



THE HISTORIC
NEW ORLEANS
COLLECTION
QUARTERLY

Volume XXVI, Number 1

Winter 2009



*Josephine Crawford:
An Artist's Vision*

Josephine Crawford:

Josephine Crawford (1878–1952), born into a large Creole family in New Orleans’s French Quarter, began to study art seriously when she was in her mid-forties. At first, her creative spirit found expression in poems and sketches, images that would come to fruition on canvas after she enrolled, in the 1920s, at the newly organized Arts and Crafts Club in the heart of the French Quarter. In the winter of 1927–28 she studied in Paris with André Lhote at his academy in Montparnasse, a pivotal time in her development as an artist. Her work was inspired by Cubism and the flattened forms and minimalist approach of modernism. She painted with a muted palette that relied upon shades of gray and variations of white; her style, always recognizable, was distinctly her own. In 1934, she won the Arts and Crafts Club’s prestigious Blanche Benjamin Prize for *Rue Kerlerec*, an evocative portrait of a Creole widow enhanced by the artist’s sly sense of humor and penchant for subtlety.

This spring The Historic New Orleans Collection celebrates the life and art of a 20th-century artist whose works were exhibited not only in New Orleans but also in New York, Philadelphia, and Central America. On March 31, The Collection will release *Josephine Crawford: An Artist’s Vision*, the third publication in the Louisiana Artist Biography Series, and unveil an accompanying exhibition.

In *Josephine Crawford: An Artist’s Vision*, author Louise C. Hoffman provides a glimpse of the personality of Crawford and skillfully recreates the Parisian and New Orleans art worlds in the first half of the 20th century. The book showcases more than 70 paintings and drawings by the prolific artist, works by André Lhote, and photographs of Josephine and her family, complemented by images from the days of the Arts and Crafts Club. The exhibition, on view at the Williams Research Center (March 31–August 29), presents a selection of Crawford’s paintings and drawings from the holdings of The Collection, other repositories, and private lenders.



Rue Kerlerec, 1934, courtesy of Micheline M. Bator; photograph by Michael Gould

Cover: Young Woman Wearing White Gloves, between 1928 and 1935 (1978.23.4), bequest of Charles C. Crawford

An Artist's Vision



Josephine Crawford, ca. 1910, courtesy of Mrs. Edmund McIlhenny

The following excerpts are from the biography.

Forty-eight years old, soon to be forty-nine, Josephine Marien Crawford sailed for France in the fall of 1927 to attend the Académie Lhote in Paris's Montparnasse district. Here, André Lhote, an undisputed master, taught the principles of art (and intimidated a few students in the process). A few years before, Josephine had enrolled in the art school of the newly organized Arts and Crafts Club in New Orleans. Now, despite a late start, she had decided to study abroad. A bold move, but Josephine, raised in a French-speaking family, would be at home in the language. It was unusual perhaps to find a middle-aged woman from Louisiana in the heart of Montparnasse, venturing forth to an art academy. But Josephine's presence in Paris was no surprise to those who understood her courage and compelling desire to be an artist...



Magnolias, 1936 (1978.23.14), bequest of Charles C. Crawford



Girl Under Mosquito Net, between 1930 and 1940, courtesy of Louise Chapman Hoffman



Eventually, we come to know Josephine through her art. She had a recognizable style that critics through the years have described as “simplified, shallow, flat, opaque” (Judith Bonner); “the decoration of a flat canvas to hang on a flat wall” (Edith Norris); and an ability to concentrate on the essentials, “rendering them as simply as Whistler did” (John Ankeney). And this: Josephine was “one of the most experimental painters of the New South between 1900 and 1950” (George Jordan). Josephine had grasped the modern movement and assimilated Lhote’s teaching. She, Paul Ninas, and Will Henry Stevens are credited with introducing Cubism to New Orleans. Her art represented a new way of looking at the world.



Francis Gains, *between 1928 and 1935* (1978.23.12), bequest of Charles C. Crawford



Modernism spread to the South—slowly. A modernist was not easy to find in the New Orleans of the 1920s. Will Henry Stevens, who began teaching in the Newcomb College art department in 1921, was a contemporary of Josephine’s—and, like her, receptive to the latest movements in the arts. For both artists, the years 1926 and 1927 proved important: Josephine traveled to Paris to study with André Lhote; Stevens attended an exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum organized by Katherine Dreier and the Société Anonyme that would lead him to modernism....

Josephine’s art never became totally abstract. Her paintings represent people, animals, flowers, objects; but her method of portraying some of her subjects could be described as “representational Cubism.” If Josephine evoked the past in a number of her artworks, she framed her subjects in a distinctly modern style.... The true-to-life depiction of a subject—the illusion of reality—was no longer of primary importance, or important at all....

Look at Josephine’s *Young Woman Wearing White Gloves*. There are no brushstrokes, only washes of color: white for the dress, gray-green for the background.... Of the elements of art—line, color, shape, and texture—Josephine was more interested in line, color, and shape (or form), less in texture. She chose gray (pale gray, dark gray, white-gray), cadmium yellow (pale hue), muted reds, black, and she had a special preference for white (*Girl Under Mosquito Net*). Josephine spoke to her viewer with white, the non-color. The voice was quiet.

Contemporary events or social concerns were not part of that voice; Josephine was not *engagée*, in the political sense. Her voice spoke of the fundamental things of life: the dignity of the individual (*Francis Gains*), the beauty of simplicity (*Magnolia*), the importance of work (*Bonnets*).

Painting in a modern style met with resistance in the South, certainly more than in the cosmopolitan cities of the East. Leaving the South was an option for an artist—but not for Josephine. But neither did she become an artistic recluse just because her style differed from swamp scenes, foggy bayous, or the Impressionistic brush of the Woodwards... She may have retired to her studio to paint behind the doors of 612 Royal Street [the family home], but that did not mean she was cut off from the life of the Arts and Crafts Club or from her friends.



