



THE HISTORIC NEW ORLEANS COLLECTION NEWSLETTER

Volume III, Number 2

Spring 1985

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Clarence John Laughlin

TRIBUTE TO A MASTER

Grandeur and Ruin
(Belle Grove Planta-
tion, neg. no. 4928)

January 2, 1985, marked the passing of one of photography's greatest masters. Clarence John Laughlin, who would have been 80 years old on August 14, pursued a career as a creative photographer and writer for nearly forty years. The great majority of his photographs are owned by THNOC, which has become the definitive repository for Mr. Laughlin's work.

After his photographic activity slowed in the

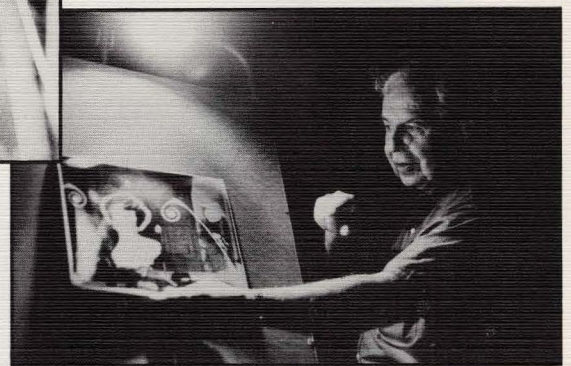
early 1970s, Mr. Laughlin devoted his time to printing and organizing his collection, enjoying his 30,000 volume library, and continuing his writing which he considered as much his vocation as his photography.

The importance that the artist placed on the written word in conjunction with the visual image is most apparent in *Ghosts Along the Mississippi*, his second and most widely acclaimed



Clarence John Laughlin with his photograph, *The Metaphysical Beauty Parlor*. Photograph © Michael P. Smith.

The Metaphysical Beauty Parlor: or, What is Reality? (neg. no. 10298)
 Here, in a strange dark world, distilled from an ugly and shabby showcase, emerges a kind of hyper-reality—in which mingle, incongruously, a fish swimming on a painted line, a Chinese face for a negro shop, a visage of sickening prettiness—all resulting in the most convincingly “real” unrealness; while above, the dust on the glass suggests the walls of a dead city . . . A window which makes manifest, through the camera, the unreality of the “real.”—C. J. Laughlin



book. It is a classic evocation of Louisiana plantation architecture with striking photographs and text. Because of the book's wide popularity, it has been reprinted repeatedly since its first publication in 1948; yet it represents only a fraction of Mr. Laughlin's lifework.

Mr. Laughlin's negative file contains over 17,000 film negatives and transparencies, primarily on 4x5 film. From these, he crafted some 2,000 master prints. The negatives, executed between 1935 and about 1970, bring out the artist's fascination with fantasy and the inner meaning suggested by people, objects, and architecture.

The Laughlin photographs and related materials were acquired by the Collection in two separate purchases. The first, from Mr. Laughlin himself in 1981, was the result of several years of negotiations between the artist and chief curator Dode Platou on behalf of THNOC.

This purchase included the 2,000 master prints and thousands of other examples of his work in print sizes ranging from 8x10 to 40x50-inch murals. An especially valuable part

of this collection is the artist's voluminous correspondence file with artists, educators, museum personnel, publishers, magazine editors, and friends. The file contains not only incoming letters but carbon copies of all his own letters.

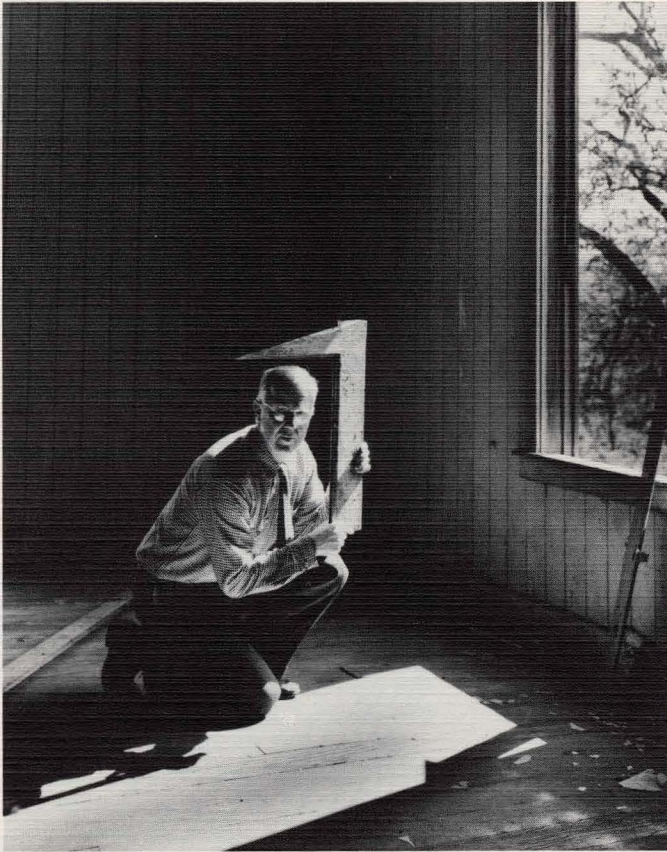
*. . . one of
 the progenitors
 of American
 surrealist
 photography*

The second purchase of Mr. Laughlin's work was made in 1983 from the photographic archives at the University of Louisville. This acquisition consisted of Mr. Laughlin's negatives, his file of 8x10 work prints, and his card file containing

technical and historical information on each negative that he made.

The extraordinary depth and detailed documentation of the collection make it an important addition to THNOC's holdings. The master print portion of the collection, as well as the many 8x10 work prints are available for use. Access to these photographs may be obtained through the card file.

The two groups of work establish the Collection as the principal repository for the study of Mr. Laughlin's photographs and writings, a designation echoed by the artist in the document of purchase executed in 1981. The curatorial decision to collect his entire range of work, rather than just a narrow selection of Louisiana photographs, was made to underscore the reputation of Mr. Laughlin as one of the most significant artists—and one of international renown—to work in Louisiana. Beyond Louisiana subjects, his work encompasses art, Victorian and modern architecture, and folk architecture throughout the Mississippi Valley and along the West Coast of the United States. This



The Photographer as Explorer of Space and Light (neg. no. 11082)

This poetic portrait of Wynn Bullock is made in his own habitat. He kneels near a plane of light which seems to lift itself from the floor; the object held (which I found in the house)—defines space, and evokes the magic of light.—C. J. Laughlin

the simple name, place, and date, and explore his feelings at the time the photograph was made.

Mrs. Platou and curator John H. Lawrence have begun to inventory the collection, resleeving negatives and preparing data entry forms for inclusion in THNOC's computerized data-retrieval system.

As a tribute to Mr. Laughlin, the Collection has organized an exhibition based on *Ghosts Along the Mississippi*. The exhibition draws largely from the spirit of that book and indeed shows photographs made at some of the same locations and at the same time. The territory will be familiar, but the look will be slightly different: Mrs. Platou and Mr. Lawrence have selected some of the less familiar work, allowing the public to appreciate more fully the creative genius of Clarence John Laughlin.

The exhibition, *Other Ghosts Along the Mississippi*, opens May 1 and continues until December 6.

—John H. Lawrence

**THE HISTORIC
NEW ORLEANS
COLLECTION
NEWSLETTER**

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The Historic New Orleans Collection Newsletter is published quarterly by the Historic New Orleans Collection, which is operated by the Kemper and Leila Williams Foundation, a Louisiana non-profit 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 4:45 p.m. Tours of the history galleries and the residence are available for a nominal fee.

