PASSION PROJECT: A Collector Salutes Southern Art
NEW ORLEANS ANTIQUES FORUM
Decorative arts lovers from across the country will convene to celebrate and learn about the material culture of the South. This year’s theme, “In Their Hands: Creative Masters of Southern Decorative Arts,” champions the artisans and artists who have left their mark on the region’s material culture.
Thursday, August 3–Sunday, August 6
Williams Research Center, 410 Chartres Street
For information, please see the inside back cover.

“FABULOUS FINDS: RECENT DECORATIVE ARTS DISCOVERIES IN THE GULF SOUTH”
This installment of the Williams Lecture, the series created by Decorative Arts Curator Lydia Blackmore, features guest speaker Sarah Duggan, research curator and coordinator of the Classical Institute of the South at The Historic New Orleans Collection.
Saturday, August 19, 10 a.m.
533 Royal Street
Free; seating is limited. For reservations, email wrc@hnoc.org or call (504) 523-4662.

FRANCISCO BOULIGNY LECTURE
This annual lecture honors the enduring influence of Spain in Louisiana, and the 2017 installment, “Cuba to New Orleans,” is a recital featuring the pianist Alexandre Moutouzkine. The event is being held in collaboration with the Musical Arts Society of New Orleans and the National Park Service.
Tuesday, September 19, 6:30 p.m.
Williams Research Center, 410 Chartres Street
Free; seating is limited. For reservations, email wrc@hnoc.org or call (504) 523-4662.
On a recent flight, I overheard a New Orleans transplant explaining to his seatmate what it was like to live and work in the city. “New Orleans is obsessed with New Orleans,” he said. Guilty! I thought. That statement will ring especially true next year, when we celebrate the tricentennial of the city’s founding. Education will be the heart and soul of our observance; through the city’s official Tricentennial Commission activities and the initiatives of many local institutions, we will learn new things about New Orleans and remember why we are right to be “obsessed.”

The Historic New Orleans Collection, of course, has big plans! Our initiatives have received an overwhelming amount of sponsorship and support and will be announced soon. We will begin 2018 with a major exhibition, New Orleans, the Founding Era, which will explore the earliest years and peoples of the city, from the Native Americans who occupied the land before the arrival of European settlers to the French engineers, enslaved Africans, and conscripted soldiers who built infrastructure against tremendous odds.

In the meantime, we have several new shows and events to take us through the rest of 2017. From the beginning, THNOC has been built on the generosity and collecting passion of its donors. Many of our landmark acquisitions have been gifts, and this summer we are celebrating one such donation with the exhibition A Most Significant Gift: The Laura Simon Nelson Collection. Art lover Laura Simon Nelson began donating her carefully curated Louisiana and southern artworks to us in 1996, and they have elevated our fine art holdings ever since. We will also continue to show Giants of Jazz, the poster exhibition made possible by Fritz and Rita Daguillard’s recent donation of their expansive collection of historical and musical artifacts.

Another frequent source of pride for our institution is the New Orleans Antiques Forum, which has enhanced our presence as a champion of southern decorative arts while connecting us to hundreds of antiques lovers and scholars. This year’s theme, “In Their Hands: Creative Masters of Southern Decorative Arts,” will yield lectures from leading experts on southern artisans, Acadian furniture, and rococo revival cabinetmaker John Henry Belter. For more information on registering, please see the inside back cover, or visit www.hnoc.org/antiques.htm to view a full schedule. —PRISCILLA LAWRENCE

FROM THE DIRECTOR

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Recent Additions
Tennessee’s Screen Siren

The Tennessee Williams Annual Review returns, with scholarly essays on the playwright’s late career, his love for an Italian film diva, and more.

The 2017 issue of the Tennessee Williams Annual Review showcases the exciting results of the journal’s recently expanded scope. Founded in 1998 by Williams specialist Robert Bray, who recently retired as editor, the Review this year welcomed a new editor: R. Barton Palmer, Clemson University’s director of film studies and Calhoun Lemon Professor of Literature. The 2017 issue features a fresh approach to The Glass Menagerie, an appreciation of the Italian actress Anna Magnani, and a piece of Williams gossip that begins as salacious but provides insight into the playwright’s final years.

The journal frequently spotlights one of THNOC’s archival jewels, the Fred W. Todd Tennessee Williams Collection, the largest privately held collection of Williams materials in the country. This year the Todd collection yielded an original program from a little-known late play, The Red Devil Battery Sign, an image of which accompanies John S. Bak’s provocative biographical essay about the playwright’s time in Vancouver. Bak uses as a springboard the notorious “underwear anecdote” that dogged Williams late in life: a rumor, supported by several sources, that involved Williams inviting young men up to his hotel room to read aloud in their underwear. Scouring interviews and letters, published and unpublished, Bak’s essay unearths important details about Williams’s late career and uses both the facts and the fictions to shed new light on the playwright’s creative process.

