



THE HISTORIC NEW ORLEANS COLLECTION NEWSLETTER

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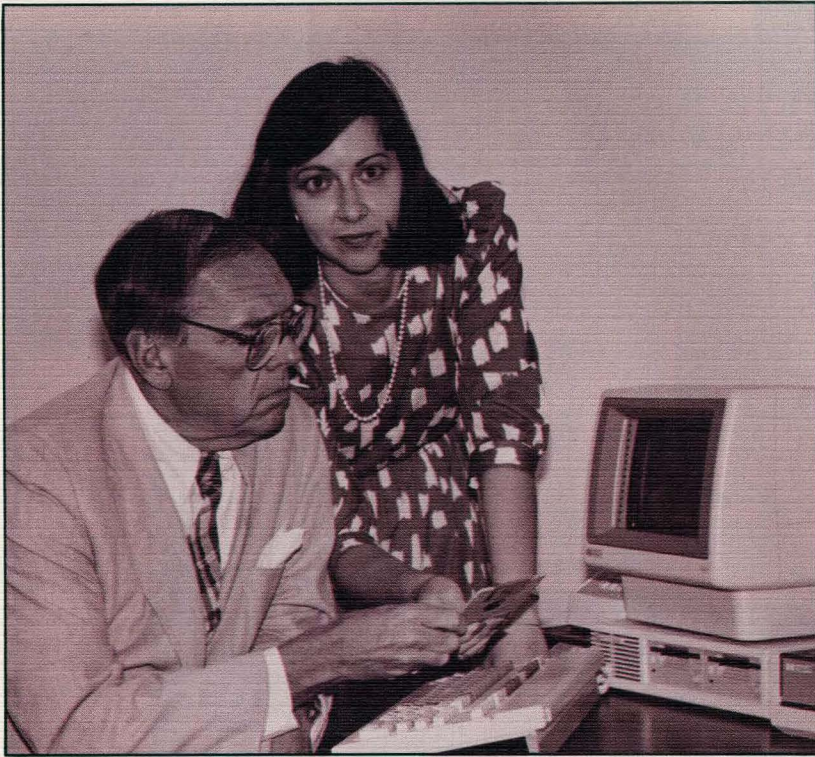
Summer 1985



HISTORIC HI-TECH

The Historic New Orleans Collection has installed a minicomputer and given it a mammoth assignment: organizing data on more than 150,000 curatorial images, charting the history and use of each item, and producing any of myriad reports within minutes.

The Hewlett-Packard 3000 S/42 computer will perform these tasks with the MINISIS data base system and with special programming developed by Willoughby Associates, Ltd.



Director Stanton Frazar with Rosanne McCaffrey

With the installation of the system in April, THNOC became one of a handful of museums in the United States using computers for the complex task of collection management.

Many museums turn to computers simply to inventory their holdings. Most are defeated, however, by the arduous job of entering data accumulated over decades. Willoughby Associates, a computer consultant group, began early this year creating a brief computer record of each curatorial piece at the Collection from their base in Evanston, Illinois. Entering a mini-



Jane Sunderland, vice president of Willoughby Associates

imum of data on each item means the system can be used sooner for research queries and statistical information.

Director of systems Rosanne McCaffrey worked closely with Willoughby Associates on choosing a system for the Collection's special needs. They first chose to license the MINISIS information retrieval system because of its linguistic agility. MINISIS was created by the Canadian government for use by developing nations; its main function is bibliographic research. Thus, this software is highly adaptable to different language structures.

"It's almost infinitely flexible. That's what's so great about it," Miss McCaffrey said.

To meet THNOC's needs, Willoughby developed software specifications for use with MINISIS, making a program ideally suitable for museum use. Divided into two components, its functions are collection management, including cataloging and report generation, and visual content access. The Collection plans to name these component programs and market them to other museums.

Choosing the hardware was easier—the version of MINISIS chosen for THNOC runs only on a Hewlett-Packard computer. To initiate the

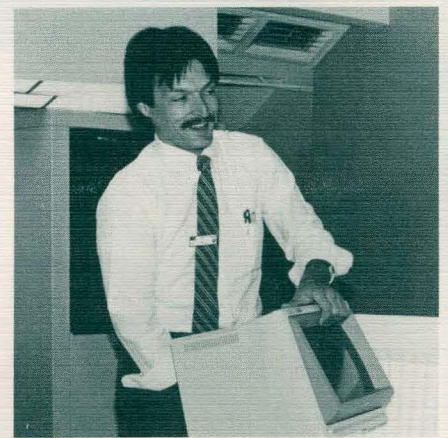
system, THNOC purchased three video display terminals, one personal computer, two different printers, disk and tape drives, a power conditioner to regulate electric flow, and a monitor which turns off the system when the electricity dips too low. The computer has a memory of one megabyte; that is, it can manipulate over a million characters at a given time. Up to 404 megabytes of data can be stored on hard disk.

The curatorial division and the registrar's department are the first to be on-line. These are the areas where computers have been crucially needed. Investigation into the computerization of these departments began in 1978, when it became apparent that the collection was growing faster than the staff could handle it manually.

"If we had 25 catalogers, it would not be enough for our growing acquisitions," Miss McCaffrey said. THNOC now employs three catalogers on its curatorial staff.

Under the present system, catalogers research each new acquisition and write a detailed description on a worksheet. Catalog cards are typed and duplicated for cross-reference headings, which may number in the hundreds. Then the cards are alphabetized and filed. When a large collection is acquired, such as the Charles Franck collection of 50,000 photographs, it must be set aside for special processing.

Now the computer will perform the repetitive work. Once the description of an item is keyed in, that record can be retrieved by recalling any word in the description. Cross-references and catalog cards become obsolete.



Matt Lawless, Hewlett-Packard representative

“There’s nothing worse than trying to alphabetize 4,000 catalog cards,” chief curatorial cataloger John Magill commented. “The computer will do all that—the filing, sorting, and multiple copying.”

In the same way, the computer will eliminate many of the problems associated with subject access. Most of curatorial’s researchers request items by subject rather than by artist or title. The difficulty of creating enough cross-references for adequate access meant that staff members traditionally had to depend on memory to retrieve images.

“We all develop really good memories around here, but you can’t rely on that; staff changes, people leave, and researchers may not get 100% of their query. They tend to get what everyone can remember,” Miss McCaffrey said.

This problem will soon end. Every word of an item’s descriptive record is indexed, and the index communicates with a staff-built, multi-lingual thesaurus, so that the computer understands synonyms and



Carolyn Dong, standing, with curatorial catalogers John Magill and Kathy Wall

THE HISTORIC NEW ORLEANS COLLECTION NEWSLETTER

Editors: Patricia Brady Schmit,
Louise C. Hoffman

Head of Photography: Jan White

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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The Historic New Orleans Collection

broader or narrower terms. For example, “education” or “college” may be typed into the computer to retrieve records containing the word “school” and other associated terms.

