FLORE EN FORME: New Orleans's Landscaping Love Affair
TENNESSEE WILLIAMS SCHOLARS CONFERENCE
The Tennessee Williams/New Orleans Literary Festival returns to New Orleans for the 31st year. THNOC is pleased to host the annual scholars conference, where literary and theater experts share insights on the work of the great American playwright.

Friday, March 24, 9:15 a.m.–4:45 p.m.
For a full festival schedule, locations, and ticket information, visit www.tennesseewilliams.net.

BILL RUSSELL LECTURE: “A TRIBUTE TO JOHN ROBICHAUX”
For this year’s annual lecture inspired by the work of jazz collector Bill Russell, the New John Robichaux Society Orchestra, led by Tom Hook and Wendell Brunious, will join forces with Louisiane Vintage Dancers to recreate an evening with one of the most popular society orchestras of the turn of the century, the John Robichaux Orchestra.

This year’s lecture is sponsored by the Derbes Family Foundation.

Wednesday, April 5, 6:30–8 p.m.
Williams Research Center, 410 Chartres Street
$15 admission; registration is required. Please visit www.hnoc.org or call (504) 523-4662.

GARDEN LEGACY BOOK SIGNING AND RECEPTION
Join The Collection in celebrating its newest book, with authors Mary Louise Mossy Christovich and Roulhac Bunkley Toledano.

Wednesday, April 12, 6–8 p.m.
533 Royal Street
Free

“FROM A WATERY GRAVE: THE DISCOVERY, EXCAVATION, AND PRESERVATION OF LA SALLE’S SHIPWRECK, LA BELLE”
Join us for a lecture by Jim Bruseth, who directed the excavation of French explorer René-Robert Cavelier, sieur de La Salle’s ship La Belle.

Wednesday, April 19, 6–7 p.m.
Williams Research Center, 410 Chartres Street
Free; registration is required. Please visit www.hnoc.org or call (504) 523-4662.

CONCERTS IN THE COURTYARD
The spring concert series, sponsored by AOS Interior Environments, features Dana Abbott Band (April), Sweet Olive String Band (May), and Johnny Sketch and the Dirty Notes (June).

Fridays, April 21, May 19, and June 16, 5:30–8 p.m.
533 Royal Street
$10 admission; free for THNOC members

CURRENT
Clarence John Laughlin and His Contemporaries: A Picture and a Thousand Words
Through March 25, 2017
Williams Research Center, 410 Chartres Street

Goods of Every Description: Shopping in New Orleans, 1825–1925
Through April 9, 2017
Williams Gallery, 533 Royal Street

The Seignouret-Brulatour House: A New Chapter
Through June 2018
533 Royal Street

PERMANENT
Louisiana History Galleries
533 Royal Street

The Williams Residence Tour
THNOC Architecture Tour
533 Royal Street
Tuesday–Saturday, 10 and 11 a.m., 2 and 3 p.m.
Sunday, 11 a.m., 2 and 3 p.m.
$5 admission; free for THNOC members
Groups of eight or more should call (504) 598-7145 or visit www.hnoc.org to make reservations. Educational tours for school groups are available free of charge; please contact Daphne L. Derven, curator of education, at (504) 598-7154 or daphned@hnoc.org.

UPCOMING
Storyville: Madams and Music
April 5–December 2, 2017
Williams Research Center, 410 Chartres Street

Giants of Jazz: Art Posters and Lithographs by Waldemar Świerzy from the Daguillard Collection
April 21–December 17, 2017
Williams Gallery, 533 Royal Street

A Most Significant Gift: The Laura Simon Nelson Collection
May 2–November 4, 2017
Laura Simon Nelson Galleries, 400 Chartres Street

GENERAL HOURS
533 Royal Street
Williams Gallery, Louisiana History Galleries, Shop, and Tours
Tuesday–Saturday, 9:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.
Sunday, 10:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

400 and 410 Chartres Street
Williams Research Center, Boyd Cruise Gallery, and Laura Simon Nelson Galleries
Tuesday–Saturday, 9:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.
FROM THE DIRECTOR

New Orleans culture is as varied as it is unique, and this spring The Collection is excited to celebrate several different aspects of local culture through our programs, publications, and exhibitions. In early February we hosted the 22nd annual Williams Research Center Symposium. A sold-out event, the presentations focused on Storyville and jazz, and in April we will launch the related exhibition Storyville: Madams and Music. Pamela D. Arceneaux, whose Guidebooks to Sin: The Blue Books of Storyville, New Orleans was released earlier this year, and her co-curator Eric Seiferth have interwoven the stories of the city’s legal vice district and of the evolution of early jazz in this colorful show.

April will also see the opening of Giants of Jazz: Art Posters and Lithographs by Waldemar Swierzy from the Daguillard Collection, a display of Polish poster art rendering jazz musicians such as Louis Armstrong and Count Basie in unforgettable, bold style. This exhibition is THNOC’s first to feature items from an important new donation, the Daguillard Collection. Covering a wide range of historical topics, the collection will be spotlighted more thoroughly in an upcoming issue of the Quarterly.

Finally, we are proud to see the release of another THNOC publication, Garden Legacy, written by our board chair, Mary Louise Mossy Christovich, and Roulhac Bunkley Toledano. The two women spent years researching this beautifully illustrated book, which celebrates the French formal gardens of early New Orleans and arrives just in time for the advent of spring. —PRISCILLA LAWRENCE

ON THE COVER
Tacsonia pinnatifidapila (passionflower vine)
by Sydenham Edwards, illustrator
in Botanical Register, vol. 18
London: James Ridgway, 1832
gift of Mark P. Dauer, 2009.0369.3

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ON VIEW

EXHIBITION

Storyville: Madams and Music
April 5–December 2, 2017
Williams Research Center, 410 Chartres Street
Free

In the 100 years since its closing, Storyville has remained alive within the cultural imagination of New Orleans. Much of the city’s Dionysian identity can be traced to the immensely profitable District, which grew into a leading tourist draw during its 20-year history. In addition to featuring the centennial of the closing of the District, 2017 also marks the 100-year anniversary of what is generally regarded as the first jazz record. “Livery Stable Blues” and “Dixieland Jass Band One-Step,” recorded for Victor by the Original Dixieland Jazz Band, a group of white New Orleans musicians, was released in early March 1917 and contributed to the growing popularity of New Orleans black vernacular music among international and interracial audiences. The new exhibition Storyville: Madams and Music examines the rise and fall of New Orleans’s red-light district while using its temporal and physical boundaries to frame a discussion on the development of New Orleans jazz.

