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1803
*A Midpoint in
American History*



A View of New Orleans Taken from the Plantation of Marigny by John L. Boqueta de Woiseri, 1803, proclaimed the Louisiana Purchase as harbinger of prosperity for America (1958:42).

INTERVIEWS with historian Clay Jenkinson, whose dramatic interpretation of Thomas Jefferson capped the *Jefferson at 250* lecture series here at the Collection in 1993, appeared frequently on Ken Burns's recent public television documentary about Jefferson. Asked about the Louisiana Purchase, Jenkinson described it as not only the major event of Jefferson's presidency but as the young republic's "making moment." With the 200th anniversary



Le Commerce que les Indiens du Mexique font avec les François au port du Missisipi by François Gerard Jollain, ca. 1720 (1952.3). This promotional engraving distributed by John Law misrepresented the topography of Louisiana but foretold wealth and commerce based on the rich interaction of Europeans, Native Americans, and Africans.

of the Louisiana Purchase looming only a few years ahead, it seems a fit time to begin thinking about the event and its significance. As if by destiny, when the Collection played host this January to a symposium about Bernard DeVoto, Pulitzer Prize-winning historian and Easy Chair columnist for *Harper's*, DeVoto's own scholarship raised the subject again.

Writing about the Louisiana Purchase on the occasion of its sesquicentennial in 1953, DeVoto declared his opinion boldly:

No event in all American history—not the Civil War, nor the Declaration of Independence, nor even the signing of the Constitution—was more important.

DeVoto came close to proving his point in a dozen pages, but he knew there were vast implications that eluded even his able pen: "However it may be put," he lamented near the end of his article, the Louisiana Purchase was "still too momentous to be understood." Can another 50 years add helpful perspective? Perhaps.

Kept in close focus, the diplomatic

history is familiar. After the Revolution, Americans pouring across the Appalachian Mountains into the Ohio River Valley accepted Spanish control of New Orleans as a mere annoyance compared to British expansion from Canada. Complacency was soon dashed by events. Soon after becoming virtual dictator of France, Napoleon pressed to regain title to Louisiana by a secret treaty with Spain. Then, in 1802 the Spanish intendant at New Orleans closed the port to American traders. While Westerners and Federalists clamored for war, Jefferson dispatched James Monroe to France to buy New Orleans. As Monroe arrived in Paris, Napoleon's dream of a Caribbean empire suffered a series of reversals, including the defeat of his expedition against Saint Domingue. Napoleon voiced his changing attitude in private early in 1803: "Damn sugar, damn coffee, damn colonies!"

The denouement of this diplomatic story is well known. Monroe and Robert Livingston approached Maurice Charles Talleyrand about acquiring New Orleans. The foreign minister suggested

that France might sell the entire territory of Louisiana. Livingston promptly reported the offer to Secretary of State James Madison in a letter, partially written in code, now owned by the Collection and exhibited in our Louisiana History Galleries. By April 30 they had agreed to a treaty, ratified that summer. To either side of Livingston's letter are exhibited original documents by which Napoleon's colonial prefect, Pierre Clément Laussat, accepted Louisiana from Spain on November 30, 1803, and conveyed it to United States representatives William C. C. Claiborne and General James Wilkinson on December 20.

The price for doubling the size of the United States was 80 million francs (\$15 million) financed for 20 years by Dutch bankers. The Mississippi and its western tributaries alone drain a million square miles. International negotiations, completed in 1819, refined the boundary between American and Spanish territories, settled the area of the Purchase at 883,072 square miles, and gave up the rest of Florida to the United States.

When the Dutch loans were repaid, overall expenditures for the Louisiana Purchase totaled \$23,527,872.57—about four cents an acre.

