat'ly became, Matthews worked in caricature that bordered on the grotesque. Like the 1960s and '70s underground comics artists who influenced him—especially R. Crumb—his caricature work in matters of race, gender, class, and sexual orientation was complex and often controversial. "Matthews's polarizing representation stems from his deep ideological need to combat political correctness," writes Nicholls State University cultural studies professor Aaron Duplantier in his article "Bunny Matthews's Worldview: Race, Art, and Love for New Orleans." Fensterstock and Tisserand will delve deeply into this aspect of Matthews's life and work in *Over the Line*.

Since his days working at Jim Russell Records, Matthews was involved in the local music scene. He served as confidante to pianist James Booker and was the editor of *OffBeat* magazine for a number of years, interviewing musicians such as James Brown, Bob Marley, Elvis Costello, Cab Calloway, Al Green, and many more. He was one of the "Fabulous Fo'Teen" who helped put Tipitina's on the map in the late 1970s and early '80s, drawing designs for dozens of posters for the venue. Matthews also had his own rock band called Bunny and the Playboys, and he played drums in a New Wave band called the Ballistics with members of the Rhapsodizers. He moved to Abita Springs in the 1980s and died after a long struggle with brain cancer in 2021.

Matthews's wife, Debbie, passed away in 2018. He is survived by two sons, Noah and Jude. It was Jude, as manager of Matthews's estate, who brought the archive to The Collection. THNOC is thrilled to be the new stewards of the work of this singular artist, a man who, as Tisserand stated in Matthews's obituary, "helped define for New Orleans an appreciation of our own authenticity." —MARK CAVE

Related Holdings



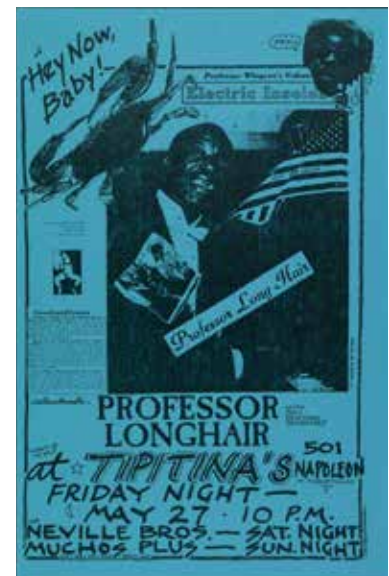
First annual New Orleans Po-Boy Festival poster

1979; silkscreen print
by Bunny Matthews
1979.360



Visionary Imagists (Bunny Matthews at left, back row)

1984; photograph
by Sandra Russell Clark
gift of Dr. Jerah Johnson, 2015.0390.89



Poster for Professor Longhair show at Tipitina's

1977
by Bunny Matthews, designer
from the Michael P. Smith Collection at THNOC,
2007.0103.7.7

RECENT ADDITIONS

Century-Old Dresses, Love Poems, and Unsung Louisiana Landmarks

Sicilian New Orleans dresses

gift of Cheryl O'Sullivan, 2023.0001

The Historic New Orleans Collection has acquired a group of garments worn by two women who immigrated from Sicily to New Orleans at the turn of the 20th century. An important addition to our collection of textile artifacts, the group consists of a wedding dress and a simple day dress with undergarments.

The brown day dress, petticoat, and underskirt belonged to Mary Caliva Danna, who was born in Sicily in June 1853 and married Gesuardo Danna in 1873, living in Bisacquino, a village within the city of Palermo. According to the 1900 census, Mary had had 14 children, but only seven were living at that time.

Gesuardo Danna immigrated to the US in 1880; Mary and the couple's first two



children, Joseph and Josephine, followed in 1882. They were on the early side of a massive influx: between 1884 and 1924, an estimated 290,000 Italian and Sicilian immigrants arrived in New Orleans, fleeing economic and political turmoil. Like many of these newcomers, the Danna family ran a fruit stand that evolved into a small grocery store.

Gesuardo died in 1928, and Mary went to live with her eldest son, Dr. Joseph A. Danna. Dr. Danna had graduated from Tulane medical school, was chief surgeon of Charity Hospital, and organized the New Orleans Post-Graduate School of Medicine at Loyola University. Mary Danna died in 1935 and is buried in Metairie Cemetery.

The brown dress is a good example of the simple, sturdy day clothes of a working woman circa 1900. Mary likely wore it regularly while working in the store. The dress itself is machine sewn, but the decoration of purple and green ribbon was added by hand. The bodice has a cotton lining to absorb sweat and fastens up the front with hooks and eyes so that it can be put on without help. The dress is accompanied by a silk petticoat, also with hand-sewn decorative additions. Underneath it all, there is a separate thick cotton underskirt to provide warmth. Made of cotton flour sacks, which were commonly used as a thrifty source of fabric, the underskirt still bears the faint lettering of "Duluth-Superior," likely the imprint of the Duluth Imperial Mill Co.

