



THE HISTORIC NEW ORLEANS COLLECTION QUARTERLY

Volume XIX, Number 1

Winter 2001

Exhibition Opens:

A Gathering of Works by Marie Adrien Persac



Canal Street, North Side, 900 Block, ink and wash on pasteboard, by Marie Adrien Persac, 1873 (1958.78.1.8). Depicted is the French Quarter side of Canal between Burgundy and Dauphine Streets. The three Greek Revival buildings (no longer standing) were designed by Charles and James Dakin in 1836. Christ Episcopal Church, right, designed by T. K. Wharton, was built in 1847 and demolished in the mid-1880s.

Marie Adrien Persac: Louisiana Artist presents a rare opportunity to see Persac's work in a single location. Though many of the objects in the exhibition come from public collections (the Historic New Orleans Collection,

Exhibition Opens: A Gathering of Works by Marie Adrien Persac

the Louisiana State University Museum of Art, the New Orleans Notarial Archives, and the Louisiana State Museum are all lenders to the exhibition), many of the opaque watercolors (gouaches) are privately owned. *Marie Adrien Persac: Louisiana Artist*, currently on view at the Historic New Orleans Collection, first opened in September at the Louisiana State University Museum of Art in Baton Rouge. The public's perception of Persac's works previously has derived from a few of his better known images—this exhibition offers not only a comprehensive view of his career but also a chance to place Persac into the continuum of Louisiana art.

Persac, who lived in Baton Rouge, Manchac, and New Orleans, pursued an artistic career in Louisiana from the mid-1850s until his death in 1873. He was born on December 14, 1823, in the French hamlet of Saumur, and his early training in France seems to have equipped him well for a career in the visual arts. Contemporary sources refer to him as

engineer, architect, artist, photographer, and teacher. Though all of these pursuits undoubtedly contributed to the making of the man and his work, “artist” is the term that seems to describe him best.

As a chronicler of the antebellum plantation scene and the post-Civil War commercial architecture of New Orleans, Persac has no equal. The two-dozen gouaches of plantations provide an unparalleled picture of rural life in the southern part of Louisiana along the Mississippi River and surrounding bayou country. Executed in opaque watercolor, with a photographic degree of detail, these rural mansions, along with their outbuildings, fences, and plantings are the finest visual documents of such houses known to exist. In the years since Persac painted them, many have been destroyed. For those remaining, the renderings provide valuable evidence for restoring these buildings or providing an understanding of how they functioned. Giving context to these individual buildings is *Norman's Chart of the Lower Mississippi River*, delineated by Persac, depicting plantation properties along the river from Natchez to New Orleans. Though planned as a series of three maps that would extend upriver to Memphis, Tennessee, only the lower section was completed.

Lithographed views of single commercial establishments (drawn by Persac and printed by Benedict Simon) and the 20 exquisite miniature drawings of the two sides of Canal Street in New Orleans stretching from the Mississippi River

to present-day Basin Street offer a view of post-Civil War New Orleans that showed a city undamaged by war and ready for business.

Other examples of Persac's production include the Gill map of Baton Rouge and other lithographs done for commercial purposes, such as the view of Exchange Alley, published in the *Almanach de la Louisiane* and his rendering of Camp Moore in Tangipahoa Parish, Louisiana.

A third branch of the French-born artist's career was devoted to producing transparent watercolors of properties to be sold at public auction. Over two dozen of these poster-sized watercolors, executed between 1859 and 1867 and long a part of the public records held in the New Orleans Notarial Archives, were made by Persac. He adhered to traditions of the style most often used by his predecessors and to the legal stipulations connected with the public sale of property. But within these conventions Persac produced a body of work that stands out among the thousands of other renderings housed in the Archives. The gathering of the work by a single artist represented in the Notarial Archives for a public exhibition has never been done before.

Marie Adrien Persac: Louisiana Artist is on view in the Williams Gallery from January 16 through April 14, 2001. The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated color catalogue with five essays on Persac's life and career, published by LSU Press.

—John H. Lawrence



Canal Street, South Side, 600 Block, ink and wash on pasteboard, by Marie Adrien Persac, 1873 (1958.78.2.4). This block is the uptown side of Canal Street between Camp and St. Charles Streets, with the Belknap Fountain at left on the corner of Camp and Canal. Several of the buildings are still standing. Inset, Belknap Fountain, stereograph slide by Samuel T. Blessing, 1876 (1995.68)

PERSAC'S CANAL STREET

In 1873 Louisiana artist Marie Adrien Persac created twenty ink-and-wash drawings depicting each block of the commercial sector of Canal Street from near the Mississippi River to Basin Street. An unfinished pencil sketch provides a bird's-eye view of the wharves around the foot of Canal Street, which includes outlines of buildings near the United States Custom

House. Although these are small, the details included are remarkable, as the artist brings the 19th-century street to life with its ironwork galleries and balconies, mule-drawn streetcars, stone paving blocks, gas streetlights, and tall wooden poles supporting telegraph wires.

The first few blocks of the street were lined with small warehouses and manufac-

turers, while past the Custom House—which is depicted with a cornice, actually not installed until years later—were large wholesale clothing and hardware dealers mingled with a few retailers. Between Chartres and Rampart Streets was the center of the city's retail fashion and luxury trade, and while there were a few men's outfitters, this was generally a woman's domain of dry



Canal Street, South Side, 1000 Block, ink and watercolor on pasteboard, by Marie Adrien Persac, 1873 (1958.78.2.8). The uptown side of Canal between Dryades Street (now University Place) and South Rampart Street contained several residences. The F. W. Tilton home, 1856, (no longer standing) is pictured at far left. The building became the home of the Shakespeare Club, a literary and theatrical organization about 1873.

goods, notions, fashion, and jewelry stores. Its counterparts were New York's Broadway and Chicago's State Street. Beyond Basin Street, Canal Street became mostly residential—here Persac turns and looks straight down the street and shows people viewing the annual Firemen's Parade.

Canal Street was in transition. There had been commercial structures between Royal Street and the river as early as the 1820s, but then the wide thoroughfare was predominantly residential. Until the 1840s the city's premier shopping district was Chartres Street, with small highly specialized shops. By this time retailing methods were changing across the nation, and dry

goods stores, too large to be accommodated along Chartres Street, were appearing on Canal Street. There were new amenities in these establishments, such as gas lighting, polished wooden counters, and attractive displays. The Touro Buildings, a shopping and office complex built in the 1850s between Royal and Bourbon Streets, had 300 feet of sparkling show windows to entice shoppers inside.

