



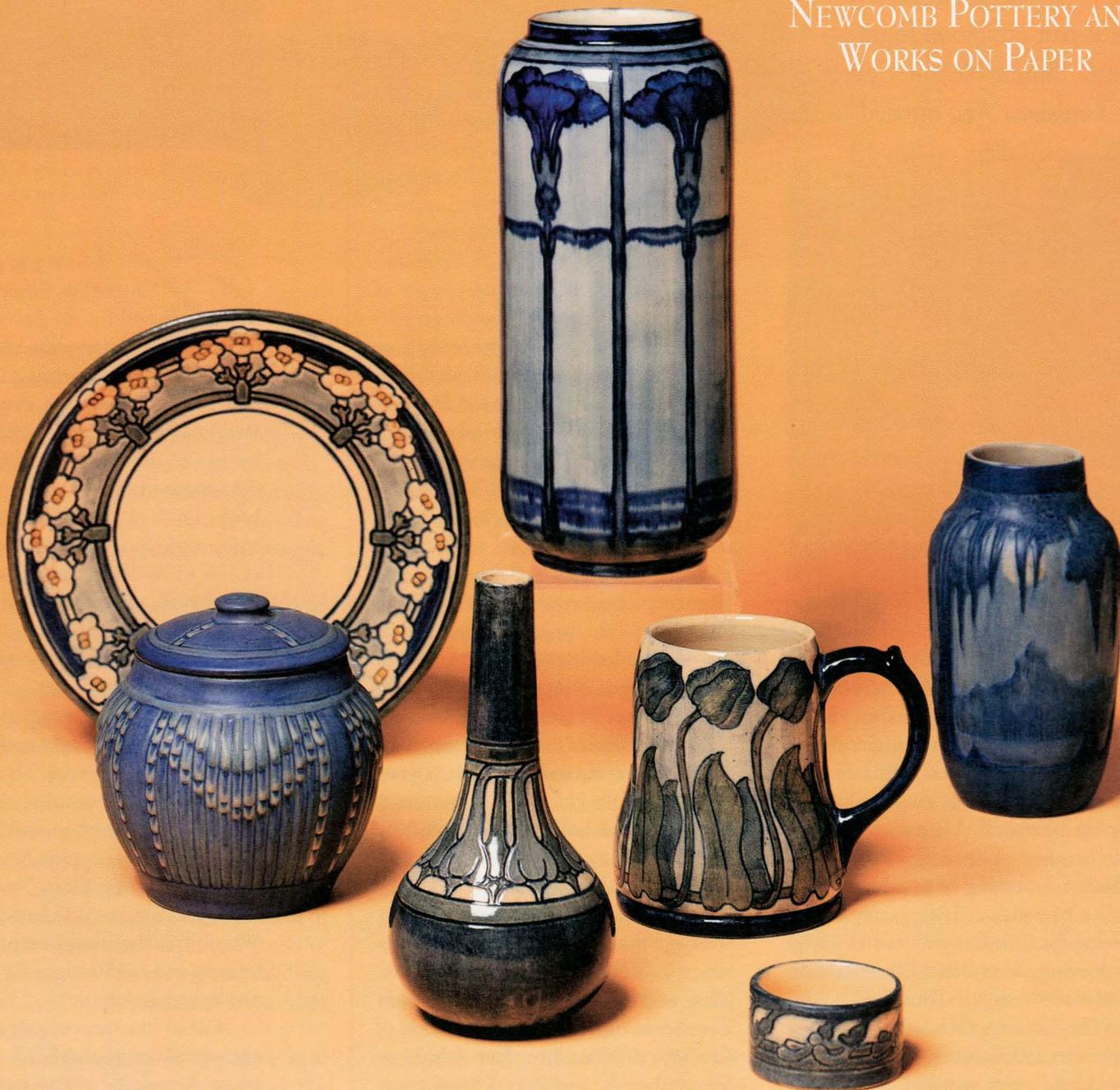
THE HISTORIC
NEW ORLEANS
COLLECTION
QUARTERLY

Volume XIV, Number 3

Summer 1996

*The
Laura Simon Nelson
Collection
of Louisiana Art*

PART TWO:
NEWCOMB POTTERY AND
WORKS ON PAPER



THE LAURA SIMON NELSON COLLECTION OF LOUISIANA ART PART TWO: NEWCOMB POTTERY AND WORKS ON PAPER

SADIE IRVINE, POTTER?



Sadie Irvine. Courtesy Newcomb College Archives, Center for Research on Women

The women of Newcomb Pottery are known for the fine designs they created to decorate the celebrated pots, but no surviving piece of Newcomb pottery has ever been attributed to a female potter. The history of the Pottery itself is well documented — the influence of both the Arts and Crafts and the women's suffrage movements, the vision of William and Ellsworth Woodward, the tutelage of Mary Given Sheerer.¹ But did any of the women of Newcomb Pottery ever throw pots as well as design them?

Newcomb Pottery produced and sold Arts and Crafts-style wares nationally from roughly 1895 until 1940. The unusual, award-winning commercial venture, affiliated with the H. Sophie Newcomb Memorial College (later, Newcomb College), was established by the Woodward brothers to provide training and employment for female fine-arts students.

Called “the most strictly indigenous product of the fictile [clay] art in America,”² the pottery was fashioned of local clays and decorated with designs based on Louisiana flora and fauna. Plant drawing

designs inspired by indigenous flora and fauna. But the later pots, unlike the earlier ones, are more softly modeled and painted, glazed in a matte finish. Stylistically, these pots fit into national art pottery trends.

The distinctive early works of Newcomb pottery are dramatically more individualistic, much less a product of a recognizable pottery line. Although all Newcomb pottery is handcrafted and one of a kind, the early pieces exhibit personal designs characteristic of each decorator. The Nelson Collection includes several of these rare and important “bright glazed,” or glossy, pieces. Of particular interest are a hanging flower cone and a tulip-motif mug, both decorated by Ada Wilt Lonnegan, and a tall cylindrical vase with a carnation design by Henrietta Davidson Bailey. Lonnegan entered Newcomb's Normal Art program in 1896, graduated in 1900, and continued to decorate pottery through 1906. Bailey graduated from the Normal Art School in 1903 and eventually joined the pottery faculty.

Other decorators represented in the Nelson Collection are Aurelia Coralie Arbo, Marie Levering Benson, Corinne Marie Chalaron, Elizabeth Antoinette Horner, Sarah Agnes Estelle Irvine, Harriet Coulter Joor, Emilie de Hoa LeBlanc, Marie de Hoa LeBlanc, May Sydnor Morel, and Anna Frances Simpson.

Laura Simon Nelson's generosity adds significantly to the Collection's previous holdings of Newcomb pottery. Many of the Nelson pots can be viewed in *The Laura Simon Nelson Collection of Louisiana Art, Part Two*, from July 13 to September 7, and *Part Three*, from September 13 to January 4, 1997.

—Maureen A. Donnelly

Newcomb Pottery and Works on Paper, the second part of the three-part exhibition featuring the Laura Simon Nelson Collection of Louisiana Art, opened in the Williams Gallery on July 13.

Laura Simon Nelson's generous gift includes 70 pieces of Newcomb pottery that represent more than three decades of work from the renowned manufactory. Through the work of 12 decorators and six potters, the Nelson group illustrates nearly all of the stylistic changes that developed during the history of the Newcomb Pottery.

At the time the Newcomb Pottery was founded in 1894, art pottery was a relatively new concept in the United States, although several significant ventures already existed, notably Rookwood in Cincinnati (established 1880) and Grueby in Boston (established 1894). These potteries were inspired by the tenets of the English Arts and Crafts Movement advocated by William Morris.