The white linen wedding dress with a high lace collar was worn by Rosalia Guarino Zito in 1910, just before she immigrated to the United States. Guarino was born in Bisacquino on January 23, 1893, and was 16 years old when she married



Frank Zito. Frank, the son of Sicilian merchants, was born in Louisiana in 1889 but was raised in Palermo. The young couple took advantage of his natural-born citizenship and left Sicily for New Orleans just after their wedding. They were welcomed by members of their extended families, including Rosalia's aunt Mary Caliva Danna.

Frank ran a grocery store in the Lower Garden District and then became a wholesale liquor distributor. He and Rosalia had seven children, one of whom, Philip Anthony Zito, became a bandleader who gave a young Pete Fountain his start. One of the Zitros' grandchildren, Cheryl O'Sullivan, daughter of Frank Zito Jr., brought the garments to The Collection.

—LYDIA BLACKMORE

Hamilton Basso love poems

gift of Wade Webster, 2023.0079

Born into an Italian American family in New Orleans, Hamilton Basso (1904–1964) became one of the city's most successful writers of the 20th century. Though he studied law at Tulane from 1922 to 1926, he left the program to pursue writing after his poem "Brain" was published in the April 1925 issue of the New Orleans-based literary magazine the *Double Dealer*. Encouraged to write a novel by his *Double Dealer* friends, including William Faulkner

Rising Moon

Like Callus at the feast of wine
I listen to the clash of cymbals
Watching the flowers of your dress
Swing above your dancing feet
In some strange way
I am torn with conflicting desires
And when the moon comes up
In mock derision I call it a squash
You laugh
I wonder if you understand ?

and Sherwood Anderson, Basso published *Relics and Angels* in 1929, which he later declared “very, very bad.” Known for his balanced views on southern themes, Basso went on to publish 14 more books, two of which, *The View from Pompey’s Head* (1954) and *The Light Infantry Ball* (1959), were finalists for the National Book Award. The former, a tale of a lawyer returning to his hometown in South Carolina, was on the *New York Times* best-seller list for 40 weeks and was said to have influenced Harper Lee when she wrote *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960). First editions of both books are available to view in the Williams Research Center reading room.

The Historic New Orleans Collection recently acquired three typescript poems written by Basso to his paramour at the time, Adele Cleveland, shortly after her debut in December 1926. A former basketball star at Isidore Newman School, Adele was a student at Newcomb College and was active in debutante society throughout the Gulf Coast. Though the relationship between Basso and Adele was short lived—he married Etolia Moore Simmons in 1930, the same year Adele married Claiborne Perrilliat—their courtship inspired Basso poetically. Basso’s verses are rife with imagery of “eyes like gray moths,” “unfulfilled kisses,” and the flowers on a dress swinging above “dancing feet.” This is a charming little collection of love poetry written by a successful writer at the beginning of his career. —NINA BOZAK

Jim Zietz photographs

© Jim Zietz, 2020.0202

Since the mid-1970s THNOC has sought to build a collection of Louisiana photography covering the entire history of the medium in the Gulf South. This mission is the subject of THNOC’s forthcoming book *Louisiana Lens: Photographs from The Historic New Orleans Collection*, due out November 1. It has also been the career-long goal of the book’s author, John H. Lawrence, THNOC’s longtime photographic curator and director of museum programs who retired to emeritus status in 2021.

One of Lawrence’s last photographic acquisitions as a full-time staffer was a group of 350 prints by photographer Jim Zietz (b. 1956). For 35 years Zietz worked as head photographer in the LSU University Relations department. During that time he undertook a number of independent projects, such as pictures of local musicians and a series documenting Cajun Mardi Gras.

Most of the images in the collection acquired by THNOC were originally taken for two book projects on Louisiana architecture. *Louisiana Buildings, 1720–1940* (LSU Press, 1997), coedited by Jessie Poesch and Barbara SoRelle Bacot, showcased local structures that are part of the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS). Since 1933, the Library

of Congress and the National Park Service have administered the survey, which now includes over a half million images and drawings documenting the built environment of the United States.

Other Zietz photographs accessioned by THNOC were commissioned for *Buildings of Louisiana* (Oxford University Press, 2003), part of the Society of Architectural Historians’ Buildings of the United States series. In addition, Zietz shot images for THNOC’s 2010 book *Furnishing Louisiana: Creole and Acadian Furniture, 1735–1835*.

Zietz’s architectural photographs capture both the grand houses of the state—such as the Hymel House, later known as the Waguespack House, which appears in *Louisiana Lens*—as well as theaters, restaurants, drugstores, churches, and mom-and-pop shops, as seen below in a view of St. Philip Confectionary on River Road.

“He had a long career, and a lot of his work was in Louisiana but not in New Orleans, and so it gave us an opportunity to expand the geographic reach of our photographic collections under the auspices of a photographer who was very well informed about his subjects,” Lawrence says. “In Jim’s pictures, there’s this deep understanding of subjects that gets overlaid on whatever picture he was making. I think that’s one of the defining characteristics of a career in photography.”

—MOLLY REID CLEAVER



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



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Laussat Society \$1,000

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Full Founder Family benefits plus:

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- annual recognition as sponsors of a premier exhibition



Over three nights in February and March, THNOC hosted outdoor screenings of the classic silent film *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*.