While there is some emotional reserve in Josephine’s work, there is also a sense of intimacy in her choice of subjects—guinea hens, red snappers on ice, a baseball player with catcher’s mitt, a woman sewing (an electric fan in the foreground). The art reveals a quiet joy that Josephine found in her observations of the world. There is wit, too: a sense of humor that ran to oddities. Josephine must have smiled as she titled one series of sketches Opus I through Opus VII. The subject of the series? Outhouses. With her collector’s eye and penchant for the picturesque, Josephine no doubt delighted in finding these structures tucked away in the coastal countryside of Louisiana and Mississippi.

Her sly sense of humor and her talent for subtleties emerge in *Rue Kerlerec*, the earnest Creole widow who has not neglected a single item of funeral attire....

Josephine’s work has a soft strength, but she is not a “pretty painter.” Lhote’s rule, probably nestled in her subconscious, would come back to her now and then—to learn your trade first, then put your personality into the painting. Josephine had



Bonnetts, between 1934 and April 15, 1935 (1978.23.69), bequest of Charles C. Crawford

learned her trade. Her art had evolved into a recognizable style, distinctly her own: her study with Lhote was a way station toward discovering her vision. Works from private collections inspired her, particularly the collection of her brother-in-law, Hunt Henderson... The Arts and Crafts Club school and the influence of modernism had refined her art.

—*Louise C. Hoffman*

Louise C. Hoffman, a native North Carolinian and graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, spent childhood summers on the Mississippi Gulf Coast where she was befriended by her grandmother's friend, Josephine Crawford. A marriage (Louise's aunt and Josephine's nephew) strengthened the connection between the two families. Formerly an editor at The Historic New Orleans Collection, Louise Hoffman is a freelance writer living in New Orleans.

Josephine Crawford: An Artist's Vision

by Louise C. Hoffman

\$30.00

Order from The Shop at The Collection
(504) 598-7147; www.hnoc.org

The Exhibition

On view at the Williams Research Center
410 Chartres Street

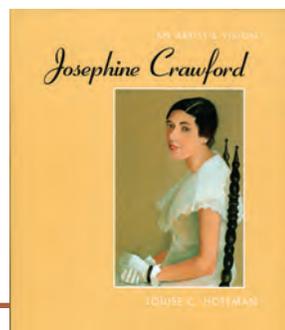
March 31–August 29, 2009

Tuesday–Saturday
9:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

Free and open to the public

Opening Reception and Book Signing

April 7, 2009
6:00–8:00 p.m.



FROM THE DIRECTOR

From colonial documents to 21st-century art, The Collection's holdings are rich with materials that document the people, places, and events of our region. Political memorabilia, the earliest known photographic views of New Orleans on paper, rare published volumes by New Orleans printers all await you, our patrons, at the Williams Research Center. Active exhibition and publication programs also bring these materials to life.



In the coming months, we will celebrate the life and work of two New Orleans artists, Josephine Crawford and Michael P. Smith, both featured in this issue of the *Quarterly*.

More than 350 paintings, drawings, and sketchbooks by Josephine Crawford (1878–1952) were bequeathed to The Collection in 1978 by the artist's brother Charles Crawford. Active from the mid-1920s through the 1940s, Josephine Crawford produced a body of work worthy of attention and study.

In 2007 The Collection acquired the life's work of photographer Michael P. Smith (1937–2008), who documented our culture over the second half of the 20th century. Smith's recent passing makes these images even more important.

The Collection will mount exhibitions of each artist's works this spring and summer. *Josephine Crawford: An Artist's Vision* opens March 31 in conjunction with the release of the biography by Louise C. Hoffman. The Crawford study is the third publication in the Louisiana Artist Biography Series published by THNOC and generously funded by the Laussat Society.

Michael P. Smith's photographs will be the star of *Beyond the Music*, on view in the Williams Gallery at 533 Royal Street from March 11 through September 13. His works are also featured in *Twenty-Five Jazz Fests* at the Contemporary Arts Center from April 17 through July 12. Both exhibitions share the umbrella title, *In the Spirit: The Photography of Michael P. Smith from The Historic New Orleans Collection*. THNOC and the CAC are collaborating on a catalogue of the photographs featured in the exhibitions.

These exhibitions and publications are examples of some of the ways that we strive to bring the region's history to life. We hope you will enjoy them as much as we enjoy bringing them to you.

—*Priscilla Lawrence*



Michael Cohn

New Chief Financial Officer Appointed

The Historic New Orleans Collection announces the appointment of Michael Cohn as chief financial officer. A former employee of Entergy New Orleans, Cohn holds a degree in finance from the University of Florida and an MBA from Tulane University.



Fred M. Smith

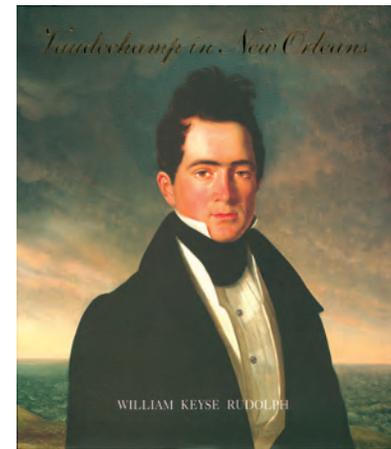
Cohn replaces Fred M. Smith, who served as CFO for 25 years. Smith has been active with the Kemper and Leila Williams Foundation since its inception in 1967. He remains on the board and serves as chair of the finance and investment committee.

Priscilla Lawrence Receives Humanities Honor

Executive director Priscilla Lawrence is the recipient of the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities' 2009 Lifetime Contribution to the Humanities Award. The Lifetime Contribution award honors citizens who have supported and been involved in the public appreciation of issues central to the humanities.

Vaudechamp in New Orleans Wins Award

The Southeast Chapter of the Art Libraries Society of North America chose *Vaudechamp in New Orleans* as the outstanding book for 2007 in the Mary Ellen LoPresti Award competition. The LoPresti Award recognizes excellence in visual arts publishing. Each entry is evaluated for usefulness to general library visual arts collections, scholarship, scholarly apparatus, image quality, and design quality. *Vaudechamp in New Orleans*, the second publication in The Collection's Louisiana Artist Biography Series, explores the life and work of portraitist Jean-Joseph Vaudechamp (1790–1864).



