

**THE HISTORIC  
NEW ORLEANS  
COLLECTION  
NEWSLETTER**

*Volume VII, Number 4      Fall 1989*

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*Ames Crevasse, 1891 (1974.25.11.31)*

*Light & Time*

## NEW ORLEANS PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBIT OPENS

Like many other institutions in this important anniversary year for the invention of photography, the Collection is commemorating the event with an exhibition from its holdings. Attempting to compress 150 years of history into approximately 75 images is the aim of the current exhibition, *Light & Time: 150 Years of New Orleans Photography*.

The date commonly recognized as the

beginning of photography is 1839 when Louis Jacques Mandé Daguerre introduced to the world his invention of a permanently fixed photographic image. New Orleans's association with that medium has been one which has existed since the very beginning: in the century-and-a-half since that time, New Orleans has been blessed with dozens of high-quality photographers.

The photographic holdings of the Historic

New Orleans Collection reflect this diversity and quality. Within the curatorial division, there are collections of regional, national, and even international importance. Photographs from commercial studios, commissioned works of a documentary or artistic nature, and single prints from this century and the second half of the last provide the particulars of people and places as only a photograph can.

*Light & Time* mirrors the holdings of the photographic collections. Limited exhibition space and an embarrassment of riches make choices of what to exhibit difficult indeed. For this reason—and to provide conservation measures—*Light & Time* will present a changing exhibition in the Williams Gallery. Instead of showing only one example of Clarence Laughlin's work, about a dozen photographs by this important artist will be on view. Some of his "color experiments"—Laughlin's fusion of painting and photography which were rarely displayed

in his lifetime—will be shown.

Choosing works by Jay Dearborn Edwards was also a dilemma. Edwards's antebellum views of New Orleans not only provide the earliest images of the bustling 19th-century metropolis; they are also excellent examples of the salted-paper process of photography. The tolerance of such works to extended periods of exhibition is very low. Consequently, frequent changes of the Edwards images will be made during the exhibition. A visitor might see steamboats at the levee on one visit, a view out Esplanade Avenue on another.

Portraits will also be among the works shown. An elegantly posed Captain Alexis Casmir Dumestre is the subject of one daguerreotype. The daguerreotype—its image of mercury amalgam resting tentatively on a polished sheet of silver-plated copper—was the first photographic process that New Orleanians would have seen. It was introduced in early 1840 by Jules Lion, a lithographer. Al-

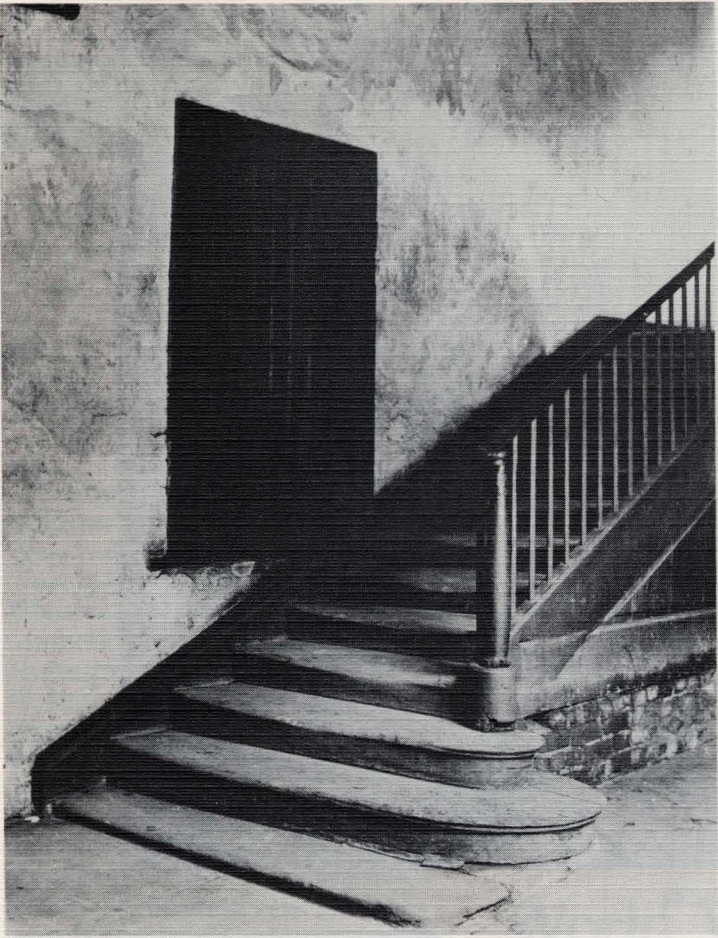


*Congressman W. J. Blackburn by Julian Vannerson (?), ca. 1858 (75-232-L)*

though no certifiable Lion daguerreotypes are known to exist, the exhibition contains later examples by Felix Moissenet and Edward



*Submarine, Bayou St. John by Ernest J. Bellocq between 1901-05 (1988.19.2)*



Architect Richard Koch (1889-1971), generous donor to the Collection, was the director of Louisiana's Historic American Buildings Survey sponsored by the Works Progress Administration during the 1930s. His photographs, contained in the survey, reveal a sensitive and talented photographer whose work included plantations and rural cabins, as well as urban architecture. This year marks the centennial of Mr. Koch's birth.

*Girod House by Richard Koch, 1930s (1985.120.71)*

Jacobs, creator of the Dumestre portrait.

Supplanting daguerreotypes were ambrotypes (made on glass) and tintypes (made on black-lacquered iron). Ease of preparation and the lesser expense of the materials and finished product made these photographic processes universally available.

Apart from the way the subjects of the photographs chronicle the area's appearance, the technological developments which ran rampant through the medium's progress in its first 50 years are amply represented in the Collection's photographic holdings. Examining the forms that this technology took is another theme of the exhibition. From one-of-a-kind daguerreotypes, ambrotypes, and tintypes to ubiquitous albumen-print photographs in the form of carte-de-visite and cabinet photographs, the major scientific milestones which led to today's photography are in evidence. An especially impressive portrait of 19th-century

philanthropist Margaret Haughey, in its original frame, is one of the albumen prints chosen for the exhibition. Also included are antebellum salted-paper prints, including those by Edwards and portraits of Louisiana congressmen; commercially produced cyanotypes (or blueprints) in the form of a business and commercial directory; and crayon enlargements. All of these serve to underscore not only the photographic look of New Orleans at any given time, but the way that advances or variations in the medium were accepted and practiced in the Crescent City.