Computerization promises to be a boon to the registrar’s department, where detailed documentation of Collection holdings is a must. The registrar types and files a report and receipt each time a cura-

torial item is loaned, donated, bought, exhibited, or moved in storage. Each piece is physically described and cross-referenced according to accession number, source (donor or vendor), and location within the Collection. Complete records are kept on sources as well. The accession files are presently being loaded into the computer.

Additionally, the registrar produces a monthly insurance report



describing the activity of each item, not only for curatorial holdings but for THNOC's entire collection. In time, as its data bank expands, the computer will be able to generate those reports quickly and accurately.

Registrar Priscilla O'Reilly believes computerization will eliminate inconsistencies in the documentation process. She expects her job to change enormously.

"I'm planning on it being much easier," she said.



Assistant registrar Maureen Donnelly

Staff members in the curatorial and registration departments look forward to the challenge of using a computer in their daily routine. Some expressed concern over the inevitability of "down time." However, Miss McCaffrey said that, unlike the larger mainframe computers, minicomputers are less prone to failure.

"I really don't anticipate it at all," she said.

Most of the equipment is housed on the third floor, where data processor Carolyn Dong oversees the operation of the system. Her new tasks in that capacity include entering data, training staff members, and programming, when necessary. Although Miss Dong is responsible for hardware maintenance, Hewlett-Packard will diagnose any problems by telephone.

Making ready a room for the computer in the Collection's 19th-century structure involved careful planning. Technicians examined the room for stability, added electrical outlets and a phone line, and replaced carpet with vinyl flooring to cut static electricity, among many other concerns.

The automation of the curatorial division is momentous enough, but Miss McCaffrey has even bigger visions of the future. A letter-quality printer and more terminals will be added to the present system. In time the manuscripts division and the research library will be on-line with the computer. Further plans for curatorial include using video or optical-digital disks that would allow researchers to see the image or artwork on the terminal screen and print out a copy. A three-dimensional object could even be photographed at 360 degrees; the computer image would rotate, allowing the researcher to view all sides. This

technology is still under development; however, given the rapid growth of computer technology in recent years, such additions may not be far away.

—Joan Lamia Sowell



A tour of the computer system will be scheduled later this year. Organizations interested should fill in the form below and return to:

Rosanne McCaffrey
 Director of Systems/Curator
 The Historic New Orleans
 Collection
 533 Royal St.
 New Orleans, LA 70130

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Telephone _____

Puzzler



The headline on the first page of the real estate section of the *Times-Picayune* of March 24, 1963, read: "Century-Old Building Gets Major Lift." The article explained that the "Canal Street building, for many years a warehouse, will get an extensive lift to transform it into a gleaming contemporary structure." The photo (1979.325.747) shows the building and adjacent structures in 1950 when they still retained their 1860s character. Can you identify the present building?

Answer on p. 15.

From the

Director



So many things are going on around THNOC these days. The results look effortless, but only because of the behind-the-scenes work of this staff. A non-inclusive series of short takes: After several years of preparation, the massive computerization project is on-line. In the gallery, the current exhibition is the tiniest tip of the incredible Clarence John Laughlin collection. The overwhelming details involved in becoming the official Laughlin archive are well under way. And speaking of film, the new film storage vault in our CBD facility, one of only a handful in the world, is getting its final shakedown. It's a super deep freeze for the long-term storage, under perfect conditions, of even explosive nitrate film. On a more aesthetic note, our shop has signed a licensing agreement with the country's foremost museum-reproduction company. Silver pieces copied from our unique 19th-century Dingeldein collection will be sold in museum shops across the nation. In the area of acquisitions, it's pleasant to report that contributions are coming our way at greatly increasing rates: many months, donations outnumber purchases. Finally, the John Latrobe journal of his 1834 voyage to New Orleans is in press, and the long awaited *Encyclopedia of New Orleans Artists*, surely destined to become a research classic, will be ready for press soon.

It is particularly appropriate to note, at this time, these achievements and our continuing expansion of collections and facilities. For in early 1985 we began a year of self-study and analysis of our institution, which will culminate in a master plan for coming decades. The prospects are exhilarating.

—S.F.

THNOC Librarian Honored

Florence M. Jumonville received the Lucy B. Foote Award from the Louisiana Library Association Subject Specialists Section for "distinctive service to her profession" through her work with the Louisiana Literary Award Committee, her publications on Louisiana bibliography, her knowledge of Louisiana history and sources, and her contribution to the development of THNOC's research library.



Board Member Receives Awards



Frank Masson, chairman of the Harnett T. Kane Preservation Award, Mary Louise Christovich, and Bonnie Nelson, president, Louisiana Landmarks Society. Courtesy Lloyd Sensat, Préservation

Mary Louise Christovich, a member of the Historic New Orleans Collection's board of directors, was recently honored for her efforts in the field of preservation. On April 21 Mrs. Christovich received the Louisiana Landmarks Society's Harnett T. Kane Preservation Award "for significant contributions in the field of preservation in Louisiana."

She was also recognized, on April 23, by the Orléans Club for preservation efforts in New Orleans re-

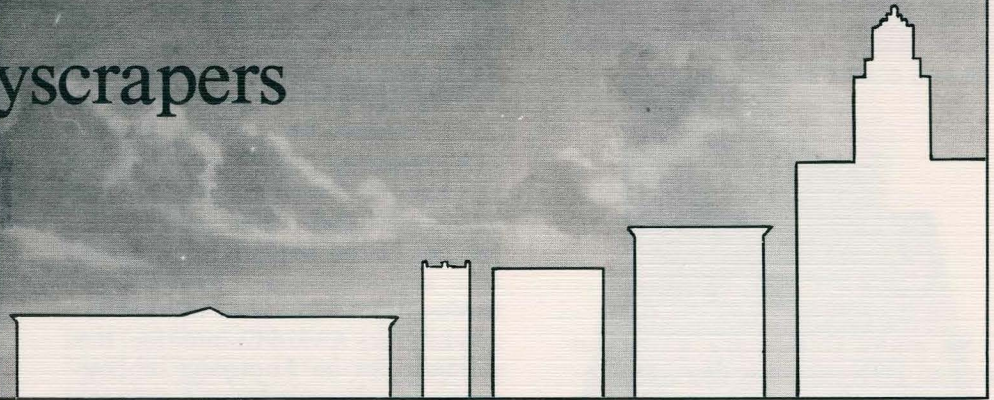
lated to the Friends of the Cabildo architecture series and to Save Our Cemeteries.

The impact of the architecture series, beginning in 1971 with Volume I, *The Lower Garden District*, served as an impetus behind the city's preservation movement. Save Our Cemeteries, founded by Mrs. Christovich, conducted the ambitious and successful campaign to save and to restore the wall vaults in historic St. Louis Cemetery II.

Early Skyscrapers

HISTORIC

New Orleans



Customs House
1849-1879

Lyons
1888

Morris
1889

Hennen
1895

Hibernia Bank
1921

The Lyons and Morris buildings, both completed in the late 1880s, were referred to as skyscrapers by New Orleanians of the day. Neither one, however, completely qualified for that distinction: although each had structural iron and steel, their walls were mainly self-supporting. Strictly defined, a skyscraper should have a full-supporting framework to separate it from other buildings.