The book retails for \$25.00 and is available from The Shop at The Collection, (504) 598-7147.

Save The Date

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IN MEMORIAM

Jan White Brantley

The Historic New Orleans Collection mourns the loss of head of photography Jan White Brantley, who died on Friday, December 19, 2008. Jan joined the staff of The Collection in 1981 and, over her 27 years of service, developed the photography department and its methods. She was also an active freelance photographer specializing in architectural photography.

Jan grew up in northern Illinois in the small town of Genoa. She received a degree in fine arts from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and was drawn to New Orleans by a teaching assistantship at Tulane University. Jan received an MFA in photography and alternate photographic processes from Tulane and stayed on to teach a third-year photography course at the university. In June 1981 she was hired by The Collection's then-chief curator Dode Platou to photograph the institution's acquisitions and to deal with the boxes of tightly rolled negatives accumulated over the years.

During her tenure, Jan developed a well-organized system for documenting



acquisitions, recording The Collection's numerous activities, and fulfilling photo requests for researchers and THNOC's publications. She adapted her system as photo technology changed; today images are shot almost exclusively in a digital format. Additionally, Jan contributed her own work to many of The Collection's exhibitions. In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, Jan, along with photography department staff members Keely Merritt and Tere Kirkland, thoroughly documented the city's devastation neighborhood by neighborhood. Their photographs were showcased in the exhibition *City of Hope: New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina*.

Jan married fellow photographer Robert S. Brantley in 1988. Over their

20 years of marriage, the couple worked together closely on freelance photography projects. They worked with Sam Wilson, the architect and architectural historian, on monographs about historic buildings, including St. Alphonsus Church, St. Patrick Church, and the Pitot House. They also illustrated S. Frederick Starr's *Southern Comfort: The Garden District of New Orleans*.

From 1998 to 2000, Jan served as president of the Gulf South Chapter of the American Society of Media Photographers. Her photographs have been published in many magazines, including *Architectural Record*, *Veranda*, *Historic Preservation*, and *Southern Accents*. She was a diligent, detail-oriented photographer. In a 1991 profile for the *Quarterly* by Louise C. Hoffman, Jan summed up what she looked for in an image: "It should be so perfectly balanced—like a good poem—that you can't add or subtract a thing." Jan's gifts as a photographer and her warm and gentle spirit will be missed by all the staff and board members of The Historic New Orleans Collection.

—Mary Mees Garsaud



Photograph from Jan and Robert Brantley's *Bayou Liberty Series*



The staircase at Louise S. McGehee School by Jan White Brantley

Archaeological Dig at the Perrilliat House

The age and distinct architecture of the French Quarter's buildings invite a host of questions from passersby: What did this building look like when it was new? Who lived here? What were their lives like? The Collection is dedicated to uncovering the answers to these questions for its French Quarter properties. And in the fall of 2008 the institution commissioned its fifth archaeological dig. As is always the case, the excavation at the corner of Conti and Chartres streets—a property currently being renovated by The Collection—has turned up a variety of interesting artifacts and stories.

The building at 400 Chartres Street, known as the Perrilliat House, is a post-colonial style house built in the mid-1820s for dry goods and clothing merchant François Marie Perrilliat. Throughout the years, it has served as a saloon, shop, and apartments. The Collection acquired the building in 1999, and, although there is no law requiring archaeological excavation prior to new construction or property renovation, decided to sponsor a dig as part of its mission to preserve and promote New Orleans history. “The renovation of this historic property provides us with the opportunity to examine the structure with scholarly eyes,” said executive director Priscilla Lawrence. “A dig can

confirm historical speculation or reveal extra layers of information that may not exist elsewhere. This complements our mission to preserve our authentic history and make it accessible for the future.”

Andrea White, director and regional archaeologist of the Greater New Orleans Archaeology Program, oversaw archaeologists from Earth Search and student volunteers from the University of New Orleans and Tulane University on the excavation, which began in October. The dig revealed dark brown staining in some places—remnants of floor planks from the structure existing before the Perrilliat House, a terrace-roofed Spanish colonial townhouse built in the late 1700s. Archaeologists also found parts of the Spanish tile roof throughout the unit, evidence that the townhouse was torn down in 1825, just before Perrilliat commissioned the existing structure.

In one excavation unit, archaeologists discovered evidence of a colonial foundation as well as a burn layer which may be associated with the 1794 fire that destroyed most of the French Quarter. The dig also turned up various artifacts, including fragments of French and British ceramics, iron nails, fish and large mammal bones, pieces of a French wine bottle, chunks of coral, and oyster shells.



Fragments of French and British ceramics

Like the dig recently conducted next door at 535–37 Conti Street, this excavation uncovered Native American ceramics. “Some of them are what we call colonoware, Native American ceramics or clays made into European vessel forms like plates and candlesticks,” said Andrea White. “These would have been evidence of trade between Native Americans and New Orleans settlers.” The stratum at which the ceramics were found on the Chartres site suggests a correlation with those found on Conti. But the relationship will not be confirmed until artifact analysis and comparison, currently underway, is finished.

Now that the dig is complete, the renovation of the Perrilliat House can proceed. The Collection is converting the building into additional exhibition space and staff offices. The first floor will house exhibition galleries opening onto the street and a studio for the photography department. The second floor will hold offices for the registration department, a board meeting room, and executive offices. The Perrilliat House will connect internally with the Conti Street buildings to facilitate the logistics of registering, photographing, and storing incoming acquisitions. The Perrilliat House renovation is scheduled to be completed by summer 2010.