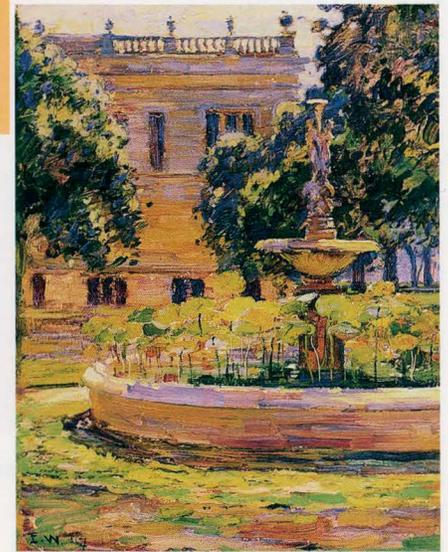
Newcomb was unique among art potteries because it was affiliated with the scholastic curriculum at the H. Sophie Newcomb Memorial College. Two brothers, Ellsworth and William Woodward, seeking to promote culture and to provide aesthetic occupational training for their fine-arts students, were the moving forces behind the establishment of the Newcomb Pottery.

The majority of the Nelson pots were made after 1910 when production at the Newcomb Pottery increased. Like the earlier works, later wares are underglazed predominately in the signature Newcomb cobalt blue and chromium green, with



Newcomb pots from the Laura Simon Nelson Collection, Sadie Irvine, decorator.

Below, The Lotus Fountain, Newcomb College Campus by Ellsworth Woodward, 1917 (LN76)



was a required course in the art school: Newcomb Pottery's Sadie Irvine wrote that "each decorator had her own portfolio of pencil drawings, accurate studies of various plant forms, trees, etc. that she knew well, most likely grew in her own garden — wild iris, cherokee rose, confederate jasmine, oak, pine or cypress trees."

As a potter myself, I was delighted when the chair of the Newcomb art department, John Clemmer, approached me in 1980 to prepare the Newcomb College pottery collection for the Smithsonian Institution's traveling exhibition. My responsibilities included researching and cataloging every pot in the university's collection. Documenting the makers, dates, inscriptions, measurements, and firing temperatures allowed me to handle hundreds of expertly thrown and decorated pieces of art pottery — fascinating and fulfilling work for a "mud-merchant," as we called ourselves.

I always wondered why there were no examples of pots thrown by the women decorators. Surely, some of these women experimented with the potter's wheel and presumably became proficient

enough to earn the Newcomb College cipher on their works. Pottery and decoration instructor Mary Given Sheerer advocated student-thrown wares, but other administrators felt the commercial success of the Pottery necessitated hiring professional potters. Increasingly throughout the history of the art school, however, more emphasis was placed on teaching all aspects of pottery manufacture.

As early as 1913, Newcomb was producing hand-built pottery. A *Times-Democrat* article written by "A Decorator" stated, "Do not think, however, that the decorators are willing to leave to the potter the entire fun of working the clay....it would be strange indeed did the imagination not suggest limitless possibilities in the piles of wet clay, and the fingers stray irresistibly toward it."

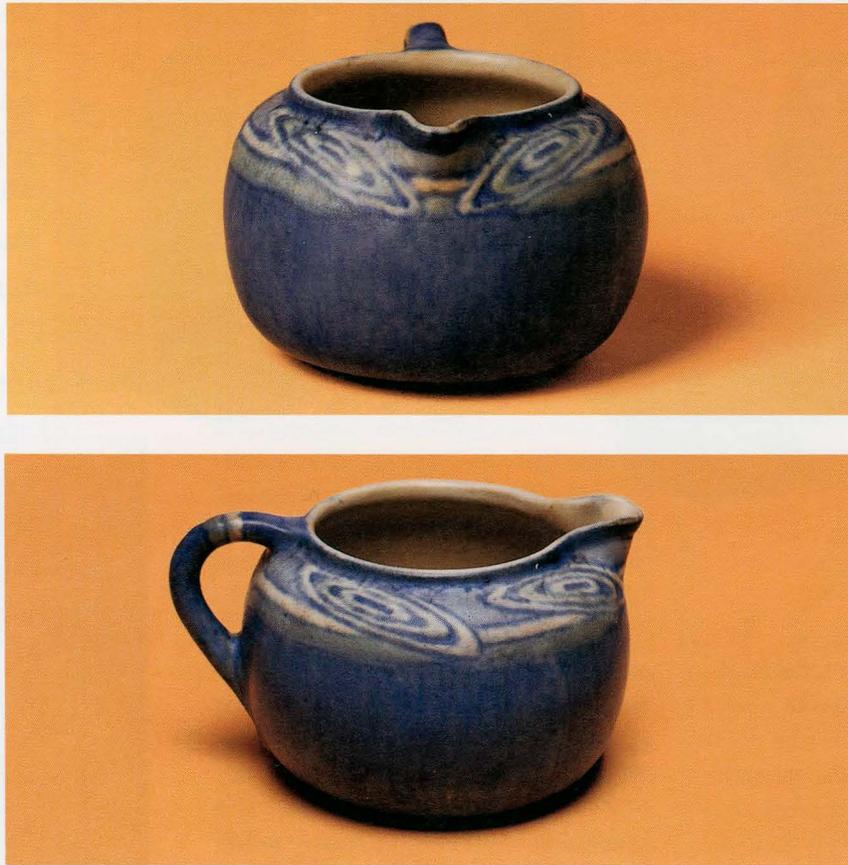
During the 1920s and 1930s, the notion of student crafting was completely realized. When Mary Given Sheerer retired in 1931, Kenneth Smith, who had joined the staff as ceramic chemist and instructor in pottery in 1929, assumed additional teaching responsibilities and the management of the Pottery.

He introduced into the student curriculum a clay and glaze calculation course which enabled "students to do their work entirely alone." Also in 1931 maverick clay artist Juanita Gonzalez was hired as the pottery design instructor. (Sculptor Angela Gregory replaced Gonzalez in 1935 after her untimely death at age 32.) A photo in a 1936 *Times-Picayune* article shows a Newcomb student standing at a foot-operated, or "kick," potter's wheel, raising a tall and impressively thrown vessel. It is logical to assume that along with the art students, some of the professional pottery decorators, particularly those of long-term employ, would also experiment with the potter's wheel.

Among Laura Simon Nelson's generous gift of Louisiana paintings and Newcomb pottery, one pot, in particular, caught my eye. The piece is a small and seemingly insignificant cream pitcher. Not well thrown! The diminutive Nelson pitcher is heavy, with walls of uneven thickness, its height minimal, the neck open, the spout timid and lopsided, the handle slightly skewed and of varying thickness. All are symptoms of inexperienced hands, certainly much less accomplished than those of craftsmen Jonathan Hunt, Francis Ford, or Kenneth Smith, the men throwing for Newcomb in 1933.

Nonetheless, the pitcher bears the Newcomb College stamp of approval on its base. It is also inscribed with a 1933 date mark and the ciphers of both Aurelia Arbo and Sadie Irvine. The markings support my suspicion: Sadie Irvine threw pots. More obvious than the slightly flawed potting of the pitcher, however, is the loose spiral decoration, completely uncharacteristic of Irvine. Ceramist Paul E. Cox commented that "Miss Sadie Agnes Estelle Irvine was the greatest decorator in the history of the enterprise." (Cox was employed by Newcomb from 1910 to 1918 and developed its famous matte glaze.) He also fondly recalled how "Sadie Irvine was able to divide a pot into fifths — or whatever the design called for — entirely by eye, chatting merrily the while." Upon receiving the prestigious Binns Medal for ceramic excellence,

Cox wrote to Irvine expressing his desire for her to have won the award, "I wish I could design like you can and draw with the precision you can do it!"



Cream pitcher, Aurelia Arbo, decorator; Sadie Irvine, potter (LNP54)

Even when much of the pottery decoration changed at Newcomb from naturalistic images of oak trees and flowers to more geometric and abstract designs inspired by Art Deco, Irvine's style retained a recognizable, almost mathematical, precision. The new line of decoration introduced in 1932 suggested rain, the Mississippi River, and Louisiana bayous. Irvine's exacting interpretations create exquisite repetitive patterns. The Nelson pitcher decoration, loosely carved and "painted," with unevenly spaced galaxy-like swirls, could not have come from Sadie Irvine's hands.

If then, Aurelia Arbo decorated the pot, did Sadie Irvine throw it? There would have been no other reason for these two women to collaborate on such a simple design, on such a small object.