Become a Member

NEW BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

There has never been a better time to join The Historic New Orleans Collection.

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- free admission to exhibitions and select tours
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HOW TO JOIN

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

For more information about membership levels, please contact THNOC's Development Office at (504) 598-7109 or visit www.hnoc.org/support/membership.

North American Reciprocal Museum Program

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

THNOC's 2023 International Study Tour took participants to Italy, traveling to Rome, Naples, and the Amalfi Coast over the course of 10 days in April. Seen here is the group in the grand hall of the Vatican Gallery of Maps.



**Katie's School of Beauty Culture and
Barbering** (detail)
between 1965 and 1971
by Betsy Swanson, photographer
1976.31.161 ii

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.



The Historic
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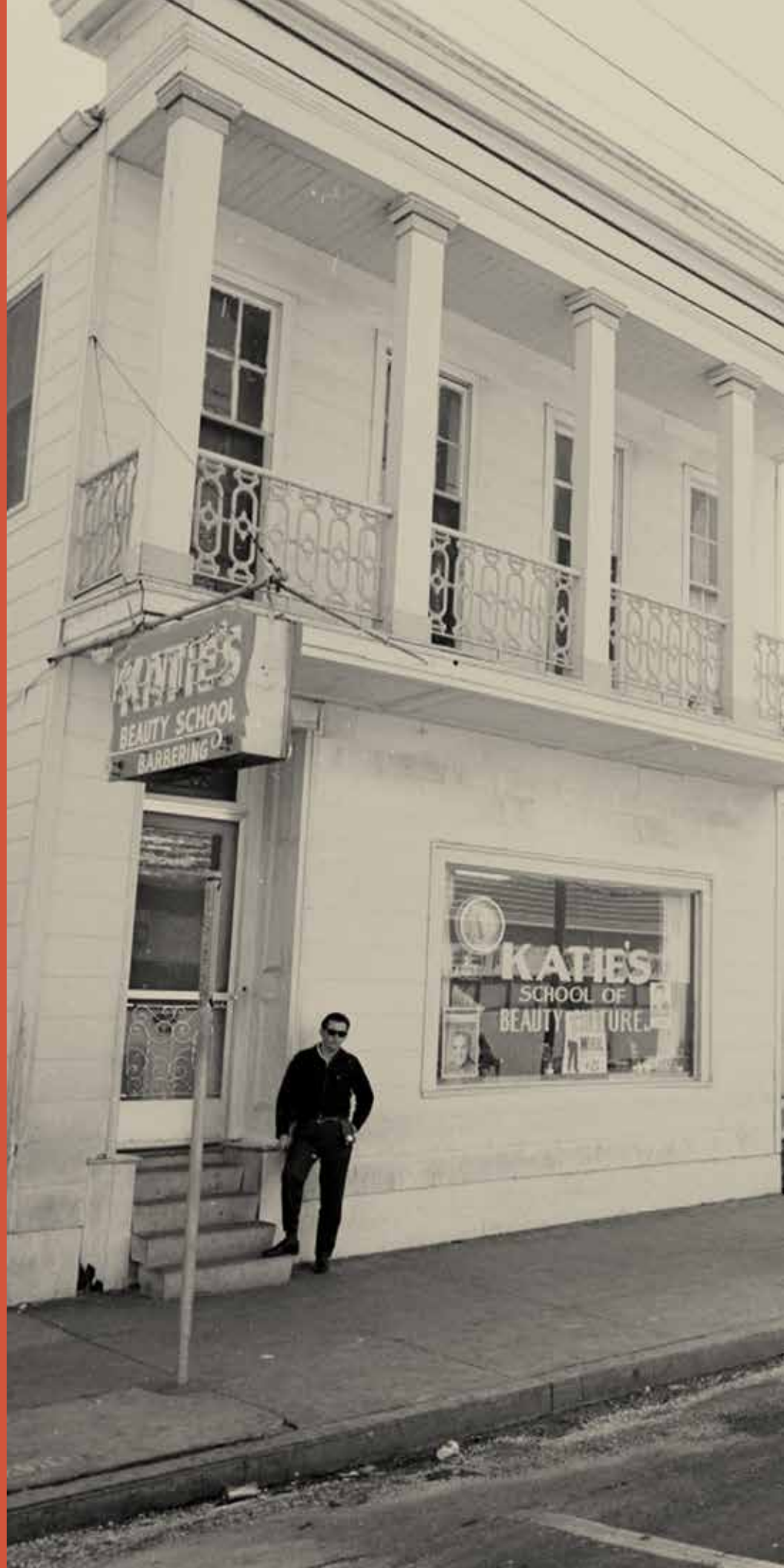
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FROM THE SHOP



Passion for fashion

The Shop has partnered with local designer Passion Lilie to create a ready-to-wear line of men's and women's clothing inspired by colors and patterns in THNOC's Seignouret-Brulatur Building and Williams Residence. These exclusive designs are fair trade—produced and come in a variety of eye-catching styles, from day dresses and shifts to Havana shirts. Shop the whole collection in person or online!

The Shop at The Collection THE HISTORIC NEW ORLEANS COLLECTION

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