Among the technological advances in photography were the perfection of the negative/positive process allowing many prints to be made of the same subject; the switch from paper negatives to glass negatives, allowing for finer detail; and the introduction of albumen paper, made from the whites of eggs, whose smooth glossy surface rendered every nuance of the negative. This devel-

opment was responsible for the extreme popularity of the carte-de-visite (photographic calling card) and the stereograph. Still other developments later in the 19th century led to the production of the first flexible films for taking pictures and to the introduction of the Kodak camera, meant for amateur photographers. Some early Kodak photographs made at Evan Hall plantation will be displayed.

The 20th century did not produce such a range of processes as those encountered in the 19th century. By far the greatest number of photographs in 20th-century collections are gelatin silver prints—the ordinary black and white photograph with which so many people are familiar. There are small groups of color work in the Collection's holdings as well, including those in the form of slides, chromogenic color prints, and dye-transfer prints, all of which will be included in the exhibition.

An important role that photography has played is that of making



*Douglas Tire Co. by Daniel S. Leyrer, 1940s (1981.324.3.236)*

images available for nearly everyone to see and to evaluate. This impact was further amplified when ways of printing photographs for mass reproduction in books, magazines, and newspapers were perfected. One section of the exhibition, organized by Jill Roberts, curatorial cataloging coordinator, presents some of the ways in which photographs have been reproduced, from the all-but-discontinued collotype to the ever-present halftone.

The Collection's photographic holdings represent a growing portion of the curatorial division. Appropriate acquisitions by contemporary photographers are made to complement or to expand upon the historical images. These contemporary works come from commercial studios—the Charles Franck and Sam Sutton collections; from free-lance professionals specializing in documentary or editorial work—Michael P. Smith and Rick Olivier; and from photographic artists—Doris Ulmann

and Laughlin.

The contemporary acquisitions tend to build on strengths already present in the pictorial holdings, rather than to explore areas which would serve to compete with the strengths of other local institutions. Befitting the nature of a museum dedicated to the preservation and display of regional history, the emphasis of the photography collections tends to be content and not concept.

If there is an underlying theme to the exhibition, it is change—the changing city and region, changing technology, and certainly the changing of items during the course of the display.

*Light & Time*, which opens October 25, will be on view through March 1990.

- **John H. Lawrence**

**THE HISTORIC  
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The Historic New Orleans Collection

From the

## Director



Collections are as varied as children and just as demanding. They need attention, particularly large photographic collections. What comes to my mind are the Charles Franck negatives and photographs, numbering over 40,000, a jumble of disorganized images at the time of acquisition. We spent months culling and sorting through the negatives of New Orleans views, people, and buildings; the next step was to hire a photographer to make archival-quality prints from selected negatives, 7,500 in all—a project that lasted three years.

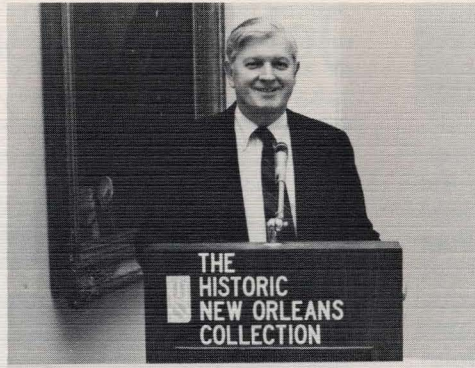
In contrast, Clarence Laughlin's collection—40,000 prints and negatives, a 17,000 card-catalog index, a book manuscript, and correspondence—was all carefully identified and organized, according to his own system. Now we are adapting his system to fit into the curatorial organizing plan at THNOC.

Some years ago I spent a fourth-of-July weekend in San Francisco on a mission to acquire another important collection. Stuart Lynn had just given us his photographs of New Orleans, including his negatives and indexing system. This generous gift was easily adapted to our record keeping.

A group of Dan Leyrer's negatives, donated by one of his friends, proved to be a treasure—and one that required a great deal of organization. The negatives are currently being sorted.

These photographic collections, large and small, add immeasurably to the understanding and enjoyment of our history. They require our care and concern. And they offer infinite possibilities.

- Dode Platou



Thomas Bonner

## Lecture at THNOC

The fourth lecture held in conjunction with a THNOC exhibition was held on Sunday afternoon, September 17. Dr. Thomas Bonner, professor of English at Xavier University and specialist in southern literature, lectured on the influence of New Orleans on four 19th- and 20th-century writers

and how this experience affected the stories they told. The writers discussed were Lafcadio Hearn, Mark Twain, William Faulkner, and Walker Percy.

To be included on the mailing list for subsequent lectures, please call Elsa Schneider at 523-4662.

## World War II Material Sought



*Servicemen in USO hall, 119 Carondelet St. by Charles Franck (1979.325.4080)*

The year 1991 will be the 50th anniversary of the United States's entry into World War II. On the home front the war caused immense social, political, and economic changes: women assumed jobs that men had previously held, new industries developed, regionalism and isolationism were broken down. An entire folklore developed during the war about individuals and events. At war's end, people realized that they did not have to go back to the old ways: postwar America was a new world.

Because World War II was so important in shaping the growth of present-day New Orleans and Louisiana, the Collection is gathering a significant collection of manuscript material reflecting the war's impact on the area and its people. Individuals with letters, diaries, and other accounts wishing to contribute to this project are urged to get in touch with the manuscripts division and to offer their material for consideration as donations.

## Profile

# John Lawrence

If John Lawrence allowed himself the time, he declares that the book he'd choose to read while lying in a hammock would be *Blue Highways* by William Leastheat Moon—a sensitive account of traveling the country's lesser known roads. The book's author and John Lawrence share the gift of seeing and appreciating the details of the everyday world. In the case of Mr. Lawrence, it is seeing the world with a photographer's eye.

But he is not likely to be found in a hammock. The curator of photographs at the Historic New Orleans Collection is more likely to be choosing photographs for THNOC's current exhibition, writing an essay about New Orleans photographer Clarence John Laughlin, or checking the temperature of the Collection's film-storage vault on Tchoupitoulas Street. He moves quickly and with purpose.

Words like accountability and custodianship occur frequently when John Lawrence is talking about the Collection's photographic holdings and his role as curator. Knowing about the proper care for photographs—temperature, storage, lighting—prompted him to write *Preservation Guide 2: Photographs*, the second in THNOC's series of manuals for the layman on the care of objects in the home. Custodianship for Mr. Lawrence also means making the photographs available to a wide audience, which he accomplishes by creating exhibitions, and by writing and speaking about the holdings. "The curator of photographs," he maintains, "should be an emissary to the public." And he must make acquisition proposals based on a thorough knowledge of all the museum's collections.

This he can do. His exposure to what the Collection contains comes from a long association with THNOC, beginning in 1975, one year after his graduation from Vassar College with majors in both art history and English. He remembers that "we were always working on exhibitions—they lasted at most about six weeks." Displaying the Collection's treasures,



and working as a docent and with researchers in the curatorial reading room, gave Mr. Lawrence the familiarity with the holdings that he needed.