By 1873 Canal Street was also the center of town. Throngs of people gathered here for events ranging from carnival parades to political demonstrations. Christmas Eve had become a big event, as thousands of people poured into the street

to welcome the holidays, by shopping, viewing the first Christmas show-window decorations of the season, and creating a cacophony of noise with drums, tin horns, fireworks, and random gunfire.

Less than half a century later, the Christmas "tradition" was only a memory, and Canal Street was transformed in ways undreamed of in Persac's day. By the mid-1880s electric streetlights replaced gas, and countless telephone and electric wires tangled overhead on tall poles. Electric streetcars replaced mules, while paving stones gave way to asphalt. By the 1880s new buildings were taller and more ornate and stores were larger.



Canal Street, South Side, 700 Block, ink and wash on pasteboard, by Marie Adrien Persac, 1873 (1958.78.2.5). The Henry Clay monument, left, now moved to Lafayette Square, was a landmark at the corner of Canal and St. Charles Streets. Visible behind the Clay monument is the St. Charles Hotel, the second of three hotels by this name on the site. This block on the uptown side of Canal was bordered on the right by Carondelet Street. Inset, St. Charles Street at the corner of Canal by an unknown photographer (1965.90.261)

Although the French Quarter was declining as a business center, Chartres and Royal Streets still remained important shopping districts, but Bourbon Street, previously a fashionable residential area, was being invaded by commerce. The most important building on Bourbon Street was the French Opera House. Built in 1859, it too was depicted by Persac—this time as a splendid gouache.

There were also commercial areas away from the center of town, with businesses often clustered around public mar-

kets. One of these was the Third District, or Port Market, at the end of Elysian Fields Avenue. This was a focal point of another Persac gouache entitled *Port and City of New Orleans*. This bird's-eye view looks across the market and its surrounding businesses toward the French Quarter and business district. The tiny but highly detailed image was the prototype for an inset on *Norman's Chart of the Lower Mississippi*, a plantation ribbon map drawn by Persac.

Persac probably drew the Canal Street

elevations as a commercial project to be reproduced and sold. It was also most likely an advertising medium, since only a few stores are identified, with additional subscribers to be added. Persac died before the series could be completed, but no matter what his purpose, the legacy of these drawings is to freeze Canal Street in time. Some of the blocks and many of the buildings he drew are unrecognizable today, but others are as familiar to us as they would have been to Persac.

—John Magill

The Historic New Orleans Collection and the New Orleans Public Library have recently signed a cooperative agreement that paves the way for the institutions to provide computer access to the New Orleans Public Library's Louisiana Biography and Obituary Index, an enormous paper card catalog located in the Louisiana Division at the Main Library. This file, containing approximately 650,000 cards arranged alphabetically, indexes obituaries in New Orleans newspapers. Also included is biographical information from older reference tools. The cards usually include the date of death, age, and an exact reference by page and column to the original death notice and/or newspaper articles.

The obituary file was begun by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) staff working in the city's Archives Department in the 1930s. The department was located in City Hall (now Gallier Hall) and the adjacent annex building on St. Charles Street. The archives housed the largest collection of bound New Orleans newspapers in existence. From this newspaper archive the obituary index was created as one of several WPA indexing projects. The indexes were kept up by the staff of the Archives Department after the WPA project ceased operation.

Although the Archives Department was transferred by ordinance in 1946 to the New Orleans Public Library, it was not



Funerary icon from a death notice, 1910 (89-537-RL)

OBITUARY INDEX PROJECT UNDERWAY

until December 1947 that the newspaper files and the WPA indexes were moved to the Main Library, located at that time on Lee Circle. The library staff uncovered inadequacies in the file: references were made only to deaths of prominent citizens, and editorials or feature stories relating to deaths were usually omitted. The obituary file was also divided into three sections: 1804-1936, 1936-45, and "current," the last category covering the portion of 1946 that had been completed at the time of the transfer to the library. To remedy any deficiencies, the library staff began indexing all obituaries from 1946 forward, while simultaneously filling in the gaps in the index beginning with the Civil War.

Work on the obituary file continued, but in the early 1970s volunteers were recruited to take over the project, bringing full coverage as far back as 1858. The decision was made to stop ongoing coverage of obituaries at the end of 1972, when print-outs of indexes to statewide death certifi-

cates began (temporarily, it turned out) to be made available. Work on the project resumed in 1998, and volunteers were able to incorporate the missing obituaries into the index going back to 1837.

When this part of the project was finished, the New Orleans Public Library could finally claim that the obituary file was complete from 1837 through 1972. While only the *Daily Picayune Times-Picayune* is fully indexed, the index also includes references from the *States* and the *Item* during the post-World War II years, from all New Orleans dailies during the Civil War era, and from a number of other newspapers, such as the *Louisiana Gazette*.

Two THNOC staff members have been assigned to the public library for regular data input. The project will continue until all the information from the index cards has been entered into the database. After a substantial number of records are in the database, the information will be uploaded to the web site of the New Orleans Public Library and linked to the web site at the Historic New Orleans Collection.

—Collin B. Hamer, Jr., and
Gerald F. Patout

Collin Hamer is head of the Louisiana Division of the New Orleans Public Library. Gerald F. Patout is head librarian at the Historic New Orleans Collection.

IN MEMORIAM: DODE PLATOU

The Historic New Orleans Collection mourns the loss of director emerita Dode Platou, who died on November 9, 2000. Mrs. Platou joined the Collection staff as chief curator in 1976, served as interim director in 1986, and was appointed director in 1987. She retired in 1992. She was an active member of the city's art community as an artist, art educator, and curator.

Joanne Pierson Platou, called Dode by everyone who knew her, grew up in Minneapolis and received a B.S. in art education from the University of Minnesota. After college she was a columnist for the *Minneapolis Tribune* before her marriage to Dr. Ralph V. Platou in 1942. That same year the couple moved to New Orleans where Dr. Platou had accepted a position as chairman of the pediatrics department of Tulane University Medical School. Mrs. Platou immediately became involved in the life of the community, establishing the medical photography department at the Ochsner Clinic and teaching photography at Metairie Park Country Day School for a number of years. Encouraged by George Rickey, then head of the Newcomb Art School, Mrs. Platou decided to enroll at Newcomb College where she earned an MFA in painting in 1959. She continued to paint, participating in solo exhibitions and group shows.