In this modern sense the Maritime Building, at the corner of Carondelet and Common streets, has often been considered the city's first skyscraper. Completed in 1895 and called the Hennen Building, it was also the first building to reach ten stories. Yet the earlier, smaller buildings were popularly known as the city's first skyscrapers.

The first to be completed was the I. L. Lyons and Co. Wholesale Drug House, a warehouse at the corner of Camp and Gravier streets. Designed by D. W. Kendall and completed in 1888, it was believed to be the tallest commercial building in the South, rising eight stories or 115 feet. The *Daily Picayune* reported that from its roof, "...a grand view of the city and its environs may be had."

A few months later in 1889 it was joined by another skyscraper, the Morris Building, which was two blocks down Camp Street at the corner of Canal Street. It was built by John A. Morris, a real estate developer and manager of the Louisiana State Lottery, who would later go on to build the Hennen Building. Designed by the architectural firm of Thomas Sully and Albert Tole-

dano, early leaders in high-rise architecture in New Orleans, the Morris Building rose seven stories to 110 feet. Although slightly shorter than the Lyons warehouse, its reputation as a skyscraper was based largely on its first-rate technology. No mere warehouse, this was the most prestigious commercial address in New Orleans when it was completed, and it was proudly pointed out to visitors as a symbol of the city's progress. It was boasted that the building was fireproof, had steel girders tying together its columns, which in turn were partly of iron, and had a steam elevator that ran at the rate of 300 feet per minute. The *Daily Picayune* called the building a "...triumph of architec-

tural skill ... a skyscraper ... reputed to be as thoroughly finished as any edifice in the country."

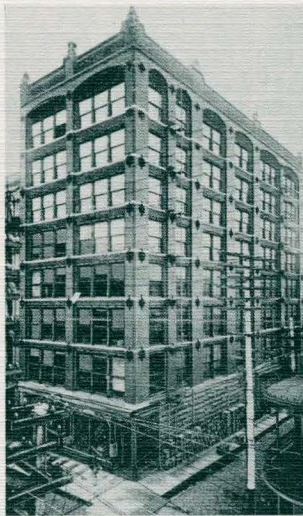
While both buildings have undergone changes, the I. L. Lyons warehouse, known as the Gravier Building, is virtually the same, except for alterations to its ground floor. The history of the Morris Building is more eventful. It burned on the night of September 1, 1900, in a spectacular fire that began in a neighboring building, entered the top floor of the Morris Building and crept down the elevator shaft. As it turned out, the building was not fireproof but "slow burning." At the time of its construction, it was feared that the spongy New Orleans soil would not support the extra weight



The Morris Building dominates Canal Street (1984.115.3).

then needed for a fully fire-resistant structure. The building did burn slowly, taking well over twelve hours for the flames to be extinguished. In spite of the intensity of the fire, the walls stood, but the interior was so badly damaged that the structure had to be rebuilt. Thomas Sully designed the new building, which was nearly identical to the old one, except for the addition of a wide cornice and several rows of bay windows. The cornice is gone and the ground floor mutilated, but the building still stands, now known as the Cigali Building.

By the standards of today both of these "skyscrapers" seem minus-



Lyons Building (1884.115.61 XI)

cule, yet in 1889 only the shot tower, some church steeples, and a few domes rose higher than the Lyons and Morris buildings. Their unornamented, vertical facades drew the eye up the sides of the buildings, rather than along them, giving the illusion of great height. They were not unlike smaller versions of the buildings then being designed and vigorously promoted as the correct style for the new skyscraper form by the Chicago architects led by Louis Sullivan.

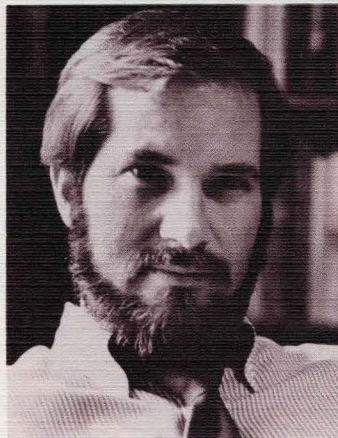
It is ironic that the Lyons and Morris buildings are now barely noticeable among the dominating towers that surround them. The construction of these two buildings almost 100 years ago, however, began that upward progression toward the imposing architecture which now defines the skyline of New Orleans.

—John Magill

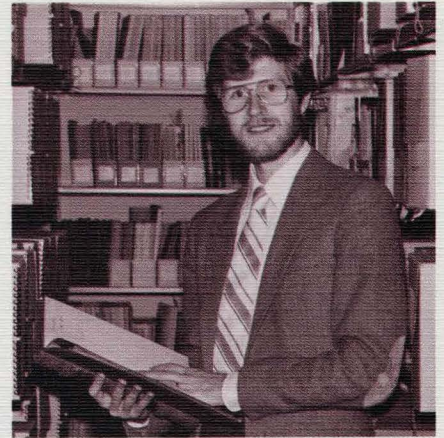
WILLIAMS PRIZES AWARDED

The General L. Kemper Williams Prizes in Louisiana History for 1984 have been awarded to Thomas W. Cutrer, author of *Parnassus on the Mississippi: The Southern Review and the Baton Rouge Literary Community, 1935-1942* (publication) and to Raimund Berchtold, author of "The Decline of German Ethnicity in New Orleans, 1880-1930" (manuscript). Florence M. Jumonville, chairman of the Williams Prizes Committee, presented the awards on March 29 in Thibodaux at the Louisiana Historical Association's annual banquet.

Parnassus on the Mississippi chronicles the brief, yet extremely productive period when, as C. Vann Woodward phrased it, "the center of the avant-garde of American literary criticism shifted temporarily to the banks of the Mississippi at Baton Rouge." This was the era of the *Southern Review*, a publication born of Huey Long's quest for the best of everything for LSU. And the *Southern Review* was indeed the best; it rose to the position of the finest American literary journal of its day. Among the scholars who were associated with it were Robert Penn Warren, Cleanth Brooks, Katherine Anne Porter, and the then-unknown Mary McCarthy and Eudora Welty. William Bedford Clark of Texas A&M University, reviewing *Parnassus on the Mississippi* in the Winter 1985 issue of *Southern Quarterly*, described the book as "remarkably valuable. . . , at once readable and impressively well-researched. . . . Dr. Cutrer has recreated a dynamic time and place in all



Thomas W. Cutrer



Raimund Berchtold

its dramatic vitality." The author, who wrote *Parnassus on the Mississippi* as a doctoral dissertation entitled "My Boys at LSU," is associate director of the Texas State Historical Association and a lecturer in the American Studies Program at the University of Texas.

"The Decline of German Ethnicity in New Orleans, 1880-1930" describes the natural process of assimilation and Americanization of German immigrants, an ongoing process which World War I merely hastened. The manuscript, which was Mr. Berchtold's M.A. thesis at the University of New Orleans, is the result of extensive research and use of primary sources, most of which he translated from the German. After graduation Mr. Berchtold joined the curatorial staff of the Historic New Orleans Collection.