In 1897 Alderman Sidney Story prepared and sponsored legislation to segregate and regulate the activities of New Orleans’s “lewd and abandoned women,” by denying them the use of housing for the sex trade outside a designated vice district, just north of the French Quarter. Concurrently, a separate red-light district for African American patrons operated quasi-legally in a nearby area, close to the site of present-day City Hall. For the next two decades, the district comprised a profitable and significant component of the city’s economy as an entertainment hub, becoming a linchpin for the emerging winter tourism season.

Vice and All That Jazz
A new exhibition commemorates the centennials of the closing of Storyville and the release of the first jazz record.

A. Storyville interior
ca. 1905; gelatin silver print negative by Ernest J. Ballocoq
1981.177.22
The fabled mansions of Storyville stood clustered along or near Basin Street, facing the Southern Railway line, which terminated at the station on Canal Street. Though many of the structures existed prior to the working-class neighborhood’s designation as a vice district, a few were specially built by enterprising investors to be among the most lavish bordellos in the country. The Arlington, Lulu White’s Mahogany Hall, and the Star Mansion, among others, were touted as the most costly and elaborately furnished establishments anywhere. Contemporary photographs included in the exhibition depict the elegant interiors of these top-flight sporting houses—a popular euphemism designed to project a sense of elite masculinity and refinement. Artifacts from the brothels—including the transom that hung above the entrance to Lulu White’s and a mirrored panel from the music room of the Arlington—demonstrate the material opulence of the buildings.

The most exclusive brothels featured piano players or small string ensembles, who worked mostly for tips. Customers frequently wanted to hear popular tunes from Broadway shows and the Ziegfeld Follies, opera and operetta favorites, and ragtime hits. Bawdy lyrics sometimes replaced the original words to the songs and were often sung by the piano player, the madam herself, or the prostitutes in her employ. Musicians had to be prepared to play anything the customer wanted to hear, the variety of which can be seen in the 20-plus copies of popular sheet music on display.

Away from Basin Street, the district also contained numerous “cribs,” crude one- or two-room structures or larger buildings partitioned into small spaces, where women worked in shifts under terrible conditions, as well as saloons, dance halls, and cabarets employing numerous musicians. Photographs in the exhibition show rows of cribs and dance clubs, and contemporary maps highlight the density and working conditions of these establishments.
E. Jelly Roll Morton
before 1920; gelatin silver print
The William Russell Jazz Collection at The Historic New Orleans Collection, acquisition made possible by the Clarisse Claiborne Grima Fund, 92-48-L.74

F. Mirror panel from the Arlington’s music room
c. 1900
2015.0204

G. Blue Book
[1903]
2006.0237

H. Directory page from Blue Book
[1905]
1969.19.6

The District offered a large number of jobs and unrivaled profitability for musicians in the area, who, with only a few exceptions (the piano player Kid Ross being the most well-known), were of African descent. The sheer number of jobs and close working conditions provided a fertile environment in which to experiment, challenge, and learn from one another, and this bounty of musical exchange played a major role in the development of New Orleans jazz. Oral histories from Manuel Manetta and Rosalind Johnson and written materials from Louis Armstrong and Jelly Roll Morton—all part of THNOC’s William Russell Jazz Collection—paint a vivid picture of the music scene within the brothels, cabarets, and honky-tonks. Clarinets owned by the early jazz pioneers Manetta and Johnny Dodds are also on display.

To help visitors navigate the District, guidebooks, known as blue books, were published and distributed with information on the various brothels and prostitutes in Storyville, as well as the best places to hear music and go dancing. A dedicated space within the exhibition focuses on the books, with digitized copies for visitors to examine in full.

Exploitation, displacement, and segregation also played principal roles in the complex history of New Orleans’s red-light districts. A draft of the 1897 ordinance establishing Storyville had included a provision designating a nearby district for black patrons, but that language was removed. A prostitution district serving patrons of color already operated, and it continued to do so without the explicit legal protection afforded to Storyville. Segregation in Storyville was far from simple: many brothels were owned and staffed by women of color, and while the high-end establishments rejected black patrons, many of the cribs and lesser brothels were open across the color line. Many Storyville nightclubs operated as “black and tans”—some run by African Americans—where integrated audiences were tolerated by law enforcement and many whites eagerly consumed black culture. Cases of human trafficking and violence were not uncommon. When it was proposed early in 1917 that the district be formally segregated, which would have forced the many women of color working in
Storyville to relocate uptown, several prominent madams of color, led by Willie V. Piazza, filed suit to retain their properties and won. A copy of the Louisiana Supreme Court’s decision in the case—one of the first legal victories in the decades-long fight against Jim Crow segregation—is on display in the exhibition.

When the United States entered World War I, in 1917, the federal government prohibited open prostitution within five miles of any military installation, forcing the closure of red-light districts across the nation. Earlier that same year, the Original Dixieland Jazz Band’s Victor recordings became an international hit, helping to spread the popularity of New Orleans jazz music. The curtain fell on Storyville on November 12, 1917, and an era that would help define New Orleans came to a close. —ERIC SEIFERTH, PAMELA D. ARCENEAUX, AND JOHN H. LAWRENCE
The Historic New Orleans Collection Quarterly

ON VIEW

Jazz Tones, Hot and Cool

Thanks to the recently donated Daguillard Collection, a new poster display of music greats opens in time for Jazz Fest.