With the same precision he brings to all his endeavors, he recalls the time he first became interested in photography: the summer of 1976. It began as an offshoot to help with his painting and developed into both an avocation and a job direction. The following year, a turning point in his career came when he traveled to the Rochester Institute of Technology for a seminar—"no fancy name, just a straightforward title such as 'The Care and Preservation of Black and White Photographic Materials.'" Care has continued to be a watchword ever since.

"It was a really good time to be involved. Photography as a collectible was in the ascendancy," he says. The immense Franck collection was beginning to take shape in 1979, followed by other large collections: Stuart Lynn, Daniel Leyrer, and Clarence John Laughlin. As the photographs arrived—"tens of thousands of objects coming in at once"—Mr. Lawrence's main concern was with editing and, at the same time, maintaining the emphasis of each collection.

In 1983, he wrote an introduction to the catalogue *Music in the Street: Photographs of New Orleans by Ralston Crawford*, in which he states that "like all artwork of value, these photographs speak to us about life—not by being synonymous with life, but by presenting a simplified analogy that may be associated with life's experiences." This ability to speak eloquently about photographs and to understand what they are about carries over into his numerous published articles in the *New Orleans Art Review*, where he is a contributing editor.

"I think of myself as a curator who makes photographs," he replies to a question about his own work. One of his photographs, *St. Louis Cemetery III At Night, New Orleans, La.*, depicts sculpted angels and saints, almost disengaged from their tombs in a play of shadows, silhouetted in reverse against the black trees and sky of



Gallery, 533 Royal by John H. Lawrence (1980.180.2)

a New Orleans night. *Stairwell*, housed at the Collection, is subtle and geometric, revealing an unexpected fragment of beauty. "I've always liked how a camera could see," he says. Serious and articulate, he continues: "It compresses three dimensions into two. It changes things—which are even further removed in black and white."

Mr. Lawrence's photographs have been featured in solo exhibitions, as well as in numerous group shows. Last year, a retrospective at Louisiana State University featured 70 of his photographs from 1980 to 1988, an exhibition that coincided with what he calls "the end of my darkroom work—for awhile, at least."

He assisted Dode Platou in acquiring the important Laughlin photography collection; it is not surprising, then, that he appreciates "Clarence's work" and his belief that photography is a portal to the mind—"an attempt," as the outspoken Laughlin put it, "to animate all things...with the spirit of man." Mr. Lawrence appreciates as well the work of photographers

A. J. Meek and both Michael Smiths, who have all worked locally. When looking for his own subjects to photograph, he likes to wander along state or parish roads, receptive to whatever comes along—his own version of *Blue Highways*. "If you're not restricted to a time table," he says, "you always see things." He comes by his sense of aesthetics naturally: his father, also John Lawrence, was dean of the School of Architecture at Tulane Univer-



sity, a practicing architect, and a preservationist.

He enjoys baseball—THNOC staffers remember the dry wit of his bulletins about the Collection's eclectic team, which he organized.

But even more, he appreciates reading about baseball: Ring Lardner's *Alibi Ike* or Thomas Boswell's *How Life Imitates the World Series*. And there's carpentry, or vegetable gardening, or fishing that fill up his spare moments. When they take time off from renovating their house, he and his wife—Priscilla O'Reilly Lawrence, THNOC's collections manager—like to go fishing in Mississippi.

To coincide with the current exhibition, Mr. Lawrence has just completed a *Guide to the Photographic Collections at the Historic New Orleans Collection*. He appreciates this opportunity to write about his favorite subject; "It's one of the benefits of the job," he says. Writer Susan Sontag, author of *On Photography*, expresses the view that "each photograph is a privileged moment, turned into a slim object that one can keep and look at again." As caretaker of the Collection's photographs and as a photographer in his own right, John Lawrence is aware of capturing the privileged moment for the sake of history and of art.

- Louise C. Hoffman

## Intern Works with Negative Collection

The Collection's intern program, now in its seventh year, provides an opportunity for college students to learn how a museum works and to participate in an exhibition or project of special importance.

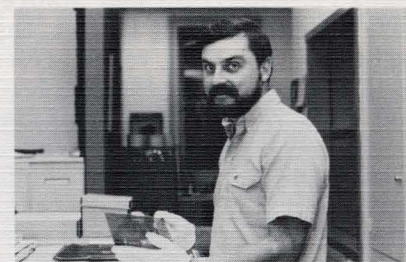
One recent internship—the first to include two semesters—involves Lee Hubbard, a fine arts major with a concentration in photography at the University of New Orleans. His project is centered around the thousands of items in the negative collection of local photographer Eugene Delcroix, which was given to THNOC by the New Orleans Museum of Art in 1984; the work consists of identifying and sorting the collection and then printing selected negatives. Mr. Hubbard was recommended for the internship because of his abilities in darkroom work and his interest in photographic history. Having a sense of responsibility

was also a key factor in Mr. Hubbard's selection: he is working with original glass negatives. The project began in January 1989.

Mr. Hubbard, a non-traditional student, returned to school after spending 13 years in military service with the Coast Guard. Interested in photography for many years, he appreciates the opportunity to work with vintage original material. "Working with glass plate negatives is rewarding," he says, "because of their historical value."

As is the procedure with all interns, Mr. Hubbard spends eight hours a week at the Collection—four hours a week observing and assisting with the operations of the different departments and four hours working on a personal project. His work with the Delcroix Collection was so successful that he was hired as a part-time employee to continue the work begun

as an intern: preparing the Delcroix negatives for final accessioning and data entry. Another tangible result of his project can be



Lee Hubbard

seen in the current exhibition, *Light & Time: 150 Years of New Orleans Photography*, where negatives that he printed are part of the display.

The Collection's intern program is administered by Dr. Patricia Brady, Director of Publications and Academic Affairs. Information about applying to the program may be obtained from her.

## A Hurricane to Remember

“Storm Heads Toward Yucatan; Misses Here,” headlined the *New Orleans Daily Item* on September 26, 1915. Two days later, through the efforts of Dr. Isaac Cline, district chief meteorologist and pioneer hurricane forecaster, the initial prediction was altered, and storm warnings were issued for southeast Louisiana. Having foreseen a major storm, Dr. Cline urged Orleanians to stay off the streets, but most people still went to work. It was soon evident to everyone that this was going to be a dangerous hurricane.

By 7 a.m. on Wednesday, September 29, wind gusts reached 50 mph in the city; later in the morning, gusts of 75 mph occurred at Chef Menteur Pass. Around noon, sustained winds were over 60 mph in the city. Many people thought at the time that the worst of the storm had passed, but squalls continued to increase in intensity throughout the rest of the afternoon. For several terrible hours, beginning around 4 p.m., the full force of the storm pummeled the city with little relief.