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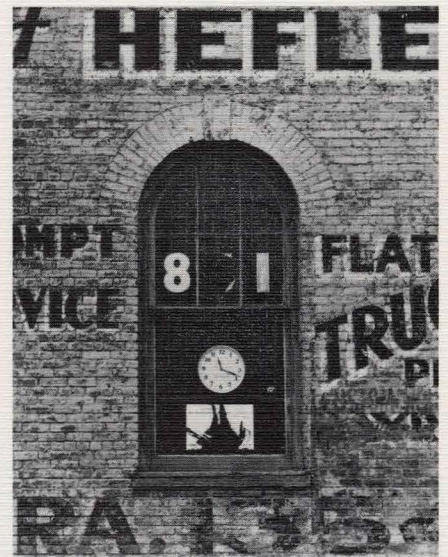
Stanton Frazier, Director

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body of work is both interpretive and documentary.

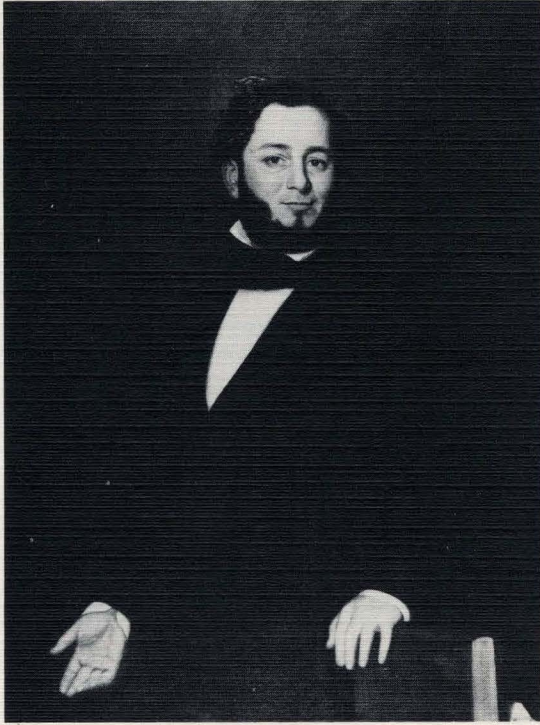
Other groups of work in the Collection—there are over twenty distinct categories defined by Mr. Laughlin—may be termed more purely creative and, in some instances, experimental. He has been recognized as one of the progenitors of American surrealist photography: his photographs and writings from groups such as "Images of the Lost," "Visual Poems," and "Satires" illustrate this aspect of his work. His themes in these photographs are universal, though the subjects themselves tend to be very specific. The essence of his intent is further amplified by captions for each photograph which go beyond



Clock Suspended in Time (neg. no. 5972)

Here is a clock apparently suspended in timeless space; the glass is torn like a piece of paper; the wall has a feeling of a bygone time—all photographed in light that is centerless, and without shadow. The very intensity of the reality of the textures and tones here give the picture a feeling of strange unreality.—C. J. Laughlin

Adolph Rinck, Portraitist



Portrait of Judah P. Benjamin by Adolph Rinck (1959.82)

In 1853 Adolph Rinck painted this portrait of Judah P. Benjamin, the famous, scholarly lawyer, who was born in 1811 in St. Croix and came to New Orleans in 1827. Benjamin, having established a successful practice, later bought Belle Chasse plantation. He was elected to the United States Senate in 1852 and fought to allow states the right to decide whether slavery should be legal. When Louisiana seceded on January 26, 1861, Jefferson Davis appointed Benjamin Attorney General, later Secretary of War, and finally Secretary of State. When the war ended in 1865, he fled to England and was admitted to the English bar on June 6, 1866. He died in Paris on May 6, 1884.

This portrait was painted the year after Benjamin was elected to the Senate. Stylistically the portrait reflects the neoclassicism of the French academic tradition in which Rinck was trained—facial features are concentrated upon and depicted with a precise realism. Benjamin is portrayed in the formal three-quarter pose against a plain background, a common practice. There is a high finish, and the table and book create a three-dimensionality typical of the artist's academic training. Rinck's use of color

is also somber and conservative, the black of Benjamin's suit highlighted against the shaded, olive background.

Recent census research for the upcoming *Encyclopedia of New Orleans Artists, 1718-1918*, has revealed that Rinck was born around 1810 in France, not in Germany or Norway as previously believed. He was trained in the Royal Academy in Berlin and later in Paris under Paul Delaroche, who had become professor of painting at the *École des Beaux-Arts* in 1833. In 1835 and from 1838 to 1840 Rinck exhibited portraits at the Salon in Paris where he may have met Jean Joseph Vaudechamp, one of New Orleans's most prolific portraitists. It is possible that Vaudechamp, who exhibited intermittently at the Salon between 1831 and 1848, encouraged Rinck to come to Louisiana.

The first indication of Rinck's living in New Orleans is an advertisement in the New Orleans *Bee* of December 9, 1840, in which he mentions that he is a friend of Vaudechamp's. This was a time of tremendous growth and prosperity for New Orleans: the population doubled to approximately 100,000 between 1830 and 1840. As a result, artists were in great demand as por-

trait painters of the wealthy planter and merchant families. Throughout his career Rinck painted many important citizens, including miniatures of philanthropist Judah Touro and John Woodhouse Audubon, son of the famous artist; he also painted a portrait believed to be of Marie Laveau and another of Theodore Clapp, a prominent minister.

Between 1840 and 1845 Rinck's advertisements indicate that he, like most other talented artists of this time, was an itinerant painter who worked here during the winter, thus escaping the heat and yellow fever of the summer months. By 1846 he seems to have become a permanent resident and was even giving painting and drawing lessons to ladies and young persons; by 1850 his wife Margarete had also opened a business in the Place d'Armes, where she sold the latest fashions and embroideries from France.

During this decade Rinck continued to practice portrait painting, but an article in the *Daily Picayune* of November 19, 1859, indicates that he also had a farm below the city on the west bank and was interested in scientific agriculture. He wrote a pamphlet outlining his ideas for a model farm. Between 1861 and 1868 there is no indication of his residency here. An article in the *Daily Picayune* of December 5, 1869, however, establishes him as resident and publisher of another pamphlet in which he expounded his ideas for an educational institution: agricultural labor should be scientifically and practically taught in addition to the sciences and "belles lettres."

According to the 1870 census, his real estate was valued at two thousand dollars and his personal estate at three hundred dollars. The last indication of Rinck's presence in New Orleans is an advertisement for portrait painting in the *Bee* dated February 17, 1871.

—Charles S. Buchanan

Sources: Mrs. Thomas Nelson Carter Bruns, comp., *Louisiana Portraits* (New Orleans, 1975); Lynne W. Farwell, "Jean Joseph Vaudechamp," *The Magazine Antiques* (September, 1968); Jessie Poesch, *The Art of the Old South: Painting, Sculpture, Architecture & the Products of Craftsmen, 1560-1860* (New York, 1983); Works Progress Administration, Delgado Art Museum Project (unpublished manuscript, 1940).

From the

Director



Dr. Alfred E. Lemmon, right, at his desk in the new manuscripts reading room



Manuscripts on the Move

A year ago May marked the opening of "The Fair," and spirits were high. *Rain*, THNOC's exhibit, was identified by a huge, deep-red umbrella which rapidly became a landmark, the equivalent of D. H. Holmes's clock for locals. Whatever else one may say about the Fair—and much has been said—there is no denying the enormous popularity of this water-inspired exhibit, sponsored by us and designated the official pavilion of the City of New Orleans. Over 800,000 fairgoers experienced the real to surreal exhibit, a number just under the New Orleans Museum of Art's King Tut. It's a nice feeling.