The Louisiana Purchase spurred exploration and expansion. Lewis and Clark tracked the vast territory in 1804-1806 and staked a claim to the Pacific Northwest. Their odyssey inspired explorers such as Zebulon Pike, John C. Frémont, and Richard Henry Dana—and artists from George Caleb Bingham, George Catlin, and Alfred Waud to Thomas Hart Benton and Ansel Adams. The original states had been resigned to sharing the Mississippi with a foreign neighbor, but the Louisiana Purchase changed America's future. Spanning the continent became the nation's "Manifest Destiny."

This expansion defined national borders we now take for granted. The Louisiana Purchase was a "making moment." We live our lives in its wake. It reshaped our hemisphere so completely that we cannot easily imagine anything different. For us, the event cannot be a surprise. Perhaps this is why Bernard DeVoto felt it was "still too momentous to be understood."

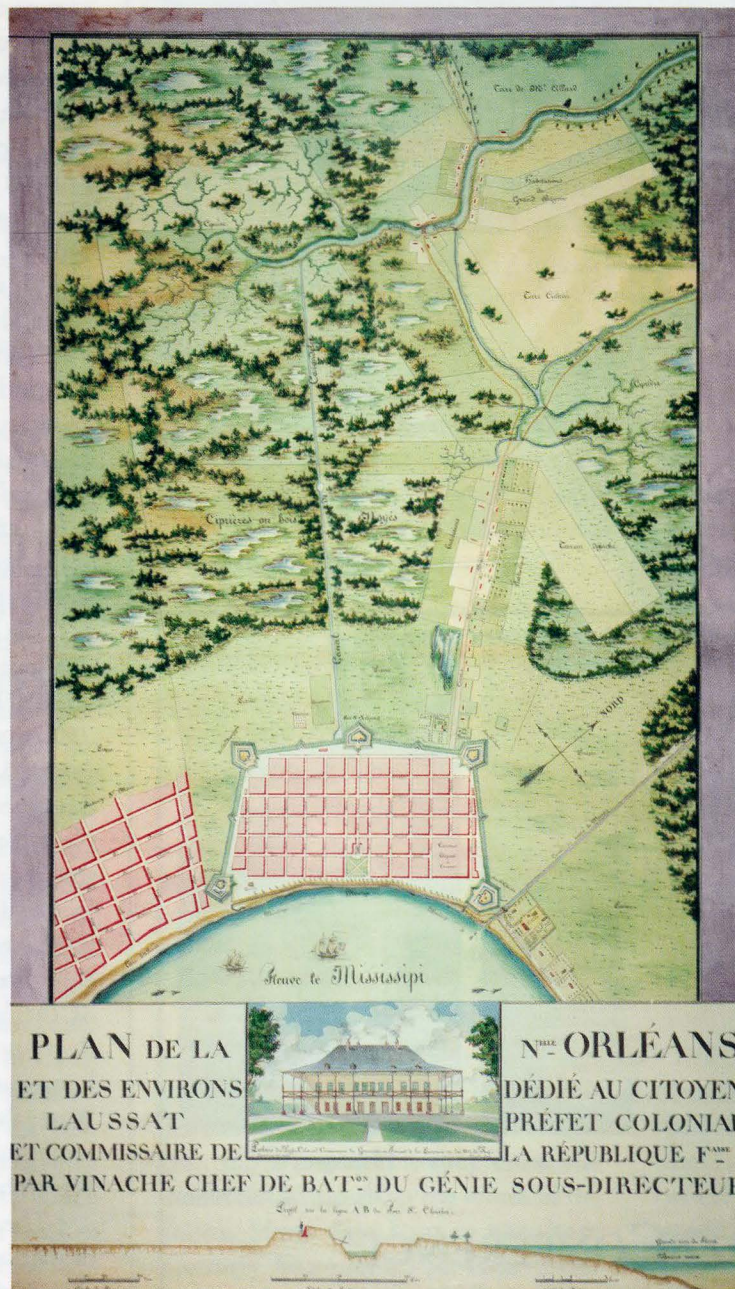
In 1803, the Louisiana Purchase was a surprise. For many Americans it was also an outrage. Jefferson believed that powers delegated by the people were strictly limited by the Constitution. He contemplated an amendment to authorize the transaction, but ratification might take months. Napoleon might change his mind. Federalists might meddle. Great Britain might intrude. The

iron was hot, and no amendment was introduced to Congress. Instead, a cabinet memorandum justified the act in reference to the implied powers "enjoyed

England Repertory complained, "that it may be soon kicked out of the way."