Lovers of the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival understand that art posters can capture the likeness, essence, and legacy of beloved musical figures. This year, The Collection is highlighting its own new collection of jazz posters, made by the Polish artist Waldemar Świerzy (1931–2013). THNOC acquired the posters, along with several other works by Świerzy, as part of a much larger and diverse gift from the prominent immunologist and collector Fritz Daguillard and his wife, Rita Daguillard. The exhibition Giants of Jazz: Art Posters and Lithographs by Waldemar Świerzy from the Daguillard Collection pays homage to African American titans of jazz and rhythm-and-blues, the 20th-century tradition of Polish poster art, and the interplay of musical and visual elements in Świerzy’s work.

Here is a look at several of the jazz greats featured in the exhibition:

A. King Oliver
original image 1975, printed between 1980 and 1989; offset lithography poster by Waldemar Świerzy
gift of Dr. and Mrs. Fritz Daguillard, 2017.0003.10

B. Louis Armstrong
1980, offset lithography poster by Waldemar Świerzy
gift of Dr. and Mrs. Fritz Daguillard, 2017.0003.6
KING OLIVER (1885–1938)

Joe “King” Oliver’s Creole Jazz Band stands as one of the most important early jazz ensembles, for channeling the music’s various roots—the band played rags, marches, and the blues—through the “hot” New Orleans style of collective improvisation, stop-time breaks, and improvised solos. Oliver, born in St. John the Baptist Parish and raised in New Orleans, began playing cornet in jazz ensembles such as the Onward and Eagle brass bands around 1907. He left for Chicago in 1918 to work with Bill Johnson, a New Orleans bassist who had successfully toured New Orleans–style jazz around the West Coast. Four years later Oliver formed his own band and sent for his protégé in New Orleans, the young Louis Armstrong, to play second cornet.

In addition to Armstrong and Oliver, the Creole Jazz Band consisted almost entirely of New Orleanians, including Johnny and Baby Dodds (clarinet and drums, respectively), Honoré Dutrey (trombone), and Bill Johnson (string bass). The Tennessee-born Lil Hardin, on piano, would become Armstrong’s wife. Oliver’s band was the second African American jazz ensemble to record, with nine sides completed for Gennett in 1923. The original band fell apart later in 1923, but Oliver continued to record and play throughout the 1920s until poor gum health, the Great Depression, and the changing tide of jazz effectively ended his career.

LOUIS ARMSTRONG (1901–1971)

One of the most influential musicians of the 20th century, Louis Armstrong shaped jazz as both a forward-looking innovator and an ambassador of the New Orleans style. Raised from the age of five on and around Perdido Street, in New Orleans’s uptown red-light district, Armstrong was deeply influenced by the city’s aural fabric, from brass bands to street vendors to weekly worship in the Sanctified Baptist Church. After learning music in the Colored Waif’s Home for Boys, holding gigs around town, and working in Fate Marable’s riverboat orchestra, he joined his musical mentor, Joe “King” Oliver, in the Chicago-based Creole Jazz Band, in 1922.

After starting a solo career, from 1925 through 1928, Armstrong released a series of seminal recordings with his Hot Five and Hot Seven ensembles, including “Heebie Jeebies” and “Potato Head Blues.” His innovative solos, distinctive vocal style, use of scat singing, and unique phrasings not only generated commercial success but also influenced countless musicians and ushered in a new era in jazz, that of the star soloist and song stylist.

ELLA FITZGERALD (1917–1996)

After an adolescence marked by poverty and the death of her mother, Ella Fitzgerald began her career in music at age 17, after winning an amateur-night contest at the Apollo Theater in Harlem. Her first big-name gig was with the Chick Webb Orchestra, and the partnership yielded the number-one hit “A-Tisket, A-Tasket” (1938). Fitzgerald’s full but girlish timbre and vocal agility only grew in strength and sophistication as
her career expanded. She took over leadership of the Chick Webb band after his death in 1939, launched a successful solo recording career in 1942, and became known as a premier bebop vocalist during her years touring with Dizzy Gillespie.

Fitzgerald later said that she was influenced by the New Orleans close-harmony singing trio the Boswell Sisters—in particular, Connie Boswell—who were radio stars of the 1920s. Another New Orleans musician, Louis Armstrong, inspired Fitzgerald when she was growing up, and decades later the two recorded a series of popular collaborations, starting with 1956’s *Ella and Louis*. Fitzgerald kept a busy touring schedule throughout the 1950s and used her stature to comment on the civil rights movement, canceling many gigs across the South—including one in New Orleans—if venues or promoters refused to desegregate the event.

**RAY CHARLES (1930–2004)**

Ray Charles became one of music’s biggest stars in the 1950s, achieving mainstream success and pioneering the emerging genre of soul with his blend of rhythm-and-blues and gospel. Charles grew up in rural Florida and went blind from glaucoma at an early age. After studying music at a school for the deaf and blind, Charles began touring the region at age 15 with a small jazz combo and played with a white country-western band in Tampa, eventually moving to Seattle to broaden his opportunities in the music business.

After signing with Atlantic Records in 1952, Charles spent time in New Orleans, living and working at the Dew Drop Inn, a hotel, nightclub, and hub of African American entertainment. During his brief residential stint in New Orleans, Charles recorded some of his earliest sides at Cosimo Matassa’s J&M Studio. In 1953 he scored his first hit with “Mess Around,” which featured a boogie-woogie piano groove and Charles’s infectious vocal style. Other hits followed throughout the ’50s and early 1960s, including “I’ve Got a Woman,” “What’d I Say,” and “Georgia on My Mind.” —MOLLY REID
OFF-SITE

New Orleans Vistas in the Nation’s Capital

Our quarterly roundup of holdings that have appeared outside The Collection, either on loan to other institutions or reproduced in noteworthy media projects.

The National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC, has borrowed six photographs for its exhibition East of the Mississippi: Nineteenth-Century American Landscape Photography, on view through July 16. The exhibition will then travel to the New Orleans Museum of Art, where it will be up October 5, 2017–January 7, 2018.