Another related exhibit, *The Waters of America*, celebrated both the Fair's theme and the Collection's Tchoupitoulas Street facility. Over 8,000 people came to see the exhibit—a record, I thought, for the opening of a building. After I made that statement in the PRC's *Preservation in Print*, chief curatorial cataloger John Magill corrected me to announce that about 10,000 people attended the opening of the Hibernia National Bank building in 1921. I stand corrected, John.



Our next major effort is the publication of the *Encyclopedia of New Orleans Artists, 1718-1918*, the research for which was begun by director emeritus Boyd Cruise some forty years ago. This reference volume of New Orleans artists will contribute significantly to the understanding of the fine arts in the Deep South.

—S.F.

Opportunities for researchers at the Collection are expanding: the manuscripts division announces the opening of a separate reading room for manuscripts and microfilm. The changes occurred on March 5 when all the microfilm readers were moved downstairs to the former conference room on Toulouse Street.

Susan Cole, curator of manuscripts, says the significant growth of the division's holdings prompted the move, as did the increase in the number of researchers. The downstairs room, located at 722 Toulouse, will now be turned over permanently to housing and servicing these holdings; Dr. Alfred E. Lemmon, coordinator of special projects, has also relocated to this area. The manuscripts offices will remain upstairs, but a staff member will be on hand at all times to offer assistance in the reading room.

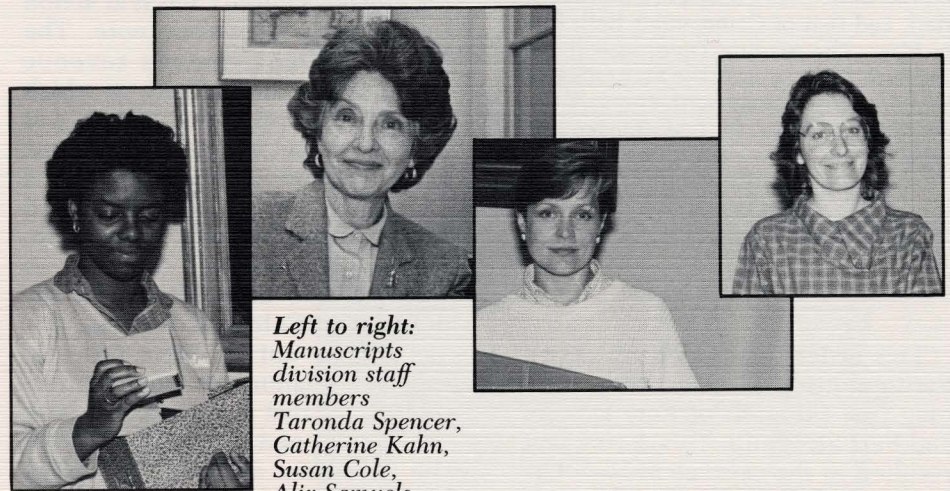
Manuscripts researchers still go to the main entrance at 533 Royal Street to be directed to the manuscripts division.

Examples of THNOC's manu-

scripts include numerous collections of family papers, documents from all periods in New Orleans history, and surveyors' field notebooks from the 19th century. Of particular interest is the Historic Cemetery Survey, extensively indexed, which provides photographs and descriptions of each tomb in nine New Orleans cemeteries.

Microfilm holdings have grown to 6200 reels, according to Dr. Lemmon. Those in particular demand are census records and ships' passenger lists from the National Archives and New Orleans newspapers—the *Times Picayune* and almost every local paper that saw publication. Other noteworthy microfilm holdings are the Sanborn insurance maps and newly acquired materials from Spanish and French archives. Extensive records of New Orleans's German community, the subject of the recent *Manuscripts Division Update*, are also available.

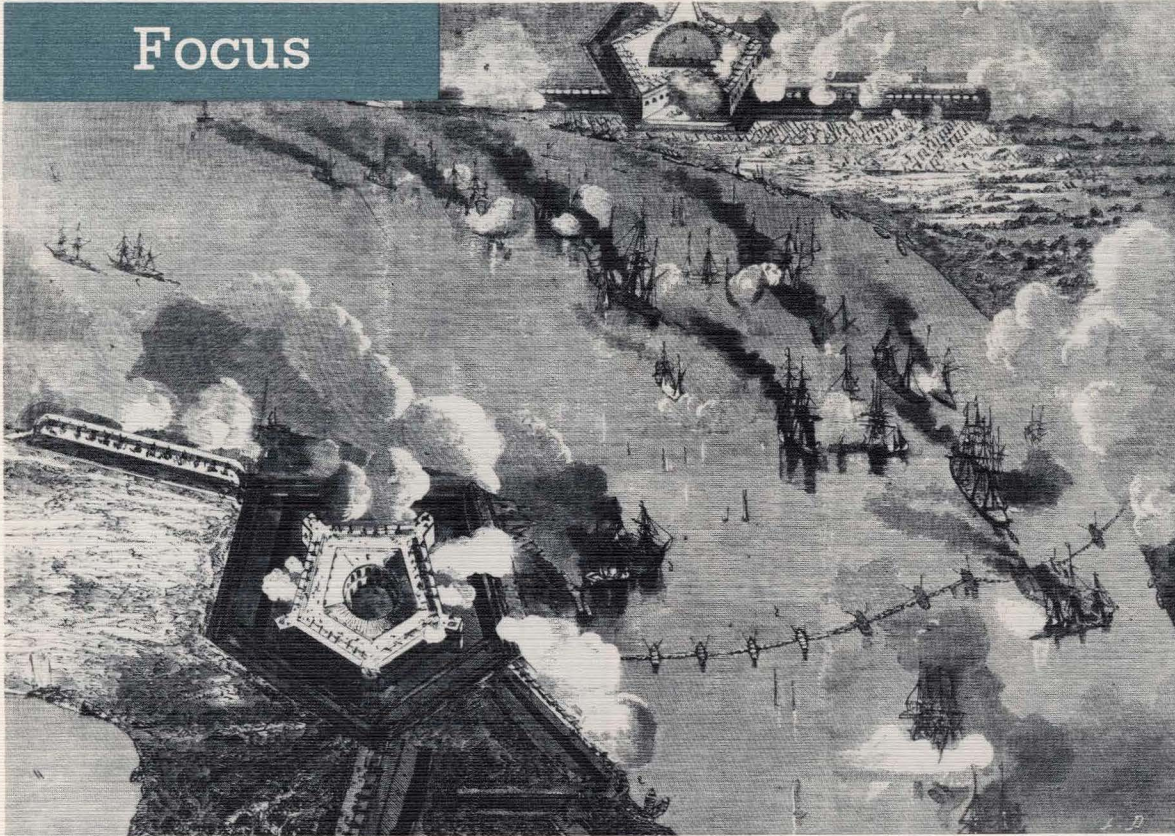
The new manuscripts reading room has four microfilm readers to accommodate a greater number of researchers.



Left to right:
Manuscripts
division staff
members
Taronda Spencer,
Catherine Kahn,
Susan Cole,
Alix Samuels

When the Night was as Bright as Day . . .

Focus



Bombardment of Fort Jackson and Fort St. Philip on the Mississippi, 1862, from Le Monde Illustré (1974.25.9.243)

U. S. Flag Ship "Hartford"
Mississippi River
April 23rd, 1862

General Order

The "Colorado's" Distinguishing Signal, two Perpendicular Red Lights, will be hoisted at the Peak of this Ship when I wish the Fleet to get underweigh, and when underweigh to proceed up the River.

The Division led by the Flag Officer will be the Blue, that led by Captain Bailey, Red, and that of Commander Bell, Red & Blue. The leading Division will not use their Port Guns, & the Flag Officer's Division their Starboard Guns in ascending the River, for fear of firing into each other.