The eye of the hurricane plowed ashore near Grand Isle, then passed over Tulane University, and finally pushed on between lakes Pontchartrain and Maurepas. A tidal surge of 13 feet, the highest of the storm, rolled across St. Bernard Parish, the Rigolets, and the Lake St. Catherine area. Sustained winds of 140 mph—a North American record for the time—were recorded for five minutes in Burrwood. In New Orleans the maximum recorded sustained wind was 86 mph lasting for ten minutes; the top gust in the city was 120 mph, lasting twenty seconds; and a barometric reading of 28.11 inches was the third lowest recorded in the world to that date. The height of the storm in New Orleans was shown on the clock of the St. Louis Cathedral, which stopped at 5:50 p.m.

Around midday, schools and offices began to close—already too



Damaged house by John J. DePaul (1974.25.11.98)

late for some people. While many school students had to be convoyed home, others had to ride out the storm at school. Streetcar service staggered to a complete halt by 2 p.m., forcing some people to struggle home in pelting rain and howling winds. Thousands of workers were stranded downtown in offices or found shelter in stalled streetcars and public buildings. Those seeking safety in the Canal Street ferry house narrowly escaped injury when the building collapsed. On the Mississippi River, the *Mastodon*, a Southern Pacific Railroad ferry filled with frightened passengers, broke loose from its moorings and floated free until tugboats could lead it to safety.

Tall buildings funneled winds to increased speeds, but in spite of dangerous conditions, there were still many pedestrians in the area. As a safety precaution, people were allowed to cross streets only in groups, with arms locked, assisted by police officers. Around the Maison Blanche Building, whose tall smokestack crashed through the skylight of the S. H. Kress store next door, winds were estimated in excess of 100 mph all afternoon. Cornices and parapets were torn from a number of structures. Show windows along Canal Street began shattering during the

late afternoon, sending volleys of window panes hurtling through the air. When windows at the United Cigar Store at the corner of Canal and Baronne streets blew out, bystanders, according to the *Times-Picayune*, “‘rushed’ the ‘smokes’ and most of the cigars were appropriated by newsboys and other persons.”

The *Times-Picayune* initially reported that “New Orleans passed through the worst storm in its history, and suffered little more than nominal damage.” It was soon evident that it was more than nominal, since nearly every building in the city sustained at least some damage.

Churches were especially hard hit. St. Anna’s Episcopal Church on Esplanade Avenue was described as a “tragic wastrel in a pile of bricks.” The steeple of the First Presbyterian Church on Lafayette Square crashed through part of the church roof and then onto two neighboring rooming houses. The big metal ornament from atop the steeple was “hurled through adjoining walls like a shot from a big gun,” according to the *Times-Picayune*.

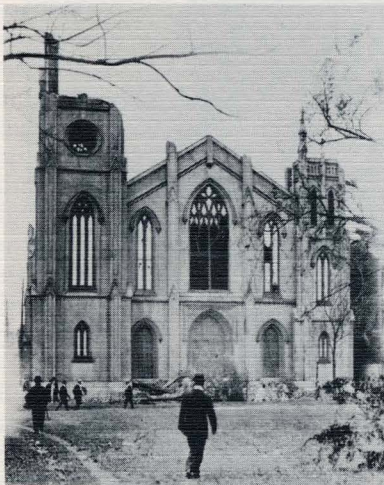
In the French Quarter, ironwork and chimneys were ripped from portions of the Pontalba Buildings. The dome and the



upper floors of the vacant St. Louis Hotel received heavy damage. The French Market was a shambles, with the Bazaar Market left an unrecognizable heap of rubble except for a still intact, but lopsided, cupola. The Presbytere's cupola was demolished, and most of the Cabildo's roof slates were torn off—one from the cupola blew inside to lodge in a portrait of Mrs. Jefferson Davis.

The parks and neutral grounds were covered with broken tree limbs; hundreds of live oaks were uprooted. In Audubon Park, the Horticultural Hall, a popular relic of the 1884-1885 World's Industrial and Cotton Centennial Exposition, collapsed into a pile of timbers and glass.

Along the riverfront, tugboats and ferries had been ripped from their moorings and left scattered about. The bow of the ship



First Presbyterian Church  
(1981.309.7.ix)

*Columbia* was atop the Esplanade ferry house, while the ship's stern rested on the bow of another ship. The stern of that ship landed on the bow of still a third vessel. Several wharves stood like skeletons, with their massive steel curtains and corrugated iron sides and roofs ripped away. All that was left of the Dumaine Street wharf was a mass of twisted metal.

Along Lake Pontchartrain, where there was considerable flooding, camps were hurled off their piers. Bucktown had become a "huge pile of wreckage and flotsam." Half of the buildings and all of the major amusement rides had blown down at Spanish Fort.

The new drainage pumps proved their worth by removing much flood water from the urban areas, but after electricity began to fail, the pumps had to be turned off to prevent short circuiting. This action caused several feet of water to accumulate in Mid-City and the neighborhoods behind South Claiborne Avenue.

The day after the hurricane, sightseers were out in force. "Parties chartered automobiles, footed it, harnessed up the family Bucephelus, all intent," said the *Times-Picayune*, "on visualizing the reported devastation of the wind zone." Hundreds of automobiles created traffic jams at broken bridges where improvised ferry service had to be provided. Security guards were posted at Mardi Gras dens to prevent people from sneaking looks at the 1916 parade floats that were visible through broken walls.

The storm ruined "annual moving day," October 1, when renters in New Orleans traditionally moved. The *Times-Picayune* reported, "Everything moved...but the movers," because so many houses were damaged that numerous families refused to vacate property, thus preventing new tenants from moving in after them.

In the rural communities surrounding the city there was considerable suffering and property damage. The death toll was around 275, including 21 in the city; but this number was actually modest by previous standards due to the efforts of Dr. Cline, a staunch early proponent of hurricane prepared-

ness and evacuation.

Life got back to normal as quickly as possible, although a number of school children received an unexpected vacation when their schools were so damaged that they could not reopen for a week or two. The day after the storm the *Times-Picayune* said, "the number of persons 'making their market'...was fully up to grade...and despite property damage visible all around, the throngs spoke cheerfully, happy that the storm was no worse than it was." Repair work on port facilities and the raising of partially submerged ships began immediately. Some public services were in partial operation the day after the storm, and almost all were nearing normal within a week and a half.

The first Sunday in October was "annual straw hat day" when the men of New Orleans stuffed their sunburned summer straw hats into a cannon on the riverfront to watch them be blown across the river as a symbol of the end of another hot summer. One men's store made light of the storm: an advertisement in the newspaper suggested the purchase of a new fall hat, saying that it did not matter that "10,000 straw hats perish in Hurricane," because " 'Twas time to shoot them anyway."