Breaking new ground for the journal is Tiffany Gilbert’s opening essay, a study of Anna Magnani’s acting style as a collaborative contribution to the film adaptations of The Rose Tattoo and The Fugitive Kind. “It still seems incomprehensible that the world—my world—can function without her in it,” said Williams, after Magnani’s death in
1973. Alicia Andrzejewski explores issues of queerness, identity, disability, and difference in The Glass Menagerie to reveal subtle forms of agency and desire, making a much-studied text new again. Rounding out number 16 is Bess Rowen’s review of a recent staging of the rarely performed Kirche, Küche, Kinder (An Outrage for the Stage). —THNOC STAFF

From “Mississippi Magnani: Transatlantic Collaborations and Civil Rights in The Rose Tattoo and The Fugitive Kind,” by Tiffany Gilbert:

In 1982, in an interview with the journalist James Grissom, Tennessee Williams reflected upon the denouement of art and America. . . . “And Anna Magnani dies, far away from me, silent and weak. Age has made it difficult for me to have much faith in things, but the death of Anna Magnani has made it almost impossible.” . . . Williams would die a few months later, in February 1983, at age seventy-one.

How do we comprehend the transatlantic scope of Williams’s despair? Of the stars who portrayed his heroines on screen, Anna Magnani, I maintain, occupied the artistic and spiritual center of gravity of Tennessee Williams’s dramatic cosmos. For her, Williams crafted the roles of Serafina in The Rose Tattoo (1950) and Lady Torrance in Orpheus Descending (1957), Italian immigrant women whose difference and desires crackled within the charged air of the Delta. . . .

In a 1961 piece for Life entitled “Five Fiery Ladies,” Williams dashed off quick, incisive tributes to Vivian Leigh, Geraldine Page, Elizabeth Taylor, and Katharine Hepburn. When it came to praising Magnani, he signaled his adoration with an emphatic typographical gesture: “MAGNANI! I put the name in caps with exclamation point because that is how she ‘comes on.’” Coming to America, in her mid-fourties, Magnani challenged the Hollywood beauty standard that dominated filmmaking after World War II. With her famously undisciplined hair, dark, encircled eyes, and aquiline nose, she lacked Grace Kelly’s icy, patrician bearing, Audrey Hepburn’s gamine elegance, and Elizabeth Taylor’s magnificent glamour. Magnani, instead, was a switch—sudden, absolute. “In a crowded room,” Williams continued in Life, “she can sit perfectly motionless and silent, and still you feel the atmospheric tension of her presence, its quiver and hum in the air like a live wire exposed, and a mood of Anna’s is like the presence of royalty. Out of this phenomenon of human electronics has come the greatest acting art of our times.”
Perilous Innovation

Alicia Maggard, one of THNOC’s 2016–17 Woest Fellows, explores the hazards and spoils of the steamboat era as seen in the story of the Teche.

In late spring 1825, New Orleanians were awaiting a boat that would never arrive. The steamboat Teche touched at Natchez on May 4, took on passengers, and stacked bales of cotton ever higher on its decks. The night was dark and visibility poor, so the Teche came to anchor some 10 miles downriver. Sleeping passengers and paddlewheels were still until just after two in the morning, when conditions improved and the captain ordered a head of steam raised to resume the journey.

A tremendous shock and a violent crack startled the crew and awoke the passengers. Excessive pressure had built up in the boat’s cast iron boilers, triggering an explosion and spraying scalding water that killed several crewmen and passengers instantly. The wooden hull caught fire, and these flames were the only light to guide survivors of the initial blast as they abandoned the sinking, ruined Teche. Some swam for shore, while others survived by clinging to bobbing bales of cotton that were thrown from the decks to save them from burning. By first light, only about 50 of the 70 passengers on board were accounted for. The remaining 20 would, like the Teche, never reach New Orleans.

Steamboats were the mechanical marvels of their day, and they augured a technological future wherein knowledge might render the natural world subservient to human needs and desires. It must have been a deeply unsettling future, however, given the frequency with which boilers exploded, paddles tangled with snags, hulls caught fire, and vessels collided. Carcasses of sunken steamboats like the Teche made Louisiana’s already labyrinthine waterways more treacherous, grimly advertising the new hazards of industrial life. In newspapers and pamphlets, Americans developed new verbal and visual tropes to narrate the carnage of industrial death. James T. Lloyd made steamboat disasters a bestseller when his 1856 Steamboat Directory mixed useful information about western river travel with gruesome accounts of its hazards. The graphic Explosion and Burning of the Teche appeared
opposite maps of major landings along the Ohio River. For Lloyd’s many readers, the promise and peril of steam power were illustrated side by side.