D. G. Farragut
Flag Officer,
W. Gulf Block'g Squadron

This order was issued by David Farragut just prior to his fleet's running past the guns of Fort Jackson and Fort St. Philip. This daring feat resulted in the capture of New Orleans, the largest port in the Con-

federacy, and made Farragut a Union hero. His success could not have been achieved without the heroic efforts of Lt. Charles H. B. Caldwell, whose papers have recently been added to the Collection's holdings.

Born in Hingham, Massachusetts in 1823, Charles Henry Bromed Caldwell entered the navy in 1838. Promotion was slow during peacetime; at the advent of the Civil War he held the rank of lieutenant.

Caldwell's initial Civil War action ended on a discordant note. The Treasury Department's revenue cutter *Robert McClelland*, on which Caldwell served as first officer, was operating out of New Orleans just as secession swept the South. When Treasury Secretary John Dix heard that the *McClelland's* captain intended to surrender the ship to Confederate authorities, he ordered Lt. Caldwell to take the *McClelland* out of New Orleans. Caldwell's failure so angered Secretary Dix that he dismissed both the captain and Lt. Caldwell from the Treasury service; Caldwell, however, remained in the navy.

The following year, in April 1862, Caldwell redeemed himself by playing a major role in the events leading to the capture of New Orleans. As commander of the gunboat *Itasca*, he was part of the Western Blockading Squadron under Flag Officer David G. Farragut. The fleet proceeded up the Mississippi River until reaching the city's only real defense against enemy attack from the Gulf: Fort Jackson on the west bank and Fort St. Philip on the east bank, 75 miles downriver from New Orleans. Besides confronting a murderous crossfire from the forts, Farragut and his fleet had to contend with such natural defenses as the river's powerful current and the swampy Louisiana terrain. To hinder the enemy further, Confederate defenders in the fort blockaded the river with a chain barrier supported by eight schooner hulks.

When bombardment failed to force their surrender, Farragut chose to run past the forts in order to reach the city, his main objective. On the night of April 21 the *Itasca*, commanded by Caldwell and accompanied by another gunboat,

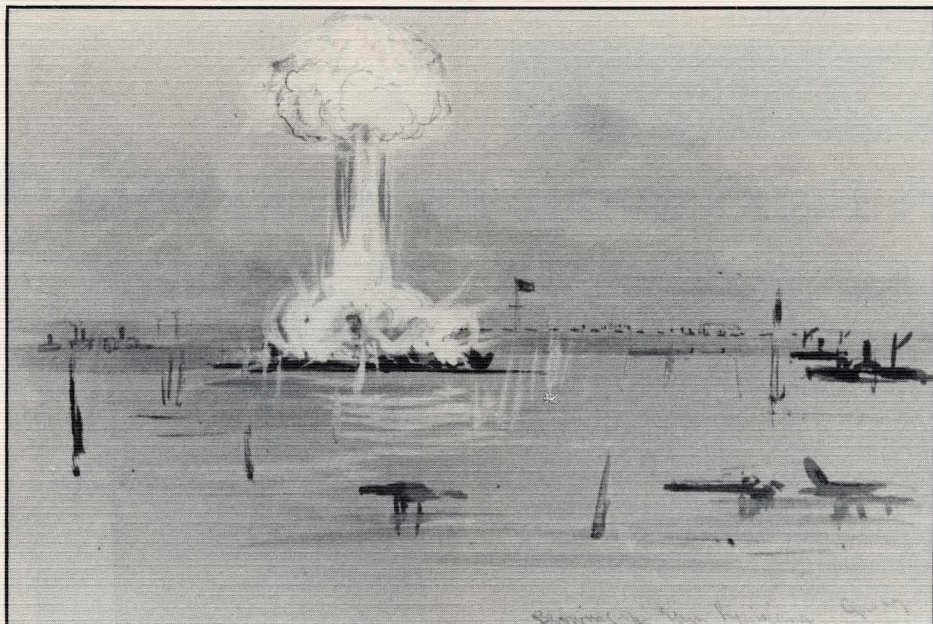
set out to breach the barrier with explosive charges, but the operation went awry when the explosives did not detonate.

Caldwell quickly ordered his crew to haul up the barrier chain and cut it with a chisel and hammer. The sudden parting of the chain drove the *Itasca* into the shallows, but she was eventually pulled free. To make the breach even wider, Caldwell sailed through the opening, then turned dramatically and smashed through another section of the chain.

Farragut waited until the early hours of April 24 to attempt a run past the forts. At 2:00 a.m. the two perpendicular red lights mentioned in Farragut's order appeared on the peak of the *Hartford*, and the fleet moved through the chain barrier toward the forts. The power of the Union fleet proved too much for the defenders in the forts. After a furious battle, which lit up the night as bright as day, the majority of the Union fleet passed the forts and steamed to New Orleans.

Ironically, one of the ships which failed to make the passage was the *Itasca*. As she approached the breach a Confederate cannonball struck one of her boilers. The *Itasca* reached New Orleans only after the surrender of the forts.

After the battle, Caldwell was promoted to the rank of commander in charge of the ironclad gunboat *Essex* at the siege of Port Hudson. In 1867 Caldwell became a captain; in 1870, Chief of Staff of the North Atlantic Fleet; and finally, in 1874, commodore. He died



Blowing Up Ram Louisiana by William Waud (1977.137.1.9)

November 30, 1877.

The Caldwell papers consist primarily of orders received by Caldwell during the Civil War, the most important of which are those issued by Farragut concerning the attack on Fort Jackson and Fort St. Philip and the orders of Farragut and Capt. Thornton Jenkins during the siege of Port Hudson. There is also a hand-drawn map of the defenses of Port Hudson.

The Caldwell papers complement several other important manuscripts collections including the Johnson Kelly Duncan letters, the Fort Jackson and Fort St. Philip letters, the U.S.S. *Portsmouth* journal, and the John Hart Diary. Combined, these collections give an ex-

cellent overview of the most important Civil War battle in Louisiana.

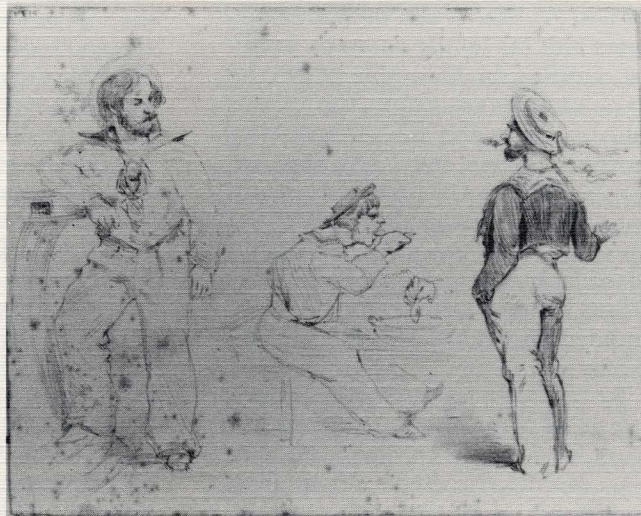
—Mark David Luccioni

Mr. Luccioni, formerly head manuscripts cataloger, is currently with the Alabama State Archives in Montgomery.

Sources: Charles L. Dufour, *The Night the War Was Lost* (Garden City, N. Y., 1960); R. U. Johnson and C. C. Buel, eds., *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War* (New York, 1887-1888); *Official Records of the War of the Rebellion* (Washington, D. C., 1880-1901); David D. Porter, *The Naval History of the Civil War* (New York, 1889); Thomas Scharf, *A History of the Confederate States Navy from its Organization to the Surrender of its Last Vessel* (New York, 1887); John D. Winters, *The Civil War in Louisiana* (Baton Rouge, 1963).



David G. Farragut (1975.123)



Sailors of the period. Character sketches by William Waud (1977.137.1.28).