Irvine was active longer than any other member of the Pottery, serving for 52 years as student, decorator, instructor, and finally, as the head of the ceramics department from 1942 until 1952. Wouldn't her curiosity, dedication, and familiarity with clay lead her to sit at the potter's wheel, particularly as instructor of ceramics? What other explanation for the unevenness of technique, the strikingly dissimilar designs of Irvine and Arbo, and, perhaps most important, the signature of two decorators upon a single piece?

The Nelson creamer, perhaps the only piece of Newcomb pottery attributed to a female potter, will

be on view in Parts Two and Three of *The Laura Simon Nelson Collection of Louisiana Art*.

— Maureen A. Donnelly

¹ Jessie Poesch, *Newcomb Pottery: An Enterprise for Southern Women, 1895-1940* (Exton, Pa., 1984).

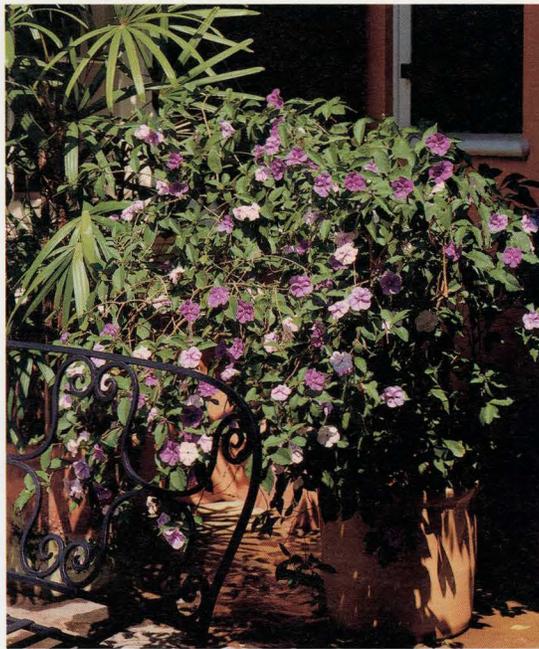
² Walter Ellsworth Gray, "Later-Day Developments in American Pottery," *Brush and Pencil* 10 (April 1902), 31-38.

Sources: Paul E. Cox, "Newcomb Pottery Active in New Orleans," *Bulletin of the American Ceramic Society* 13 (May, 1934) and "Potteries of the Gulf Coast," *Ceramic Age* 25 (1935); *Times-Democrat*, March 9, 1913; *Times-Picayune*, March 22, 1931, May 3, 1936; Tulane University, Howard-Tilton Memorial Library, Special Collections, Sadie Irvine Letters, box 1, folders 3 and 7 (MS.635).

DIRECTOR

With deepening appreciation every year, I welcome the flowering of a plant in the courtyard near the museum shop. Its foliage implies a shrub of no consequence, but spring brings an array of rich violet flowers — simple flowers, slightly larger than impatiens. Within days, their petals change color—fade is not a word that does justice to the progression of subtle hues—from violet to lavender to white. As new blooms join the display, the plant known as Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow soon exhibits its full palette all at once.

Brunfelsia pauciflora is a fitting denizen for our courtyard and not just because of its common name. Botanists suggest that Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow originated in Brazil and was



introduced to New Orleans gardens about 1840. It thrives in this urban setting, flowering more profusely when its roots are crowded. It prefers

partial shade but survives full sun. It is said to be hardy “only to 27 degrees,” but it winters here pretty well with modest shelter.

In summer, tiny blossoms of jasmine and sweet olive waft their sensuous fragrance into the French Quarter’s heady atmosphere, while bold flowers too numerous to name clamor for attention. Unlike the barkers on Bourbon Street, however, Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow simply invites contemplation and a return visit. Its complexions are different this afternoon from this morning. Within its familiar range of hues, they will be the same and different tomorrow. The differences delight but do not surprise. Not unlike humanity. *Plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose.* Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow.

— Jon Kukla

WILLIAMS PRIZE AWARDED



Jon Kukla with Jennifer Fairclough, daughter of Williams Prize winner Adam Fairclough

Race and Democracy: The Civil Rights Struggle in Louisiana, 1915-1972, written by Adam Fairclough and published by the University of Georgia Press, has won the 1995 L. Kemper Williams Prize of \$1000. Based on exhaustive research in public and private collections as well as extensive oral history interviews, Fairclough’s *Race and Democracy* explores

the complex relationships between the familiar civil rights movement of the 1960s and the often forgotten efforts that commenced within two decades after the Supreme Court’s *Plessy* decision of 1896 had made “separate but equal” segregation the law of the land.

Professor Fairclough holds the Chair in Modern American History at the University of Leeds, in the United Kingdom, and is the author of previous books and articles on aspects of the civil rights movement. Reviewers throughout the country have acclaimed *Race and Democracy: The Civil Rights Struggle in Louisiana, 1915-1972* as a book that transcends its state-wide subject to illuminate the entire history of the movement in 20th-century America.

Established in 1974 by the Historic New Orleans Collection and the Louisiana Historical Association, the Williams Prizes in Louisiana History are designed to encourage fine scholarship and writing. Prize recipients are chosen each year by a committee appointed by the Louisiana Historical Association. The

1995 awards were announced in March at the association’s annual meeting in Hammond, Louisiana. The committee awarded no prize in the manuscript category this year.

Entry forms for the annual competition are available from Dr. Jon Kukla, Chair, Williams Prize Committee, The Historic New Orleans Collection, 533 Royal Street, New Orleans, Louisiana 70130-2179. The deadline for nominations published or completed in 1996 is February 1, 1997.

LECTURE

H. Parrott Bacot, director of the LSU Museum of Art, will give a lecture, “The Arts and Crafts Movement at Newcomb College,” on Thursday, August 1, at 7:30 in the Counting House, 533 Royal Street. The lecture complements the current exhibition, *Newcomb Pottery and Works on Paper, Part Two of The Laura Simon Nelson Collection of Louisiana Art*. Seating is limited.

LOUISIANA'S SPANISH ARCHIVES

The cooperative microfilming project of the National Archives of Cuba and the Historic New Orleans Collection continued over the past year. The project was initiated with the microfilming of the *Fondo Floridas* (see vol. XIII, no. 3). The recent efforts resulted in the identification and microfilming of an additional 7,000 pages of documentation. The work focused on Louisiana materials found in several sections of the archive, including *Asuntos Políticos*, *Comisión Militar*, *Gobierno General*, *Gobierno Superior Civil*, *Junta de Fomento*, *Realengos*, *Real Consulado y Junta de Fomento*, *Reales Cédulas y Ordenes*, *Reales Cédulas*, *Varios*, and *Yntendencia de Hacienda*.



The first section, *Asuntos Políticos*, contains royal orders and correspondence among Spanish officials from 1770 to 1829. The subject matter relates to Spanish grievances against foreign powers such as England and the United States; there is also information about the port of New Orleans and the migration of Spaniards from New Orleans to Cuba in 1818. *Comisión Militar* includes reports on individuals from New Orleans involved in “criminal activity” in Cuba from 1825 to 1851. *Gobierno General* and *Gobierno Superior Civil* contain correspondence primarily of the Spanish consuls in New Orleans from 1817 to 1859. Among topics covered are the emigration of individuals and families from New Orleans to Cuba, the travel of an opera troupe from New Orleans to Havana, and the clandestine slave trade. *Junta de Fomento* includes a highly useful 1789 inventory of useful wood native to Louisiana. *Realengos* (1777-1835) comprises land-tenure records for

Baton Rouge, the Felicianas, Mobile, and Pensacola. Also included is a denunciation of two North Americans for having made offers to purchase the archive of the deceased royal surveyor Vicente Pintado from his widow.