In 1969 she was named curator of the new Wisner Wing at the Delgado Museum (now the New Orleans Museum of Art). She also served as curator of education during her seven-year tenure at the museum. In 1976, Mrs. Platou joined the Collection staff as chief curator, with duties that ranged from planning exhibitions and catalogues to caring for the collections and establishing an acquisitions committee. She produced a book about artist and former director Boyd Cruise that



appeared in conjunction with an exhibition of his paintings.

She was particularly pleased to oversee the acquisition of an important collection of the works of Alfred R. Waud, a 19th-century illustrator whose drawings depicted the American scene from the 1850s through the 1870s. She helped acquire materials relating to the Arts and Crafts Club, a collection reflecting artistic life in New Orleans during the first half of the 20th century. She also was instrumental in acquiring the photographs and related photographic materials of Clarence John Laughlin, which

resulted in the Collection becoming the definitive repository for Laughlin's work. She maintained a special interest in the paintings of Boyd Cruise and, after her retirement, continued to work on an inventory of Cruise paintings.

Mrs. Platou's commitment to art led to her participation in many art-related activities, including the Council of the Arts for Children where she served as president in 1978-79 and the Arts Council of Greater New Orleans. She completed a course in arts administration at the Harvard Business School.

In her last director's column for the *Historic New Orleans Collection Quarterly*, she wrote about arriving as chief curator in 1976 when there were fewer than 20 employees: "We were constantly putting up and taking down exhibitions. It was hectic, intense, and fun." She went on to say that "we have seen the original nucleus of prints and maps acquired by the Williamses broaden and deepen to become an outstanding collection for the study of Louisiana history and culture." Mrs. Platou's contribution to this growth has been integral to the success of the Collection.

— Louise C. Hoffman

FROM THE DIRECTOR

We are saddened by the loss of Dode Platou. To us, the staff, she was mentor and friend, role model, and our director. She was always



positive and always supportive. We treasure the memories of her funny stories, her boundless energy, and the creative and diverse experience she brought to every challenge. Many important collections came to us because of her hard work. Under her leadership our operations grew and our commitment to the standards of collections care and preservation was strengthened. The Historic New Orleans Collection will always reflect Dode's accomplishments and contributions.

Dode was an avid supporter of our desire for professional development. Many organizations provide training for archival, museum, and library standards—from cataloging methodology to ethics. One such organization, the American Association of Museums, has offered an accreditation program for 30 years. Museum accreditation is achieved through a rigorous program of self-study culminating in a site visit by peers selected from similar institutions. Over the years the criteria have become more and more developed. I am happy to announce that the Historic New Orleans Collection, first accredited in 1978, has just been awarded renewed accredited status.

Another important announcement is the appointment of Dr. John R. Hébert as Advisory Scholar. Dr. Hébert is Chief of the Geography and Map Division at the Library of Congress. He is a former Williams Research Center symposium participant and an informal consultant on other projects. More recently, he has been editing for THNOC a historical atlas of Louisiana to be published in conjunction with the 2003 Louisiana Purchase bicentennial celebration. We are proud to have John on board in an official adjunct capacity!

— Priscilla Lawrence

PAUL MORPHY: NEW ORLEANS'S KING OF CHESS



Today the pink building at 417 Royal Street is famous as Brennan's Restaurant, but in the mid-19th century it was known as the family home of chess master Paul Morphy, whose celebrity extended far beyond Louisiana. In New York and Paris, the young Morphy was besieged by female admirers and sought out by artists and aristocrats.

An unpublished manuscript in the Collection's holdings, "First and Last Days of Paul Morphy," by Constant Beauvais, examines the life of the celebrated man. Beauvais was the *nom de plume* of Léona Queyrouze Barel, a family friend of the Morphys. A contemporary reader of her manuscript might be struck by Queyrouze's lavish praise of her subject, but other biographers and chess scholars have confirmed Morphy's genius.

In 1850, when Morphy was just 13, he played Hungarian chess master Janos Lowenthal and defeated him in three out of three games. In October 1857 Morphy commenced his reign as chess's acknowledged champion: he easily swept away the best players in the United States before challenging England's Howard Staunton, who was thought by many to be the best player in the world. Staunton refused the

contest however, and Morphy traveled to Paris, where he met and defeated Europe's most formidable players. In one particularly



Top, chess piece from a set owned by Paul Morphy (1983.51.1.7); *above*, daguerreotype of Paul Morphy, between 1857 and 1859 (1996.75)

stunning display, Morphy played the eight best players in Paris simultaneously. Furthermore, he did so blindfolded, calling out his moves in fluent French and tracking the positions of each game solely by memory. After ten hours, during which he remained seated and blindfolded, Morphy won six games and drew two. It is hard for us to imagine the excitement generated by these matches, and the clamor of huge crowds straining to catch a glimpse of this quiet young American.

In 1859, Morphy returned home in triumph, but his reign as the "King of Chess" was not to last. In her biography,

Queyrouze notes that Morphy's "most salient characteristic always was an invincible aversion to popularity, which gradually developed into an unusual disdain of celebrity." In 1860, Morphy made his last challenge, open to any player in the world, adding that he would grant his opponent a pawn and the first move. His challenge was not accepted, and Morphy stunned the chess world by permanently retiring from professional play after a career of only two years, a move that would earn him the sobriquet "the Pride and Sorrow of Chess."

Queyrouze's manuscript stands apart from other biographies of Morphy in that it describes intimate episodes from his obscure later years, told from the perspective of a family friend and confidante. She describes Morphy's deliberate disavowal of his fame as a chess player and his long decline into mental illness. Morphy's mother foresaw his early death in July 1884, telling Queyrouze that Morphy would "die of apoplexy like his father." Apart from the advantage of her access to the reclusive Morphy, Léona

Queyrouze seemed to understand and identify with Morphy's solitary genius. In many ways, she was as remarkable a person for her time as Paul Morphy.