While the hazards of the river and the horror of boiler explosions meant that steamboats like the Teche rarely survived more than five years of service, their machinery awaited a separate fate. For antebellum steamboats, often little more than glorified rafts built to move cotton downriver, the cost of the engine and boilers often far exceeded that required to construct the hull and fixtures. Especially in the early years of steam navigation, when engine works and machine shops were still concentrated in the northeast, even engines once sunk in Mississippi mud were valuable prizes.

James Campbell was betting on just that when he sent engineer William Graham to the site of the Teche wreck. Campbell was the New Orleans–based owner of the Teche. He had lost the vessel, but he still hoped to salvage its machinery. Graham carried upriver a “yard and chain cable for the purpose if possible to secure in a better manner the bottom of the Teche so if possible to save the Engine,” according to a letter Campbell wrote to his Natchez associate. Extant records do not definitively indicate whether Graham was successful, but it is likely that the steam engine formerly aboard the Teche was raised (using muscle power, no less), repaired, and repurposed to power a new industrial venture.

Histories of industrializing America often focus on Yankee tinkerers and networks of machinists in the northeast, but marine engines that began their lives in these industrial hubs proved regionally indiscriminate when they or another component of their system failed. Salvage and repair work generated income and know-how in places like New Orleans that could easily be applied beyond the steam-navigation industry. The sinking of the Teche and the attempted raising of its engine highlight both a creative response to technological problems and the human costs of material progress. —ALICIA MAGGARD
A Legacy of Love

A new exhibition highlights the collection and generosity of art lover Laura Simon Nelson.

Laura Simon Nelson, a Baton Rouge native with little formal schooling in art, has enjoyed a lifelong interest in the subject. After years of collecting, her enthusiasm grew into an intense desire to see the artworks cared for properly and made accessible to the public for viewing and further study. This dream began to materialize in 1996 with her gift of 307 works to The Historic New Orleans Collection, a number she expanded to 525 in subsequent years. A selection of more than 80 of these pieces, including paintings, sculpture, and Newcomb pottery, is on view in the Laura Simon Nelson Galleries, which THNOC named in her honor in 2012.

While visiting architect Carl Woodward, Nelson viewed *Man Sharpening Axe*, a watercolor painting by his uncle, Ellsworth Woodward. Founder of the Newcomb College art school, Ellsworth and his brother, William (Carl’s father), established the Newcomb Pottery enterprise, which flourished from 1895 to 1940 and brought a source of revenue to many women. Active in numerous art organizations, the brothers promoted art locally and regionally and advocated for the preservation of the Vieux Carré and the establishment of an art organization to stimulate interest in the Quarter and its architecture. Public appreciation of the Woodwards and Louisiana art was eclipsed by the modernist art movements of the 1950s and ’60s, but William’s influence was lasting: his numerous French Quarter street scenes form the foundation to which all other subsequent street scenes of the Vieux Carré are indebted.

Upon hearing Nelson’s appreciation of the Woodward painting, Carl

A. *Cup and saucer with pinecones and needles*
1921; glazed earthenware
by Henrietta Davidson Bailey (1874–1950), decorator; Joseph Fortuné Meyer (1848–1931), potter
*gift of Laura Simon Nelson, 2011.0027.17*

B. *Man Sharpening Axe*
1910s; watercolor on paper
by Ellsworth Woodward (1861–1939)
*gift of Laura Simon Nelson, 1996.122.2*
led Nelson to his attic, full of artwork by both William and Ellsworth Woodward, and exclaimed, “I’ve been waiting for you all my life.” In addition to embarking on collecting Woodwards, Nelson continued schooling herself about her new passion. She sought the advice of George Jordan, a former museum curator who guided her in Louisiana, American, and European art.

The fruits of Nelson’s collecting and research were first showcased in 1996, with a three-part exhibition at THNOC. The show spanned a year’s time and was accompanied by weekly lectures, symposia, and an exhibition catalog, as well as a documentary on the Woodwards that continues to be shown intermittently on the local PBS affiliate, WYES-TV. This summer, five years after the opening of the galleries named for her, The Collection presents another Nelson showcase with *A Most Significant Gift: The Laura Simon Nelson Collection*.

A wide range of subjects are on view by artists including Wayman Adams, Jacques Amans, François Bernard, Morris Henry Hobbs, Clarence Millet, and Andres Molinary. The show embraces Nelson’s love of the Woodwards, as well as their dedication to women’s education, which inspired her to collect work by women artists. Henrietta Davidson Bailey, who taught at Newcomb for 39 years, is represented by pottery featuring pine cones and pine needles,
Sadie Irvine, who served on the faculty and then as clerk of the Newcomb Guild for 20 years, is represented by several pieces, as is pottery decorator Anna Frances Simpson. A portrait of Lydia Brown by Josephine Crawford depicts one of the leaders of the Arts and Crafts Club of New Orleans. The portrait reveals the painterly style Crawford developed during her training at the club’s art school in the late 1920s, before her Parisian studies under cubist theorist André Lhote changed her style dramatically.