New Orleans

A Rendezvous for Booklovers

New Orleans on the eve of the Civil War was one of the most commercial cities in the United States. During the economic confusion following the city's fall to Federal forces in 1862, however, many of the older establishments failed. The city's commercial opportunities and the benefits of a vigorous economic revival which followed the fall of Vicksburg in mid-1863 were thus left primarily to northern businessmen.

This favorable economic climate was responsible for attracting Blelock & Co., a then-famous stationery and bookselling firm which, though headquartered in New York, had branches in several southern cities. To establish the firm's New Orleans store in 1863, George and William Blelock chose Albert Eyrich. Eyrich, who had a "peculiar talent" for the business, had first been

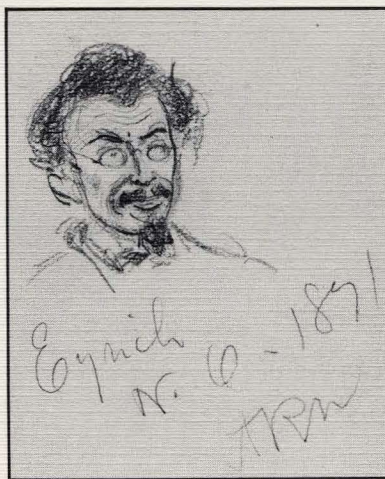


Eyrich's label

associated with the company's Memphis store and then had set up a successful branch at Vicksburg.

Albert Eyrich (1839?-1891) was born in Prussia. When he was eleven years old, his family came to America, settling in Memphis. After he completed his education, Eyrich was employed in the pharmaceutical business. When the Civil War began, he enlisted in the Confederate army but soon was discharged because a serious eye disorder had incapacitated him for active duty. When he was physically able, he found employment with Blelock and Co.

By 1869 Eyrich had become proprietor of the store. For the next 22 years he was the guiding spirit behind one of the city's outstanding bookstores, even though he was ac-



Albert Eyrich by Alfred R. Waud (1965.90.281.2)

tually the owner for only four years. For a brief period the store was taken over by the Kain brothers, one of whom had clerked for Albert Eyrich, but it returned to Eyrich hands in 1875. It was owned successively by Albert Eyrich's brothers, Robert and Julius C., but Albert remained as clerk and later as manager until his death in 1891. By 1893, the store had gone out of business, a casualty of the economic depression which occurred in that year.

Throughout these years of changing ownership, two things remained constant. One was the bookstore's location at 130 Canal Street; Adler's Jewelers today stands on the site (now numbered 718-720 Canal Street) occupied by Eyrich's building, destroyed by fire in 1908. The other was the bookstore's ability to provide its customers with a variety of quality reading material. Eyrich's handled newspapers and such periodicals as *Every Saturday* and offered books ranging from R. Shelton MacKenzie's *Life of Charles Dickens* (1870) to *Poems* (1877) by Sidney Lanier to *Illustrated History of Ancient Literature, Oriental and Classical* (1878) by John D. Quackenbos. Local authors' works were not neglected: Eyrich's stocked such items as *A Woman of New Orleans*

(1889) by "a Man o' the Town" (Samuel Humphreys James). In addition, the shop proclaimed itself "headquarters for fine stationery."

The popularity of the store was referred to in J. C. Eyrich's obituary: "For a score of years, when the French Opera was at its height, the Eyrich shop was a delightful rendezvous for booklovers." Among its customers was Eliza Nicholson, editor of the *Picayune*, who wrote poetry under the pseudonym "Pearl Rivers."

Another, although minor, aspect of the Eyrich enterprise was publishing. In 1869 *The Heroine of the Confederacy; or, Truth and Justice* by Florence O'Connor, which had been published in London three years earlier, was brought out under the Eyrich imprint. *The Heroine of the Confederacy* may be Eyrich's only publication; no other has been located.

Eyrich's Bookstore, though now forgotten, was in its heyday "one of the most familiar institutions of its character in this section of the country," according to Albert Eyrich's death notice in the *Daily Picayune*. A large part of its popularity may be attributed to the enterprising and well-read Albert Eyrich, "... a man of culture and refinement, whose ... pursuit of the book business was, perhaps, more for the gratification of his tastes than for the actual financial gain."

—Florence M. Jumonville

Sources: Advertisement for Eyrichs Book Store, *The Ladies' Hand Book of Needle Work* ([S. 1.], 1879); Gerald M. Capers, *Occupied City: New Orleans under the Federals, 1862-1865* (Lexington, Ky., 1965); "Death of Albert Eyrich," *Daily Picayune*, September 6, 1891; Friends of the Cabildo, *New Orleans Architecture*. Vol. 2, *The American Sector*, (Gretna, La., 1972); "Last Rites Held for J. C. Eyrich," *Times-Picayune*, October 11, 1927; Louisiana Library Association, *Louisiana Union Catalog* (Baton Rouge, La., 1959); New Orleans city directories, 1866-1912; J. Curtis Waldo, *Illustrated Visitors' Guide to New Orleans* (New Orleans, 1879).



The Care of Furniture



Should an antique piece of furniture be restored to its original condition by sanding out scratches, filling dents, and stripping aged finishes? The common belief of most people today, including many furniture restorers, is definitely yes: furniture should be returned as closely as possible to its original appearance.

Conservators, however, see furniture in a different light—as an artifact, subject to general museum standards for care and restoration. From this point of view, restoration can be undesirable or even dangerous as it destroys the history of an object. Conservators try to preserve the “character” of an item, keeping historical elements intact. These include the variety of damages that document the object’s use.

Consider the case of a small table damaged in an 1830 farmhouse fire: removing the charred areas would, in fact, be removing an important historical record. Conservators advise that furniture repair should not be irreversible; instead, repairs should stabilize a condition, such as the replacement of a missing leg. The paramount concern of conser-

vators is twofold: to arrest or amend any defect capable of causing damage and to provide protection for the piece by maintaining it in optimum conditions.

Environmental Control

Although the treatment of any damage should be entrusted to the care of a professional, a collector may help to preserve his furniture by following certain basic procedures. The first consideration in caring for any furniture collection is gaining an understanding and control of the environment. Most furniture is made from wood or other organic, permeable materials and so is especially vulnerable to the effects of humidity, temperature, and light.

Wood decays because of expansion and contraction caused by fluctuations in humidity and heat. It is crucial, then, to store furniture in a climate maintained at a constant level: 50% relative humidity at 68 degrees Fahrenheit is ideal.

Both high and low humidity—over 70% or below 30%—can be damaging, particularly to pieces which are inlaid, veneered, or painted. High humidity softens the adhesives which bind inlays or veneers to the surface of an object. It also encourages mold growth, corrodes metal parts such as brass handles, and causes a whitish finish or “bloom,” an indication that moisture has actually penetrated the surface. Low humidity causes shrinkage of materials which can lead to cracking and splitting, separation of joints, and loosening of pegs and screws.

A furniture owner who wants to measure regularly the relative humidity of his home may buy a hygrometer, a small instrument available through laboratory supply warehouses. Humidity can then be controlled by a dehumidifier or a humidifier.

All light—even low light levels over an extended period—causes

cumulative damage to organic substances. Ultraviolet and infrared light rays, found in direct sunlight and most fluorescent light tubes, deteriorate wood and harm furniture finishes. Controlling sunlight with blinds, draperies, shutters, and awnings remains the easiest method. The plastic UF-3 Plexiglas, cut to fit a window’s interior surface, absorbs ultraviolet light and provides additional, though costly, protection. An ultraviolet filter can lessen the damage caused by fluorescent lighting.

Household Practices

Collectors should be aware of the correct way of moving and placing furniture. A chair, for example, should never be lifted by its crest rail or arms but rather by grasping its seat with both hands. In addition, important pieces should be placed away from heat sources as well as drafts of cold air.