Among other things, she was a musician and composer, a linguist, an essayist, and a poet who published her work in *L'Abeille*. She fenced and was the only female member of *L'Athénée Louisianais*. In the 1880s Queyrouze was the first woman in New Orleans to give a public speech. She was a proponent and teacher of French language and culture and corresponded with Emile Zola and French President Paul Deschanel. She was also a close friend of

writer Lafcadio Hearn, who once observed that Queyrouze was “all fire and nerves and scintillation; a tropical being in mind and physique, and I could never be to her what I should like to be.” Hearn visited Queyrouze at her family’s home at 17 Rue St. Louis (now 523-5 St. Louis), where she helped him translate the French Creole idioms that would appear in his novel *Chita*. It was Hearn who encouraged her to finish “that Morphy Sketch” which he understood as a “psychological work” reflecting not only Morphy, but Queyrouze as well.

Queyrouze wrote and published her reminiscences of Hearn in the early 1930s, and the Morphy manuscript was composed under similar circumstances. Late in life, Queyrouze had become nearly blind and wrote her initial drafts on large sheets of paper in huge script. These were transcribed by her brother, J. Maxime Queyrouze, who then read it back to her, noted her oral corrections, and neatly copied out the final versions. The Morphy manuscript is written on lined paper, the leaves of which have been encapsulated and bound. Pencil corrections are scattered throughout its 76 pages. Queyrouze’s obituary, which appeared in the *Times-Picayune* on January 9, 1938, states that her brother had intended to publish her manuscript posthumously, but no publisher was ever found.

Now part of the manuscripts collection at the Williams Research Center, “First and Last Days of Paul Morphy,” written by an extraordinary woman, sheds light on a legendary figure in New Orleans history.

—Jason Wiese

Sources: Constant Beauvais [Léona Queyrouze Barel], “First and Last Days of Paul Morphy,” THNOC; Jonathan Cott, *Wandering Ghost: the Odyssey of Lafcadio Hearn* (New York, 1991); Hill Memorial Library, “Louisiana Authors: B,” web page, accessed Jul. 26, 2000; Hill Memorial Library, “Manuscript Resources on Women’s History in the Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, Hill Memorial Library, LSU,” web page accessed Jul. 26, 2000; Michael L. Kurtz, “Paul Morphy: Louisiana’s Chess Champion,” *Louisiana History* 34, no. 2 (1993); David Lawson, *Paul Morphy: The Pride and Sorrow of Chess* (New York, 1976); Léona Queyrouze Barel, *The Idyl: My Personal Reminiscences of Lafcadio Hearn* (Toyko, 1933); *Times-Picayune New Orleans States*, Jan. 9, 1938.

THE SHADOW OF DOUBT

Shortly after daybreak, on the morning of October 20, 1991, Thomas E. Weiss witnessed the cypress coffin containing the remains of his brother Dr. Carl Austin Weiss carefully lifted from a vault at Roselawn Cemetery in Baton Rouge. Also in attendance were Carl’s son, grandson, and a team of forensic scientists led by James E. Starrs of George Washington University. A mobile X-ray unit was on site as well to document precisely the condition of the remains and the location of metallic objects in the coffin before it was transported to a pathology laboratory. The reason for the exhumation and subsequent forensic investigation was to put to rest nagging doubts about Carl’s violent and mysterious death at the hands of Huey P. Long’s bodyguards in 1935.

A recent donation to the Williams Research Center documents Thomas Weiss’s quest to find out what had happened to his brother. When it was reported that Long had been shot and that Dr. Carl Weiss was the alleged assassin, Weiss’s family, and those who knew him well, found the news both baffling and unbelievable. Nothing in Carl’s demeanor suggested that he might be capable of such a thing. He was, by all reports, content with life—happily married and recently a father. His medical practice was doing well and a promising future lay ahead. On the evening of September 8, 1935, Carl Weiss made a house call to a patient before stopping by the hospital to do a pre-operative procedure on two children who were having their tonsils removed the following day. It seemed unthinkable that on the way back from his medical duties—and without giving any sign of distress—he would walk into the Louisiana State Capitol building to assassinate Huey Long.

Many of the general public, however,



Carl Austin Weiss (89-37-L)

assumed that Carl had assassinated Long, and some who opposed Long’s political views went so far as to praise Weiss as a self-sacrificing martyr for the cause of democracy. A second collection, the Weiss Family Papers, also the donation of Thomas Weiss, contains hundreds of letters of condolence to the Weiss family following Carl’s death. A nun from Ireland wrote, “Our hearts ache for you in the awful death of your gentle, intellectual, wonderful son. If only it had been somebody else who had delivered the state of this man. You may be sure that God had regard for the motives and intentions more than for the acts, and your boy’s intentions were noble and patriotic. May he rest in peace.” An anonymous man from Brooklyn, New York, wrote: “Your family can feel proud to have produced so fine a man. Such courage, such unselfishness, such greatness of heart to be willing to sacrifice his life for humanity.” The Weisses responded to all these letters with a reply

that their son was not the assassin. Some correspondents even went so far as to send financial gifts to the family, which were returned.

The Weiss family never accepted the scenario that was reported by the media. Carl's father repeatedly defended his son's memory against claims that he was the assassin. After the *Journal of the American Medical Association* wrote an obituary using the word assassin, Carl's father wrote to the editor: "You know but one side of this gruesome affair, and knowing only the garbled lie...you uncharitably credit my son with the assassination."

Long died of his wounds about a day and a half after the shooting—and, as zealous as his opponents were, his followers were equally devoted. Although convinced of Carl's innocence, his father feared that some sort of mob violence might threaten the family. After Carl's funeral service, the Weisses took refuge in New Orleans at a hotel on St. Charles Avenue. They remained there about four days until friends in Baton Rouge said that it was safe to return. Even then, Thomas Weiss remembers that he and his father would keep rifles at the front and back windows of the house and would watch for any unusual activity.

At the time of the event only a minimal investigation was done. The examination of Carl's remains indicate that at least 23 bullets struck his bones—it has been estimated that Weiss was shot as many as 60 times. The specialists who studied the bullet impact points concluded that Weiss was in a defensive posture, which is contrary to the accounts given by the bodyguards. In addition to the forensic reports, Weiss's gun and some lost police reports resurfaced as a result of the renewed investigation. Unfortunately, none of this new information clarified the events of 1935 but, in the words of forensic scientist James E. Starrs, merely "lengthened the shadow of doubt."

—Mark Cave

Sources: Weiss Family Papers, THNOC; Dr. Thomas Weiss Papers Relating to Dr. Carl Austin Weiss, 1935-1995, THNOC; Interview with Dr. Thomas E. Weiss, July 28, 2000.