The Louisiana Purchase did more than exacerbate sectional jealousies, it unraveled compromises woven into the Constitution by the Philadelphia convention of 1787. "Republicans, who glory in their regard to the rights of human nature," thundered the *Columbian Centinel and Massachusetts Federalist*, were buying "an immense wilderness for the purpose of cultivating it with the labor of slaves." Louisiana, the *Connecticut Courant* warned, "is to be a field of blood.... The natives of the soil... must be driven out, and a still more numerous race from Africa must be violently brought in to toil and bleed under the lash." Louisiana's inhabitants seemed "totally unaccustomed to Republican institutions" and unlikely "to forget their former allegiance." How could people "bred up in the arms of despotism... suddenly be fitted for self-government and republicanism?" Some Federalists preferred a "more rational policy of keeping [the realm of alligators] an untrodden waste for owls to hoot and wolves to howl in," rather than extending American citizenship to "the half savage *omnium gatherum* of Louisiana."

It seems clear after two centuries that travelers who actually visited New Orleans came closest to seeing the significance of the Louisiana Purchase. Benjamin Henry Latrobe, for example, arrived in 1819 to "a more incessant, loud, rapid & various gabble of tongues... than was ever heard at Babel." He found New Orleans "wholly new



New Orleans in 1803. Joseph Antoine Vinache's Plan de la Nouvelle Orléans et des Environs Dédié au Citoyen Laussat, Préfet Colonial et Commissaire de la République Française was presented to Pierre Clément Laussat, who presided over the transfer of Louisiana from Spain to France to the United States in 1803 (1987.65 i-iii).

by every nation." The expediency of acquiring Louisiana meant "a fatal wound to strict construction" inflicted by the very champions of limited government. "The Constitution has now become such a foot-ball," the *New*

even to one who has traveled much in Europe & America”: a bustling urban place filled with Catholics and Jews as well as Protestants—with Creoles, French, Spanish, Africans, Native Americans, West Indians, and Anglo-Americans. And with Irish, Germans, and countless others soon to arrive.

American public life had been the domain of Protestant, agrarian, English-speaking men. At New Orleans, the Louisiana Purchase began an encounter with diversity that occupied the 19th and 20th centuries. In 2003, when the nation pauses to contemplate the Louisiana Purchase as a mid-point in its history, we



Noon on Sunday at the French Market N. Orleans by Alfred R. Waud (1965.13). Visitors in 19th-century New Orleans were struck by the rich diversity of its people.

can marvel at who we have become—the very antithesis of Jefferson’s yeoman republic—and wonder what the next two centuries might bring.

—Jon Kukla

From The

DIRECTOR

A kernel of corn is not large, but gather enough of them in an ocean-going vessel and they can threaten lives and property. Last December,



56,380 tons of corn captured the headlines. The corn was headed for Japan aboard the *Bright Field*, a 763-foot bulk carrier that lost all power in the middle of the Mississippi. Two minutes later, currents slammed the crippled ship into the Riverwalk, a crowded shopping center. “That river is big and dangerous,” a marine surveyor reminded me a few days later: 6,000 ships and 120,000 barge rigs pass the Riverwalk each year.