- John Magill

Sources: Isaac Monroe Cline, *Storms, Floods and Sunshine: A Book of Memories* (New Orleans, 1945); *Daily Item*, Sep. 26-Oct. 10, 1915; *Times-Picayune*, Sep. 27-Oct. 10, 1915; Charles L. Sullivan, *Hurricanes of the Mississippi Gulf Coast* (Gulfport, [n.d.]).



Hurricane Aftermath by John J. DePaul (1974.25.11.99)

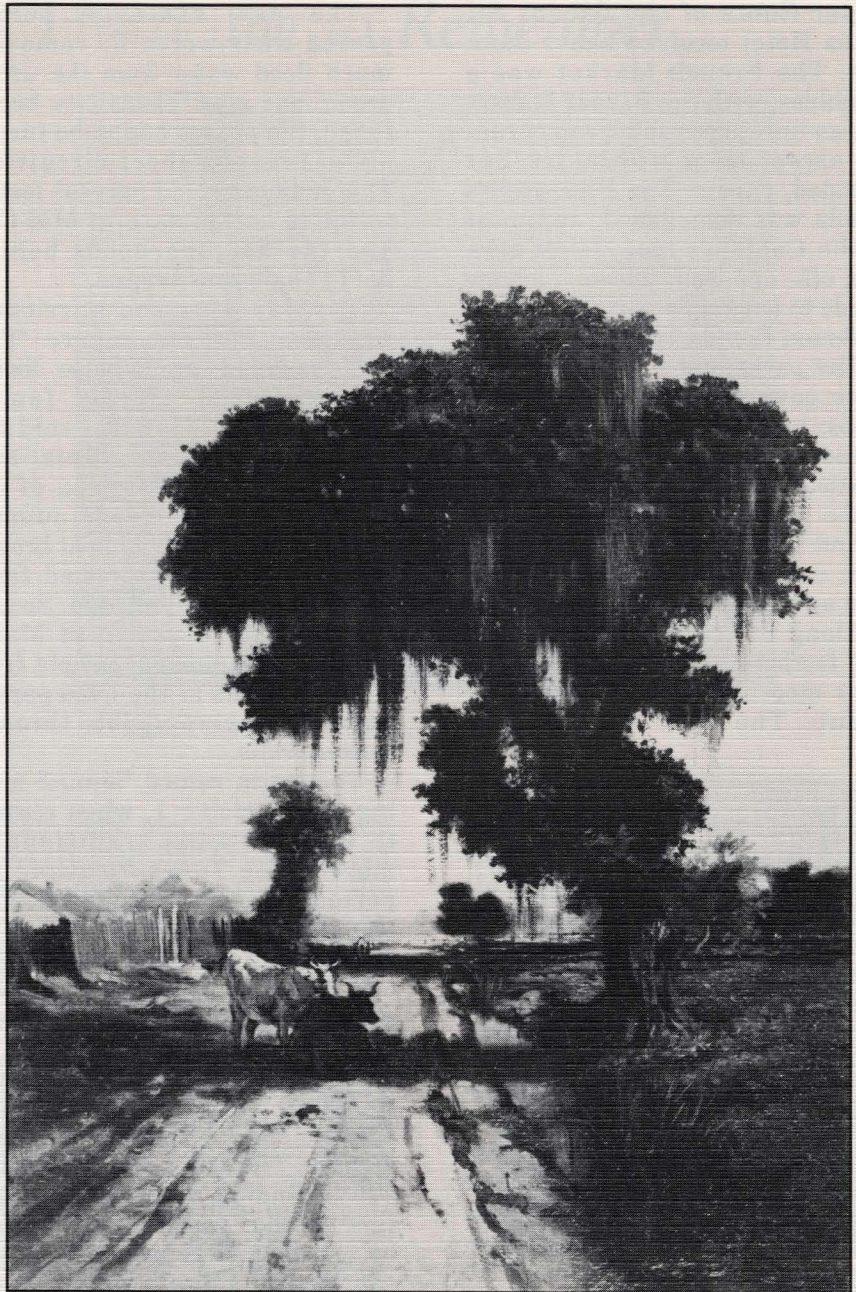
## Acquisitions



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

### CURATORIAL

Richard Clague, Jr. (1821-1873), the first New Orleans resident to paint the flatlands of lower Louisiana, is now considered the South's most important 19th-century landscape painter. His work is highly sought after by collectors and museums interested in southern painting; his career was well documented in a 1974 exhibition and catalogue by Roulhac Tolodano at the New Orleans Museum of Art. THNOC's selective collection of paintings by New Orleans artists lacked a work by Clague until the recent acquisition of an unrecorded landscape, *In Old Louisiana*. The rural setting is probably across Lake Pontchartrain in St. Tammany Parish, where Clague enjoyed making pencil sketches from nature and then translating them into oil paintings in his French Quarter studio. The painting's vertical format (approximately 18x11 inches) is highly unusual for the artist; all known Clague landscapes are horizontal, appropriate to the depiction of the subject. The composition, however, is typical of the formality of design acquired when he lived and studied in France. Pastoral subjects from Clague's sketches are subtly arranged along horizontal planes and guide the viewer through the composition: an open road, two cows in the shade of a moss-laden oak, a farm building, a line of trees on the distant horizon, dense white clouds,



*In Old Louisiana* by Richard Clague (1989.96)

and an expansive blue sky. These pastoral Louisiana landscapes were suitable additions to Victorian parlors in New Orleans. The paintings found an appreciative audience, as well, in the northeastern United States, where Clague's art may be classed with the work of the great American landscape painters.

■ The Louisiana landscape is also interpreted in *Duck Blind*, *Bayou Club*, a recently acquired lithograph. The limited-edition print, dated 1974, is the only local scene by the noted New England illustrator Walter DuBois Richards, who has identified the site as a

preserve near Abbeville. A more familiar scene is a wood engraving of *Madame John's Legacy* by the prominent midwestern illustrator and muralist Fred Geary (1894-1955). The wood engraving suggests the era of the 1930s and is one of a series of prints probably resulting from an unrecorded visit to New Orleans by the artist.

■ Few local 20th-century print-makers are better known than Caroline Durieux, whose popular lithographs are humorously satirical. Recently acquired is the 1957 color lithograph *Deep South*, the artist's subtly abstract interpretation of the Ku Klux Klan, depicted

with white hoods and stylized crosses printed in red, white, and blue.