Eight images were provided to the Ponderosa Stomp Foundation for use in A Closer Walk, an interactive online music map that will debut this spring. The map is a collaboration of WWOZ-FM, the Ponderosa Stomp Foundation, ePrime Media, Bent Media, and Randy Fertel.

Buster Holmes behind the bar at his restaurant 1970; photoprint by Jules L. Cahn
The Jules Cahn Collection at The Historic New Orleans Collection, 2000.78.1.1677


Buddy Bolden’s band
ca. 1905
The William Russell Jazz Collection at The Historic New Orleans Collection, acquisition made possible by the Clarisse Claiborne Grima Fund, 92-48-L.137

The Alexandria Black History Museum in Virginia reproduced one photograph for its current exhibition Before the Spirits are Swept Away: African American Historic Site Paintings by Sherry Z. Sanabria.

LaLaurie Mansion, 1140 Royal Street
1900; photoprint by Detroit Publishing Co.
2-050-058

Jennifer Atkins of the Florida State University School of Dance was provided with seven images for her forthcoming book, The Secret Side of Mardi Gras: Dance in New Orleans Carnival Balls (LSU Press, August 2017).

Emily Poitevent, queen of Comus 1895; photoprint mounted on cardboard by Moses and Son 1977.68.1
Krewe of Proteus ball invitation 1888; color lithograph with silver and gold ink by François Appel 1960.14.52
Art of the Parterre

A new THNOC book traces three centuries of French landscape design and explores the beauty of New Orleans formal gardens.

Sumptuously illustrated and meticulously researched, The Collection’s latest publication, Garden Legacy, blends natural history, art history, and archival analysis to trace the imprint of French garden design on New Orleans. Longtime collaborators Mary Louise Mossy Christovich and Roulhac Bunkley Toledano channeled their passion for historic preservation into the book, their eighth coauthored volume, which was published in December.

A saga of French cultural influence spanning three centuries, Garden Legacy is also a showcase for the holdings of local repositories, most notably the New Orleans Notarial Archives (NONA). The authors coined the term Illustration Art to describe the magnificent watercolor paintings now held in NONA’s Plan Book Collection. These artworks—typically consisting of a title section, site plan, and elevation or indication—were created to accompany 19th-century property auctions. Garden Legacy includes work from more than 40 of the notarial artists, as well as capsule histories of nearly 80 properties across the city, from the French Quarter to the uptown, back-of-town, and downriver neighborhoods that absorbed New Orleans’s expanding population in the antebellum decades. These neighborhood surveys show the persistence of the parterre, a geometrical garden form brilliantly employed by landscape architect André Le Notre at Versailles; concisely defined by Antoine Joseph Dezallier d’Argenville in his 1709 treatise La théorie et la pratique du jardinage; and embraced by engineers, botanists, and habitants.

A foreword by S. Frederick Starr, owner of the city’s only surviving antebellum riverfront plantation, places the book and its authors within a vital line of New Orleans preservation efforts. And an essay by Florence M. Jumonville surveys passenger lists, city directories, auction notices, newspapers, and other sources to create a demographic overview of the gardening profession. —JESSICA DORMAN
FROM PART II OF GARDEN LEGACY:

Gardens change constantly—by season, by day, by moment. Their plans, on the other hand, endure—static and unchanging. The architects, surveyors, and engineers who illustrated New Orleans gardens in what became known as archival drawings created architectural and garden artistry distinctive and idiosyncratic and in so doing fashioned a unique genre. The talented illustrators who created these plans worked en plein air—drafting out of doors with the intention of translating sketches into watercolor and gouache images in the studio. Aesthetically compelling enough to be considered “Illustration Art,” the drawings answer the particular interests of a moment in the past while preserving images of a developing city.

In France, in the late eighteenth century, artist Pierre-Henri de Valenciennes (1750–1819) and some of his contemporaries initiated the important movement toward landscape impressionism. Valenciennes appreciated the immediacy that en plein air afforded. He and his associates used light as well as aerial perspective to capture fleeting moments before atmospheric effects could alter them. A similar approach to the technique would mark the work of nineteenth-century illustrators in New Orleans. Gardens and buildings softened by clouds, and bordered by trees, fences, and banquets with granite edges, allowed local artists to frame spontaneous images.

Along the roads and the sidewalks of New Orleans, the artists measured and sketched in small and medium-sized notebooks. Within these notebooks—or, as they called them, sketchbooks—the men drew rough drafts of properties that they later expanded in color and detail into large watercolor paintings on paper. The work of at least twenty-one surveyors appears in over 650 sketchbooks that The Historic New Orleans Collection acquired in 1978. . . . Whereas the sketchbook version might be whimsical, loose, or messy, the final drawing had candor and, in some cases, almost a staged rigidity. Importantly, the sketchbooks may contain the only existing representations of lost historic properties and their gardens. . . .

The archival drawings underscore New Orleans’ natural world as well as its architectural one. A tree, a garden with parterres and plates-bandes, a lamppost, a roof, a gallery—all find form first within the small sketchbooks and then in final artistic representations. Clouds are there in abundance, unifying the compositions and relaxing lines and elements. In vivid blue skies, hundreds of them appear in every formation, in shimmering white, shades of cyclamen pinks, and hints of dark overcast, enough variation to thrill a meteorologist.

—MARY LOUISE MOSSY CHRISTOVICH AND ROULHAC BUNKLEY TOLEDANO
Founders’ Keepers

The papers of Leila and Kemper Williams illuminate the daily lives, early collecting habits, and charitable giving of THNOC’s cofounders.

Deep in the vaults of the Williams Research Center, nestled on mobile shelves stretching nearly the width of the third floor, sit over 400 unassuming gray archival boxes, meticulously labeled and inventoried. Among the many hundreds of manuscript collections housed at The Historic New Orleans Collection, this group of boxes comprises some of the most institutionally valuable material THNOC possesses: the personal, business, and financial papers of General L. Kemper and Leila Williams, founders and benefactors of The Collection. The materials date as far back as 1915, and contain the details of lives devoted to preserving the history and culture of New Orleans and Louisiana.