Real Consulado y Junta de Fomento (1813-1844) is primarily concerned with migration from New Orleans to Cuba and contains an 1819 document that outlines the preferred type of colonist. Materials in *Reales Cédulas y Ordenes* are maintained in bundles of documents, in contrast to the section *Reales Cédulas*, which are bound. Louisiana materials in these two sections together span the years 1765-1794 and cover commerce, education, and the crea-

tion of the Cabildo, as well as information about goods that could be imported from Europe, the immigration of families from the Canary Islands to Louisiana, Indian affairs, religion, taxes, and the transportation of Acadians to Louisiana. In the section *Varios* is a series of documents relating to actions taken by the first bishop of Louisiana, Luís de Peñalver y Cárdenas, toward José Galan; *Yntendencia de Hacienda* (1806-1852) contains files of the Spanish Consul of New Orleans about individuals wishing to move from New Orleans to Cuba.

The past year's work, authorized by a license granted by the Office of Foreign Currency Control of the U.S. Treasury Department, builds upon the Collection's materials relating to Spanish interests in Louisiana and continues THNOC's commitment to make primary materials from foreign archives available locally. The microfilm has a finding aid based on the descriptions of the various documents and *expedientes* (or files) created by the staff of the National Archives of Cuba.

— Alfred E. Lemmon

A SCIENCE

In November 1832 the Harvard Medical School preserved in alcohol the brain of a German doctor named Johann Spurzheim (1776-1832). He had traveled to America in June and had sparked the imagination of thousands through a series of lectures in Boston that outlined the fundamentals of what he called “the science of the mind.” Better known as phrenology, this new “science” provided those searching for an alternative to metaphysics a seemingly perfect system for understanding and improving the human mind. Spurzheim soon attracted an enthusiastic following, then died suddenly on November 10, an event that only served to stimulate interest in the theory that would become an American obsession during much of the 19th century.

The principles of phrenology were developed by Spurzheim's teacher, a Viennese physician named Franz Joseph Gall (1758-1828). Simply put, Gall held that the brain was composed of many separate organs, each governing a different aspect of a person's character. Because the skull snugly encased the brain, the development of these different organs — and therefore a person's character — could be discerned by a close examination of the head. The size of the organs was not fixed and could be changed through the repression or cultivation of different attributes, making the improvement of people possible — a notion well suited to the optimism of the time.

The new science permeated American culture: Edgar Allen Poe noted “an inordinate expansion above the regions of the temple” to imply a sublimity in the character of Roderick Usher, Walt Whitman published his own phrenological analysis in several editions of *Leaves of Grass*, and Herman Melville lamented his

In 1830s New Orleans, entrepreneur James H. Caldwell was busy with plans for his St. Charles Theatre. He decided to stage grand operas for the theater's second season of 1836-1837, featuring English and Italian works in contrast to the offerings of French opera at the Théâtre d'Orléans. To supplement the theater's orchestra, he looked to his native England for musical talent. An agent working for Caldwell spotted Thomas E. Cripps, who was working as a theater musician in London, and soon he was hired for Caldwell's enterprise. The Thomas Cripps Papers, housed in the Williams Research Center, tell the story of the Englishman's career in America — and the story of the family left behind.

Cripps was born in Middlesex, England, on July 29, 1817. His father, Thomas Cripps, Sr., pianoforte maker and musician, had taught his son to play the piano. At the age of 19, Cripps, along with 15 other musicians, boarded the *St. Lawrence*, which left the London docks on November 6, 1836, and arrived in New Orleans on February 4, 1837. The next night Cripps played in Caldwell's new orchestra, which performed the overtures to *Massaniello* and *Fra Diavolo*. His starting salary was 15 dollars a week. Within a month, he was promoted to chorus master of the St. Charles Theatre and received a raise of five dollars a week. Cripps worked at the theater until it was destroyed by fire on Sunday, March 13, 1842.

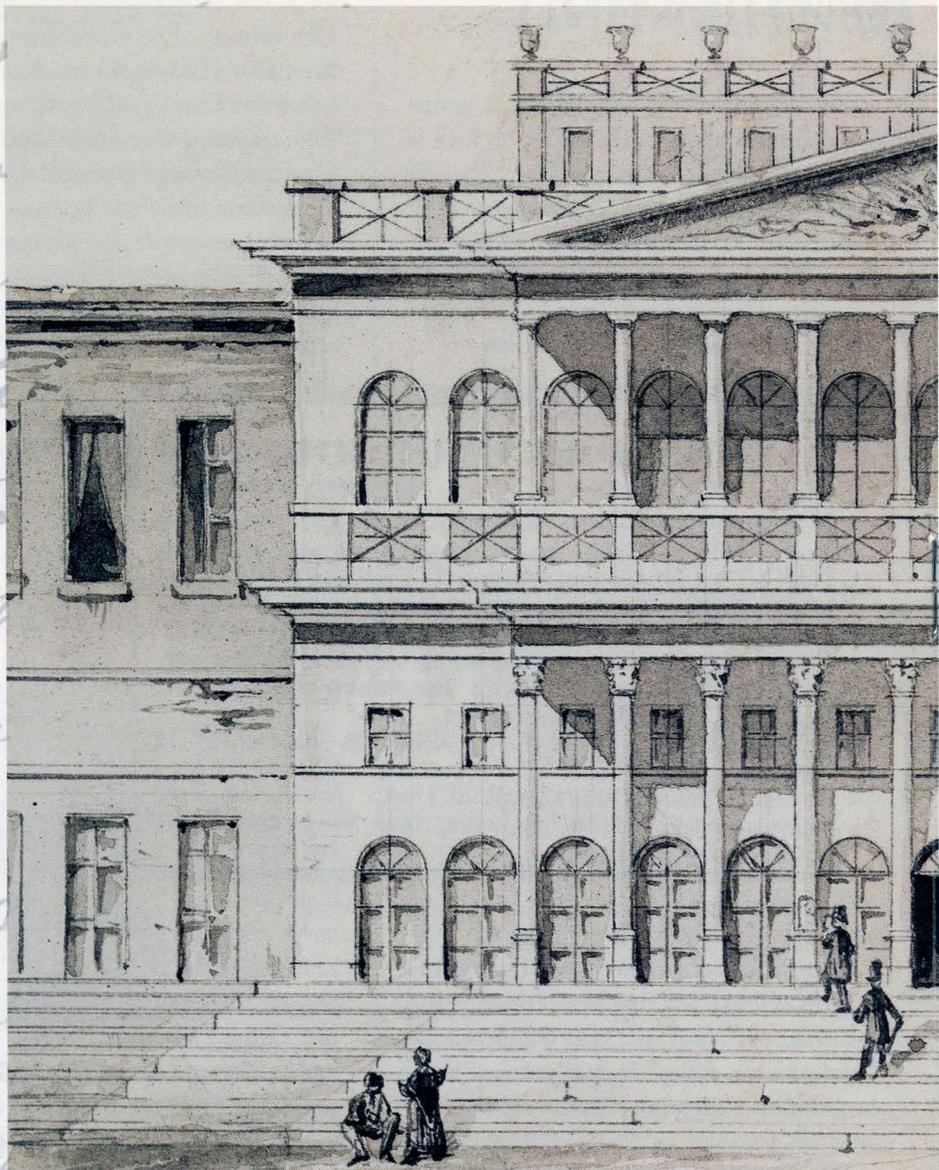
The Thomas Cripps Papers tell about his subsequent career in the lively cultural climate of mid-19th century New Orleans — so different from his father's experience. The papers also relate the poignant story of Cripps's family in England as told in 76 letters written between 1837 and 1863. These letters record the hardships of life in London during the 19th century, reminiscent of the world of Charles Dickens. They reveal a father who turned to alcohol, sisters forced to pawn jewelry and take in sewing, and a mother who chronicled their declining fortunes. In 1837, England was gripped by a major economic depression and families like the Crippses, whose financial stability had always been

precarious, found it increasingly difficult to make a living.