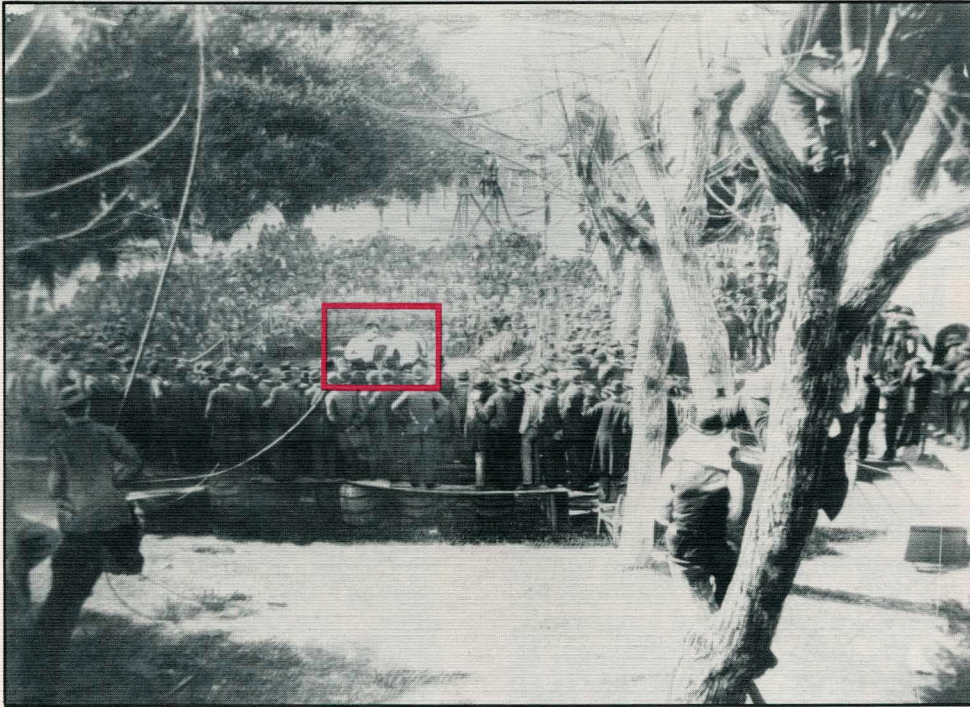
A committee of three selected the award recipients. Miss Jumonville represented the Collection, and Drs. Raleigh A. Suarez and Thomas D. Watson represented the Louisiana Historical Association.

Entries for the 1985 Williams Prizes are now being accepted. For more information, write to the General L. Kemper Williams Prizes Committee in care of the Historic New Orleans Collection.

CREDITS

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

Bareknuckle Fighting: Sullivan Ruled the Ring



Left, The Sullivan-Ryan fight, Mississippi, 1882 (1978.85.2). Note fighters in rope ring (designated by red box), temporary stands supported by barrels, and spectators in trees.

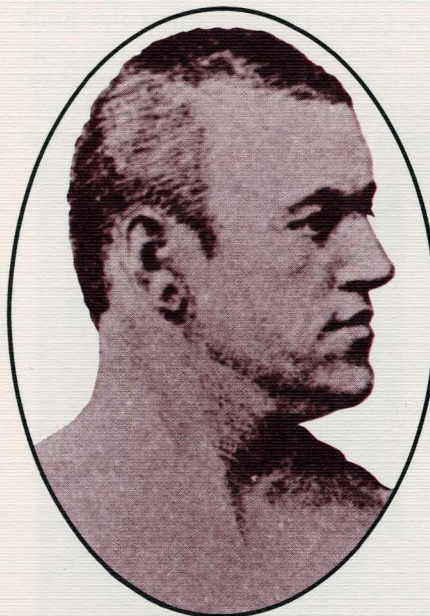
Below, John L. Sullivan, detail (1974.25.2.40). Original, Howard-Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University.

New Orleanians, known for loving a spectacle, enthusiastically supported prizefighting in its early, bareknuckle days. In fact, few American cities were so closely tied to the development of this popular sport as was this city. But boxing was not without detractors: it was outlawed throughout the United States from the Civil War period until 1890. During this time, however, New Orleans reigned as the underground capital of boxing, claiming fans from all segments of society.

There was no shortage of boxers or promoters to satisfy the demands of the local populace, and despite exhortations from the press, city leaders, and pillars of virtue, New Orleans witnessed nine championship fights from 1870 to 1892. Without question, the best-known boxer of this time was the great John L. Sullivan of Boston who was the undisputed heavyweight champion from 1882 until 1892, a title he won and lost in matches in or near New Orleans. The popularity of the sport soared as a result of Sullivan's prowess, and it was not a coincidence that seven of the nine championship matches were held in New Orleans during the decade of Sullivan's reign.

The fight which established Sul-

livan's championship was held exactly two weeks before Mardi Gras on February 7, 1882, in Mississippi City, Mississippi, selected as a secret location in an effort to evade the laws of Louisiana. The practice of using unannounced venues for prizefights was not uncommon, and New Orleans often served as the boisterous host city for the training camps, retainers, reporters, and fans who, then as now, were an integral part of a major sporting event.



John L. Sullivan

Sullivan, 23, challenged 29-year-old Paddy Ryan, an Irishman from Troy, New York, the acknowledged champion since 1880. After avoiding Sullivan for some months, Ryan finally agreed in late 1881 to meet Sullivan within one hundred miles of New Orleans. In early January 1882 both fighters arrived in town to intensify their training, with Sullivan setting up camp in Carrollton; Ryan, at West End.

Headquarters for the supporters were separate as well: the Ryan camp chose the St. James Hotel on Magazine Street while the St. Charles was host to the Sullivan backers. The crowds massed around these two command posts, much like crowds in the French Quarter for the Sugar Bowl. The *Daily Picayune* decried such behavior, claiming that "the better elements of our city view with disgust and shame the rallying of the crowd here that attends upon a prize fight. . .," but in fact that crowd included many prominent citizens of the city as well as a number of notable visitors.

Although editorials were unrelenting in their attack on the spectacle, journalists did not refrain from reporting the smallest details surrounding the upcoming battle. Newspapers claimed that, while opposed to such an exhibition, it was

their duty to report the news. In early February, they turned their attention to the Ryan-Sullivan fight with newspapers listing not only out-of-town visitors but their choice of contestant and the amount of each bet as well.