—Rachel Gibbons



The Perrilliat House at 400 Chartres Street in 2001, shortly after The Collection acquired the building



The Perrilliat House under construction in 2008



Tennessee Williams with Marion Black Vacarro at opening night party for Night of the Iguana (2001-10-L, MSS 562, folder 2337), The Fred W. Todd Tennessee Williams Collection

Building Tennessee Williams's Legacy

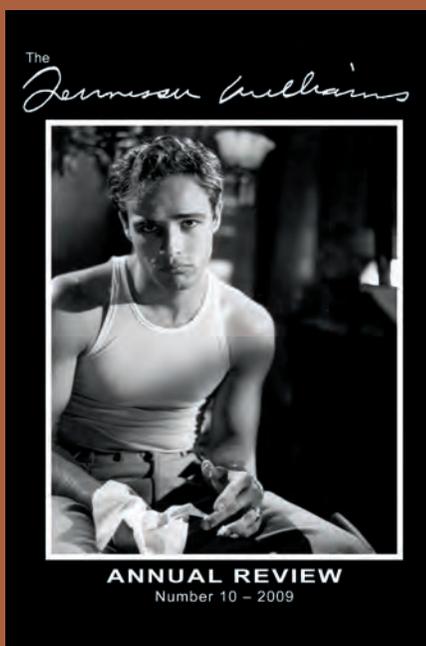
There seem to be endless angles from which to analyze the works and life of New Orleans's adopted son Tennessee Williams. As the publisher of the scholarly journal the *Tennessee Williams Annual Review* and a major repository for materials related to the master playwright, The Historic New Orleans Collection is dedicated to contributing to Williams's growing cultural legacy.

In 2004, The Collection partnered with Dr. Robert Bray of Middle Tennessee State University to publish the *Review*, which Bray founded in 1998. The journal's 10th issue will be released this March in conjunction with the Tennessee Williams Scholars' Conference—an annual event held at The Collection as part of the Tennessee Williams/New Orleans Literary Festival. Journal highlights include essays exploring Williams's treatment of veterans, women, and politics. The *Review* also showcases a photo essay from the filming of the 1951 Warner Brothers production of *A Streetcar Named Desire*,

with photographs drawn from The Collection's extensive Fred W. Todd Tennessee Williams Collection.

Since acquiring the Todd Collection in 2001, the institution has continued to grow its Williams holdings. Now an online guide (or "pathfinder") to Tennessee Williams research at The Collection is available at www.hnoc.org. Visit the Research Tools page under Collections & Research to access the pathfinder, which is divided into three sections: early acquisitions, the Todd Collection, and recent acquisitions. Each section is further divided into specific categories. For example, the Todd Collection is divided into manuscripts, correspondence, financial and legal documents, theater, cinema, and periodicals and books. Downloadable finding aids with individual item descriptions are provided for each category.

Also in the online arena, the *Review* and Scholars' Conference now have a new and improved website. Check out the site at www.tennesseewilliamsstudies.org.



Tennessee Williams Annual Review, No. 10—2009

Individual subscriptions: **\$15.00**

Library/Institution
subscriptions: **\$30.00**

Order from The Shop at
The Collection

(504) 598-7147; www.hnoc.org



*Director Elia Kazan confers with Mitch (Karl Malden) as Blanche (Vivien Leigh) listens in during the filming of the 1951 Warner Brothers production of *A Streetcar Named Desire* (2001-10-L, MSS 562, item 1572), The Fred W. Todd Tennessee Williams Collection. A photo essay of film stills and off-camera shots from this production is included in the forthcoming issue of the *Tennessee Williams Annual Review*.*



Holy Family Spiritual
Church, Lower Ninth
Ward, New Orleans, 1973

IN THE SPIRIT

The Photography of
Michael P. Smith
from The Historic New Orleans Collection



Irma Thomas at the New Orleans Jazz Festival 1975 Michael P. Smith, 1975

Irma Thomas, *New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival*, 1975

In the spring of 2007, The Historic New Orleans Collection acquired the archive of photographer Michael P. Smith (1937–2008), ensuring both its long-term preservation and public access. An article in the spring 2008 *Quarterly* profiled the scope and content of Smith’s archive, which includes photographs, field recordings, journals, correspondence, printed ephemera, and other documents. Smith’s professional and personal interests offer an extended gaze into the world of spiritual churches, Mardi Gras Indians, and traditional jazz funerals, as well as the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival, which Smith photographed without interruption from 1970 to 2004. This spring The Historic New Orleans Collection, in partnership with the Contemporary Arts Center, New Orleans, will showcase the Michael P. Smith Archive for the first time in a pair of exhibitions sharing the title *In the Spirit: The Photography of Michael P. Smith from The Historic New Orleans Collection*.

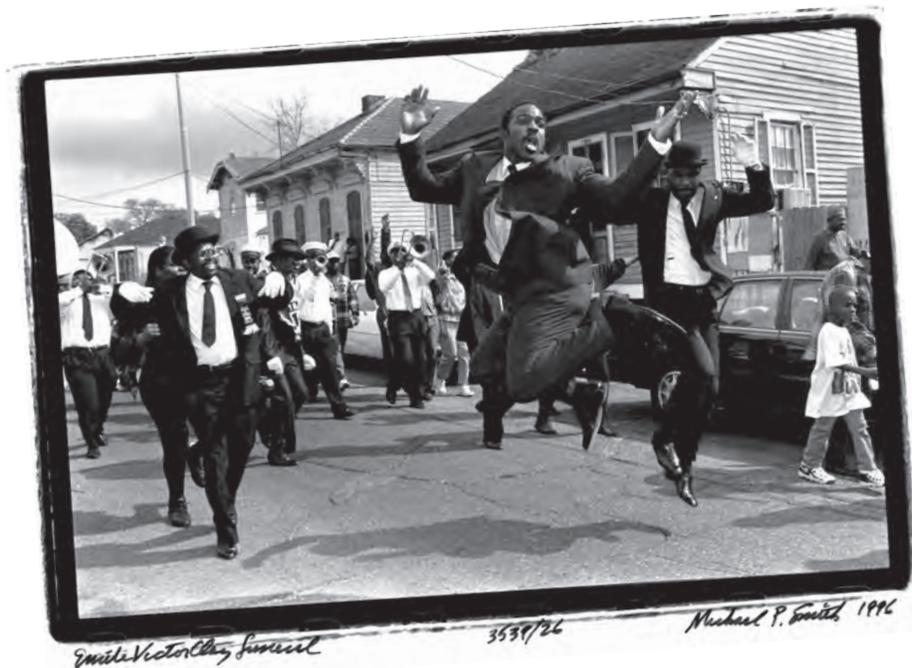
The exhibition at The Historic New Orleans Collection, subtitled *Beyond the Music*, focuses on the breadth of Smith’s nearly 40-year career. Presented in the Williams Gallery at 533 Royal Street, *Beyond the Music* opens on Wednesday, March 11, and continues on view through Sunday, September 13. *Twenty-Five Jazz Fests* at the Contemporary Arts Center, 900 Camp Street, spotlights Smith’s