In the first letter dated April 26, 1837, the elder Cripps wrote his son about a harsh winter and the family's financial woes. In August 1838 Mary Ann Cripps, Thomas's mother, thanked him for the money he sent and related her fear that Mr. Cripps might have been sent to debtors prison if the money had not arrived when it did. In September 1839 Thomas's father wrote that the "good old hands belonging to the band of Covent Garden have been discharged and that

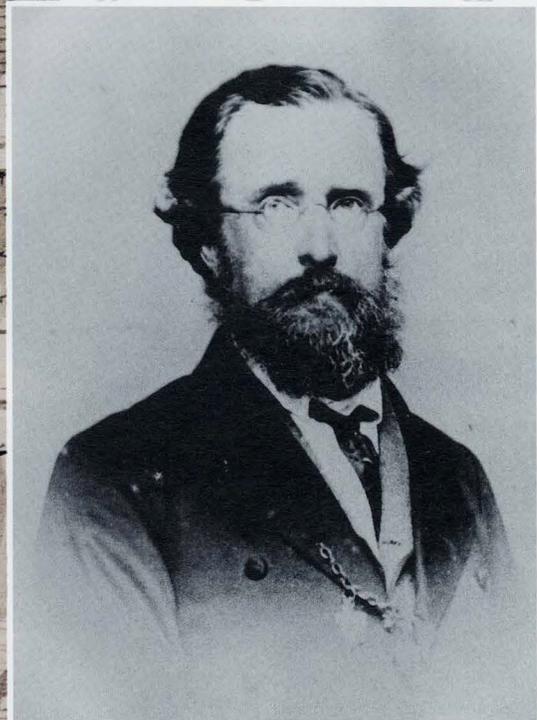
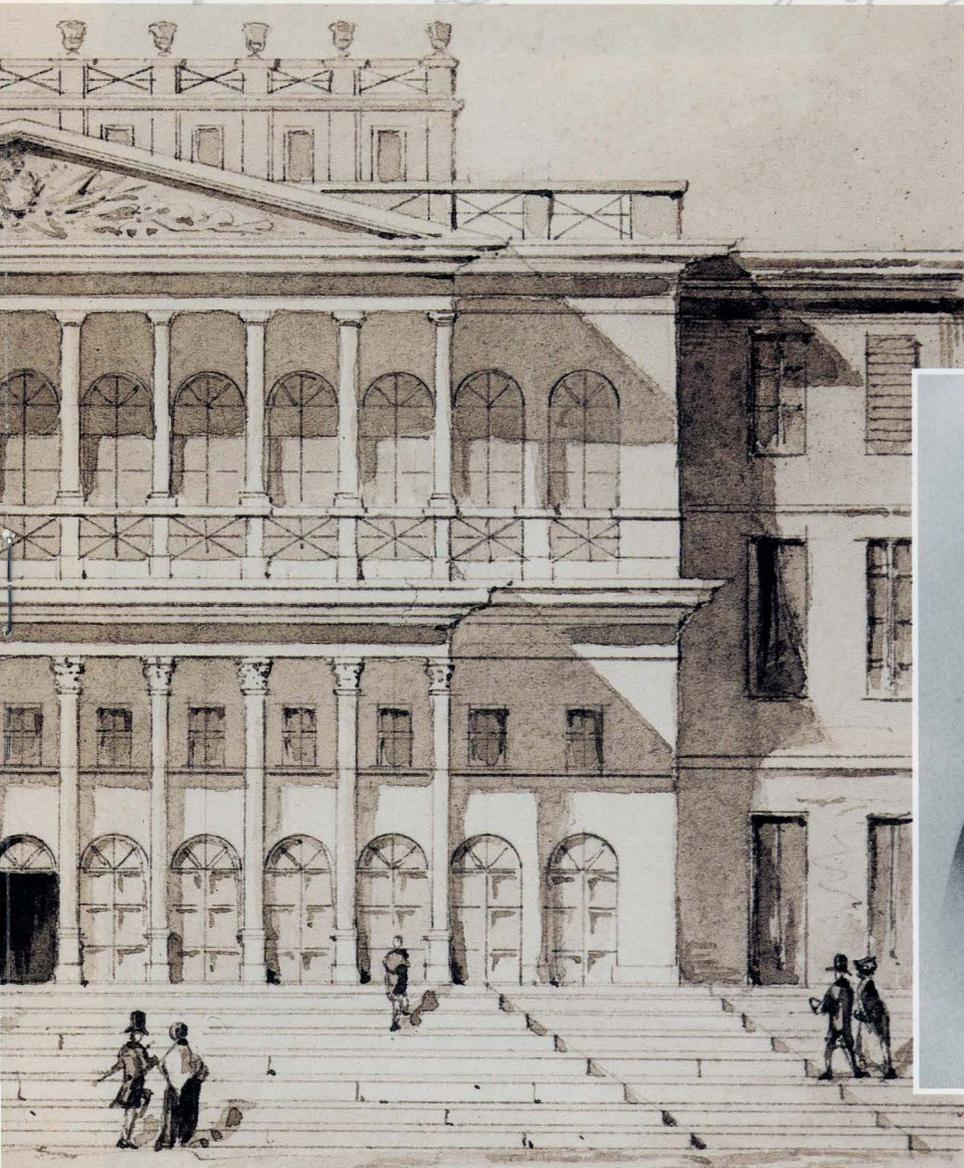
Mr. Shamas and several others are on their way to New York." His letter the following March reported music shops going out of business and the closing of the Drury Lane Theatre. Cripps grew despondent as work became scarce, and Mrs. Cripps wrote to Thomas in secret asking him not to send money to his father, who, she said, would only use it to buy drink. Her tale of woe continued, when John, one of Thomas's brothers, had a skirmish with the law and was sentenced to six months at hard labor.

On September 16, 1847, Mrs.



St. Charles Theatre (1963.7)

LETTERS FROM HOME



Thomas Cripps (MSS 459)

ME: THE THOMAS CRIPPS PAPERS

Cripps wrote that Mr. Cripps had been sent to the workhouse and the family forced to leave their home of 24 years for a small two-room flat. From then until his death in 1858, Mr. Cripps was in and out of the workhouse. Later, Thomas Cripps received word from his mother that his brothers had left for America.

After the departure of her sons, Mrs. Cripps's letters recount current events in London. She described the building of the London underground railway and construction of the new Westminster Bridge and the Thames

Embankment; in 1862, she mentioned the steam engines and picture gallery at the "Great Exhibition." The arrival in London of H.R.H. Princess Alexandra of Denmark, bride-to-be of the Prince of Wales, was described in her letter dated March 31, 1863.

Eventually, Cripps received a letter from his brother-in-law informing him that his mother had died in her sleep on March 22, 1865, bringing to a close the letters from London. Fortune, however, was kinder to the young musician. After his employment at the St. Charles

Theatre went up in flames, Cripps found other work: he played the organ at the Church of the Messiah and taught music, offering instruction in voice and on the harp and pianoforte from his Erato Street home and from Hewitt's Music Store. Thomas Cripps continued working as a music teacher until the early 1880s and died on November 16, 1893. He is buried in Cypress Grove Cemetery.

— Carol O. Bartels

Source: John Smith Kendall, *The Golden Age of the New Orleans Theater* (Baton Rouge, 1952).

WILLIAMS RESEARCH CENTER ACQUISITIONS



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

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

MANUSCRIPTS

The Joseph Marcal Collection of Manson Family Papers and Manson Salt Broker Records, 1850-1951, recently donated by Mr. Marcal, provides insight into the city's business community over a long period of time. The six linear feet of materials, most of it carefully arranged in binders, focuses primarily on the brokerage firm through the 1920s. Other materials include New Orleans Stock Exchange quotations (1919-1921), John M. Huger Stock and Bond Brokers quotations (1908-1911), advertising postcards, Maurepas Milling Company reports and payroll lists, and a 1913 commercial trade report concerning business opportunities related to the opening of the Panama Canal. Early correspondence and family records add a human dimension. The graphics found on many letterheads depict drawings of local commercial buildings. The firm, founded in 1850 by Charles Manson, was later run by his sons, Robert and James. Manson Brothers, brokers, continues to do business in New Orleans.

■ Irma Stiegler has donated the papers of Rene A. Stiegler, a general agent and superintendent of docks for the Dock Board and a transportation consultant. His papers, covering the years from



New Orleans brass bands. From the Jerome Cushman Jazz Photograph Collection (96-36-L)

1919 to 1982, contain correspondence with politicians, news clippings, and Congressional Record publications. Copies of his letters are frequently accompanied by responses from political figures such as J. Bennett Johnston, Hale Boggs, Allen Ellender, Earl K. Long, Russell Long, James Fitzmorris, Victor Schiro, John Overton, F. Edward Hébert, and Everett Dirksen.