Equally important is the mainte-



A chair should never be lifted by its crest rail.

nance of furniture finishes. Robert F. McGiffin, furniture conservator and consultant, addresses a popular misconception when he states, “The idea that furniture must be polished frequently, perhaps once every two weeks, is ridiculous.” The single treatment suggested for furniture with high gloss finishes, such as lacquer or shellac, is frequent dusting. Paste wax, such as Butcher’s Wax or Renaissance Wax, may be applied to pieces every six months to every couple of years depending upon the objects’ frequency of use. It is preferable to remove old wax

with turpentine-dampened toweling before an application of new wax.

Non-drying oils—lemon, almond, olive, and mineral—are often recommended for use on furniture with unfinished surfaces. Since these oils attract dust, as much oil as possible should be removed after application. Oil should never be applied to a waxed finish, or vice versa, since the resulting surface becomes gummy and must be removed.

Linseed oil or any product containing it should be avoided at all times: conservators feel its use produces irreversible changes. In addition to dramatic darkening, linseed oil forms a surface which is so tough that it cannot be removed from the piece without damaging the finishes beneath it.

Major treatment of any fine piece of furniture should be done by a trained conservator, but an owner who follows these suggestions for controlling environmental variables and using correct household practices can help preserve his collection.

—Maureen Donnelly

Sources: Per E. Guldbeck, *The Care of Historical Collections* (Nashville, 1972); Robert F. McGiffin, Jr., *Furniture Care and Conservation* (Nashville, 1983); Lee Parr McGrath, *Housekeeping With Antiques* (New York, 1971).

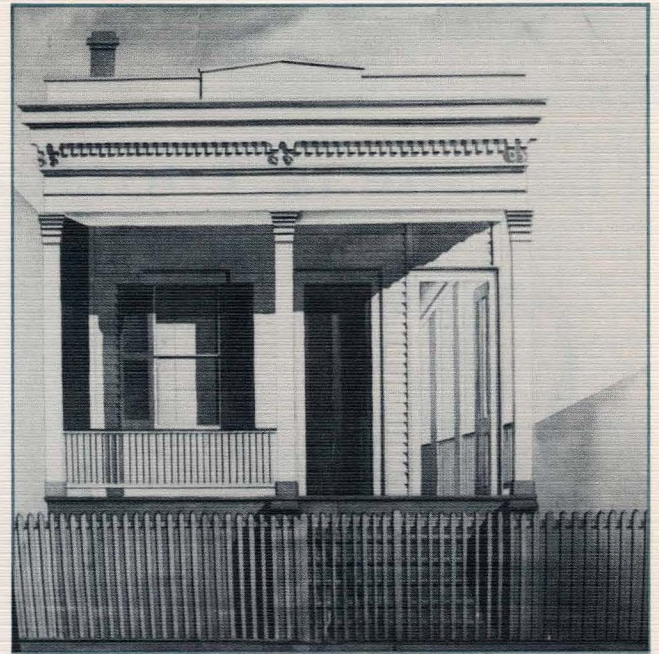
Puzzler Update

Pamela Arceneaux, one of THNOC's reference librarians, has pointed out another variance between the 1817 edition of the Tansse map of New Orleans and the 1825 edition. By 1825, the French Quarter had two new streets: "Rue Jeffersson" and "Rue Madisson" bisected the squares on each side of the "Place d'Arm," now Jackson Square.

—John A. Mahé II

CREDITS

Photographs: Claire de la Vergne, Judy Tarantino, and Jan White



Drawing of 937 St. Andrew Street, Notarial Plan Book, district 4, square 106

Research Reveals One of Oldest Shotguns

Research for a THNOC-sponsored architectural project has incidentally uncovered what may be the oldest shotgun house extant in New Orleans. This Greek Revival shotgun, located at 937 St. Andrew Street near the St. Thomas housing project, originally had a front door opening on a side gallery, a most unusual feature in New Orleans.

The house was built in 1848 for Miss Mary Neilson, who purchased the property in May of that year for \$660. Tax records for 1848 show no improvements on the entire square in which the house is located, but by 1849 the tax rolls indicate that the lot on which the house stands is valued at \$800 with improvements in the amount of \$1000. Miss Neilson sold her property to Euphemia Bertheaud, wife of Bernard Ryan Coffee, in 1860 for \$2400.

The shotgun, the most common of traditional house types today, appeared toward the middle of the 19th century and proliferated during the late Victorian period. While most shotguns are heavily adorned with jigsaw ornamentation characteristic of the Victorian period, the house on St. Andrew was built in the earlier, more restrained Greek Revival style. It is a three-bay frame shotgun cottage with a gallery extending across the front and along one side. Originally there was a cornice with brackets, dentils, and

a parapet. The floor plan consists of rooms of relatively equal size lined up one behind the other.

In 1876 when the house was sold at auction to Henry E. Grosch, it was described as "a frame house and kitchen adjoining the house, the whole slate roofed. The house contains a double parlor with sliding door, a room and two cabinets, galleries in front and on the side, and gas introduced in the house; a kitchen and servant's room, paved yard, cistern, privy, etc." (Notarial Archives, Theodule Buisson, 1876, vol. 4, no. 68). There is a plan of the house at the time of the 1876 sale in plan book 97, folio 23 at the Notarial Archives.

Although both neighborhood and architectural details have altered, the shotgun still retains its distinctive side gallery. The house, built 137 years ago, is located in the Lower Garden District.

—Lynn Adams

Mrs. Adams, a researcher for the Historic New Orleans Collection, has done extensive architectural research for the Vieux Carré Survey. She acted as research assistant to Dr. S. Frederick Starr, who was commissioned by THNOC to write a book on the Garden District. Dr. Starr, formerly scholar-in-residence at the Collection, is president of Oberlin College.

In Memoriam: Janet W. Yancey

Janet Wallace Yancey, wife of Benjamin W. Yancey, president of THNOC's board of directors, died late last year after a long illness. Mrs. Yancey became celebrated in New Orleans as an English teacher during her 28 years at the Louise S. McGehee School; she served three terms as headmistress of the school. She also served on the boards of the United Fund, the Family Service Society, and the Tulane-Lyceum Association.

Mrs. Yancey had a particularly close relationship with the Historic New Orleans Collection and its staff. In a 1983 interview, Mrs. Yancey reminisced about her long friendship with Leila Moore Williams and her attachment to the Collection. A devout Episcopalian, Mrs. Yancey met General and Mrs. L. Kemper Williams, the founders of the Collection, at Christ Church Cathedral during the 1930s when she was a young, single teacher. She came to spend a great deal of time at their home; because of Mrs. Williams's ill health, she often stayed there during the general's business trips.

The evening that Mr. and Mrs. Yancey were married, they toasted the occasion with champagne at the Williamses' home. Common interests in literature and the history and culture of Louisiana forged bonds of lasting friendship. One memorable winter, the two couples traveled together to the Mediterranean, the Greek Islands, and Egypt, a journey amply documented with photographs and mementos now at the Collection. On Mrs. Williams's death, the new Williams Foundation came into being under her will, in which Mr. Yancey was named to its board of trustees.

Mrs. Yancey saw her warm relationship with the Collection as an extension of her valued friendship with Mrs. Williams. She was particularly concerned about the working conditions and well-being of the staff. The Collection was enriched by her interest, advice, and sympathy. Director Stanton Frazar said, "We suffer from the absence of her spirit at the Collection. Her loss is a sad one for all of us."

—Patricia Brady Schmit

Acquisitions



The Historic New Orleans Collection acquires hundreds of items through purchase and donation during the course of each year. Only a few recent acquisitions can be noted here.