■ Another color lithograph documents the first year that electric globes replaced gaslights used in carnival decorations by businesses and clubs. The Edison Electric Illuminating Company was organized in August 1887; according to Perry Young in *The Mistick Krewe*, this early public service company sponsored a carnival parade at night to show the practicality of electricity to illuminate a moving group of people. The much-anticipated spectacle was recorded in a rare color lithograph (approximately 25x38 inches), printed locally by the firm of Koeckert & Walle. The print shows the costumed participants led by a grand marshal who carried a baton mounted with a large, incandescent globe. Young identified the procession of marchers as chambermaids, nursemaids, French housemaid hussars, scrubwomen, cooks, kitchen maids, washwomen, and elegant ladies, all sporting headgear or accessories with incandescent lights. Eight horses and their grooms, also fitted with lighted helmets, pulled the engine and dynamo to supply current—carried along concealed wires—to the marchers. The lithograph suggests a grand night spectacle, but newspaper accounts reveal the disappointing truth: rain that Saturday night forced cancellation and dispersed the thousands awaiting the event. Though the parade was rescheduled for Ash Wednesday, many of the marchers did not show up because of rumors that participants might be electrocuted.

■ The recent acquisition of a large unsigned watercolor and pencil drawing of the mammoth La Belle Creole Cigar Factory in the 1880s may be the design for a business poster that was never printed. The factory was located in a building that still stands at Magazine and Julia streets. The active street scene includes several carriages, wagons, drays, and pedestrians and suggests a healthy and prosperous business. The owners' names, S. Hershheim & Bro., are painted in bright red, a sign of pride for the nation's largest cigar manufacturer—and one that had



*La Belle Creole Cigar Factory*  
(1989.84)

earned a national reputation for quality products. An image of “La Belle Creole,” symbol of one of the firm’s top selling cigars, peers coquettishly from a vignette in the center of the collage.

■ The curatorial division has added several examples of banknotes to its collection of rare 19th-century paper currency. Many of these date from antebellum days when many banks and businesses issued money. Recent acquisitions include bills from Cook & Brother; the New Orleans, Jackson & Great Northern Railroad; the Louisiana State Bank; the Citizens Bank of Louisiana; and the Canal Bank, the latter donated by George Popovich. More examples of New Orleans currency would be welcome donations.

■ Film and tape are useful resources for historians because they carry more information than paintings, prints, photographs, and other still imagery. The cultural climate of New Orleans in 1986-1987 was documented in a series of television programs called “Steppin’ Out”; its host-producer, Peggy Scott Laborde, has donated 68 video cassettes originally broadcast on WYES, the local public broadcasting station. They contain commentary about the art scene, theater, movies, literature, and cuisine. Two films, also aired on the local PBS station in 1963, were given by local artist

Zella Funck and her daughter, Margaret Chapman. The programs, geared to child education, show Miss Funck explaining various art techniques.

- John A. Mahé II

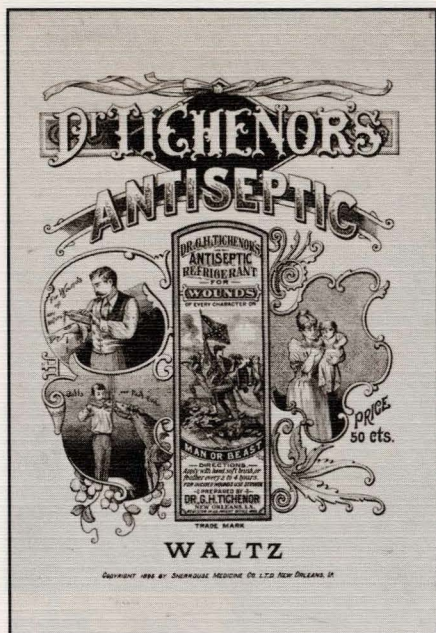
## LIBRARY

Paul Emile Johns, musician, friend of Frederick Chopin, and Russian consul in New Orleans from 1848 until 1860, also pioneered the publishing of music in this city. A native of Cracow, Poland, Johns probably arrived in New Orleans in 1820. He appeared in city directories in 1822 and 1823 as a “teacher on the piano forte” and as a “pianiste.” In 1826 Johns began selling music, imported from Paris, in his home and at the shop of a friend, a sideline which officially became his second career in December 1830, when he announced the establishment of E. Johns & Company, music sellers and stationers. The Collection has recently acquired a previously unrecorded piece of sheet music bearing the imprint of E. Johns & Company, the earliest such item known to survive. “Governor Gilmer’s Grand March” by W. W. Waddell was performed at a concert held in the governor’s honor in Athens, Georgia, on August 4, 1830. George R. Gilmer (1790-1859) had been elected to the first of two non-consecutive terms as governor of Georgia in 1829. This composition was published simultaneously in Philadelphia by George Willig and in New Orleans by Emile Johns, probably in December 1830, and is very early for a piece of sheet music with a New Orleans imprint.

■ Another piece of sheet music acquired by the Collection was also published in New Orleans and commemorates a prominent local physician and his contribution to medicine—Dr. Tichenor’s Antiseptic, still in popular use today. “Dr. Tichenor’s Antiseptic Waltz” was written by Louis Blake and published by the Sherrouse Medicine Company, Ltd., in 1895. Dr. George Humphrey Tichenor of Kentucky, a Confederate veteran, had developed the formula used in

the preparation of Dr. Tichenor's Antiseptic while in private practice in Mississippi. He and Col. J. M. Sherrouse established the Sherrouse Medicine Company, Ltd., in Baton Rouge in 1885 and moved their operations to New Orleans three years later to get a larger field for their rapidly increasing business. The company's major product was the antiseptic, "which for wounds, bruises, burns, sprains, etc., and for colic, cramps and general household purposes, has no equal, as evinced by the testimonials of the best men of the country." Shortly before the appearance of this waltz, the Sherrouse Medicine Company purchased a printing plant for their private use in advertising and for office and laboratory work. Undoubtedly, this waltz was commissioned and introduced to the public as a means of advertising their product. The title is certainly to the point in mentioning the product's name, but it also conjures up images of waltzers wearing sterile surgical masks and gloves as they whirl around the ballroom.

■ Regimental histories expand upon the basic movements of a military unit, giving an in-depth picture of camp life and the incidents and personalities which form the character of the unit. The unfamiliar country they moved through and the civilians, hostile and friendly, they encountered are often commented upon in a regimental history. Several northern units which saw action in Louisiana during the Civil War were



(89-313-RL)

the subjects of such histories. George N. Carpenter's *History of the Eighth Regiment Vermont Volunteers; 1861-1865* relates this infantry regiment's service from its arrival in New Orleans in May 1862, through the regiment's operations in the Lafourche District, Bayou Teche, Alexandria, and the Port Hudson campaign in Louisiana, to its mustering out in Washington, D.C., in June 1865. Postwar activities of the regiment's most noted members are also related by Mr. Carpenter, the regiment's sergeant major, along with monument dedications and regimental reunions.