The papers include everything from the mundane to the extraordinary, forming a portrait of upper-class life in Louisiana in the first half of the last century. There are receipts from the druggist—including Prohibition-era prescriptions for “medicinal” spirits such as whiskey and gin—and from the mechanic, documenting maintenance of the family’s vehicles. The Williamses bought new cars nearly every year, from Packards to Lincolns to Jaguars. Photographs of lush holiday table settings in the couple’s residence capture Leila’s love of fine tableware and commitment to formal dining. Awards and citations for General Williams’s military service help to capture a sense of the man before he retired and began collecting.

Bills of sale document some of the first items added to the Williamses’ holdings—what would become the basis of The Collection—including Norman's New Orleans and Environs, a book of the history of the city up to 1845 (55-49-L); paintings, such as Sixth Precinct Station House (1952.31); and military-themed books such as The Pictorial Field-Book of the War of 1812 (68-42-L.2). Letters from distinguished New Orleanians, including Mayor deLesseps Story “Chep” Morrison and members of the Christ Church
clergy, complement the immense collection of correspondence. Records of stock and bond trades, mineral leases, and fastidious property transactions—including those of Toulouse Street buildings still in operation under THNOC—chronicle the Williamses’ business dealings and financial inclinations for the better part of five decades.

There is much more, however, to these papers than personal expenditures and business transactions. Buried in these myriad financial documents, one begins to see a pattern of genuinely thoughtful philanthropic activity, meticulously noted in precise handwriting. The recipients of the Williamses’ largess included religious and political organizations, as well as General Williams’s alma maters, the Lawrenceville School and the University of the South. There are donations recorded to the New Orleans Philharmonic Symphony, the Music Academy of the West, and organizations dedicated to eradicating diseases. Year after year, the Williamses’ charitable contributions covered a wide range of causes, with one in particular garnering the majority of gifts: schools and programs to help children.

While the Williamses’ contributions benefited well-off learning institutions such as the McGehee School and the Lawrenceville School, the majority of their donations went to schools and causes for exceptional or disadvantaged children, from the deaf or hard of hearing to children with learning differences or physical disabilities. The Williamses also contributed to African American schools and organizations, such as Fisk University, the United Negro College Fund, and the Piney Woods School, an independent, historically black boarding school. One large annual donation went to the Good Shepherd Mission, an Episcopal organization benefiting Navajo children in the Four Corners region of the Navajo Nation.

The Williamses did not simply cache their dividends and earnings but gave back to their community and region, and the story of their generosity is the foundation of The Historic New Orleans Collection. —HEATHER M. SZAFRAN
ON THE JOB

Eli A. Haddow

POSITION: Marketing assistant, on staff since 2016

ASSIGNMENT: Curate THNOC’s first Instagram account

It goes without saying that a museum gallery must be curated. Complementary objects are arranged to create a unified experience, leaving the visitor with a fresh take on a familiar subject or introducing them to something new altogether.

In the digital world, the idea of curation is as important as it is inside a gallery. For many people, social media interaction with The Historic New Orleans Collection may determine whether they ultimately visit us. One part of my job is curating the museum experience in that digital realm. The marketing department recently opened a THNOC Instagram account, allowing us to showcase our spaces, collections, and staff and to construct a unified but diverse snapshot of life at The Collection.

Instagram, like Facebook or Twitter, is made up of user-based content, which simply means that anyone with an account can share posts with their followers, who can “like” or make a comment on them. Unlike other social media apps, Instagram is primarily visual, with a picture and caption making up every post. It is also accessed primarily on mobile phones rather than personal computers, which allows us to easily reach people in the course of their daily lives.

As curator of our Instagram feed, I aim to post about five photos a week. The key to successfully engaging our followers is to create visual content that makes them want to stop scrolling, appreciate our photo, and read what we have to say. Through images of our beautiful properties, glimpses of exhibitions and publications, and access to interesting behind-the-scenes activity, our followers can get to know THNOC as a realm of possibilities waiting to be explored. This can mean simple eye candy—a spiral staircase in the Reading Room or the Royal Street courtyard bathed in sunlight—or significant moments, such as the first unboxing of THNOC’s latest publication or a standing-room crowd at a program.

While pretty pictures of our historic courtyards and properties are among our most popular posts, so too are photos of staff members at work, giving tours, handling objects, or sharing what they like most about a piece of our history. For example, a post in January showed Docent Kurt Owens in front of a display case of Carnival regalia, to promote...
The Collection’s seasonal Mardi Gras tours of the Louisiana History Galleries. To me, showing employees engaged with our collections creates a personal connection between our staff and THNOC’s mission and is a key part of everyday life here.

In fact, some of our most successful posts come on Wednesday—or, to use our special hashtag, #WRCwednesdays—when I head over to the Williams Research Center to showcase the work of our catalogers, processors, curators, and reference staff. One of my favorites from this series shows Reference Assistant Robert Ticknor with a 1789 letter signed by Louis XVI just five days after the storming of the Bastille, during the French Revolution. These WRC posts explore the breadth and scope of our collections, which are all freely accessible to the public, and they also engage the community: people comment regularly to ask questions about our holdings or simply to thank us for preserving these pieces of our history.

In February we surpassed 1,000 followers, and celebrated by holding our first Instagram contest—giving away a Michael P. Smith print to one lucky participant. Instagram users are generally young—about 90 percent are millennials—and the app elicits more than three billion likes a day, meaning that users actually consider and engage with the posts rather than mindlessly scrolling through their feeds. As a museum, we take seriously the need to attract this group and expand our base of support.

At the age of 24, I myself am a millennial, and I’m aware that my generation sometimes has a reputation for laziness and entitlement, but studies also show (and my experience confirms) that we value honesty and have an unbridled thirst for new knowledge. Instagram is an important tool to wow this demographic with a curated museum experience that makes them want to explore some of what The Collection has to offer.