LIBRARY

Nearly 1000 items, including books, pamphlets, and periodicals, have been presented to the library by St. Mary's Dominican College, which recently ceased operation. These materials, formerly among the holdings of the John XXIII Library at Dominican, include such scarce works as *New Orleans Characters*

(1876) by Leon Frémaux, *Pouponne et Balthazar* (1888) by Simone de la Houssaye, and Henri Joutel's *Journal Historique du dernier voyage que feu M. de la Sale fit dans le Golfe de Mexique . . .* (1713).

Many of the books concern Louisiana law. There are numerous volumes of *Acts* of the Louisiana legislature, including one volume which, issued in 1864 in Natchitoches, is a rare Confederate imprint; general indexes of successions opened in Orleans Parish; and a number of 19th-century digests, codes, and journals. Pamphlets in the collection cover all aspects of Louisiana history and social life, from the petroleum industry to libraries, from Jean Laffite to Edward Douglass White.

■ Other acquisitions include fifteen medical almanacs which were given to customers of New Orleans pharmacies during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the donation of Tom Ireland, and *Proceedings of the Court of Inquiry Relative to the Fall of New Orleans* (1864), a recent purchase.

—Florence M. Jumonville



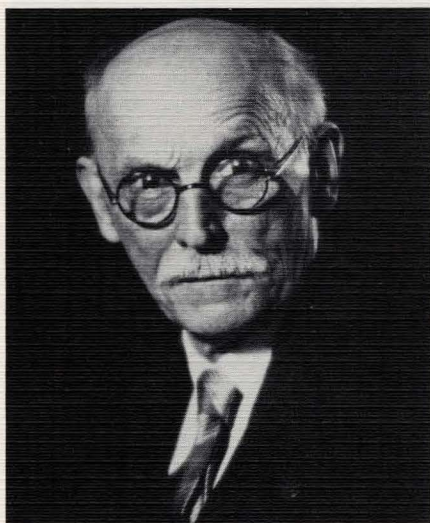
Illustration from *The Grandissimes* by George Washington Cable. The book is a gift of St. Mary's Dominican College (85-045-RL).

Several recent donations have enhanced the Mardi Gras collections of the curatorial department. Mrs. W. B. Burkenroad, Jr., donated Mardi Gras regalia, including crown, scepter, necklace, and gauntlets which belonged to Miss Henryetta Kahn, queen of Phunny Phorthy Phellows, February 18, 1898.

A motion picture of the Rex parade made February 26, 1926, is now the earliest film in THNOC's collection. The film was donated along with a 1975 color film of the Comus ball by George R. Montgomery. Mrs. Edmund Wingfield has also given a color film of the 1969 Proteus parade and ball.

Invitations, programs, scrolls, and correspondence from 14 carnival krewes spanning the years 1929-1980 have been donated by Mrs. Henry C. Pitot.

■ A recent purchase included seven photographs by New Orleans photographer Joseph Woodson "Pops" Whitesell (1876-1958), an internationally known French Quarter resident. Whitesell, a self-taught photographer who was an Indiana native, lived and worked for more than 30 years at 726 St. Peter Street behind Pat O'Brien's. He is particularly known for his dramatic portraiture.



Ellsworth Woodward by "Pops" Whitesell (1984.185.1)

■ Daniel Webster Whitney, a contemporary of "Pops" Whitesell as well as a fellow French Quarter resident, came to New Orleans in the early 1920s after studying at the



Rebirth by Daniel Webster Whitney (1984.231.2)

Maryland Institute of Fine and Applied Arts and the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. He began teaching at the Arts and Crafts Club School, serving also as instructor for the Ocean Springs Summer Art Colony and WPA Adult Education Project. In 1938 he opened the Daniel Whitney School of Painting at 911 Chartres Street. Whitney, who was considered one of the city's best art teachers, often maintained that "schools are bad for painting. They cause imitation

rather than original thought." Daniel Whitney's own paintings were frequently exhibited, particularly in the 1920s and '30s. Mrs. Whitney has recently given THNOC nine of his paintings.

■ A small enameled locket, which, when opened, displays photographs of important New Orleans scenes, is the donation of Mrs. Gordon Reese. The locket dates from around 1905 and is an unusual example of souvenir views of the city.

—Priscilla O'Reilly

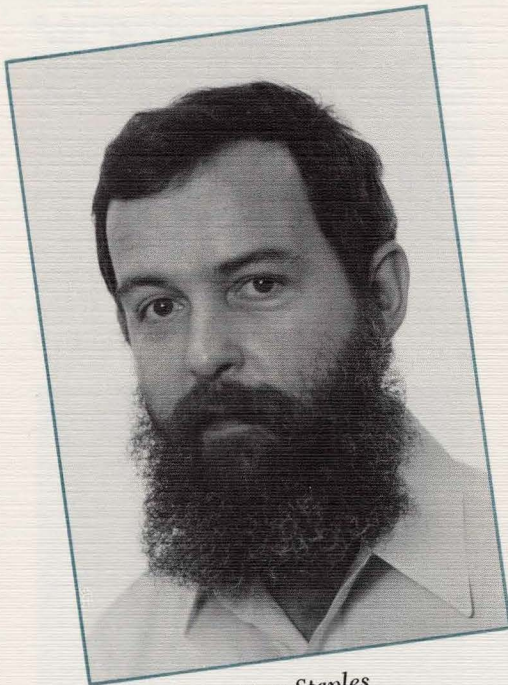


Book-shaped locket with landmark views (1984.229)

Staff

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Chief preparator **Tom Staples** was selected by the Smithsonian Institution to attend their workshop, Design and Production of Exhibitions, February 11-15 in Washington, D. C. . . . the schedule included a tour of the staging areas in the Office of Exhibits Central for participants to learn how exhibits are handled for the numerous Smithsonian museums . . . Mr. Staples is responsible for preparing and mounting exhibitions in the Williams Gallery besides preparing all new acquisitions for active storage and maintaining items on display in the history galleries and Williams residence.



Tom Staples

Dr. Alfred Lemmon has written about the role of women in music for the record jacket of a Leonora Mila album, published by the West German company, Teldec . . . **Priscilla O'Reilly**, registrar, and **Jeanie Clinton**, administrative assistant, attended a study course on legal problems of museum administration, sponsored by the American Law Institute, the American Bar Association, and the Smithsonian Institution, in Chicago, March 20-22.

Curator **Rosanne McCaffrey** is the new treasurer of the Louisiana Association of Museums, elected at the annual meeting April 11-12 in New Iberia/Lafayette . . . **Dr. Patricia Schmit**, director of publications, was elected to the board of directors of the New Orleans/Gulf South Booksellers Association.

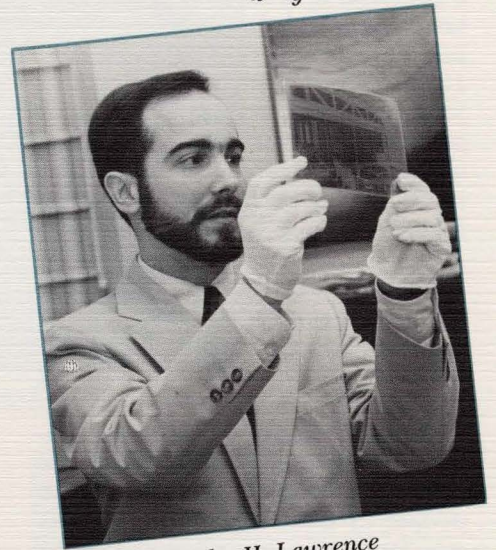
Curator **John H. Lawrence** was recently appointed to the board of directors of the Friends of the Vassar Art Gallery in Poughkeepsie, New York . . . he also had four photographs at the Arthur Roger Gallery group exhibition in January . . . articles by Mr. Lawrence have appeared in recent issues of the *New Orleans Art Review* . . . and he was one of seven local photographers to discuss his work at the Friends of Photography meeting in February.