THE HISTORIC NEW ORLEANS COLLECTION encourages research in the Williams Research Center at 410 Chartres Street from 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday (except holidays).

Cataloged materials available to researchers include books, manuscripts, paintings, prints, drawings, maps, photographs, and artifacts about the history and culture of New Orleans, Louisiana, and the Gulf South. Each year the Collection adds thousands of items to its holdings by donation or purchase. Only a few recent acquisitions can be noted here.

MANUSCRIPTS

The Progressive Party was organized as an alternative to the Democratic and Republican parties at the beginning of the 20th century because its supporters feared that the traditional parties were dominated by unhealthy business and political alliances. When Theodore Roosevelt (1858-1918), a Republican who had served two terms as president (1901-1909), failed to regain the Republican nomination in 1912, he ran unsuccessfully as the Progressive presidential candidate. Among the party's issues were revision of political nominating mechanisms, woman's suffrage, abolition of child labor, and conservation.

Although individuals continued to fight for these ideas, the Progressive Party disintegrated as a national political force, not fielding another presidential candidate until 1924. John Milliken Parker (1863-1939), one of the wealthiest businessmen and planters in the South, was an acquaintance of Roosevelt and a supporter of progressive causes. The youngest president of the New Orleans Cotton Exchange and a member of the New Orleans Board of Trade, Parker ran unsuccessfully for governor of Louisiana as a Democrat in 1912. As a Progressive candidate in 1920, he

gained the governorship, advocating public education and increased state regulation of utilities; he carried through a number of changes, including a new state constitution. A collection of letters (1903-1916) from Roosevelt to Parker donated by his grandson, Blanc A. Parker, reveals a lasting friendship. Salutations of "My dear Mr. Parker" evolved into "Dear John," and letters frequently involved arrangements to meet for hunting or socializing. Roosevelt's enthusiasm for military action is documented in a 1915 letter outlining a plan to raise troops if needed to go to Mexico and a 1917 letter speculating on his service in a war with Germany. Also included are a copy of a 1917 letter from Parker to President Woodrow Wilson supporting Roosevelt's offer to raise a division for World War I service, news clippings, programs, copies of speeches, and other letters.

■ The role James Wilkinson (1757-1825) played in the settlement of the West has been the subject of scholarly speculation. After serving as an adjutant general in the Revolutionary War (1775-1783), James Wilkinson settled in Kentucky and became involved in its quest for independence from Virginia and statehood. The critical need for trade rights on the Mississippi River prompted exchanges with Spanish Governor Esteban Miro (ca. 1744-1795) that included support of Spanish interests and advocacy of Kentucky's independence from the United States. Wilkinson was appointed, along with W. C. C. Claiborne, to receive Louisiana from France in 1803. Hugh Wilkinson III has donated two letters that James Wilkinson wrote in 1825 to his son, Joseph B. Wilkinson, expressing his concerns about land interests in Texas. James Wilkinson died shortly afterward in Mexico City.

■ The Harvey Canal Limited Partnership has added several plans of the Harvey Canal Locks that enhance its previous donation of records (*Quarterly*, Vol. XVIII, Number 2, Spring 2000). The seven plans include those for the gate cast housing, lock chambers, anchor plate, sill

OYSTER BAY,
LONG ISLAND, N.Y. June 29th, 1915.

Dear John:

The Big Stick came. I have written to Cuyut.
He must be a fine fellow. If we go to war in Mexico, I should
think he would be one of the very men we could use.

mere police work ought to be performed by regulars; and I would move
heaven and earth to get to the front myself. ^{in my own way} While I should be broken-
hearted if I could not get to the front, yet I should move heaven and
earth to get the Division to the front under Allen if they did not let
me go.

Faithfully yours,
Theodore Roosevelt

John M. Parker, Esq.

* If this is war with Mexico, all the work ought
to be done by regulars; no volunteers should be called for.

Selections from a letter from Theodore Roosevelt to John Milliken Parker (2000-62-L)

plate, and whole locks (with watercolor). Henry A. Peeler's name appears on one of the plans.

—M. Theresa LeFevre

LIBRARY

In a presidential election season, it is interesting to note that Zachary Taylor, the twelfth president of the United States, was administered the oath of office on Monday, March 5, 1849. The designated date, March 4, fell on a Sunday, raising the question as to whether the nation was without a president for a day. Adding to the Collection's materials related to Zachary Taylor, THNOC has recently acquired a rare 1847 campaign pamphlet entitled "*The Life of General Zachary Taylor...*" This item provides an account of how "Old Rough and Ready" spent nearly a quarter of a century policing the western frontier and reviews his successes at Monterrey and Buena Vista during the Mexican War. The pamphlet also includes



Taylor and His Generals, illustration from *The Life of General Zachary Taylor and a History of the War in Mexico, Giving an Account of the Battles* (2000-168-RL)

an illustrated portrait of General Taylor as well as five illustrated plates of Taylor's various battles. Taylor's presidency was short-lived. On July 4, 1850, after participating in a ceremony laying the cornerstone of the Washington Monument, Taylor fell ill and was dead within five days.

■ A very rare and fine 1819 edition of *The Columbian Navigator* by John Purdy has recently been acquired. The only other known North American copy of this important work is found in the library holdings of the Mariners' Museum in Newport News, Virginia.

As the extensive subtitles explain, *The Navigator* provided early sailing directions for the coasts and harbors of North America. Beginning with Halifax, Nova Scotia, the navigational instructions conclude with directions to the Mississippi River. This second-edition publication, printed for noted British chart sellers James Whittle and Richard Holmes Laurie, brings together information from a variety of original documents and surveys.

Purdy declares that "it appears the mouth or principal entrance to the Missisipi [sic] is in latitude 29° 5' or 29° 6' and longitude 89° 8' from Greenwich, or nearly so." He goes on to say, "New

Orleans is composed of neat brick houses, with a greater proportion of miserable wooden ones. The town consists of three streets, parallel with the river. The public buildings are the townhouse, church, military and civil hospital, barracks, custom-house and theatre."

■ Another useful maritime-related acquisition is a 1903 index to the reports of the Corps of Engineers projects from 1866 to 1900. *The Chief of Engineers and Officers of the Corps of Engineers, United States Army, 1866–1900* was published in Washington by the Government Printing Office. It is arranged alphabetically by location. Nearly 100 pages cover a variety of projects on the Mississippi River, Lake Pontchartrain, and on other rivers and streams in Louisiana.