Second Line Jammers Social and Pleasure Club,
New Orleans, 1987



Chuck Berry, *New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival*, 1982



Funeral of Emile Victor Clay, *Central City*, New Orleans, 1996



Rebirth Jazz Band, Second Line Parade with the Original Four Social Club, *New Orleans, 1987*

photographs of performers at the world-renowned Jazz and Heritage Festival. Opening Friday, April 17, *Twenty-Five Jazz Fests* will continue on view through Sunday, July 12. A full-color catalogue, featuring essays by Jason Berry, Dan Cameron, and John Lawrence and Jude Solomon, chronicles Smith's career and his extensive archive. The book is available from The Shop at The Collection for \$24.95: (504) 598-7147; www.hnoc.org.



Michael P. Smith Photographing Bo Dollis on Super Sunday by *Carolyn Long, March 19, 1989*

In the Spirit

The Photography of Michael P. Smith from
The Historic New Orleans Collection

Beyond the Music

The Historic New Orleans Collection
533 Royal Street

March 11–September 13, 2009

Tuesday–Saturday, 9:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

Sunday, 10:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

Free and open to the public

Twenty-Five Jazz Fests

Contemporary Arts Center
900 Camp Street

April 17–July 12, 2009

Thursday–Sunday, 11:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

Free for CAC members

\$5 General admission \$3 Students & Seniors

DONOR PROFILE:

New Orleans native John Geiser III just downsized. He sold his large Uptown house, donated most of his belongings (many to The Collection), and moved to a smaller home. After retiring from 23 years as Swiss Honorary Consul to New Orleans, Geiser, age 70, is planning to volunteer abroad.

Geiser's Swiss heritage and appreciation of culture comes from his grandfather, John Geiser Sr., an accomplished painter who worked in New Orleans until his death in 1943. Geiser III has been donating family items to The Collection for years. His grandfather's paintings, tools, photographs, and various other items are a valued part of The Collection's holdings.

Born in Langenthal, Switzerland, in 1869, Geiser Sr. learned the trade of decorative painting in Lausanne, Switzerland. Restless to travel, he spent four years in Buenos Aires in his early 20s. After a few months back in Switzerland, he set off again for Havana, Cuba, in October 1893. The French ship on which he traveled, the *Marseilles*, sank in the Atlantic. A lifeboat full of priests recruited him to help them row. They landed in Galveston, Texas, where the Swiss Consul advised Geiser to continue on to New Orleans where he would find a larger Swiss community and more activity.

In New Orleans, Geiser met George Soulié, a Parisian papier-mâché artist who hired him to help make Mardi Gras floats. Geiser lived with a Swiss family on Dauphine Street, where he met and fell in love with the family's cousin, Clara Jeanne Aurianne. After briefly returning to Switzerland, Geiser settled in New Orleans in 1896 and married Clara Jeanne. In 1900, after tiring of depending on the seasonal work provided by the Mardi Gras industry, Geiser started his own business as a "fresco painter" specializing in mural and detail painting for

John Geiser III

theaters, churches, and private homes. John Geiser, Incorporated: Fresco Artists and Interior Decorators was born.

Over the years, Geiser received several important projects. In 1903 he painted a set of seven Victorian-style murals for the Seidenbach mansion at 6020 St. Charles Avenue. A few years later he was commissioned by Mr. and Mrs. Marks Isaac to paint murals and mottoes in the card room of their newly constructed residence at 5120 St. Charles Avenue (now the Milton H. Latter Memorial Library). In 1915 he was offered a job that confirmed his success in the decorative painting industry—the contract to restore the interior of St. Louis Cathedral.

Geiser's only son, John Geiser Jr., took over the family business and Geiser III followed in his footsteps. Fortunately, the younger Geisers often encountered paintings completed by the elder in the course of their work. After World War II, the elaborate Victorian murals in the Seidenbach home were no longer in vogue. In 1946 the new owners of the residence hired painters to cover the grand murals in white. Upon learning that his father's works were to be painted over, Geiser Jr.

successfully requested permission to remove the paintings (which were on canvas). When John Geiser III bought a house on Eighth Street in 1970, his father offered him the murals, which he subsequently installed in his new home. Geiser donated the murals to The Collection after the recent sale of his residence. "I know they're going to be well taken care of," he said.

In 1976, John Geiser, Inc., was chosen by St. Louis Cathedral to reintegrate lighter colors from the church's early years. Geiser Jr. and Geiser III were working on a site that had been assigned to Geiser Sr. many years before.

Geiser III became well acquainted with The Historic New Orleans Collection in the institution's earliest years. He remembers when General L. Kemper Williams first opened his private collection to the public in 1966. Later, John Geiser, Inc., was hired by then-director Stanton "Buddy" Frazar to

paint the walls for the changing exhibitions in the Williams Gallery. Frazar had initiated the changing exhibition program and envisioned the gallery walls being painted a different brilliant color for each new exhibition. Geiser recalls painting those walls over and over again. In the 1980s, Geiser began donating his grandfather's works and family memorabilia to The Collection. Now as he prepares to depart the city to start a new life chapter, Geiser leaves behind a rich legacy. Through his generous donations, he has provided a resource for others to learn about his family and their artistic contributions to New Orleans. "Everyone has treasures in their families. I feel that you owe it to your ancestors to take good care of them," Geiser said. "I know these things will be in good hands at The Collection."

—Rachel Gibbons



The Geiser family. John Geiser Sr. is seated center, Geiser Jr. is standing back left, and Geiser III is the small child sitting on his mother's lap, left.