Elsa Schneider, curator of education, presented workshops on THNOC's history packet, *Evidence of the Past*, at a teachers' in-service meeting in Slidell, March 11 . . . curator **John A. Mahé II** attended the North American Print Conference in Boston, April 25-27 . . . in 1987 THNOC will serve as one of the area hosts when the Print Conference meets in New Orleans.

Susan Cole, curator of manuscripts, and the manuscripts staff welcomed the Greater New Orleans Archivists Society at their March 13 meeting hosted by THNOC . . . curatorial assistant **Raimund Berchtold** is teaching German in the Accelerated Language Learning Program offered by UNO's Metropolitan College . . . **Alix Samuels**, manuscripts assistant, recently earned an M.A. in English from North Texas State University . . . Mrs. Samuels also tutors in the Developmental English Lab at Our Lady of Holy Cross College.



Rosanne McCaffrey



John H. Lawrence

EDUCATION

THNOC continues to offer two museum studies courses . . . chief curator **Dode Platou**, in conjunction with Tulane University, directs



Tulane interns, above, Eric Greimann, Charles Smallwood, Paula Trohn, and David Weidman, and left, Susan Herskowitz, Bo Reily, and Wesley Lambert

the course, Careers in Museum Administration, which is team taught by staff members . . . the internship program is supervised by Dr. Schmit.



Eydie Rymer, UNO intern

SPEAKERS BUREAU

Staff members have recently made presentations to the following organizations: Dr. Schmit, the DAR, the Friends of the Archives, and the Lafourche Heritage Society . . . chief curatorial cataloger John McGill, the Fine Arts Club and Com-

putrac . . . and Elsa Schneider, the Pittsburgh Conference.

The Historic New Orleans Collection has a large staff of experts in many areas of Louisiana studies who

are available as speakers for community organizations. For a complete list of topics and speakers, contact Dr. Alfred E. Lemmon, coordinator of the Speakers Bureau.

Artists Encyclopedia

THNOC's research into the lives and careers of New Orleans artists up to 1918 will soon be ready for publication. The book, *Encyclopedia of New Orleans Artists, 1718-1918*, will contain valuable information from New Orleans newspapers, city directories, census records, books, and other publications. Much of this information was "rediscovered" by the Collection's director emeritus, Boyd Cruise.

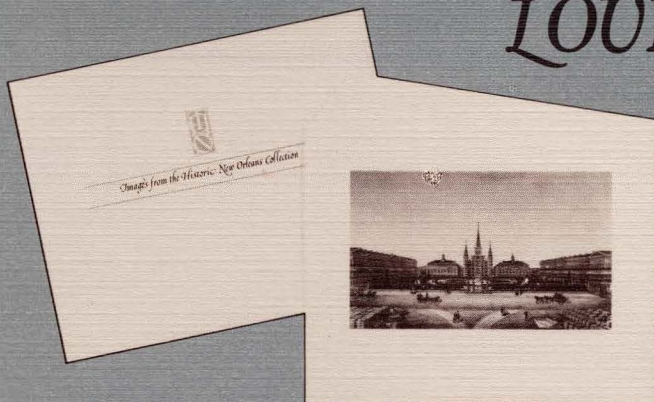
This reference book will correct some misconceptions and improper attributions resulting from the lack of published information. Jean François Feuille, for example, has been traditionally identified as the man named Feuille who signed certain portraits in Louisiana collections. He appears in the New Orleans directories in the years 1837-

38 and 1841, as well as in newspaper advertisements, as an engraver. Advertisements for a portrait painter using only the last name Feuille supported the assumption that J. F. Feuille was both the engraver and the portrait painter.

An article, apparently overlooked since it appeared in the New Orleans *Bee* in 1835, reveals that there were two brothers working in New Orleans at the same time. The engraver gave his full name in advertisements and his initials in the city directories; the portrait painter used only his last name—his first name has yet to be discovered. The Feuille brothers exemplify the type of information to be found in this forthcoming reference work from the Collection.

—John A. Mahé II

LOUISIANA IMAGES



A portfolio of 12 historic Louisiana images, from La Salle's claim of the Louisiana territory for France to a view of the St. Charles Hotel, ca. 1920. Full color reproductions (11 × 14") on heavy stock, ready for framing. Selected from the Collection's holdings.



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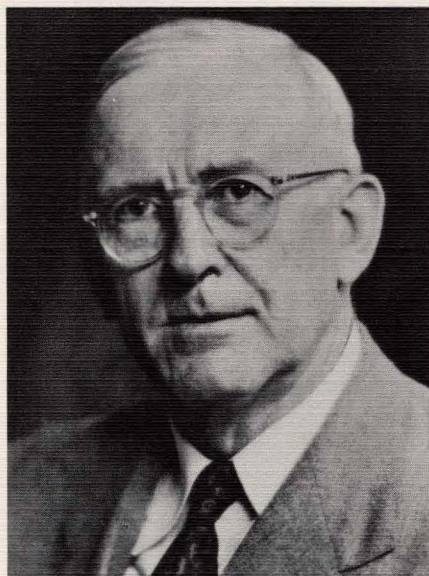
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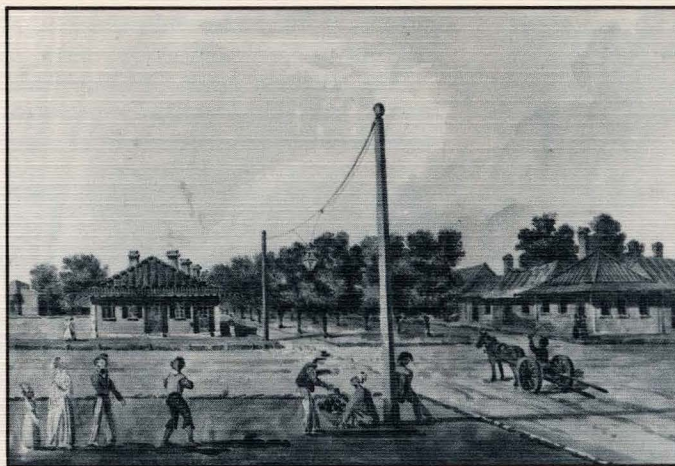
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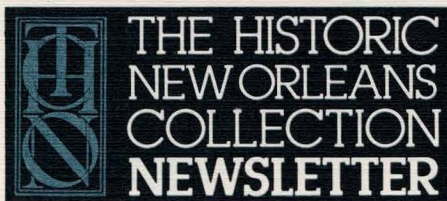
Street Scene with Vendor, watercolor by John H. B. Latrobe (1973.36)

Director Stanton Frazar recently announced the creation of the Richard Koch Publication Fund for the publication of a series of books on Louisiana history. Proceeds from a bequest from Mr. Koch have been used for the past ten years to publish edited editions of documents and to purchase books for the library, as Mr. Koch requested. According to Mr. Frazar, the Collection wished, with the inauguration of this fund, to recognize formally Mr. Koch's many contributions to the city and to the Collection. The reading room of the curatorial department is also named in Mr. Koch's honor.

An outstanding architect who,

among other achievements, was elected to the presidency of the American Institute of Architects, Richard Koch was particularly known for his effective restoration work on historic Louisiana buildings.

The journal kept by John H. B. Latrobe on his 1834 journey to New Orleans will be a publication of the Koch Fund. The original manuscript is owned by the Maryland Historical Society, which has given permission for its publication by the Collection. The journal has been edited by Samuel Wilson, Jr., noted New Orleans architectural historian and Mr. Koch's partner for over twenty years.



THE HISTORIC
NEW ORLEANS
COLLECTION
NEWSLETTER

THE HISTORIC NEW ORLEANS COLLECTION
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