■ Also acquired is a two-volume set, published in 1834, that chronicles the journey of Theodore Marie Pavie in 1829 on the Mississippi River, with stops at Natchez and New Orleans. *Atlantische Erinnerungen. Reisebilder Aus Canada Und Den Vereinigten Staaten Von Nord Amerika* is the first German edition of this travelogue. Pavie, who was 18 years old when he made the trip down the Mississippi River, wrote about Indians, camping, bear hunting, and various aspects of nature. The only other known copy of the book is in the New York Public Library.

—Gerald Patout

CURATORIAL

A silver tea service presented to Samuel J. Peters on October 1, 1850, by the officers and clerks of the Custom House is a recent acquisition. The engraved coin-silver set, manufactured by H. E. Baldwin and Company of New Orleans, includes a hot water urn, teapot, creamer, and covered sugar bowl. Each piece, rich with floral and foliate scroll chasing, bears an inscription to Peters, who served briefly as collector of customs. A banker and businessman, Peters championed public education and civic improvements in New Orleans. At the 1848 national Whig convention, he played a prominent role in nominating Zachary Taylor as the party's presidential candidate. Peters was disappointed in his expectation of being named secretary of the treasury by the new president, but Taylor did appoint him collector of customs in New Orleans. When the appointment was not confirmed by Congress, Peters returned to private business and civic activities, prompting the gift of this silver service.



Silver tea service presented to Samuel J. Peters, October 1, 1850 (2000.42.1-5)

■ A number of donations enrich the photographic collections. Fred L. Logan has donated a late 1890s photograph of the yacht *B. D. Wood*. Twenty views of the 1984-1985 Louisiana World's Fair held in New Orleans, showing amusement rides, exhibition buildings, the Wonder Wall, and the Mississippi River Bridge is the gift of the late Dode Platou. D. Clive Hardy has contributed photographs of the Fernand Tessier Class of the Knights of Columbus Council (1924), an early 1920s group at the Baptist Bible Institute, Brother Leonard's Boys School Class (ca. 1930), and three uptown residences. Mitchell Gaudet has donated a group of Vieux Carré street scenes including views of Jackson Square, St. Louis Cathedral, the Bosque Court, and the Brulatour Courtyard. An 1881 view of the Colton family residence, titled "Our Homestead," comes from Kharin Mishan. Eric J. Brock has given a color photograph of Rabbi Maximilian Heller. From William K. Greiner comes a photographic portrait of a family member by Joseph Woodson "Pops" Whitesell as well as a group of materials relating to the Kross Lumber and Wrecking Company.

■ The Sisters of St. Joseph of Medaille, Archives of the Southern Region, via Sister

Jane Aucoin, C.S.J., have donated a 1981 color lithograph showing the first three Catholic bishops of Lafayette, Louisiana. The lithograph was designed by Floyd Sonnier and published by Beau Cajun Arts Production.

■ Three maps showing New Orleans, Lafayette, and the parishes of Pointe Coupée and Feliciana come from John E. Walker. Mary Ross Berridge has contributed carnival ball favors and other memorabilia associated with carnival. A small painting of a streetcar by New Orleans artist Cecilia M. Seixas Willey, who was the wife of French Quarter artist Philo L. "Chief" Willey, is the donation of Mrs. Robert Killeen. Michael D. Wynne has contributed posters focusing on state politics including the Long family dynasty, Jimmie Davis's governorship, and that of Murphy J. Foster and Murphy J. "Mike" Foster.

■ Ashley Woods, Blake Woods, and Joyce Kelly have donated a sign from the John McCrady Art School. The sign, which hung outside the McCrady School on Bourbon Street from 1946 through the early 1950s, was a landmark for the art community in the French Quarter.

—Judith H. Bonner

DONORS: JULY–SEPTEMBER 2000

<p>Alachua County Historic Trust: Matheson Museum, Inc. Melissa Ashurst Mary Ross Berridge Sarah V. Bohlen in memory of Ernest C. Villeré Dr. Patricia Brady Eric J. Brock Mrs. Peter C. Broussard Cahn Family Foundation Mrs. John W. Calhoun Walter Carroll, Jr. Catholic Library Association Viola S. Claverie Mrs. Walter Díaz Educational Technology Review Center Fairfax County Public Library Faubourg Marigny Improvement Association Dorothea G. Garrett Mitchell Gaudet Goudeau Antiques Edith Greenwood William K. Greiner Roland Guidry Virginia Van der Veer Hamilton D. Clive Hardy Harvard University Press Harvey Canal Limited Partnership Anna Heiduk Skip Henderson George A. Hero III Herbert Hey Dr. J. E. Isaacson, Jr. Zide Jahncke Mrs. George B. Jurgens Joyce Kelly Mrs. Robert J. Killeen Mrs. W. Elliott Laudeman III Dr. Alfred E. Lemmon Fred L. Logan</p>	<p>Else J. Martin George H. McLoughlin Michael Ginsberg Books Kharin Mishan Jackson L. Molaison Neighborhood Development Foundation Betty Jane Nolan Blanc A. Parker Gerald F. Patout, Jr. Carol Hood Pierce Jean-Pierre Piqué Dode Platou Jo Anne Gosselin Plessala Alexander Ritter John Robert Sarpy Elizabeth Gentry Sayad George Schmidt James Shelby Sessums Sisters of Saint Joseph of Medaille, Archives of the Southern Region Smithsonian Anacostia Museum and Center for African American History and Culture Sons of the Revolution in Louisiana Dr. S. Frederick Starr Harriet Swift Roulhac Toledano University of South Alabama, Center for Archaeological Studies John E. Walker Françoise Watel Mr. and Mrs. Hugo Wedemeyer Merlyn Weillbaecher West Baton Rouge Parish Library Routh T. Wilby Hugh M. Wilkinson III Ashley Woods Blake Woods Michael D. Wynne</p>
---	---

ADVISORY SCHOLAR APPOINTED



The board of directors announces the appointment of Dr. John Hébert as Advisory Scholar, beginning the first of January. Dr. Hébert is the Chief of the Geography and Map Division, Library of Congress. He was the coordinator (1989-1993) of the five-year program sponsored by the Library of Congress, *1492-1992: An Ongoing Voyage*.