Details from murals created by John Geiser Sr. for the Seidenbach mansion at 6020 St. Charles Avenue. John Geiser III recently donated the murals to The Historic New Orleans Collection.



LAUSSAT SOCIETY GALA

On November 12, 2008, members of the Laussat Society gathered at the home of Lynne and Hunter White for a gala evening. **Pictured top, left to right,** are Leslie Bertuccin-Ness and Grace Kaynor, Brian and Emelie Cheramie, and Hunter and Lynne White with Sherry and Charles Snyder. **Pictured bottom, left to right,** are Harry and Claire Stabel, Andrew and Crickett Lapeyre, and Peter Sather.



Learn from the Past
BUILD FOR THE FUTURE

Be a Part of Louisiana's Future by Helping to Preserve Its Past...
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Your generous support funds research, educational outreach, award-winning publications, and internationally renowned exhibitions.

Membership has its benefits...

In addition to preserving Louisiana's past, your membership confers valuable benefits, including:

- Subscription to The Collection's donor newsletter
- 10% shop discount
- Unlimited guided tours of the history galleries, Williams Residence, the architecture of THNOC's buildings and courtyards, and current exhibitions (during regular business hours)
- Admission to the Concerts in the Courtyard series
- Members-only trips, events, and exhibition previews
- Recognition on The Collection's donor wall

FOUNDER \$35
 Full membership privileges; as outlined

MERIEULT SOCIETY \$100
 Full membership privileges; special gift

MAHALIA SOCIETY \$250
 Full membership privileges; special gift; private, guided tours of The Collection

JACKSON SOCIETY \$500
 Full membership privileges; special gift; private, guided tours of The Collection; free admission to all evening lectures presented by The Collection

LAUSSAT SOCIETY \$1,000
 Full membership privileges; special gift; private, guided tours of The Collection; free admission to all evening lectures presented by The Collection; special Laussat Society receptions and tours; annual gala evening

BIENVILLE CIRCLE \$5,000
 Full membership privileges; special gift; private, guided tours of The Collection; free admission to all lectures and conferences presented by The Collection; special member receptions and tours; annual gala evening; private luncheon with the executive director

Membership—at all levels—carries benefits for the entire household: a single individual or a couple, along with any children under age 18. For more information, please visit our website at www.hnoc.org or call the office of development at (504) 598-7109. All inquiries are confidential and without obligation.



DONORS: JULY–SEPTEMBER 2008

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MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Second Annual New Orleans Antiques Forum *In Search of Southern Style*

Thursday, August 6–Sunday, August 9

Enjoy four days of lectures and tours dedicated to the study of the southern decorative arts, featuring pre-eminent scholars including Carrie Reborra Barratt, The Metropolitan Museum of Art; Daniel F. Brooks, Arlington Antebellum Home and Gardens; Jason T. Busch, Carnegie Museum of Art; Dana Byrd, Yale University;

Jane Karotkin, Texas Friends of the Governor's Mansion; Christina L. Keyser, George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate and Gardens; Jessie J. Poesch, Newcomb College of Tulane University; Margaret B. Pritchard, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation; J. Thomas Savage, Winterthur Museum & Country Estate.

ACQUISITIONS



THE HISTORIC NEW ORLEANS COLLECTION encourages research in the Williams Research Center at 410 Chartres Street from 9:30 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. Though only selected gifts are mentioned here, the importance of all gifts cannot be overstated. Prospective donors are invited to contact the authors of the acquisitions columns.

MANUSCRIPTS

For the third quarter of 2008 (July–September), there were 21 acquisitions totaling approximately 43 linear feet.

■ The Historic New Orleans Collection recently acquired an 18th-century manuscript of school exercises by an unnamed French boy. Titled “Vers françois et latins sur le départ du Révérend Père Dongé pour le Mississipi, par les écoliers de son quartier,” the manuscript contains translations of a few French poems into Latin. The florid French verse was translated to commemorate Reverend Father Pierre Dongé’s anticipated departure for the Louisiana colony. (2008.0238)

A member of the Jesuit order, Reverend Father Dongé (1670–1705) accompanied Pierre Le Moyne, sieur d’Iberville on his third voyage to Louisiana. Leaving France in September 1701, the Iberville expedition arrived at Pensacola in mid-December of that year. Dongé served as chaplain at Mobile until September 1704, when his superiors ordered his transfer to St. Domingue. Departing on the ship *Pélican*, Dongé succumbed to yellow fever en route to the island colony and is believed to have been buried at Havana, Cuba.

■ In November 2006, La Maison Hospitalière, a historic French Quarter nursing home originally founded to care for indigent women, ceased operation. The organization recently donated its records, covering the years 1890 to 1997, to The Historic New Orleans Collection. Containing institutional minute books, scrapbooks, photographs, and correspondence, the records not only give an overview of La Maison Hospitalière’s history but will provide researchers with a greater understanding of a wide range of topics, including women in New Orleans, housing for the elderly, health care, and French Quarter history. (2008.0207)

La Maison Hospitalière traces its origins to the 1879 founding of La Société Hospitalière Des Dames Louisianaises by Coralie Correjolle (1844–1931) and 30 other women. La Société was dedicated to caring for indigent women who found themselves in difficult circumstances following the Civil War. In 1893, the organization acquired its first property at 822 Barracks Street and named the facility La Maison Hospitalière. The architectural firm of Koch and Hernandez soon added a second floor and expanded the building into a residence capable of housing 35 women.

Eventually the facility was licensed as a nursing home and over the years the property was expanded to encompass buildings along Bourbon and Dauphine streets. Financially strained prior to Hurricane Katrina, La Maison Hospitalière was unable to overcome losses it sustained as a result of the 2005 storm.

■ A small collection of papers from the Nighthead and Gouguet families donated by Wayne Gouguet focuses primarily on the life of Bavarian immigrant and Seventh Ward resident George Nighthead (ca. 1841–1910) and the descendants of his daughter Annie Nighthead Gouguet (ca. 1866–1923). George Nighthead, who established Nighthead’s Restaurant near Bayou St. John and also ran an ice house on North Rampart

Street, married at least three times. Annie was the daughter from his marriage to Mary Ann Crowell.