■ Little is known about Pierre Dormenon, who served as parish judge of Pointe Coupée during the

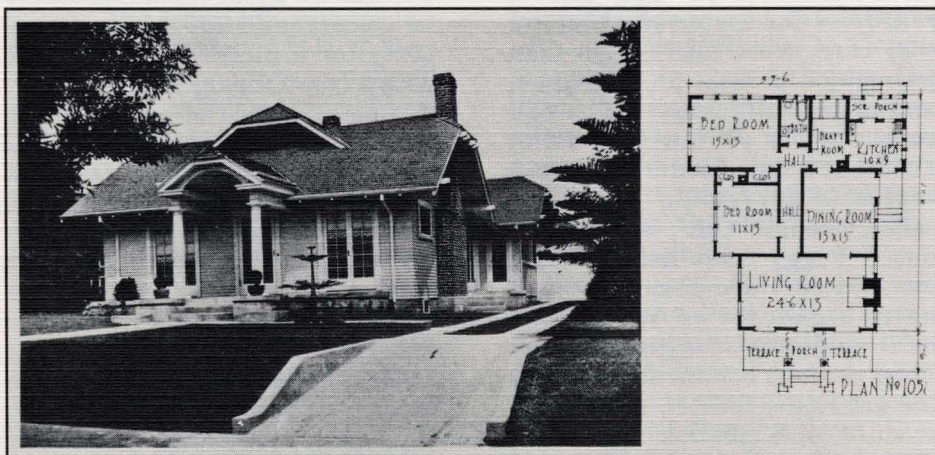
years 1807 through 1810, and again from 1818 through 1832. A Frenchman who was in Santo Domingo at the time of the slave rebellion, he came to Louisiana via Maryland. In his pamphlet *Memoire*, published in New Orleans in 1810, he defends himself against public ridicule for his part in the slave revolt. The copy recently acquired is from the collection of Gaspar Cusachs, a prominent New Orleans businessman and president of the Louisiana Historical Society from 1913 until his death in 1929, and is the only known copy in existence.

■ Among other interesting items received by the library were two trade catalogues from New Orleans companies. The Southern Pine Association issued a catalogue, *Modern Homes*, in 1921, which depicts 50 residences with their floor plans. Many homes of that era found around New Orleans may be recognized in this booklet. The Henderson, Thoens and Gerdes Company described ice and refrigeration equipment in their catalogue of 1893, the year they exhibited their machinery at the Columbian Exposition held in Chicago. Also received were several issues of the monthly magazine of the Warren Easton Boys' High School, *Old Gold and Purple*, covering a period from November 1923 to May 1925.

-Pamela D. Arceneaux

## MANUSCRIPTS

"On Washington Avenue between Camp and Chestnut there stands a large, massive stone building dear to every girl who has ever entered its portals.... Shall I ever forget the strange feeling that took possession of my heart when I entered the large iron gates and heard them clang behind me." Leda Hincks Plauché, a member of the Newcomb College graduating class of 1907, wrote this memoir in her scrapbook filled with photographs, social notes, clippings, and the words to college songs and cheers ("Boom a rang a rang a tang!"). The "massive stone building" (actually, scored plaster) of which she writes was built as a



Modern Homes, catalogue (89-281-RL)

home by James Robb about 1855 and became the new home of Newcomb College in 1891.

Mrs. Plauché, a talented artist, had a busy career as a designer of carnival ball tableaux and floats, book illustrator, and owner of the Green Orchid Shop in the French Quarter. A fine sampling of those talents may be viewed in a donation by her daughter, Mildred Plauché Landry. Included are sketches of costumes, publications, correspondence, and the scrapbook from her Newcomb College days.

■ The fusillade which echoed through the Capitol Building on September 8, 1935, changed the history of the state of Louisiana, and perhaps of the nation as well. Who knows what the future would have held for Senator Huey P. Long if his life had not been violently ended by a bullet, allegedly fired by young Dr. Carl A. Weiss, Jr., who died on the scene in a hail of tommy-gun fire. Many theories have been expounded and many volumes have been written to try to explain the events and motives which led up to the assassination, but 50 years later there are still unanswered questions. One will not find any new revelations in the Weiss Papers, donated by Dr. Thomas E. Weiss to the manuscripts division. What the researcher will find here is an inside view of a close-knit family of doctors and musicians who were devastated by the news that Carl—a young physician with a wife and a three-month-old son—had reportedly shot Senator Long and had been killed on the spot. Letters of condolence, filled with disbelief and shock, poured in from all over the world to the Weiss family. Accusations and theories of conspiracy flooded the newspapers. The material, collected by Dr. Carl A. Weiss, Sr., reveals a moving story of one family's private grief during a most public event.

■ The Historic New Orleans Collection offers the researcher an extensive body of material on the history of land surrounding this city. The manuscripts division has just acquired a proposal by George Hero, New Orleans businessman and land promoter, for the sale and development of land in and around the Belle Chasse Planta-



Above, *Newcomb girls in costume; right, senior class play announcement (89-35-L)*



Newcomb Campus . . . . .  
on Saturday the twenty-fifth-  
of May, nineteen hundred and  
seven, at eight of the clock . . .

tion in 1916. Hero campaigned unsuccessfully for many years for a bridge to connect the east and west banks of the Mississippi. This report includes natural and man-made drainage systems, weather reports, agriculture, proposed industrial and port development, and snapshots of houses and farming in this development known as the "Hero Tract" on the west bank of the river.

■ Some of the best descriptions of Louisiana can be found in letters addressed to family "back home" by young men seeking their fortune here during the decades before the Civil War. Caleb Green, a clerk of court of the Western District of Louisiana, wrote three letters between 1835 and 1842 to family members in New York state. Writing from Opelousas, Washington, and Breaux Bridge, he commented on the climate ("the healthiest in the United States"); his wife and daughters who spoke only French; and slavery, which he called a "great moral and social

evil....We are sleeping on a volcano and the rumbling of the earth betokens an explosion." Caleb Green cautioned his father that the preaching of the abolitionists in the North not only slowed down the process of emancipation by southerners, but was destined to drench the land in blood. He wrote his brother in 1842, urging him to address a letter to some gentleman of influence in Congress, relating that the smuggling of slaves from Texas was taking place at the mouth of the Sabine River, the author's own official position prohibiting him from bringing the complaint.

- Catherine C. Kahn

#### PHOTO CREDITS

Jan White Brantley  
Judy Tarantino

# Staff

## PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Director **Dode Platou** visited various museums in the Midwest during a recent trip to observe the procedures of other institutions...her tour included stops at the Newberry Library in Chicago, the Chicago Historical Society, the Minnesota Historical Society, and the James Ford Bell Library at the University of Minnesota.