A native of Louisiana, he is a graduate of the University of Southwestern Louisiana and received a doctorate in Latin American history from Georgetown University. Dr. Hébert has written extensively on the 18th-century Spanish presence in the United States (the Spanish borderlands), historical cartography, and Latin American bibliography. He is the editor of a historical atlas of Louisiana, to be published by the Historic New Orleans Collection in conjunction with the bicentennial of the Louisiana Purchase in 2003.

Persac Symposium: *Taking the Measure of Marie Adrien Persac*, presented by the Historic New Orleans Collection and the LSU Museum of Art, Saturday, February 17, 2001, 9:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m., Williams Research Center, 410 Chartres Street. Speakers: Barbara SoRelle Bacot, Sally K. Reeves, John Magill, John Lawrence, and H. Parrott Bacot. The exhibition *Marie Adrien Persac: Louisiana Artist* opened at the Collection January 16. Reservations recommended. Call 504-598-7171.

Spanish Exhibition in Jackson, Mississippi: THNOC-sponsored bus tour to Jackson to view *The Majesty of Spain: Royal Collections from the Museo del Prado and Patrimonio Nacional*, March 4, 2001. \$55 per person. Call 504-598-7171 for more information.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Symposium in Spain: *Bourbon Louisiana: Reflections of the Spanish Enlightenment*, the WRC annual symposium repeated in Spain, March 23, 2001, Universidad de Alcalá. The tour departs from New Orleans March 17 and returns March 27. The group will stay in Madrid and Seville. Call Peter McLean, Ltd., at 504-833-6275 for reservation information.

Lecture: “Two Hundred Years of Celebrations and Legacies Inspired by the Louisiana Purchase” presented by Elizabeth Gentry Sayad, April 3, 2001, at the Historic New Orleans Collection, 533 Royal Street. The lecture is sponsored by Les Amis des Vieilles Maisons Françaises. Mrs. Sayad is the founder of Les Amis, the French colonial

preservation group in St. Louis, and chairman of the group’s commemoration of the bicentennial of the Louisiana Purchase. She serves on the national advisory committee for the Purchase bicentennial. Free and open to the public.

Second Annual Bill Russell Lecture: To complement the William Russell Jazz Collection, THNOC will present the second Bill Russell lecture on Thursday, April 19, 2001, 7:30 p.m., at the Williams Research Center, 410 Chartres Street. Barry Martyn and Dr. Bruce Boyd Raeburn will present musical demonstrations of early New Orleans drummers including Alfred Williams, Sammy Penn, Baby Dodds, and Josiah Frazier. Free and open to the public. Reservations recommended. Call 504-598-7171.

STAFF

IN THE COMMUNITY

Fred Smith, member of the board of directors of the Kemper and Leila Williams Foundation, has joined the board of the Salvation Army. **Priscilla Lawrence** was featured in *New Orleans Magazine's* "People to Watch" issue.

Carol Bartels, president, Louisiana Archives and Manuscripts Association; **Pamela D. Arceneaux**, chair of the Lucy B. Foote Award Committee, Louisiana Library Association; **Judith H. Bonner**, Louisiana state director for the Southeastern Museums

Conference; **Jan Brantley** and **John Lawrence**, photographs in the Preservation Resource Center's opening exhibition in the Leeds-Davis building; **John Lawrence**, photograph on exhibit, New Orleans Museum of Art; **Bettie Pendley**, board of directors of the Vieux Carré Property Owners, Residents, and Associates; **John Magill**, WLPB-TV interview for PBS production about Kate Chopin.

Speeches: **Patricia Brady**, Daughters of the American Revolution and Jefferson Parish Library; **Gerald Patout**, Daughters of the American Revolution, Culture Club, and New Orleans Center for Science and Mathematics; **Mark Cave** and **John Magill**, Tulane University sociology class; **John Lawrence**, Louisiana Colonials; **Mark Cave**, New Orleans Genealogical Society.

MEETINGS

Patricia Brady, Southern Historical Association and White House Historical Association; **Carol Bartels**, Louisiana Archives and Manuscripts Association; **Judith Bonner**, Southeastern Museums Conference and South Central Modern Language Association; **Alfred Lemmon** and **Nancy Ruck**, Southeast Chapter of the

Music Library Association; **Alfred Lemmon**, Chicago Humanities Festival and Society of American Archivists; **Pamela Arceneaux**, Gulf South History and Humanities Conference; **Gerald Patout**, **Amy Baptist**, and **Jason Wiese**, Louisiana/Southern Mississippi Chapter of the Special Libraries Association and library preservation lecture at THNOC; **John Magill** and **Amy Baptist**, Southeastern Library Network workshops. **John Lawrence**, Oracle 18 for photography curators.



Carol Bartels



Pamela Arceneaux



Judith Bonner



Lynn Adams



Louise Hoffman



Mary Mees



Diane Plauché



Heidi Hitter



Maclyn Hickey



Linda Epstein

CHANGES

Mary Mees, publications assistant; **Lynn Adams**, editor; **Louise Hoffman**, senior editor; **Diane Plauché**, shop manager; **Heidi Hitter**, volunteer, vertical file collection; **Linda Epstein**, volunteer, Historic Districts Survey Project; **Maclyn Hickey**, special projects and volunteer, Williams Research Center.

PUBLICATIONS

The Louisiana Purchase Bicentennial Series in Louisiana History: Vol. XV—Visions and Revisions: Perspectives on Louisiana Society and Culture includes **Pamela Arceneaux's** "Guidebooks to Sin: the Blue Books of Storyville," and **Patricia Brady's** "Free Men of Color as Tomb Builders in the Nineteenth Century." **Bettie Pendley** and **John Magill**, *Preservation in Print*; **John Magill**, *Cultural Vistas*; **Judith Bonner**, *New Orleans Art Review*.

AAM ACCREDITATION



Every ten years the American Association of Museums evaluates institutions that have received AAM accreditation. The association has recently renewed accreditation for the Historic New Orleans Collection for the third time. Accreditation certifies that a museum operates according to standards set forth by the museum profession, manages its collections responsibly, and provides quality service to the public. Of the 8,000 museums nationwide, only some 750 are accredited.