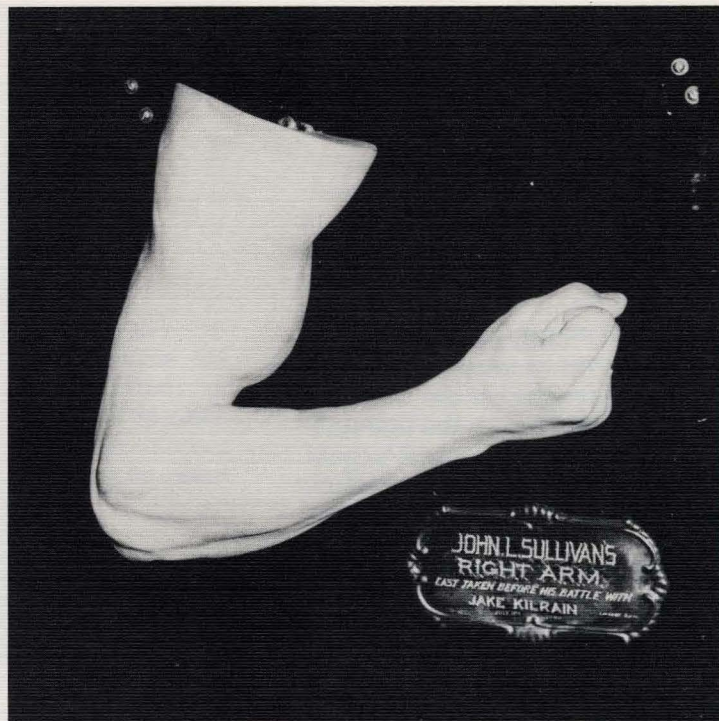
As the day of the fight drew closer, the reporting of the fight increased, as did local criticism. Both men were reported in fine form: Ryan weighing in at 190 pounds, and Sullivan at 180. Large crowds gathered at West End to witness Ryan's workouts in which he appeared so impressive that he was the pre-fight favorite.

By the time most readers received the *Daily Picayune* on February 7, the fighters and their followers were either in or well on the way to Mississippi City. The editors wrote a lengthy treatise on the affair, stating that the time for glorious athletes and bloody athletic spectacles had passed with the Greeks and Romans. A brief letter to the editor, signed by "Many Readers," asked that the paper publish the names of the local officials, politicians, and "young society men" attending the fight as they "are holding office through our votes, counting on our votes in the future, or visiting our daughters, . . ." generosities they obviously did not merit by attending such a spectacle.

The combatants left town on the afternoon of February 6. In the early morning hours of February 7, fight fans boarded a special train with stops at both the Girod and Canal Street stations before traveling to an unknown destination. When the train departed at 5:00 a.m., passengers expected to travel to the Chef Menteur highway, east of New Orleans; a large crowd had gone there the night before, anticipating it to be the location of the match. The train, however, sped on toward the Gulf Coast, leaving stranded fans to catch a second train east later in the morning.

After the first train arrived in Mississippi City at 10:30, the crowd proceeded to the Barnes Hotel, location of the Ryan camp. A ring was promptly erected by driving four posts into the firm, level ground, two referees were selected, and shortly before 1:00 the "mill" was underway.

Sullivan's right arm
(1974.25.2.57).
Original cast is
at the New
Orleans Athletic
Club.



Sullivan dominated the match from the outset, and after only nine rounds, lasting eleven minutes in all, he ruled the boxing world as the new champion. The battered Ryan had to be carried from the scene, soon afterward reaffirming his pre-fight announcement that he was retiring. Sullivan, who merely sustained a black eye, enjoyed a rousing celebration on his return to New Orleans. Despite its short duration, the match engendered great enthusiasm among the 1500 fans who had journeyed to the Gulf Coast. It was estimated that some \$200,000 in wagers exchanged hands.

Attempts to halt the fight proved futile as misinformation headed the sheriff of Harrison County, Mississippi, to the neighboring town of Biloxi. Even so, the *Picayune* issued a terse editorial on February 8 chiding Mississippi for not halting the fray held in "the quiet little burg," and calling for strong laws to prevent any repetitions of the event. Elsewhere in the paper over five columns were devoted to the preceding day's events, including a transcript of the contract, biographies of the fighters, an account of the train ride over, a round-by-round account, and post-fight interviews.

Sullivan returned twice more to New Orleans to defend his title. In July 1889 he fought the last bare-

knuckle championship in America, defeating Jake Kilrain in 75 rounds that lasted two hours and sixteen minutes. Again the fight was in Mississippi, this time in Richburg, outside Hattiesburg. Three years later, when Sullivan lost his title to "Gentleman" Jim Corbett, the fight was held at the Olympic Club on Royal Street as part of a three-night series of championship fights called the Triple Event. A crowd of 10,000 saw the champion fall in the 21st round, ending the ten-year rule of the "Boston Strong Boy."

New Orleans's fortunes as a fight city rose and fell with Sullivan. In 1890, a year after Sullivan's fight with Kilrain, New Orleans became the first community to legalize prizefighting with gloves. As other cities legalized the sport, however, New Orleans lost the prestige once accorded it by boxing enthusiasts. In the 20th century the area has produced other fighters and hosted major fights in the Superdome. But it has never regained the glory it enjoyed when the great Sullivan ruled the ring, and New Orleans, as the center of boxing in America, served as his capital city.

—Richard C. Marvin, Jr.
Mr. Marvin was formerly an assistant curator at the Collection.

Sources: Dale Somers, *The Rise of Sports in New Orleans: 1850-1900* (Baton Rouge, 1972); *Daily Picayune*, January-February, 1882.

Priscilla O'Reilly

Priscilla O'Reilly carefully places the early 19th-century map of the Faubourg Marigny on the work table. As registrar, she is the first staff member to see a curatorial acquisition after its arrival at the Collection. "This is the best part of the job," she says, "the time when I have the first look and realize I am working with primary source material."

Mrs. O'Reilly is a trained artist. For the past two years she has had the unusual task of accessioning several of her own creations: the 1984 and 1985 doubloons and ball invitations of an old-line carnival organization. This distinction is a fitting one for the Mississippian whose love of art began "when I drew or painted on everything in sight." In defense of the walls at home, her mother provided art materials and private art lessons which continued through high school. Since she was an only child, Mrs. O'Reilly feels she turned to art to entertain herself. "You learn to concentrate," she says, "and to get lost in something."

She describes her hometown of Gulfport as a wonderful place to grow up, yet New Orleans was close

"... I drew or painted on everything in sight."

enough to be almost an extension of home. She went on to Mississippi State College for Women in Columbus, a place she defines as "brimming with antebellum homes." She remembers a graduation tradition at MSCW, the magnolia chain ceremony; she was more interested,



however, in receiving a BFA in commercial art. From her home state she moved to Dallas, a city she loved, and began a job as wedding gift consultant/registrar with the Sanger-Harris Department Store. Her sympathetic manner must have served her well in handling demanding customers. "Around Christmastime," she laughs, "you really learn the meaning of patience."

During this period Mrs. O'Reilly stopped painting for awhile. She relates an experience which occurred when her first child was small: "I looked up to see Brian with red acrylic paint in his mouth and the dog with black acrylic, and I decided that this was not the way to paint."

But art continued to be an important part of Mrs. O'Reilly's life. She began graduate courses in art history at the University of Texas at Dallas. Later, after moving to New Orleans, she completed the course work for a master's degree at Tulane University. Her favorite period in art history—"that's what Mr. Frzar asked me when I interviewed for the job"—is the Italian Renaissance.

The interview resulted in Mrs. O'Reilly's joining the Collection staff in 1980 as assistant to registrar Lisette Oser. Two years ago she was

named head registrar after Mrs. Oser's resignation, and she assumed responsibility for the monthly list of curatorial accessions. Her department also maintains insurance reports for both the manuscripts division and the library as well as for the curatorial division.