■ Jerome Cushman, a former New Orleans librarian and friend of collector Bill Russell, has donated 892 black-and-white photographs that he took of several jazz figures from 1961 to 1964. The Jerome Cushman Jazz Photograph Collection is arranged chronologically and contains many annotations identifying individuals, groups, and events. The photographs complement the William Russell Jazz Collection.

■ Microfilm holdings have expanded to include 17 reels of membership applications to the Louisiana Society of the Sons of the American Revolution, 1893-1993. The organization has donated research rights; and two copies of an index to the applications, alphabetically arranged by ancestor and member, have been donated by Dalton Woolverton.

Also acquired are nine reels of microfilm of the Louisiana Fire Insurance Maps from the Sanborn Map Company, supplementing the Collection's holdings of Sanborn Maps.

— *M. Theresa LeFevre*

CURATORIAL

New Orleans's United Fruit Company came under fire in the early 20th century from local interests as a possible conduit for bringing yellow fever to the city from the company's Latin American operations. Yellow fever was still a threat, and the memory of the great epidemics of the previous century were not so distant in 1906. In fact, just the previous year the city had been hard hit with an outbreak of the disease.

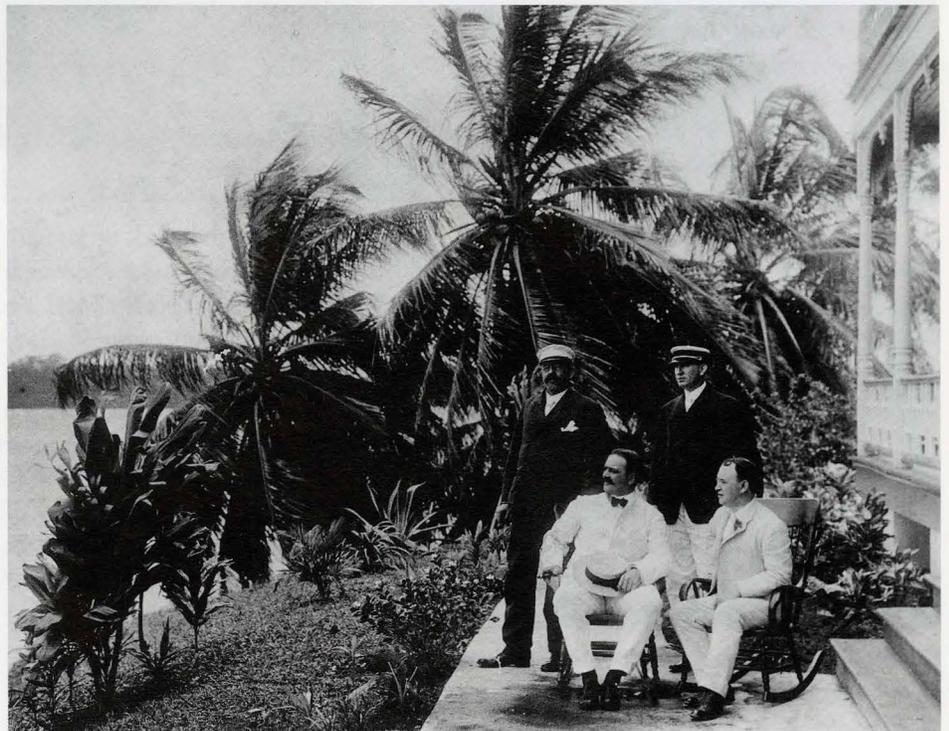
In an effort to dispel these fears, the United Fruit Company undertook a public relations campaign. A recent acquisition reflects this effort: a presentation photographic album that documented the journey of a "blue-ribbon" panel to the company's banana plantations in Central America. In addition to C. H. Ellis and other executives from United Fruit, those making the trip on the steamship included doctors, reporters, and a photographer, John Teunisson of New Orleans.

Teunisson's views give a vivid picture of the area, its workers, the courtesies extended to visiting dignitaries, and construction of the Panama Canal. The album is interspersed with pages of letterpress text, and the photographs are presented on multiple colored-paper mounts, a typical technique of the time. The album underscores New Orleans's importance as a port in trading with Central and South America.

■ Ed Wiegand, longtime owner of the Bienville Gallery, has donated an abstract



*Louisiana
swamp scene
by Knute Heldner
(1996.10.6)*



United Fruit Company tour to Central America and Panama, 1906, Bocas del Toro, Panama (1996.14)

painting by Jay Milder. The circa 1960 painting, showing Wiegand sitting with a blue-faced dog, is depicted in bright yellows, reds, and greens. Another donor, Amy E. Law, has given an oil-on-silk portrait of Larry Fontaine, a French Quarter

entertainer in the 1950s and 1960s.

■ A donation from Margaret E. Lauer consists of six circular Louisiana swamp scenes painted in oil on paper by Knute Heldner in the 1940s. The monochromatic blue sketches, each showing a

bayou scene with one or two skiffs near a cabin nestled under moss-laden cypress trees, were executed for a competition sponsored by the Blue Plate Company.

■ Some years ago Gordon W. Callender, Jr., donated an oil portrait of Second Lieutenant Alvin A. Callender, R.A.F., painted by William Woodward after the World War I pilot was shot down over Germany. Mr. Callender has now given a photograph of the young man that obviously served as a model for Woodward's portrait. Callender had been Woodward's student at the Tulane University School of Architecture and had assisted Woodward in taking dimensions of the St. Louis Hotel before its destruction. Callender airfield was named in his honor.

■ Hersch Cohen has given a mid-1930s wood engraving by California artist Charles Surendorf, who visited New Orleans and exhibited at the Arts and Crafts Club in the 1930s and 1940s. The print, titled *Mardi Gras—New Orleans*, was one of a series.

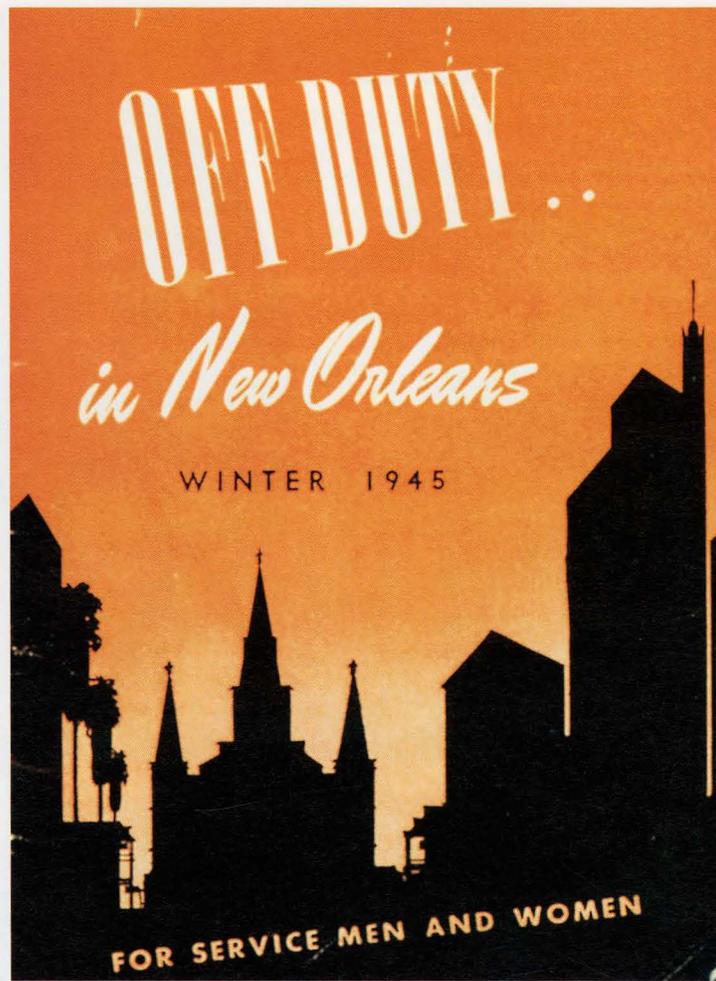
■ Artist Patricia Hardin has donated a watercolor design for the 1992 carnival ball program of the Mystic Club. Mrs. Hardin's gift complements printed invitations of her design, recently given to the Collection. Philip Toti and Walter Plauché have donated postcards depicting scenes of New Orleans and of Evan Hall Plantation.