Robert M. Rucker’s Royal Street Antique Shop shows the 333 Royal Street storefront of book publisher Joseph Harmanson, who made his shop into a gallery for printmakers, including Knute Heldner, whose paintings also reveal radical style changes—from cubist cityscapes to romantic views of swamp cabins. Nelson’s collection includes numerous works in a variety of subjects and art styles, making it an excellent source for an analytical study of artistic trends and historical events in Louisiana.

Nelson’s concern for the survival of her collection and its accessibility to future generations led her to THNOC, and to date, the Laura Simon Nelson Collection is the single largest private collection of Louisiana artworks placed in a museum. Nelson’s donation has led to increased awareness of Louisiana art, helping to preserve an audience for many artworks that might otherwise have been overlooked. —JUDITH H. BONNER
OFF-SITE

Looking toward the Tricentennial

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

Frederick Lewis, professor of media arts at Ohio University, received a reproduction of an East Louisiana Railroad Co. advertisement for use in Paul Laurence Dunbar: Beyond the Mask, a documentary on the life and legacy of the noted African American writer.

**East Louisiana Railroad Co. advertisement**

between 1887 and 1891

1974.25.37.57

The New Orleans Advocate requested use of 18 images for publication in its series commemorating the tricentennial of New Orleans’s founding. The series, slated to run daily for 300 days, began in March.

**“Save Newcomb College” pin**

2006

gift of Elizabeth Himel Killeen, 2011.0183.1

Audubon Park Natatorium

c. 1928; photoprint

by Charles L. Franck Photographers

The Charles L. Franck Studio Collection at The Historic New Orleans Collection, 1979.325.577

The Irish Cultural Museum of New Orleans requested two images of Eamon de Valera, a former president of the Irish Republic who visited the United States in 1919 and 1920, for use in the documentary Proclaiming Ireland: Eamon de Valera’s Mission in New Orleans. Produced by the Irish Cultural Museum through funding provided by the Emigrant Support Programme of Ireland, the video premiered at the museum last November to mark the 100th anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising.

**Eamon de Valera outside St. Louis Cathedral**

1920; photoprint from gelatin dry-plate negative

by John Tibule Mendes

gift of Waldemar S. Nelson, 2003.0182.278

Philadelphia’s National Constitution Center has borrowed one manuscript item for use in its current exhibition The Story of We the People, on view through 2017.

**Sanitation report on the Crescent City Live Stock Landing and Slaughter House Co.**

1875; pamphlet

by Gustavus Devron, sanitation inspector

89-098-RL
**ON THE JOB**

Kent Woynowski

**POSITION:** Digital assets manager, on staff since 2009

**ASSIGNMENT:** Improve online access to the William Russell Photographic Collection

THNOC’s William Russell Photographic Collection, a subset of the monumental William Russell Jazz Collection, contains around 6,200 photographs of jazz greats and related memorabilia, compiled over decades by the famed jazz historian. Until now, your primary tool for exploring the collection was a 616-page finding aid—a typed list of more than 3,000 folders and their contents, available on paper and as a PDF. A researcher would have to page through the extensive finding aid—either in the Reading Room of the Williams Research Center or via the PDF available on The Collection’s website—and make a list of photographs for a reference assistant to bring out. The process was unwieldy at best. Thousands of images—not only publicity stills but also candids of musicians taken backstage, at rehearsals, at recording sessions, and at home—deserved to be more accessible, and that’s where I came in. I’m happy to say that today, you can use our online catalog to search the Russell collection’s contents easily and view many objects online. You can already view over 2,600 of the collection’s images, and we’re adding more all the time.

As digital assets manager, I’m in charge of arranging and preserving THNOC’s digital images, video, and audio, ensuring access to this content for both staff and the public. With over 150,000 electronic files in our accessioned collection alone, it’s a daunting task. The finding aid for the Russell photograph collection represents years of fantastic work by THNOC catalogers, who have worked to identify dates, subjects, and other details about many of the images. This information has been available in the paper record but not the online public catalog; my goal was to add these details to the catalog, thereby giving researchers the ability to conduct searches that would be impossible to do in the Reading Room with the paper index. But typing that information into the catalog would have required months of work: not an option. I needed to automate the process, which meant writing scripts, or series of computer commands that manipulate data. With the right scripts, the computer would be able to swiftly organize the finding aid’s words into a spreadsheet, neatly classified and ready to be imported into our electronic catalog.

I needed to consider many factors to anticipate how the script would interact with the text of the finding aid. Take typos, for example: your eye sees the word “Jakcson” and knows it means “Jackson,” but the computer doesn’t. Unlike you, the computer doesn’t know that “ca.” and “circa” are the same. A script needs you to tell it exactly what kinds of information will be sorted, but the Russell collection, like many manuscript collections, is unpredictable. Some photographs have a title, transcription, size, date, and description, while others have only a title and date. Trying to transform these variables into a consistent format that a computer would understand, I felt like I was back in my symbolic logic class in college.
The nerd in me loves the way you can use scripts to make data do what you want, as well as the clean layout of spreadsheets, with everything in its place.