Besides the paper work involved in acquiring an item, either purchased or donated, the registrar's department establishes a file and assigns an accession number for each acquisition. One acquisition, however, may be subdivided into many parts. In January over 800 architectural drawings were included in one entry. That's when Mrs. O'Reilly and assistant registrar



Maureen Donnelly must encourage each other that the work *will* get done.

Mrs. O'Reilly's duties are enlivened by the diversity of objects received by her department: jewelry, photograph albums, carnival regalia, paintings, sculpture, prints, and drawings. She recalls the pleasure she felt in discovering the beautiful condition of a souvenir album from the World's Industrial and Cotton Centennial Exhibition of 1884-85.

The diversity extends to materials borrowed for THNOC's exhibitions. Recently Mrs. O'Reilly received architectural fragments gathered by Clarence John Laughlin from the ruins of Belle Grove, one of the plantation "ghosts" that he photographed. Plaster, curved bricks, broken pieces from a capital—these are included in the current Laughlin photographic exhibit in the Williams Gallery.

When she's not at the Collection, Mrs. O'Reilly likes to take her teenagers, Brian and Shannon, to her family's farm in Mississippi for horseback riding and fishing. And



she paints. She took lessons from local artist George Jordan last fall and often paints in the company of other artistic staff members. Painting walls—the childhood passion—still intrigues her. She and data processor Carolyn Dong are painting a mural on a friend's dining room walls.

Mrs. O'Reilly explains that it is not so much the end result of her art, but its execution, that is important to her. "What I enjoy is the act of drawing."

—Louise C. Hoffman

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.

MANUSCRIPTS

The Wilkinson-Stark family papers consist of correspondence, family documents, memoirs, newspapers, maps, clippings, and genealogical materials related to the Stark family, early settlers in the Mississippi

Territory, and, through the marriage of Mary Farrar Stark to Robert Andrews Wilkinson in 1837, the Wilkinson family of New Orleans. One series of correspondence among members of the Stark family concerns frontier life between 1806 and 1812. Another series of letters between Mary Farrar Stark Wilkinson and her husband reflects the anxiety of a family deeply involved in the Civil War: Mrs. Wilkinson and the children were in occupied New Orleans, while Colonel Wilkinson commanded the 15th Regiment Louisiana Volunteers in Virginia until his death at the second battle of Manassas. Of particular note is a communication from Willaim Tecumseh Sherman and Ulysses S. Grant, July 4, 1863, in which he asked if Mrs. Wilkinson might pass through the lines to see her son after the surrender of Vicksburg.

The Wilkinson-Stark Family Papers are a gift from Mrs. David de Laureal and Mrs. Edwin Ogden, descendants of the Starks and Wilkinsons.

The Vicksburg Daily Citizen, June 18, 1863, shown front and back. It was printed on wallpaper due to the scarcity of paper during the Civil War. From the Wilkinson-Stark Family Papers (85-26-L)

IMPROVEMENT.—Although the city of Vicksburg has been in a state of siege, and our inveterate enemy has been bombarding us incessantly for more than a month, we are still able to say that this is the age of improvement.—Cut off from all outside resources, we are enabled to bring into play our own native genius to cater to the public taste in the most approved style. At a great expense and with the most untiring labor, we have succeeded in making our paper a pictorial sheet, to the great delight of our readers. Citizens will please save these illustrated papers until the war is over, when they can ornament the walls of their rooms with the most beautiful designs.—The soldiers also will be very glad to obtain the variegated papers for the embellishment of their tents. Thus we go.

■ The Right Reverend David Sessums, rector of Christ Church and Episcopal Bishop of Louisiana from 1891 to his death in 1929, is the central figure in the Sessums/Galleher/Goldstein/Dreyfus family papers. Bishop Sessums came to New Orleans after receiving his theological education at the University of the South. He was made rector of Christ Church in 1887, the same year the church moved from Canal Street to St. Charles Avenue. He married Alice C. Galleher, whose father was Bishop of Louisiana, and upon Bishop Galleher's retirement, followed his father-in-law into that high office. The collection of family materials includes letters, clippings, programs, and photographs spanning almost a century, carefully saved by the mother of the donor, Nicholas Walter Dreyfus.

■ The Swiss Society of New Orleans was founded in 1855 to provide for the needy among its members, to assist fellow countrymen, and to encourage Swiss immigration into Louisiana. It also became a social club which sponsored balls and parties. Papers, including a charter, anniversary programs, burial records, and histories of the Swiss in New Orleans are the gift of John Geiser III, one of the Society's historians.

■ Albert Aschaffenburg, patriarch of the family operating the Pontchartrain Hotel, was a real estate dealer and builder in New Orleans. He built the Casa Grande Apartment and the Lafayette Hotel and had begun construction of the Pontchartrain Hotel at the time of his sudden death in 1918. His interest in road construction led him to found the Motor League of Louisiana and to promote building of such important roadways as the Chef Menteur Highway. A scrapbook of correspondence, pictures, publications, and clippings of his career is the gift of his son, Eugene Aschaffenburg.

■ Another builder who changed the face of New Orleans in the 1890s was Richard Fourchy, a contractor and civil/marine engineer, who became the United States Inspector of Public Buildings in 1894. His business correspondence with the supervising architect in Washington, D.C., and other official letters were a gift of George E. Pettengill.

■ The Collection has several series of letters, diaries, and other materials documenting fighting and occupation in Louisiana from the point of view of the Federal soldier posted here during the Civil War. Adding to this body of information is a newly

acquired group of letters from Corporal Charles Bennet, Company H, 26th Regiment Connecticut Volunteers, stationed at Camp Parapet in Carrollton, to his family in Rhode Island. Corporal Bennet arrived in New Orleans on December 16, 1862, with General Nathaniel Banks, and his correspondence depicts with great clarity the experience of Federal troops waging war in Louisiana during the dog days of 1863. Subsequent letters describe New Orleans, Camp Parapet, Banks's formation of the Corps d'Afrique, and troop preparations for the sieges of Vicksburg and Port Hudson. Corporal Bennet, along with J. M. Mosher, edited field newspapers entitled *The Letter H* and the *Twenty-Sixth*, printed at Carrollton, Louisiana, copies of which are included in the collection.

■ Additions to the collection of newspapers on microfilm are the *Louisiana Gazette*, 1804-1824; the *New Orleans Republican*, 1870-1876; the *New Orleans States-Item*, 1930-1939; and the *Times-Democrat*, 1883-1914.