—ELI A. HADDOW

To follow The Collection on Instagram, search in the app for @visit_thnoc.

STAFF NEWS

New Staff
Terry Scriber, security manager.
Hannah Aufdembrink, Katherine Determan, Vanessa Cano, Kathy Dean, David Feldman, Kathy Johnson, Ian Schiffman, Tom Whelen, volunteers.

Changes
Jen Biniek is now a full-time sales associate at The Shop. Associate Registrar Kate Carter departed in late January to devote time to her growing family.

In the Community
Senior Editor Dorothy Ball joined the board of Emerging Philanthropists of New Orleans (EPNO).


In January Editor Molly Reid appeared on a panel discussion about Danny Barker’s literary and storytelling career at the Danny Barker Banjo and Guitar Festival, held in New Orleans.

In January Lydia Blackmore, decorative arts curator, gave a talk on the exhibition Goods of Every Description: Shopping in New Orleans, 1825–1925 to the American Decorative Arts Forum, at the Legion of Honor Museum in San Francisco.

Honors
The Collection—led by the team of Assistant Curator/Historian Eric Seifert, Senior Curator/Oral Historian Mark Cave, and Educator Coordinator Jenny Schwartzberg—recently won a grant from the National Park Service for a civil rights oral history project.
FOCUS ON PHILANTHROPY

Duncan Brown

Duncan Brown’s New Orleans roots run deep—seven generations deep—but he frames his place in this lineage against more recent history: “I’m part of the generation that came into adulthood after Katrina.”

Brown sees this generation as one uniquely interested in civic engagement, especially through volunteering and philanthropy. Before beginning his studies at Tulane University, where he earned a degree in political science, he enlisted in the Louisiana National Guard and entered the Reserve Officers’ Training Corps program. Hurricane Katrina struck while he was in college, compelling him to return to his family’s home in Covington to help rebuild the roof and clear debris.

The city and region’s recovery reaffirmed the commitments he’d made: he remains a reserve guardsman and was called to action recently during the devastating floods in Baton Rouge, where he helped manage logistics for food and water distribution for Livingston Parish.

“It instills a certain discipline,” Brown said of his continuing service. “And there’s an element of adventure to it.”

Brown’s day job is as an operations manager for Dawn Services, an offshore towing business based in Harvey. The company provides a number of maritime services throughout North and Central America, including dredging support and assistance to the oil and gas industry. He likens the role to being an officer in the military. “Your milestones are so tangible: a port gets dredged, another job gets finished,” he said.

Intangibles have brought Brown home to his city of birth. “There’s a lifestyle and culture in New Orleans you can’t get anywhere else,” he said. He’s currently renovating a condo in the Warehouse District, a neighborhood popular among young professionals. He loves the area’s walkability, dining scene and—no small thing for the frequent traveler—the convenience of not having a yard to maintain.

Brown represents a changing city, but he stays connected to his family heritage. The great-great-great grandson of Tabasco inventor Edmund McIlhenny, he enjoys visiting the company’s home base of Avery Island and the areas around it with family, especially for duck hunting. “I’d like to think I’m a good shot,” he said, adding that his father, Buzzy Brown, a former skeet instructor, “might disagree.”

Brown feels a sense of responsibility for preserving the history of this city and region, one factor that compelled him to join the Caillot Circle, The Collection’s new membership group for young professionals, sponsored by New Orleans Auction Co. “I think with my roots I have a unique opportunity to be an ambassador,” he said. “That said, you can live here one day and develop a deep appreciation of this place. A lot of my closest friends are transplants who are eager to get involved in the city.”

With a brother who is a teacher, Brown views the Caillot Circle’s support of education initiatives as an added incentive. He also appreciates the networking opportunities the group provides—but he’s not all business. “It’s a fun social circle to be a part of and a great way to meet other young people in the city,” he said. “I’m looking forward to the rest of the year. The group is planning some must-do events, and I know people are going to have a great time.”

—NICK WELDON

The Caillot Circle is open to ages 21–45, as well as the young at heart. For more information, call (504) 598-7181 or visit www.hnoc.org/cc.
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Board of directors and staff of The Historic New Orleans Collection in memory of Kurt E. Schon—Artist Spaces: New Orleans by Tina Freeman and Morgan Molthrop, Louisiana Artists Series (Lafayette: University of Louisiana at Lafayette Press, 2014)
ON THE SCENE

Jazz Stories and Storyville Scholars

On December 1 The Collection celebrated the launch of its publication A Life in Jazz, illustrated edition, with an event honoring the life and music of author Danny Barker. Gwen Thompkins, host of public radio’s Music Inside Out and a contributor to the new edition, led a live version of her show, featuring interviews and musical demonstrations. The evening wrapped up with a performance by the Shannon Powell Traditional Jazz Band.

A. Gwen Thompkins interviews Bruce Boyd Raeburn, curator of the Hogan Jazz Archive at Tulane University.


C. Drummer Shannon Powell tells Thompkins a Danny Barker story.

On February 4 The Collection hosted the 22nd annual Williams Research Center Symposium, with this year’s theme, “Storyville and Jazz, 1917: An End and a Beginning.” The night before the symposium, attendees were invited to join THNOC in the launch of Guidebooks to Sin: The Blue Books of Storyville, New Orleans by Pamela D. Arceneaux, senior librarian and rare books curator.

D. Pamela D. Arceneaux signs copies of Guidebooks to Sin at the launch party for the book, held the evening before the symposium.

E. Dr. Michael White, Susan Russ, and Manager of Administrative Services Kathy Slimp

F. Kathleen Nettleton and Alecia P. Long

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ACQUISITION SPOTLIGHT

Capturing the Big Picture of 19th-Century New Orleans

Canal Street, New Orleans Mammoth-Plate Ambrotype
2015.0465

To say that antebellum photographic views of New Orleans are rare is an understatement. Even more exceptional are photographs with unusual dimensions made from lesser-used processes, such as this oversized ambrotype capturing the entire downriver side of the 800 block of Canal Street. Produced between 1857 and 1859, the image is attributed to Felix Moissenet (though that attribution, suggested in a letter accompanying the photograph, has not yet been confirmed). Moissenet was one of a few photographers who operated on or near Canal Street at the time.