Dode Platou

Head librarian **Florence M. Jumonville** was appointed chairman of the Louisiana Library Association's Advisory Committee on Publications. **Judith H. Bonner**, assistant curator, recently lectured on "Art in New Orleans in the 1920s" as part of a faculty institute on Faulkner and his contemporaries entitled "William Faulkner and Other Famous Creoles," sponsored by the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities and Southeastern Louisiana University.

Florence Jumonville



Judith Bonner

**Dr. Alfred E. Lemmon**, acting curator of manuscripts, spoke on surveying historic cemeteries at the National Trust Conference on Burial Sites held in Charleston, South Carolina, in June...he also spoke at the New Orleans Keyboard Festival on New Orleans composers...Dr. Lemmon was invited to participate in the Latin American Archivists Preservation and Conservation Institute at the University of Texas at Austin.



Alfred Lemmon

**Priscilla O'Reilly Lawrence**, collections manager, was moderator for "Copyright Administration for the Large and Small Museum," a session at the annual meeting of the Southeastern Museums Conference in Atlanta in October...**John H. Lawrence**, curator of photographs, served as a panelist.

## CHANGES

Erratum: **Alan Balicki's** title was incorrectly listed in the summer *Newsletter*...the correct title is preparator/assistant registrar.

**Alfred E. Lemmon** is serving as acting curator of manuscripts.

**Jill Roberts** married Patrick Gushman in October in Northampton, Massachusetts.

## PUBLICATIONS

**Judith H. Bonner** and **John H. Lawrence** contributed articles to the *New Orleans Art Review*.

## MEETINGS

**Jan White Brantley**, head of photography, and **Judy Tarantino**, photographer, attended a photo-lighting seminar, "The Magic of Light," given by

San Diego photographer Dean Collins in August.

**Jill Roberts**, curatorial cataloging coordinator, and **Charles Patch**, systems manager, traveled to Chicago in October for the meeting of the Museum Computer Network.

**Taronda Spencer**, manuscripts cataloger, and **Alfred E. Lemmon** attended the annual meeting of the Society of American Archivists in St. Louis. Dr. Lemmon also attended the annual meeting of the Association of Records Managers and Administrators in New Orleans.

**Dode Platou** and **Elsa Schneider**, curator of education, went to Seattle for the annual meeting of the American Association of State and Local History in September...Mrs. Platou and **John A. Mahé II**, chief curator, attended the arts awards luncheon given by the Arts Council of New Orleans.

Priscilla O'Reilly Lawrence



Elsa Schneider

## MEDIA

**Alfred E. Lemmon** presented a program on Iberian music for Columbus Day on the WWNO radio program, "Musica da Camera." **John H. Lawrence** was interviewed about the work of photographer Clarence John Laughlin for television.

## SPEAKERS BUREAU

Staff members have recently made presentations to the following organizations: **Pamela D. Arceneaux**, International Council of Community Churches...**John Magill**, Danish school teachers, sponsored by the Delphi Foundation.

# Exhibition Inspires Comments

As part of the exhibition *'Way Down Yonder in New Orleans: Visitors' Impressions of the Crescent City*, a guest book was placed in the exhibition gallery and New Orleans visitors were invited to record their own impressions of our city. The book, containing acid-free paper, will be preserved permanently in our manuscripts department. Visitors came from almost all of the United States and from Canada, Mexico, Costa Rica, Jamaica, Brazil, Norway, Sweden, Germany, Austria, France, Switzerland, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan. Following are some of the comments found in the guest book:

"Wonderful, but too hot!" West Germany

"What have you done to Bourbon Street?" Illinois

"We can delay our trip to Paris." Wisconsin

"My lasting impression of New Orleans will be a combination of sultry weather, seafood, Cajun music, Hurricanes, and friendly people. This is a unique American city. I will return!" Northern Ireland

"In my home town, people pay good money to hear the kind of music played on the streets here." Texas

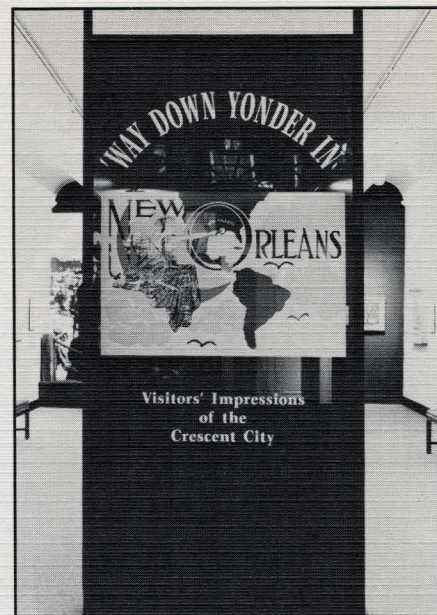
"La plus américaine des villes françaises." France

"Trying to find a parking place is a terrible experience, but fortunately it is a fascinating town [in which] to walk and see the sights." Illinois

"Australia largely has been a 'throw away' society. Amongst other things New Orleans has kept physical vestiges of its past, combined it well with the new, and all based around the majestic Mississippi River." Australia

## Viewed in Japan

In June the Japanese Broadcast Corporation NHK filmed the exhibition *'Way Down Yonder in New Orleans: Visitors' Impressions of the Crescent City* for viewing in Japan last August. The broadcasting company is equivalent to England's BBC, with programming



that reaches five million viewers. The productions are in English; for those who are less fluent in the language, Japanese translations are available at bookstores throughout Japan. The program included interviews with director Dode Platon and John Magill, assistant curator, as well as information about THNOC.

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## Bibliography of New Orleans Imprints

The *Bibliography of New Orleans Imprints, 1764-1864*, the latest publication of the Historic New Orleans Collection, is now available for purchase. This descriptive bibliography of books, pamphlets, and broadsides and other ephemera printed in New Orleans contains over 3,000 entries. The work of head librarian Florence M. Jumonville, the *Bibliography* is the result of many years of meticulous research and will stand as a definitive reference tool.

P. William Filby, Fellow and former President of the Manuscript Society, comments: "It is an immaculate work where Miss Jumonville's ingenuity, tenacity, and enthusiasm have produced a *tour de force*." The introduction is a history of printing in New Orleans.



The Shop at the Collection offers for sale a large and varied selection of antique and period jewelry in styles ranging from Victorian to Art Deco. Distinctive pieces include cameos, message brooches, chatelaines, mourning jewelry, watch fobs, rings, and calling card holders. Costume jewelry from the past is particularly appropriate as a Christmas gift.

**THE HISTORIC  
NEW ORLEANS  
COLLECTION  
NEWSLETTER**

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