What the paper finding aid does well, though, is reveal patterns in the physical arrangement of the collection—the context of each item. For example: a series of photographs of pianist Clarence Lofton contains one or two “good” shots—entirely in focus, well composed—and several “lesser” outtakes. One outtake shows a blurred arm lifted overhead, and another shows a pair of blurred hands hovering chest-high with curled fingers, as though pouncing on the keyboard. Viewed together, the six images become frames in a short film, one that tells you more about Lofton’s playing style than a single “perfect” photograph ever could. Our database reproduces the relationships among the objects in storage and preserves that context; online, you can either find images individually or browse through the series as a whole, just as you would in the Reading Room.

Running the data through several different formulas, in an untold number of stages, eventually did the trick: I was able to generate 3,300 electronic catalog entries in two weeks of work. I can’t claim the data is perfect, but our catalogers will follow and clean up any mistakes. The results within our online catalog, which anyone can search at www.hnoc.org, were immediate: before my additions, a catalog search for “Bunk Johnson” yielded 48 hits. After: 360 hits. “Baby Dodds” jumped from 26 hits to 152 hits, and “Alcide ‘Slow Drag’ Pavageau” went from 11 results to 80.

I’ve always been attracted to the things people don’t mean to preserve—things you meant to throw away but didn’t, fleeting moments you never thought would be recorded. They often offer the viewer surprise moments of personal connection. A picture of Mahalia Jackson looking cheerful and relaxed in an armchair turned out to have been taken around the corner from where I live, inviting me to feel, for a minute, like her neighbor.

Now that this collection is accessible online, researchers and fans will find it easier to make their own connections and discoveries.

—KENT WOYNOWSKI

**STAFF NEWS**

**New Staff**
Rachel Ford, assistant registrar. Celine Hannon, Guy Seaberg, Gregory Thompson, and Cheryl Zorman, volunteers.

**Changes**
Jennifer Ghabrial is now head registrar. Robert Ticknor is now a reference associate. Erin M. Greenwald has accepted a new position as curator of programs at the New Orleans Museum of Art.

**In the Community**
In early April, Senior Librarian / Rare Books Curator Pamela D. Arceneaux chaired the session “New Orleans: Portal to Commodified Circulation of Prostitution” at the annual meeting of the Organization of American Historians, held in New Orleans.

Reference Associate Robert Ticknor chaired a panel, “Redefining the Sportsman’s Paradise,” at the Louisiana Historical Association’s annual conference, held in Shreveport this past March.
As senior vice president of Neal Auction Co., one of New Orleans’s oldest auction houses still in operation, Katie Hovas understands perhaps better than most the work of The Historic New Orleans Collection. Like The Collection, Neal Auction deals with historic objects and is powered by a team of catalogers who research each item’s condition, materials, vintage, and maker. Like THNOC, the auction house produces publications—catalogs—compiling information about and pictures of the current crop of objects. And, every August, Neal Auction is a lead sponsor of The Collection’s New Orleans Antiques Forum. Though Neal’s objective is to sell its items, while The Collection—as a nonprofit repository, research center, and museum—preserves and showcases them to the public, both Hovas and THNOC share an abiding love of the history and material culture of the South.

“It’s just such a privilege to be involved with you all,” Hovas, a longtime member of THNOC’s Laussat Society, said of Neal Auction’s role in the Antiques Forum. “You’ve definitely helped preserve the material culture of the region. When the forum first started, [president] Neal [Alford] and I were so pleased to have not only a decorative arts event here in New Orleans but one hosted by THNOC, which meant it would be done to their standards—and therefore would be fabulous.”

Hovas’s interest in history and decorative arts goes back to childhood. A native of the Greenville, Mississippi, area of the Mississippi Delta, she was a “bookworm” who devoured all types of titles—particularly ones related to history and the South. Writers and historians such as Shelby Foote, Walker Percy, and Ellen Douglas (pen name of Josephine Haxton) all lived or had lived in the area, giving Hovas an early appreciation for the role of southern culture in American arts and letters. “You were aware of so many prominent authors,” she said.

In addition to literature, the decorative arts also exerted an early pull on Hovas—particularly the blend of horticulture and material culture that comes with flower arranging. She remembers watching her mother arrange cut holly in a Paris corbeille—“There’s one on every dining room sideboard across the rural South,” Hovas said—before Sunday dinner at her grandmother’s house. Her mother and grandmother were chatting throughout, not seeming to look at the corbeille at all, yet the finished arrangement was “this perfect spiral of holly,” Hovas recalled. “I thought, ‘Wow, well I want to do that when I grow up.’” Hovas has done just that, becoming an avid gardener, arranger, and frequent flower-show judge in her spare time.