One of the intriguing and poignant items in the collection is a report card booklet belonging to Florence Thayer, the wife of Annie Nighthead Gouguet’s son George. Thayer had attended McDonough 11, a public school at the corner of Palmyra and Roman streets in Mid-City. Covering the 1895–96 academic year, the booklet plots Florence’s



George Nighthead
(2008.0257, folder 6)



Florence Thayer Gouguet
(2008.0257, folder 9)

progress as a third grader. She started the year off with good grades, but her scores plummeted after the first few months and she continued to fail for the remainder of the year. This sudden shift may be attributed to the fact that her stepfather, George Thayer, passed away in August 1895. Florence’s mother Annie Tandy (ca. 1849–1925) married four times. Her second husband, Victor Garvis, died when Florence was two years old. Thayer, Annie’s third husband, was the father young Florence knew best. (2008.0275)

—*Mary Lou Eichhorn*

LIBRARY

For the third quarter of 2008 (July–September), there were 36 acquisitions totaling 110 items.

■ The 25th anniversary of the Battle of New Orleans, in 1840, and the death of its hero, Andrew Jackson, in 1845,

prompted a number of publications on the former U.S. president's life and achievements, but very few in a language other than English. Amédée-Théodore Bouis, a little-known Louisianian living in Paris during the 1840s, anonymously published a pamphlet there entitled *Biographie du général Andrew Jackson, ancien président des États-Unis* in 1841. A second Parisian edition appeared the following year, listing its author on the title page. Upon Jackson's death, another edition with new material was published, this time in New Orleans by J. L. Sol-lée. The Historic New Orleans Collection recently acquired the New Orleans imprint, which is unlisted in local bibliographies. While the pamphlet covers the major events of Jackson's life, his military career, and presidency, there is little to indicate that the author knew his subject personally or ever met him. (2008.0271)

■ The Cromwell Steamship Company's very detailed 1900 brochure entitled *New York and New Orleans Direct* claimed that because the company's steamers made no stops between New York and New Orleans, inconveniences such as changes and delays were completely avoided. One panel of the recently acquired brochure describes in idyllic terms "A Beautiful Voyage to the Crescent City" from the pier at Rector Street in New York to the wharf at the foot of Toulouse Street in New Orleans. It also lists the five steamships of the fleet and their captains, gives elaborate timetables for rail connections from New Orleans to points north and west and into Mexico, and folds out to reveal a United States map showing the company's sea routes and inland connections. (2008.0269)

■ Theodore Roosevelt's love of the outdoors was prodigious, matched only by his love of writing about his adventures. Recently acquired, *A Book-lover's Holidays in the Open* (1916) is a compilation of essays on Roosevelt's trips to the wilds. He takes the reader to the rim of the Grand Canyon, then on to Argentina, Chile, Brazil, and Canada. Of local interest is his chapter "Bird Reserves at the Mouth of the Mississippi." In June 1915,

Roosevelt was a guest in the Pass Christian home of his friend and future Louisiana governor John M. Parker of New Orleans. He comments on the practice of well-to-do southerners maintaining summer houses on the Gulf and notes that "there is not much bad weather, as a rule, but every few years there comes a terrible storm which wrecks buildings and destroys human lives by the thousand, washes the small Gulf sailing craft ashore, and sweeps away all the docks." Roosevelt continues to describe his visit, the wildfowl of the Gulf region, activities of game wardens and poachers, and the good work of the Audubon Society in preserving bird habitats. (2008.0277)

■ Opera sensation Adelina Patti (1843–1919), considered by music scholars to be the greatest soprano of the 19th century, visited New Orleans often during her career, briefly residing in the building at 631 Royal Street still known as "Patti's Court." A recently acquired pamphlet, *Biographical Sketch of Madame Adelina Patti*, published around 1880 by Steinway & Sons, provides a brief account of the life and career of the popular star and contains many professional endorsements and advertisements for Steinway's pianos. (2008.0112)

—*Pamela D. Arceneaux*

CURATORIAL

For the third quarter of 2008 (July–September), there were 25 acquisitions totaling more than 500 items.

■ George Peter Alexander Healy was a prominent and prolific mid-19th-century American portrait painter. During intermittent stays in New Orleans in 1860 and 1861, he painted a large number of portraits. The Collection recently acquired one of his New Orleans works, a likeness of Colonel Alva Morris Holbrook, painted in 1861. The sitter was the publisher of the *Picayune*, a New Orleans daily newspaper. In 1872, Holbrook married his literary editor, Eliza Jane Poitevent. When Holbrook died four years later, she became the editor of the newspaper. (2008.0219)



Young Douglass by Elizabeth Catlett, 2004 (2008.0251.2)

■ A recent gift from Charles Ferguson includes 13 political cartoons by Byron Humphrey, whose work appeared in the editorial pages of the *New Orleans States-Item* from 1972 to 1981. The ink drawings reference topics of local, national, and international interest. Also included in the gift is *Young Douglass*, a woodcut portrait of abolitionist Frederick Douglass by Elizabeth Catlett. (2008.0251.1–16)

■ Twentieth-century painter Alvyk Boyd Cruise is well known for his historical watercolors depicting the architecture of 19th-century New Orleans. However, Cruise's subject matter extended beyond the historical to still lifes and modern cityscapes. *Coming Jack Lamp* is an example of the latter, showing a modest commercial building in the final stages of demolition. The work is executed in Cruise's crisply edged and detailed style. (2008.0249)

■ Jay Dearborn Edwards made photographs in New Orleans from 1858 to 1861. Displaced by the Civil War, he moved from place to place until he reestablished himself as a photographer in Atlanta in 1886. Edwards's great-grandson and namesake, Jay D. Edwards, has donated two of the photographer's Atlanta works. Both depict the bustling downtown area near Wall Street, with one photograph prominently featuring the railroad station and its steam-powered locomotive. (2008.0263.2,.3)

—*John H. Lawrence*

IN MEMORIAM



The Historic New Orleans Collection mourns the loss of Shirley Ludman, shop assistant, who died on January 19, 2009. Shirley joined the staff of The Collection in September 1988. Her enthusiastic reception of visitors to The Shop and genuine zest for life will be greatly missed.