—Catherine C. Kahn

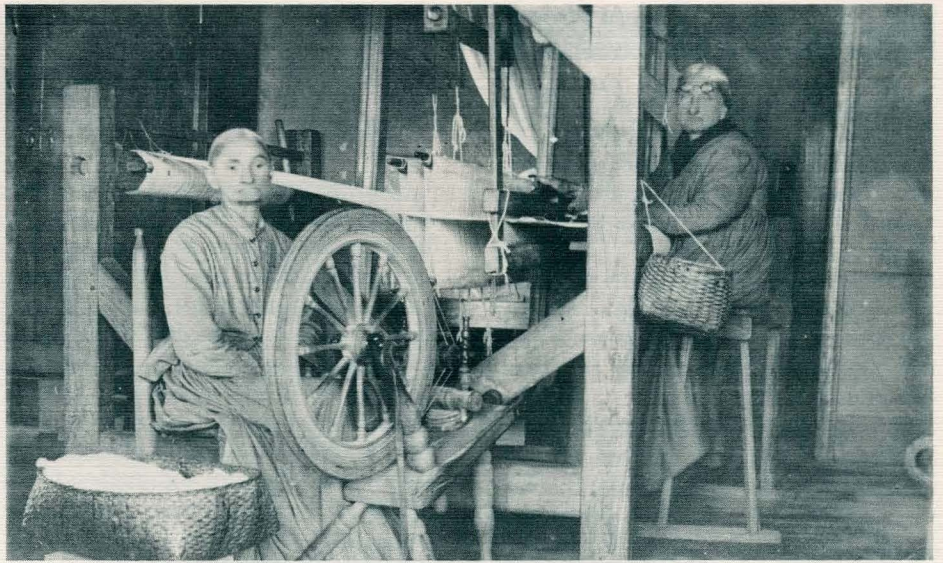


Albert Aschaffenburg, left, with Captain W. H. Hardee and P. M. Milner, members of the Motor League of Louisiana, on the site of the Chef Menteur Highway, 1918 (1985-16-L)

A plan drawn by Carlos Trudeau, dated April 24, 1788, showing an enlargement of the original Gravier plantation subdivision was recently acquired. After the great New Orleans fire of March 21, 1788, when much of the city was destroyed or damaged, Bertrand Gravier subdivided his plantation into lots for sale to those residents who may have wanted to move out of the congested French Quarter. The property covered a large portion of the central business district above Canal Street. The plan purchased by THNOC shows the subdivided land which extends from the river to Dryades Street.

An 1811 map by the surveyor Joseph Pilié, donated by James Mills, shows the earlier subdivisions of the Marigny Plantation. These two manuscript maps demonstrate the early development of two plantations above and below New Orleans as they became the city's first suburbs.

■ A recent gift from E. John Bullard includes an 1896 souvenir packet, one of those given to passengers of



Acadians in 1896, by J. C. Handley (1985.1)

the Sunset Limited, the train that traveled between New Orleans and San Francisco. The cloth- and leather-bound folder contains booklets with historical portraits of points of interest in New Orleans, such as the story of "Vendetta Alley" and "The French Opera House." Blotter paper with scenes of the city, stationery, maps, and a

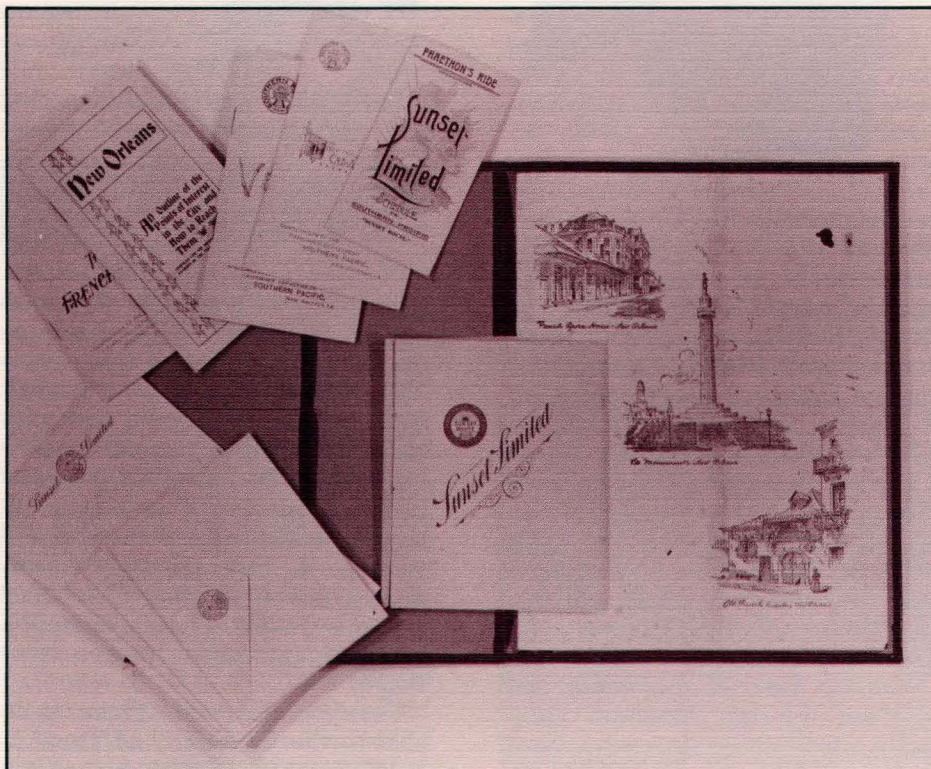
train schedule complete the complimentary gift from the railroad to its New Orleans travelers.

■ *Acadians in 1896*, a photograph by J. C. Handley of New Iberia, Louisiana, is the gift of Dr. Ervin C. Erods. A visitor to the area, writing on the back of the mounted photograph, noted that the women card, spin, and weave the "yellow cotton" into handsome curtains. The visitor, after describing the abundance of food and game in the area, concluded that "These Acadians, descendants of the unfortunate people dispossessed of their homes by the English found in Louisiana peace, plenty, & undisturbed possession of the fruits of their industry. *Evil* has turned to *good* for their children."

■ A complete set of carnival regalia used by Ethelyn Lallande, queen of Rex in 1897, has been acquired. The set includes the crown, scepter, necklace, earrings, bracelets, gauntlets, queen's pin, and ducal decoration.

■ Gene Benefield has donated lottery equipment including three multigraph drums, numbers, and type. The equipment was used for a private Louisiana lottery around 1925.

—Priscilla O'Reilly

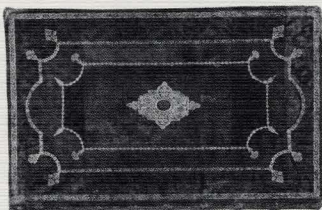


An 1896 souvenir packet from the Sunset Limited recalls the grand days of passenger trains (1985.27. 1-11).

Among recent acquisitions is *Two Months in the Confederate States, including a Visit to New Orleans under the Domination of General Butler* (1863), written anonymously by an English merchant (W. C. Corson). It contains sympathetic but reliable accounts of economic and social conditions in the Confederacy, including vivid descriptions of New Orleans as a city which, "...in October 1862, exceeded in dulness [sic] any little countrytown I ever saw the day after market-day." The only hotel open "...was the 'City Hotel,' the St. Charles being closed, and others used either as hospitals or as headquarters of some Federal departments. The Custom-house was being used as barracks and offices; pickets patrolled the adjoining streets, cannon commanded the approaches; and a constant communication by signal was kept up with the gunboats and troops across the river and elsewhere. Merchants, commission-agents, brokers, and tradesmen lounged about their empty stores and offices until about two p.m., taking occasional drinks with quiet toasts, and then went home to curse the common foe in peace."