After graduating from Newcomb College in New Orleans and receiving a JD from the University of Mississippi, Hovas spent a decade working as a trust banker, where she learned all the ins and outs of estate sales and auction houses. From there, “it really was a natural segue” into auction work, she said. Hovas has been at Neal Auction for 20 years, and she still gets a thrill out of the auction cycle, from the behind-the-scenes prep work to the spectacle of the sale. In addition to cataloging all silver that comes through Neal, Hovas is responsible for overseeing the publication of the auction catalog for each sale event. Typically Neal holds an auction every other month, and with every cycle Hovas compiles information from the catalogers on each item, writes any additional copy, edits the catalog for publication, and makes sure it gets sent to the printer in time to be mailed out approximately three weeks in advance of the sale. She also helps curate the look of the showroom and arranges the flowers for the auction preview.

When it comes time for the final event, though, Hovas loves to be a spectator. “It’s great people watching,” she said. If a bidding war erupts, the theater gets even richer: “You’ll see a volley of pointed looks and dramatic flourishes” of the bidding paddle. “I describe it as the perfect combination of shopping, people watching, and gambling. There’s always an element of chance.” —MOLLY REID
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January–March 2017

The Historic New Orleans Collection is honored to recognize and thank the following individuals and organizations for their financial and material donations.

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Tribute gifts are given in memory of or in honor of a loved one.

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**Bookplates**

Donations are used to purchase books that will be marked with a commemorative bookplate.

- Board of directors and staff of The Historic New Orleans Collection in memory of Bruce Baird III—*Expressions of Place: The Contemporary Louisiana Landscape* by John R. Kemp (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2016)
- Board of directors and staff of The Historic New Orleans Collection in memory of Jane Gardner Aprill—*Freedom’s Mirror: Cuba and Haiti in the Age of Revolution* by Ada Ferrer (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014)
- Board of directors and staff of The Historic New Orleans Collection in memory of Maxine Stiegler Lawrence—*Cabannoye: The History, Customs and Folklore of St. James Parish* by Lillian C. Bourgeois (Gretna, LA: Pelican, 1957)
- Board of directors and staff of The Historic New Orleans Collection in memory of Dr. Christina Vella—*New Orleans Women and the Poydras Home: More Durable Than Marble* by Pamela Tyler (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2016)

**NORTH AMERICAN RECIPROCAL MUSEUM PROGRAM**

Members of the Merieult, Mahalia, Jackson, and Laussat Societies and the Bienville Circle receive reciprocal benefits at other leading museums through the North American Reciprocal Museum (NARM) program. These benefits include free member admission, discounts on concert and lecture tickets, and discounts at the shops of participating museums.

**BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP**

All members of The Collection enjoy the following benefits for one full year:

- complimentary admission to all permanent tours and rotating exhibitions
- special invitations to events, trips, receptions, and exhibition previews
- complimentary admission to the Concerts in the Courtyard series
- a 10 percent discount at The Shop at The Collection
- a subscription to The Historic New Orleans Collection Quarterly

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ON THE SCENE

Garden Parties and 19th-Century Dancing

On April 12, authors Mary Louise Mossy Christovich and Roulhac Bunkley Toledano joined The Collection in celebrating the release of Garden Legacy, THNOC’s newest title.

A. Senior Curator Judith H. Bonner and Thomas Bonner Jr.

B. Roulhac Bunkley Toledano, E. Alexandra Stafford, and Mary Louise Mossy Christovich

C. Alva Chase, Pat O’Brien, Ina Fandrich, and Edgar L. “Dooky” Chase III

D. Terry Gay, Kearney Gay, Anna-Louise Gay, Tate Gay, and Mary Louise Mossy Christovich

E. Florence Jumonville, Janet Vasquez, David Vasquez, and Randy Vasquez

On February 8, Russell Lord, Freeman Family Curator of Photographs at the New Orleans Museum of Art, spoke about the life of Clarence John Laughlin in conjunction with the outgoing exhibition Clarence John Laughlin and His Contemporaries: A Picture and a Thousand Words.

F. Associate Curator Jude Solomon, Director of Museum Programs John H. Lawrence, Russell Lord, and Assistant Curator Mallory Taylor

The 2017 Bill Russell Lecture, “A Tribute to John Robichaux,” featured a society orchestra and dance troupe demonstrating the kinds of social dances that filled New Orleans ballrooms in the 19th century. The lecture was sponsored by the Derbes Family Foundation.

I. The New John Robichaux Society Orchestra, led by Wendell Brunious and Tom Hook

J. Louisiane Vintage Dancers

Music lovers gathered for a springtime happy hour at the April 21 installation of Concerts in the Courtyard.