The spire of Christ Church Cathedral, designed by Thomas Wharton and constructed in 1846–47, anchors the left side of the photograph, with part of the 700 block of Canal, known as Touro Row, defining the right edge. The Touro buildings—a commercial block developed by Judah Touro (1775–1854)—had been under construction since 1852, and an assortment of construction materials for the buildings fills the badly maintained neutral ground. The gap seen in Touro Row, fronted by four one-story columns, marks the site of the rectory for the previous Christ Church Cathedral. The foreground of the photograph, cast in heavy shadow, is populated by carriages and their drivers.

Ambrotypes flourished for about a decade between 1854 and 1865, before being replaced in popularity by the tintype and, ultimately, easily reproducible paper photographs. The photographic technique involves an underexposed negative made on glass, using the wet-plate collodion process, which is then backed by a solid black background. The process transforms the negative into a positive image. Ambrotypes were typically produced in a quarter-plate size (3.25" \times 4.25"), making the "mammoth-plate" Canal Street view, measuring 8.25" \times 10", an unusually large and rare example.

A lithograph executed sometime between 1858 and 1859, making it a rough contemporary of the ambrotype, shows a less cluttered streetscape, with the emphasis on the Touro buildings in the 700 block. While the lithograph is not a clone of the ambrotype, the latter could have been used in some way to execute the former. We know that some photographs of this era were used as the basis for wood-engraved illustrations in the popular press. —JOSHUA H. LAWRENCE, JUDE SOLOMON, AND MALLORY TAYLOR

RELATED HOLDINGS

Touro Buildings
1858 or 1859; lithograph
by John T. Hammond, lithographer
1974.25.3.475

View of Canal Street
1857; wood engraving from a sketch of a photoprint
by James Andrews, photographer, and Samuel S. Kilburn, draftsman
gift of Boyd Cruise, 1948.9
Alice Brady (1927–2012) both owned and bartended at a series of French Quarter gay and lesbian bars for more than 50 years. In 1952 she opened the Mascarade Bar at 819 St. Louis Street; she would go on to operate Alice Brady’s, Mr. D’s Hide-A-Way, and Brady’s, all located in the French Quarter. Later in life she would bartend at the Friendly Bar, which is still open, on Chartres Street in Faubourg Marigny. Known as a parental figure in the gay and lesbian community, she was involved in early gay Carnival organizations and was a longtime supporter of LGBT social and athletic organizations. Recently discovered in the attic of her former home, at 417 Thirba Street in Metairie, is a unique assemblage of photographs, artwork, correspondence, and ephemera documenting the lives of four New Orleans entertainers.

Dorothea Vernon “Torchy” Wilde (1924–1997), who lived with Brady at 417 Thirba Street, worked as a bartender and burlesque dancer. Her life is represented through materials from her time at Rabouin High School, photographs, and audio recordings related to her Torch Studio recording business, which operated sometime between the late 1950s and early ’60s. Brady’s papers also include signage and photographs related to Wilde’s stepfather, Clarence Frank Wilde (1884–1955), who operated a storefront display of mummified animals at 1028 Jackson Avenue. (Some of those specimens—a desiccated chicken, dog, cat, and snake—also were discovered in Brady’s attic but were not part of the acquisition.) Clarence was frequently in conflict with New Orleans law enforcement, with offenses that included operating a photography studio on the Canal Street neutral ground, involvement in various fights and shootings, and plotting—with his son and a car full of dynamite—to firebomb the homes of film projectionists who were on strike.

Handbills, programs, photographs, contracts, and correspondence illuminate the vaudeville career of Clarence’s uncle, Jack Vernon Owen (1877–1953), a blackface comedian and musician who performed throughout the Southeast and Midwest. The last of the four entertainers represented within Brady’s collection is Betty Corder (1931–1982), who, for various unconfirmed reasons ranging from debt avoidance to stage names, used the aliases Terry Hall and Pam Holloway. The latter was a name used by a Bourbon Street burlesque dancer...
in 1952, but it is unclear whether Corder was that performer. Corder’s life is reflected through correspondence dating from 1951, directed to several aliases at different French Quarter addresses as well as California locations including Tommy’s 299 Club, a famous San Francisco lesbian bar. Corder’s mother, Jane, was her primary correspondent, and the letters frequently lament Corder’s absence from home and warn of the dangers of narcotics. —AIMEE EVERRETT

James Wilkinson letter of introduction for Aaron Burr
2016.0286.3

In early June 1805, at Fort Massac, near the confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers, American Major General James Wilkinson (1757–1825) met with his old friend Aaron Burr (1756–1836), the former Continental Army colonel who had recently resigned the vice presidency after his duel with Alexander Hamilton. Some scholars believe the two men discussed plans to create an independent republic from part of New Spain (Texas) and the western territories of the United States—a plot that became known as the Burr Conspiracy. Wilkinson wrote a number of letters introducing Burr to influential persons in New Orleans, including one addressed to Dr. Robert Dow (1753–ca. 1841). It is unconfirmed whether Burr intended to discuss his treasonous plans with Dow, but in the letter Wilkinson assures Dow that he may “repose without unease in [Burr’s] confidence and discretion.”

Burr arrived in New Orleans on June 25 and remained in the city for three weeks, meeting with all manner of people—Spanish, French, and American—before departing on July 14. It’s possible that Burr was assessing the city’s social and political willingness to support a military expedition, to be launched sometime the following year. We can assume that Dow was among the people that Burr met, but he has not yet been identified as having been an active participant in the conspiracy.