■ Another noteworthy publication is *Proceedings of the Delegates of the Friends of the Administration of John Quincy Adams, Assembled in Convention at Baton Rouge* (1827). Although Adams's unsuccessful bid for re-election to the presidency would not occur until late 1828, his Louisiana supporters planned ahead, meeting "...in order to devise and make use of all legal and honorable means to secure the re-election of JOHN QUINCY ADAMS. ..." In an address, the delegates responded to charges against Adams and listed the faults of his opponents.

—Florence M. Jumonville



Staff

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

The spring issue of *LLA Bulletin* contains two articles by head librarian **Florence M. Jumonville**: "Louisiana-Related 1984 Publications: A Bibliography," and "Inside the Front Cover: Bookplates of Louisiana Collectors," which describes 18th- through 20th-century bookplates used by prominent Louisiana individuals and institutions, including sixteen examples from THNOC's collections. Miss Jumonville and library assistant **Adrienne Duffy** attended the Louisiana Library Association conference March 23-26 in Lafayette where Miss Jumonville presented the Louisiana Literary Award. She serves as chairman of the committee for that award.



Sue Laudeman

Shop manager **Sue Laudeman** and **Warren Woods**, shop bookkeeper, attended the Museum Store Association's annual conference May 11-16 in Buffalo, New York. Mrs. Laudeman led the Museum Information Exchange discussion group for history museums. She was re-elected chairman for the South Central region of the Museum Store Association. Mrs. Laudeman also was chosen chairman of the 1986 MSA exhibition to be held in Denver. Member museums will display their publications, posters, and developed products.

Curator **John H. Lawrence** and assistant registrar **Maureen Donnelly** attended the American Association of Museums Conference in Detroit June 9-13. Mr. Lawrence gave a presentation on *Other Ghosts*



Ornithologist **Roger Tory Peterson** with **Sylvia P. Ross**, president of the Lafayette Natural History Museum Association and **Rosanne McCaffrey** during a bicentennial tribute to **John James Audubon** in Lafayette. Photograph © Curtis Darrah 1985.

Along the Mississippi to the Friends of Photography, affiliated with the New Orleans Museum of Art. His photograph of **Clarence John Laughlin** was included in a recent show featuring portraits of Laughlin by other photographers. Five of his prints were hung in an exhibit of cemetery photographs.



Jan White

Jan White, head of photography, participated in a lighting seminar by Calumet Photographic, May 5, in Chicago. She and **Alix Samuels**, manuscripts registration assistant, attended the fourth annual seminar on Conservation of Archival Materials at the Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin.

Dr. Alfred E. Lemmon, coordinator of special projects, had a review published in *Hispanic American Historic Review* (LXV/1). Dr. Lemmon presented a lecture on June 4 in Madrid for the *Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Cientificas*. His topic was "Cultural Transplantation: The Introduction of European Music in the New World."

Chief curator **Dode Platou** traveled to the University of Texas at Austin to examine that institution's photograph collection and storage facilities. Director of systems/cu-

rator Rosanne McCaffrey attended the Special Libraries Association meeting in Winnipeg June 8-13. . . THNOC representatives to the Louisiana Association of Museums' annual meeting in Lafayette were John Mahé, John Lawrence, Priscilla O'Reilly, and Rosanne McCaffrey. LAM has selected Mr. Mahé as program committee chairman for the 1986 meeting in New Orleans. . . THNOC will serve as one of the host institutions. . . Susan Cole, curator of manuscripts, attended the annual meeting of the Manuscripts Society May 29-June 1 in Providence, Rhode Island.



Think Phi

NEW STAFF

Think Phi joined the maintenance department in May.

SPEAKERS BUREAU

Staff members have recently made presentations to the following organizations: Dr. Patricia B. Schmit, the Hermann-Grima Historic House. . . Dr. Alfred E. Lemmon, the St. Tammany Arts Club.

SEMINAR

A program on the work of Clarence John Laughlin will be sponsored by THNOC as one of the events held in connection with the Southeast College Art Conference (SECAC) which is meeting in New Orleans October 24-26, 1985. The Laughlin program will be held on the afternoon of Saturday, October 26; John Lawrence is the coordinator.

Speakers will include Jonathan Williams, poet, publisher, and photography critic; Abraham Davidson, professor of art at the Tyler School of Art in Philadelphia, whose field is American visionary and eccentric artists; and Peter Morrin, curator of 20th-century art at the High Museum in Atlanta.

Puzzler

Answer

The "gleaming contemporary structure" is the Sanlin building, 442 Canal Street, which actually is a series of adjacent units built in the 19th century across from the Custom House. Rather than destroy the structures and erect a new building,

the owner, Fred Gottesman, enveloped the row of varied structures in a screen of gold and silver anodized aluminum and transformed them into a modern office building. The name Sanlin, according to Mr. Gottesman, is a composite of the names of his son Sandy and his daughter Linda.

—John A. Mahé II



Sanlin Building. Photograph by Robert Brantley

Catalogue Available

The Louisiana Microfilm Project, presently sponsored by Loyola University, Louisiana State University, and the Historic New Orleans Collection, funds the microfilming and cataloging of a series of Louisiana documents from the *Archivo General de Indias* in Seville; it is the continuation of a project begun by Loyola in the early 1960s. Over 300,000 frames of official correspondence between colonial officials and the Spanish government and the working papers of officials in Louisiana and West Florida have

been microfilmed to date.

The Historic New Orleans Collection is now making available a comprehensive, two-volume catalogue of the Santo Domingo Papers, the first series of papers filmed. Prepared jointly by scholars from the *Archivo General* and Loyola, the catalogue contains a bilingual (Spanish-English) historical preface, archival preface, instructions for use, glossary, index, and summary descriptions in Spanish of the groups of documents within each *legajo*.

THE CATALOGUE OF THE SANTO DOMINGO PAPERS

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Check enclosed hardback at \$40.00 _____

Visa paperback at \$20.00 _____

MasterCard 4% tax LA residents _____

Acct. # _____ 9% tax New Orleans residents _____

Exp. date _____ Postage and handling _____ \$1.50

TOTAL AMOUNT _____

Other Ghosts Along the Mississippi

"Other Ghosts Along the Mississippi," the Collection's current exhibit of 66 photographs by Clarence John Laughlin, opened in May and runs through December 6. (See p. 15 for Laughlin seminar information.)



Above, Louisiana Pastoral (Number 6), 1951 (neg. no. 6447). Note how low and flat the banks of this bayou are. Note, too, how many trees sprout everywhere, and how all the air seems thickened with moss. . . — C. J. Laughlin

Left, Plantation Boy, 1951 (neg. no. 6800). Seated near the outer wall of the chapel is Earl Dubriel, descendant of the original Africo-French colony at Melrose. . . — C. J. Laughlin

 THE HISTORIC
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NEWSLETTER

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