G. The Dana Abbott Band brings its blend of soul and rock to The Collection’s Royal Street courtyard.

H. Jackson Kimbrell, Curator of Decorative Arts Lydia Blackmore, Cynthia Kimbrell, and Karen Algee
Lulu White (1868–1931), one of Storyville’s most notorious madams, presided over one of its most famous brothels, Mahogany Hall, at 235 North Basin Street. The establishment featured only light-complexioned women of color, who were referred to as octoroons in the terminology of the period. Styled the Diamond Queen for her extensive jewelry collection, White was unexcelled in self-promotion. She issued her own souvenir booklets and was pictured in other prostitution guides, although the accuracy of her likeness in these pamphlets has been disputed. Throughout her career, White often crossed paths with the law on charges of assault, attempted murder, and trafficking in underage girls, but her lawyers usually managed to have charges reduced or dropped.

White was born near Selma, Alabama, and first appears in a New Orleans city directory in 1888, listed as residing at a boarding house on South Basin Street. By 1890 she became madam of a brothel at 166 Customhouse Street (approximately 930 Iberville Street today), where she cultivated her reputation as a purveyor of the most beautiful prostitutes in the country. In 1898, the year Storyville officially opened, White moved her business to 235 North Basin, into a newly constructed, lavishly appointed, turreted, four-story mansion containing an elevator, five parlors, and 15 bedrooms. Each bedroom featured a bathroom with hot and cold running water, at a time when many New Orleans residences had only outdoor privies. White’s nephew Spencer Williams immortalized her mansion in his jazz composition “Mahogany Hall Stomp.”

The elaborate, beveled glass transom over the entrance to Mahogany Hall—with
The Famous Lulu White, Queen of the Octoroos
from The Red Book: A Complete Directory of the Tenderloin
New Orleans, 1901
1969.19.3

“Lulu White” and “235” emblazoned in amber-colored glass jewels—was among that structure’s distinguishing features. Recently acquired through funds provided by THNOC’s Laussat Society, the transom—nearly all that remains of Mahogany Hall—is on display in the exhibition Storyville: Madams and Music, on view through December 10 at the Williams Research Center.

Once Storyville closed, in 1917, White’s influence as well as much of her fortune vanished, and she was arrested repeatedly for continuing to operate a brothel in the guise of a hotel, in violation of the ordinance that abolished the red-light district. In 1922, during Prohibition, she was convicted of possessing and selling liquor from her saloon at 241 North Basin Street, a portion of which still stands. For the remainder of her life, she lived at various addresses and around the old district, and in 1929 sold Mahogany Hall and her saloon to Leon Heymann, owner of Krauss Department Store. Awaiting another trial on charges of running a disorderly house, White died ill, broke, and almost forgotten, in 1931. Mahogany Hall was one of the last of the Storyville-era mansions to be demolished, in 1949, several years after the Housing Authority of New Orleans (HANO) cleared most of the area for construction of the Iberville housing project. —PAMELA D. ARCENEAUX

Dinner at Antoine’s manuscript
gift of Antoine’s Restaurant, 2015.0304

Author Frances Parkinson Keyes wrote many bestsellers in the mid-20th century, but the 1948 murder mystery Dinner at Antoine’s was her most successful title. Keyes gained a reputation for doing meticulous background research to create detailed settings. She spent the summer of 1936 in Normandy, France, researching and writing her biography of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux. She maintained a residence near Baton Rouge from December 1943 to September 1945 to get the right feel for the location of The River Road (1945), her family drama set on an old sugar plantation. In 1948 she was already acquainted with Antoine’s Restaurant and proprietor Roy Alciatore; the restaurant had appeared in three of her previous books. The novel revolves around characters first introduced at a dinner party held in the restaurant’s lavish 1840 Room, with its blood-red wallpaper, bronze statuettes, dark marble mantel, and chandelier. The book was third on the Publishers Weekly top-ten list for 1948. Keyes eventually gave the manuscript, written in ten notebooks, to Alciatore as a gift.

In 2015 Alciatore’s grandson Rick Blount, the current proprietor of Antoine’s, spoke with THNOC Executive Director Priscilla Lawrence about ensuring the manuscript’s preservation by donating it to The Collection. The ten notebooks containing Keyes’s handwritten draft—with its numerous revisions, additions, and editorial marks—are now available to researchers who may wish to study her writing process. —MICHAEL M. REDMANN

Denechaud christening set
gift of Dr. Charles F. Genre in memory of Emma Douglass Genre, 2016.0224

This christening set was presented to the six-month-old Maria Alphonsine Emma Denechaud by Charles Morgan...
of five pieces of sterling silver—cup, napkin ring, knife, fork, and spoon—fitted into a custom case. The silver was made by the Whiting Manufacturing Company of New York and sold in New Orleans by E. A. Tyler. Born in Massachusetts and trained as a watchmaker before he moved to New Orleans, Tyler was a successful retailer on Canal Street from 1841 until his death, in 1879. He employed silversmiths and watchmakers to repair jewelry and to make custom pieces, but the majority of his business was in imported silver. Tyler’s store, at 115 Canal Street, was completely redone at the end of 1869, and it was one of the most fashionable places to shop at the time that Morgan purchased the gift for baby Maria. —LYDIA BLACKMORE