—Judith H. Bonner and
John H. Lawrence

LIBRARY

The Singing Sixties: The Spirit of Civil War Days Drawn From the Music of the Times by Willard and Porter Heaps (University of Oklahoma Press, 1960) is a recent acquisition that complements the library's significant holdings of Confederate music. Long out of print, this history of the role of music in the Civil War discusses the songs of camp and battle as well as the popular music of the home front.

■ Irma Stiegler has donated menus, programs, pamphlets, and brochures from several local institutions, all dating from the 20th century. Among the more interesting items are a program for Orpheum



(96-068-RL)

circuit theaters for the week of January 31, 1926; a menu for a luncheon which was held at the Roosevelt Hotel on October 7, 1952, honoring Archbishop Joseph Francis Rummel; and undated Christmas cards from Arnaud's Restaurant and from Mayor and Mrs. Moon Landrieu. Also included is a program of the Philharmonic Society of New Orleans that dates from early 1936. The featured performer was Hollywood star Nelson Eddy, accompanied by pianist Theodore Paxson. Eddy sang selections from Mozart, Brahms, Strauss, and Meyerbeer, as well as other popular songs from his repertoire. This concert was one of a series sponsored by the Philharmonic Society of New Orleans during the mid-1930s.

■ Charles M. Gibson, Jr., has donated a small pamphlet which provides a glimpse of New Orleans during World War II. Entitled *Off Duty in New Orleans, Winter 1945*, the pamphlet was published for ser-

vicemen and women by the New Orleans Hotel Association. It contains a brief historical sketch of the city, with a walking tour of the Vieux Carré, maps, lists of facilities, and special services and accommodations for officers and their wives. The New Orleans Council of Jewish Women organized and compiled the information for the pamphlet.

■ During the mid-1830s, easy credit and a large supply of money created a boom in land speculation. To control inflated land prices, President Andrew Jackson issued his Specie Circular which required hard currency for land sales rather than paper notes. Speculators, convinced that the boom was over, tried to turn their bank notes into specie as land prices fell; many banks were forced to close; and cotton prices fell on the international market.

New Orleans was one of the cities most seriously affected by this Panic of 1837. Factors, merchants, and planters were ruined when bank notes could not

be met; the city remained in the throes of this depression until 1845. On September 1, 1837, however, the firm of commission merchants Brander, McKenna, and Wright issued an optimistic letter informing their former clients that their "affairs are now in a position to enable us to resume our business free from difficulty or embarrassment, and, we trust, with the continued confidence of our friends." The firm was out of business by 1841. A copy of the letter, which also quotes cotton prices, was recently acquired.

■ Thomas P. Dolbear established writing academies in New York, New Orleans, and Natchez. The library has acquired a copy of his textbook, *The Science of Practical Penmanship* (7th ed., 1850) which presents his philosophy of teaching penmanship, as well as lessons. Several testimonials are also featured. Dolbear stated that penmanship is of two kinds: practical and ornamental. Practical penmanship, taught at Dolbear's academies, included all styles of writing which could be executed quickly and clearly and was of most use in business. The *New Orleans True American* proclaimed, "let all bad writers at once apply to these gentlemen...they deserve the highest credit for their labours in reducing penmanship to a science."

— Pamela D. Arceneaux

AT THE COLLECTION

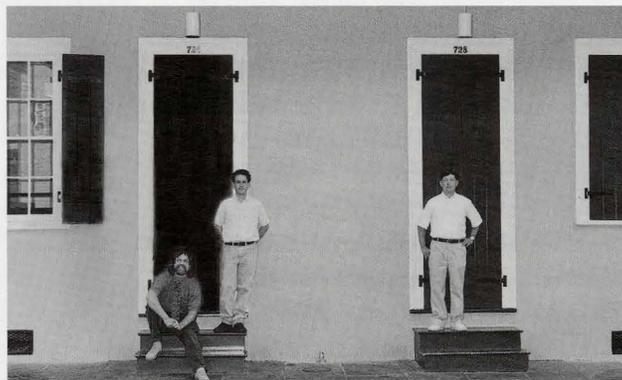


In June, Mme. François Bujon de l'Estang, wife of the Ambassador of France to the United States, visited the Collection. Pictured above are Mme. Bujon de l'Estang, Jon Kukla, Courtney-Anne Sarpy of the French Consulate, and Louise Hoffman.

DONORS: JANUARY - MARCH, 1996

Margo K. Baldwin	James Jacobsen
J. Burgin Barousse in memory of Boyd Cruise	Dr. Jon Kukla
Jack Belsom	Mrs. W. Elliott Laudeman III
Bookworm & Silverfish	Margaret E. Lauer
Mrs. John W. Calhoun	Thomas B. Lemann
Gordon W. Callender, Jr.	Joan Lennox
Clifton D. Cardin	Louisiana Office of Tourism
Center for the Study of the American South	Louisiana Society of the Sons of the American Revolution
Mrs. William K. Christovich	John T. Magill
Hersh Cohen	Joseph Marcal
Mrs. O. J. Counce	James J. Murphy
Jerome Cushman	Walter Plauché
Edouard de Pradel de Lamaze	Rose Publishing Company
Maureen Donnelly	Irma Stiegler
Mrs. Ernest H. Estes, Jr.	Phillip Toti
Charles M. Gibson, Jr.	United States Senate Historical Office
Patricia Hardin	University of Nebraska Press
Jack Jackson	Mr. and Mrs. John E. Walker
	Dalton L. Woolverton

VIEUX CARRÉ COMMISSION AWARD



Preparators Doug MacCash and Steve Sweet, left, and Larry Falgoust, the Collection's master carpenter, are pictured in front of THNOC's award-winning cottage where their offices and workshops are located. At the annual awards ceremony of the Vieux Carré Commission on June 8, 1996, the Commission presented its top award, the Certificate of Honor for Restoration, to the Historic New Orleans Collection for the restored Creole cottage at 726-728 Toulouse Street. Work on the cottage was completed in 1995. The Collection purchased the cottage in 1990 and, in 1991, an archaeological dig confirmed that the first structure on the site, a French barracks, dated from the 1720s. The existing house may have been built earlier than 1830. The philanthropist Thomy Lafon bought the cottage in 1876 and left it, in his will, to the Society of the Holy Family.

Trapolin Architects and Kemper Construction Company were in charge of the restoration.

STAFF



Mary Louise Christovich

AWARDS

Mary Louise Christovich, president of the Kemper and Leila Williams Foundation, received an award for outstanding service and support from the Louisiana Association of Museums. The Louisiana Preservation Alliance gave its education award to THNOC for the restoration of the Beaux Arts building at 410 Chartres Street as a scholarly research center for Louisiana information; Mrs. Christovich accepted the award. The Collection received an honorable mention in the American Association of Museum's publications design competition for the souvenir gift boxes distributed at the grand opening of the Williams Research Center.

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Jan Brantley, head of photography, will serve a second term on the board of directors of the New Orleans/Gulf South chapter of the American Society of Media Photographers. Elsa Schneider, head of public relations, was a panelist at the annual meeting of the Louisiana Association of Museums in Baton Rouge, and Priscilla Lawrence was a panelist at the American Association of Museums meeting in Minneapolis. Head librarian Florence M. Jumonville spoke about the Williams Research Center at the annual meetings of the New Orleans chapter of the Catholic Library Association and the New Orleans Association of Law Librarians.

John H. Lawrence, director of museum programs, attended the meetings of the Louisiana Association of Museums and the American Association of Museums and gave a gallery talk about his photographs to the photography group of the New Orleans Museum of Art. Dr. Alfred E. Lemmon, curator of manuscripts, presented a paper, "Status of Colonial Louisiana

Documentation," at the Southern Archives Conference in New Orleans.