We may never know the full scope of Burr’s intentions or the names and roles of his alleged co-conspirators, as rumors of a plot reached President Thomas Jefferson before any plan could be set in motion. Burr was denounced even by his old friend Wilkinson, who, like Burr, was accused of treason and tried in a military court. Both men were eventually acquitted of their respective charges, but their friendship was over and their reputations were permanently damaged. —JASON WIESE

Drawing of a woman with tignon
2016.0289

Nicolas-Marie Ozanne (1728–1811) traveled extensively in his role as an official painter for the French navy, and though he’s best known for his portrayals of maritime activity, his oeuvre also contains noteworthy depictions of people he observed while abroad. This drawing of his, believed to have been made during a deployment to the French West Indies, shows a woman holding up flowers in her apron and wearing a tignon, a head wrap traditionally worn by women of African descent.

The tignon played an important role in the social history of New Orleans when, in 1786, Spanish Governor Esteban Miró commanded all free women of color to wear them in order to conceal their hair. Prior to the decree, free women of color wore their hair in intricate styles often involving feathers and jewelry. The governor feared that these hairstyles, by drawing the attention of white men and invoking jealousy from white women, challenged the colony’s racial hierarchy. Free women of color undermined the law’s suppressive intent and reasserted their beauty and independence by wearing elegant wraps of myriad colors, materials, and knotting styles.

In its detail, Ozanne’s drawing offers the chance for comparison with other examples of period style, and provides evidence of the customs and histories shared by women of African descent throughout the French sphere. The specific relationship between Louisiana and the French colony of St. Domingue was explored in the 2006 exhibition Common Routes: New Orleans • St. Domingue, which featured another drawing of a woman by Ozanne. —NICK WELDON

Roujot: The New Orleans Letter of 1747
2016.0311.1–.2

Professional genealogist and colonial scholar Winston De Ville has written and published approximately 100 monographs on early Louisiana genealogy and history—many through his two publishing houses, Polyanthos and Provincial—and has contributed more than 300 articles in academic journals. He is recognized as a fellow of the American Society of Genealogists based on the quantity and quality of his work. De Ville recently donated a copy of a 2003 book about a colonial document he translated, edited, and published through Provincial Press. Roujot: The New Orleans Letter of 1747 contains a photographic facsimile of a French letter.
written by Edmé François Roujot, with an accompanying essay discussing the letter and placing it in the context of the era. Roujot, a native of Irancy, a small community in the Burgundy region of France, was an official of the Company of the Indies and served as the administrator of the LeBlanc Concession near Natchez. In 1730 he married Angélique Chartron, whose first husband had been killed during the 1729 massacre in that settlement, and they moved to New Orleans to raise a family. Roujot appears in and leaves his signature on at least a dozen documents in the judicial records of the Louisiana Superior Council during the early colonial period.

The original letter was presented to De Ville by Roujot’s descendants during his first research trip to France, in 1970. Part of the letter was missing at that time and may be permanently lost. THNOC acquired the letter to accompany the donated book.

Written by Roujot while in New Orleans to his brothers in France and dated May 15, 1747, the letter describes a New Orleans colonial lifestyle in which families were beginning to thrive, not simply subsist, and discusses commercial opportunities available, including the making of indigo and the cultivation of tobacco. Family news from previous correspondence is commented upon and new developments related. Roujot shares his observation on native peoples in the New Orleans area—“I will tell you, my dear brothers, that [they] . . . can almost no longer be called savages. They are refined.” —PAMELA D. ARCENEAUX

RIGHT: The Pictorial Field-Book of the War of 1812; or, Illustrations, by Pen and Pencil, of the History, Biography, Scenery, Relics, and Traditions of the Last War for American Independence by Benson J. Lossing New York: Harpers and Bros., 1869 68-42-L.2
The news of the gallant defense of New Orleans produced a thrill of intense joy throughout the land. State Legislatures and other public bodies thanked the hero who commanded the victorious little army. A small medal was struck and extensively circulated among the people. Congress voted him the thanks of the nation, and ordered a commemorative gold medal to be given him.

GOLD MEDAL PRESENTED TO JACKSON.

It was a bright and beautiful winter morning on the verge of the tropics. The religious ceremonies were to be held in the old Spanish Cathedral, which was decorated with evergreens for the occasion.

In the centre of the public square, in front of the Cathedral, where the equestrian statue of Jackson now stands, was erected a temporary triumphal arch, supported by six Corinthian columns, and festooned with flowers and evergreens. Beneath the arch stood two beautiful little girls, each upon a pedestal, and holding in their hand a civic crown of laurel. Near them stood two damsel, one personifying Liberty, and the other Justice. From the arch to the church, arranged in two rows, stood beautiful girls, all dressed in white, and each covered with a blue gauze veil and bearing a silver star on her brow. These personified the several States and Territories of the Union. Each carried a flag with the name of the state which she represented, upon it. Each also carried a small basket trimmed with blue ribbon and filled with flowers; and behind each was a lance stack in the ground bearing a shield on which was inscribed the name and legend of the state or territory which she represented. These were linked by evergreen festoons that extended from the arch to the door of the Cathedral.

At the appointed time, General Jackson, accompanied by the officers of his staff, passed through the gate of the Grand Square fronting the river, amid the roar of artillery, and was conducted between lines of Plauché's New Orleans battalion of Creoles (which extended from the gate to the church) to the raised floor of the arch. As he stepped upon it the
FROM THE SHOP

The Collection’s own Jazz Fest tradition

Visitors to the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival (April 28–May 7) are invited to stop by The Shop at The Collection’s booth in the Louisiana Folklife Village. The Shop will be selling reproduction prints of legendary New Orleans musicians and culture bearers taken by photographer Michael P. Smith. Prints are $35—a special rate for festivalgoers only.

A. Byrd at Home
1979; photograph by Michael P. Smith
© The Historic New Orleans Collection, 2007.0103.4.837

B. Ernie K-Doe at the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival
1983; photograph by Michael P. Smith
© The Historic New Orleans Collection, 2007.0103.4.721

C. Creole Wild West Challenge on Mardi Gras Day
1983; photograph by Michael P. Smith
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