The Ideal City
gift of Beckham’s Bookshop Co., 2016.0461.2

Cosimo Noto (ca. 1871–?) was a Sicilian physician who practiced in New Orleans from approximately 1899 to 1906. He was a member of the Orleans Parish Medical Society and contributed to the New Orleans Medical and Surgical Journal. In 1903 Noto published his first and only book, The Ideal City, a utopian novel that uses New Orleans as a stage to show how socialism, medical advances, and hygiene can transform a broken society into a near-perfect one. Due to poor economic conditions, social turmoil, and political corruption, the late 19th century saw a rise in utopian fiction. What sets The Ideal City apart is its strong emphasis on the role of medicine in creating a perfect society. New Orleans at the turn of the last century was a perfect setting for Noto’s medical utopia: a growing population and the lack of a public water and sewerage system led to water- and insect-borne diseases, which contributed to one of the highest death rates in the country. Noto believed that capitalist society had a vested interest in keeping the working classes unhealthy, and that doctors were complicit in keeping society infirm.

Noto starts The Ideal City in this unhealthy environment but then jumps 50 years forward, to New Orleans in 1953, by which time the United States has adopted socialism and physicians have become the foremost consultants for urban planning. The streets of New Orleans have been renamed after socialist and medical luminaries (for instance, Napoleon Avenue has become Pasteur Boulevard) and are now kept clean and quiet. Meals are prepared centrally and hygienically according to each individual’s nutritional needs, and there is such an emphasis on health education that the city requires few physicians. The entirety of Covington has been transformed into a state sanitarium where those with diseases can be treated by specialists. Though The Ideal City is very much fiction, the book serves as a memento of a utopian moment in American history and a portal into bygone theories about how to improve New Orleans. —NINA BOZAK

Washerwoman
2015.0365

Samella Sanders Lewis is well known for her creative and academic contributions to American art. In a career spanning seven decades, she has created publications and exhibition opportunities for African American artists that were previously nonexistent.

on March 23, 1870. Maria was born to Edouard François and Juanita Delphine (née DelFrigo) Denechaud on September 12, 1869. E. F. Denechaud operated the Washington Hotel at the lake end of the Pontchartrain Railroad at the time of his daughter’s birth and grew to become a successful hotelier in the South, with a hotel in Birmingham and several restaurants and hotels in New Orleans. Charles Morgan was a railroad and shipping magnate with business contracts across the region. This gift to the Denechaud’s infant daughter represents a very beneficial partnership for the family. Recently donated by Dr. Charles F. Genre, the christening gift set is made up ...
Born in New Orleans on February 27, 1924, Lewis studied at Dillard University under noted artist Elizabeth Catlett. Lewis earned her bachelor of arts degree in art history from Hampton Institute in 1945 and a master of arts degree from Ohio State University in 1948. In 1951 she became the first African American woman to receive a doctorate in fine arts and art history.

Lewis taught art history at Scripps College in Claremont, California, from 1969 to 1984, and was the college’s first tenured African American professor. She founded Contemporary Crafts, the first African American–owned art publishing house, as well as the International Review of African American Art, a scholarly journal to chronicle the contributions of black artists. She authored and published important monographs on Catlett and sculptor Richmond Barthé, as well as one of the first and most widely used textbooks on African American art history. For her many accomplishments—including her role in helping establish the Museum of African American Art in Los Angeles—Lewis has received numerous awards and distinctions, including the UNICEF Award for the Visual Arts (1995). Locally, Lewis was an inspiration for the establishment of the Stella Jones Gallery, in 1996, and she has continued to serve as a consultant and curator there.

Lewis’s Washerwoman, a gouache painting, comes from the collection of renowned poet Maya Angelou. It was painted during the artist’s graduate studies, probably in 1949 when she was living with relatives in the Bayou Teche region. The painting is typical of Lewis’s portraits of workers in sugarcane fields and of domestic help, and its minimal contours and flat areas of unmodulated color are emblematic of her style’s compositional simplicity. —JUDITH H. BONNER

The Historic New Orleans Collection Quarterly

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The Historic New Orleans Collection is a nonprofit institution dedicated to preserving the distinctive history and culture of New Orleans and the Gulf South. Founded in 1966 through the Kemper and Leila Williams Foundation, The Collection operates as a museum, research center, and publisher in the heart of the French Quarter.

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The 2017 New Orleans Antiques Forum will examine the artistry and influence of those individuals whose hands crafted the decorative arts so cherished in the South. Now in its tenth year, this four-day program is nationally regarded as one of the premier events for antiques collectors and enthusiasts. Join us for presentations by renowned speakers, optional activities—including a guided tour and a jazz brunch—and plenty of fun in historic New Orleans.


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Individual oyster platters
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