Pamela D. Arceneaux, reference librarian, attended the Louisiana Library Association's annual meeting in Alexandria and a workshop sponsored by the Society of American Archivists in New Orleans. Reference archivist Mark Cave also attended the workshop. Staff members attending the Southern Archives Conference were Theresa LeFevre, registrar of manuscripts; Carol Bartels, manuscripts cataloger; and Mark Cave. Steve Sweet, assistant preparator, traveled to Norfolk, Virginia, to attend a workshop sponsored by the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works during the Institute's annual meeting.

MEDIA

Curator John Magill spoke about the Brulatour courtyard on WDSU-TV. He was interviewed for an Arts and Entertainment television documentary, and he and Florence Jumonville and Alfred Lemmon talked about the Williams Research Center on WYES-TV's "Steppin' Out." Dr. Patricia Brady, director of publications, also appeared on "Steppin' Out." Curator Judith H. Bonner was interviewed about the Nelson exhibition on WBYU and on the television program "Town Meeting, Louisiana Style."

PUBLICATIONS

George Washington's Beautiful Nelly by Patricia Brady (University of South Carolina Press) has just been released in a paperback edition. Florence Jumonville contributed an article, "Set to Music: The Engravers, Artists, and Lithographers of New Orleans Sheet Music," to the most recent issue of *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*. Jan Brantley's architectural photographs illustrate *The Church of St. Alphonsus* by Samuel Wilson, Jr., published by the Friends of St. Alphonsus.

John Magill contributed articles to *New Orleans Magazine* and *Preservation in Print*.

CHANGES

Peggy Gershuny, administration, who joined the staff in 1978, retires in July. Kate Holliday has accepted the



Clockwise, from top left, Peggy Gershuny; Kate Holliday; Eileen Thornton (left) and Mai Thacker; David Dibble

position of standards coordinator. Mai Thacker and Eileen Thornton are receptionists at the Williams Research Center. David Dibble is the new curatorial cataloger.



THE HISTORIC NEW ORLEANS COLLECTION QUARTERLY

Editors:
Patricia Brady
Louise C. Hoffman

Head of Photography:
Jan White Brantley

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

Board of Directors:
Mrs. William K. Christovich, President
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Jon Kukla, Director

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The Historic New Orleans Collection

Additional photography by:
Elizabeth Kellner and Cornelius Regan

SPEECHES

John Lawrence spoke about the Collection to the New Orleans Rotary Club. Judith Bonner gave a talk on 19th- and 20th-century Louisiana art at the Robert E. Smith Regional Library. Pamela Arceneaux spoke about the history of prostitution to the Literary Study Group. John Magill presented a talk to Genealogy West and to Save Our Cemeteries.

VOLUNTEERS

The Collection is always grateful to the volunteers who generously contribute their time to the institution. Martha Parker is a volunteer docent. Elizabeth



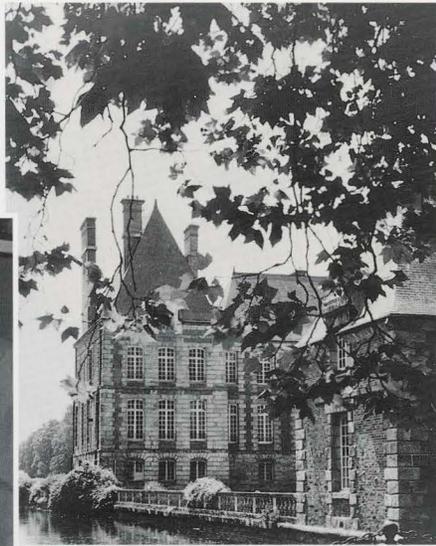
Martha Parker



Elizabeth Byrd

Byrd, a student at the University of the South, is a summer volunteer working in registration, preparation, and in the manuscripts division. Other volunteers are Mary Ann Hymel, Richard Jackson, Charlotte Knipmeyer, Betty Jane Nolan, Margot Pleasants, Harry Redman, George Reinecke, Dan Ross, Linda Schoenfeld, and Jeanne Shepherd.

CULTURAL EXCHANGE



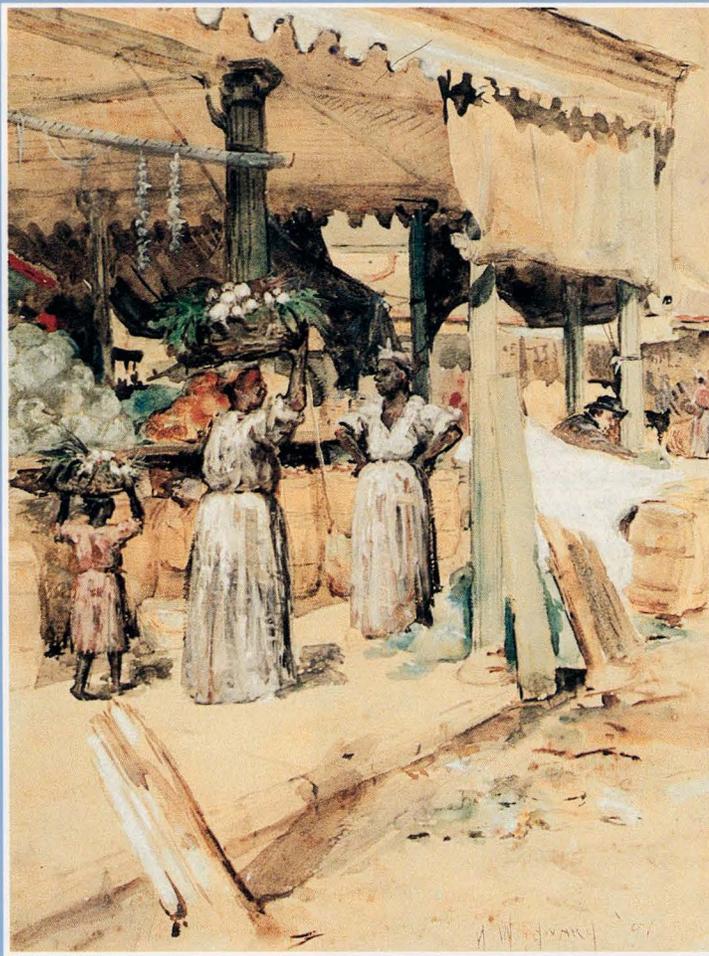
Twins in Spirit: Plantation Homes of Louisiana and Castles of France, an exhibition on view from March until mid-July at the Williams Research Center, was organized by two foundations that promote cultural exchange. The exhibition was the first at the new research facility. Pictured at the reception, cosponsored by the French Consulate, are, above left, John Lawrence, producer Pauline Jamison, and photographer Jacques Royal. Above right, Courances (Essonne département), near Paris; below, Parlange plantation, Pointe Coupée Parish.

THE SHOP



Book illustrations by 19th-century artist Maria Howard Weeden (1847-1905), an Alabama native who worked under the name Howard Weeden, are available for purchase in the museum store. Weeden studied at the Tuskegee Female Methodist College. She was known for her sensitive portrayals of southern blacks, which were used to illustrate her books of verse — *Shadows on the Wall*, *Bandanna Ballads*, *Songs of the Old South*, and *Old Voices*. The original watercolor of the young girl pictured above is included in the Laura Simon Nelson Collection of Louisiana Art.

Also available in the museum store are cultural “passports,” sponsored by the Arts Tourism Partnership. With the purchase of a Cultural Passport to History for one special price of \$19.96, the visitor gains admittance to 12 local museums and historic houses. The passport is valid for one year and is transferable. For more information, call the shop at 504-598-7147.



In The Williams Gallery

Part Two of *The Laura Simon Nelson Collection of Louisiana Art* opened on July 13 and continues through September 7. The current exhibition, *Newcomb Pottery and Works on Paper, New Orleans* by William Woodward, 1891 (LN104).



THE HISTORIC
NEW ORLEANS
COLLECTION
QUARTERLY

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