THE HISTORIC NEW ORLEANS COLLECTION QUARTERLY

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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 9:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m., and Sunday, from 10:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. Tours of the History Galleries, the Williams Residence, and the architecture of the buildings and courtyards are available for a nominal fee.

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ISSN 0886-2109

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A Tribute to Dr. William F. Wagner

When the preeminent New Orleans jazz collector Russell Wagner, more commonly known as Bill Russell, passed away on August 9, 1992, his brother, Dr. William F. Wagner, became responsible for finding a home for his brother's vast assemblage of rare jazz materials. Looking and sounding remarkably like Russell, Dr. Wagner approached The Historic New Orleans Collection and within a month the more than 56,000 items were residing in The Collection's vaults. Thus began a longstanding relationship between Dr. Wagner and The Collection.

Over the years, Dr. Wagner made numerous donations to supplement the original William Russell Jazz Collection. He acted as a liaison with jazz collectors, encouraging them to donate their papers to the repository. And he was a constant source of information about both the Russell Collection and his brother's life. Although Dr. Wagner did not himself



William Wagner and former manuscripts registrar Joseph Scott move boxes of materials in the William Russell Jazz Collection, 1992

pursue a musical career—he was a highly regarded chemistry professor at the University of Kentucky at Lexington—he assisted his brother in some of his landmark recordings, went with him on searches for rare musical treasures, traveled with him in Europe, and cared for him in later years.

On October 31, 2008, Dr. Wagner passed away at the age of 92.

—*Alfred E. Lemmon*

STAFF

IN THE COMMUNITY

John Lawrence moderated a panel discussion, "The Artist's Perspective," at the Louisiana Arts and Science Museum in Baton Rouge. **Anne Robichaux** was elected to the board of the Vieux Carré Property Owners, Residents and Associates.

EDUCATION

Daniel Hammer received a master's degree in preservation studies from Tulane University.

CHANGES

Ashley Barckett, library processor; **Eric Seiferth**, reading room projects assistant.

INTERNS

Letitia R. Hopkins, Xavier University, curatorial department.

VOLUNTEERS

Pattie Averback, **Edith Dunn**, **Denise Gremillion**, and **Susan Whelan**, docent department; **Frank Pons**, Williams Research Center.

Tenth Annual Bill Russell Lecture *Louis Armstrong's New Orleans*

by **Dr. Thomas Brothers**

Director of graduate studies and professor of music at Duke University and author of *Louis Armstrong's New Orleans* (W. W. Norton, 2006)

Friday, April 17, 2009

Williams Research Center
410 Chartres Street
7:00 p.m.

Free and open to the public
Seating is limited.
Call (504) 523-4662 for
reservations.

*Presented in conjunction with the
French Quarter Festival*

THE SHOP

The Shop is offering a new line of stationery designed exclusively for The Collection by New Orleans stationer Alexa Pulitzer. Showcasing three illustrations from treasury notes in The Collection's holdings, the note cards are sold in sets of 10 for \$12. Each set features one illustration.

The Shop is also carrying a selection of handbags featuring John James Audubon prints. Produced by Art Bags, a designer that uses licensed images from museums and contemporary artists, the custom bags sell for between \$120 and \$140.

All items can be ordered online at www.hnoc.org or by calling (504) 598-7147.



Detail of woman from the \$50 treasury note issued by the Bank of Louisiana, 1862 (1976.129.4.30), gift of Mrs. Alfred Grima

CITY OF NEW ORLEANS



Detail of New Orleans from the \$200 treasury note issued by Municipality Number One, City of New Orleans, 1837 (1952.27.8)



Detail of pelican from the \$20 treasury note issued by Municipality Number Two, City of New Orleans, 1843 (1952.27.23)

EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH UPDATE

OCEAN COMMOTION 2008

The education department participated in Ocean Commotion 2008 on Thursday, November 13, at the Pete Maravich Assembly Center on Louisiana State University's campus in Baton Rouge. Hosted annually by the Louisiana Sea Grant College Program, Ocean Commotion is an event in which area students have an opportunity to learn about and interact with the plants and wildlife of the state's coastal environment. The Louisiana Sea Grant College Program was established in 1968 to promote the state's coastal resources through research and education. As one of the program's educational initiatives, Ocean Commotion assembles exhibitors from both public and private institutions to make presentations to teachers and students. This year 60 exhibitors participated and more than 3,000 teachers and students attended.

The education department's booth featured a marsh mural that students were encouraged to help create by adding their own strokes of the brush to a canvas prepared by The Collection's staff artists. The students were able to portray in an artistic manner what they had learned from other exhibitors about coastal wildlife. The idea for a Louisiana wetlands mural originated at The Collection's annual Family Day in the spring of 2008. The education department plans to incorporate the wetlands mural project into the programs it offers to New Orleans schools.



—Sue Laudeman

AT THE COLLECTION



On October 1, 2008, The Collection hosted a reception in honor of the opening of *A Closer Look: The Antebellum Photographs of Jay Dearborn Edwards, 1858–1861*. Visitors to the exhibition galleries enjoyed a mix of old and new—the earliest known photographic prints of New Orleans and interactive viewing stations.



More than 300 people turned out to see *Theresa Andersson* in the final performance of the fall *Concerts in the Courtyard* series. **The series resumes this spring on Friday, March 20. Visit www.hnoc.org for dates and performers.**



The Historic New Orleans Collection was one of several sites in the French Quarter and downtown New Orleans hosting new-media installations as part of *DesCours*, an annual five-day contemporary architecture and visual arts event presented by the American Institute of Architects New Orleans (December 10–14, 2008). Presented in the Toulouse Street courtyard, the installation at *The Collection*, Petal Project 5, was created by architects *Thaddeus Zarse and Clare Olsen*.



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