THE SHOP



Woodward-inspired scarf

WE SALUTE

The *Quarterly* turns the spotlight on three volunteers who have contributed to the work of the Historic New Orleans Collection for many years. By generously sharing their talents, these volunteers have helped further the Collection's goal of preserving and interpreting the history and culture of New Orleans and the Gulf South.

Mary Ann Hymel, a New Orleans native, joined the docent department as a volunteer in 1983. In 1988, she moved across Lake Pontchartrain to Mandeville but still comes in every Thursday to give tours of the Williams Residence. She enjoys telling visitors about the elegant furnishings and about the collector's vision that was shared by Leila and Kemper Williams.

Dr. Harry Redman began volunteer work at the Collection in 1992 after retiring from the French Department at Tulane University. He is originally from northwest Florida. He is currently translating letters in the Grima Family Papers and has recently translated a document issued by



Mary Ann Hymel



Harry Redman



Richard Jackson

Alejandro O'Reilly. Other translations include Iberville's prospectus for the settling of Louisiana and materials in the Ste-Gême Papers.

Richard Jackson started volunteering at the Collection in 1995 after moving back to New Orleans. He was formerly head of the Americana Collection in the New York Public Library's music division at Lincoln Center until his retirement. He is cataloging the papers of a New Orleans civic leader, the late Mrs. E. B. Ludwig. He previously worked on various parts of the William Russell Jazz Collection. Mr. Jackson contributed an essay, "Fess Manetta: Maisons de Joie," to the Collection's 1998 publication *Jazz Scrapbook: Bill Russell and Some Highly Musical Friends*.

Many others contribute their time and talent to THNOC on an on-going basis. We thank them all.

THE HISTORIC NEW ORLEANS COLLECTION QUARTERLY

Editors:
Patricia Brady
Louise C. Hoffman

Head of Photography:
Jan White Brantley

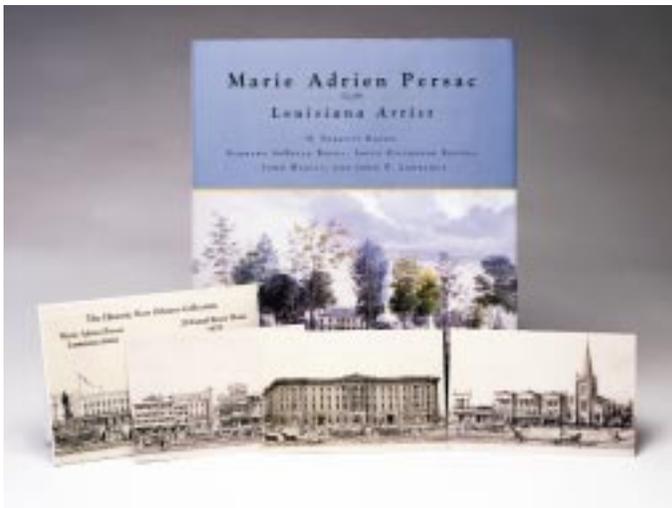
The Historic New Orleans Collection Quarterly is published by the Historic New Orleans Collection, which is operated by the Kemper and Leila Williams Foundation, a Louisiana nonprofit corporation. Housed in a complex of historic buildings in the French Quarter, facilities are open to the public, Tuesday through Saturday, from 10:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. Tours of the history galleries and the Williams Residence are available for a nominal fee.

Board of Directors:
Mrs. William K. Christovich, President
John E. Walker
Fred M. Smith
Charles A. Snyder
Drew Jardine

G. Henry Pierson, Jr., emeritus
Priscilla Lawrence, Director
The Historic New Orleans Collection
533 Royal Street
New Orleans, Louisiana 70130
(504) 523-4662

hnocinfo@hnoc.org
www.hnoc.org
ISSN 0886-2109 © 2001
The Historic New Orleans Collection

Additional photography by:
Dustin Booksh, Jennifer Berger, and Amanda Fuller



A scarf inspired by artist Ellsworth Woodward's beautiful 1930s masterpiece, *Backyard in Covington*, is now available for purchase. A Shop exclusive, the hand-painted scarf with hand-rolled edges is the work of New Orleans artist Kathy Schorr. And, for anyone interested in Louisiana art, the Shop is

offering *Marie Adrien Persac: Louisiana Artist*, published by LSU Press, with full color illustrations and essays by H. Parrott Bacot, Barbara SoRelle Bacot, Sally Kittredge Reeves, John Magill, and John H. Lawrence. Also available are postcard packets featuring Persac's Canal Street views, suitable for framing.

PLEASE SEND

Quantity	Amount
_____ Silk scarf, 34" x 34": \$100	_____
_____ <i>Marie Adrien Persac: Louisiana Artist</i>	_____
Cloth, \$39.95	_____
Paperback, \$24.95	_____
_____ Persac postcard packet, 20 images,	_____
featuring the north and south sides of Canal Street, 1870s, \$18.95	_____
<i>Shipping and Handling</i>	_____
scarf, \$7 (UPS)	_____
<i>Marie Adrien Persac,</i>	_____
cloth: \$5; paper: \$4	_____
Persac postcard packet, \$2;	_____
additional cards, \$.50	_____
Taxes as applicable:	_____
9% Orleans Parish	_____
4% other La. residents	_____
Total Amount Due	_____

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City, State, Zip: _____
 Visa MasterCard Check or Money order
 Account Number: _____
 Exp. Date: _____
 Signature: _____

LEILA WILLIAMS TEA HONORS DONORS



The fourth annual Leila Williams Tea honoring the Collection's donors for the year 2000 was held on December 12 and featured a special exhibition, Philanthropy & Foresight: The Legacy of Kemper and Leila Williams, on view in a new gallery adjacent to the Counting House. Pictured at the tea are, top row, Tim Pickles; Gloria Wilkinson and Priscilla Lawrence; and Mimi Calhoun. Second row, Nell Nolan Young and Elsa Schneider; Kinzey Branham (sculptor of the bronze busts of Kemper and Leila Williams). Third row, Kathleen Perschall, Elizabeth Davidson, and Judith Bonner; Raymond Calvert, Noreen Lapeyre, and Gladys Jurgens



KEMPER AND LEILA WILLIAMS FOUNDATION
THE HISTORIC NEW ORLEANS COLLECTION
Museum • Research Center • Publisher
533 Royal Street
New Orleans, Louisiana 70130
(504) 523-4662
Visit the Collection on the Internet at www.hnoc.org
ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