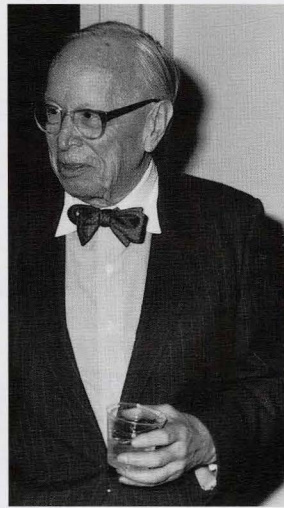
In a fascinating new book, *Rising Tide: The Great Mississippi Flood of 1927 and How it Changed America*, John M. Barry shows what big and dangerous meant 70 years ago. On New Year’s Day, 1927, the river reached flood stage at Cairo, Illinois. In April, when the first government levee broke, the flow was 3 million cubic feet — three times the capacity of the lower Mississippi. The river destroyed its levees, swept away houses and barns, people and animals. Water flooded 27,000 square miles — sometimes as deep as 30 feet — until September.

The 931,159 people who lived on those flooded acres were Americans by virtue of a big and dangerous event nearly two hundred years ago. The river spawned the Louisiana Purchase. Our frail republic doubled in size. By turns, the Purchase brought America survival, civil war, and prosperity. These events, like the Mississippi River itself, inspire awe. “Big and dangerous,” my friend said. “Is now, always was, always will be.”

—Jon Kukla



Douglas Brinkley and Jon Kukla



Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.

DEVOTO CONFERENCE

The Historic New Orleans Collection and the Eisenhower Center for American Studies at the University of New Orleans cosponsored the conference “Devoted to the American West: The Century of Bernard DeVoto, 1897-1997” on January 11 at Le Petit Théâtre du Vieux Carré. DeVoto, who wrote extensively about the American West, was editor of the Lewis and Clark Journals, curator of the Mark Twain Papers at Harvard, and winner of the Pulitzer Prize in history. Pictured, **left**, are conference organizers Douglas Brinkley, director of the Eisenhower Center and associate professor of history at UNO, and Jon Kukla; **at right**, historian Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., one of the speakers at the conference.

JUANITA ELFERT: A LIFETIME COLLECTING

"Juanita, I have a client who wants to buy that Art Nouveau table from you for \$500."

"I know who wants to buy my table. I'll sell it to you for \$500, but not to him. If you want to sell it to him for \$500, that's your business."

Juanita Elfert (1904-1996) had a sixth sense for quality, whether in people or objects. A well-known art and antiques dealer in New Orleans, "Nita" was raised by her paternal grandparents and started buying and selling while still in her teens. She could spot a phony a mile away or find the jewel in the junk pile faster than anyone else. Fortunately for many of us, she was willing to share the knowledge that came from a lifetime of working with valuable objects.

After the government closed Storyville during World War I, several junk and thrift shops opened in the old red-light district. Juanita Elfert would reminisce about those days: "I could walk in there and buy a Vaudechamp portrait for a dollar and sell it to a serious collector for maybe eight dollars." She loved sharing stories from the early years of collecting, especially concerning Louisiana items. "I also knew which dealers on Royal Street wouldn't speak to each other, much less go into each other's shops," she said. "I'd buy from one shop and take it a few doors down the street and sell it for a fast profit to another shop."

October first was, for many decades, moving day in New Orleans. Nita often followed moving vans to see what kind of early Louisiana furniture might be on board. "Sometimes," she said, "I'd pick the best pieces out of the garbage when people moved. What was just an old



Juanita Elfert, photograph by Swinney, ca. 1925 (1996.42.2)

broken-down chair to them was often a late 18th- or early 19th-century Louisiana chair."

Nita made notes and kept records on her finest items. She was quick to learn which woods were used in different regions. She could tell at a glance if a table was made in south Louisiana or if it came from France or Canada.

During the Depression years, old Creole families forced to sell treasured antiques or paintings would seek out Juanita. They knew they could trust her, but, more important, they knew she would not gossip about the source of the items. Many days I sat in her shop, Country Antiques on St. Peter Street between Royal and Chartres Streets, and watched her scrutinize would-be clients who wandered in from the street. It wasn't your ordinary antique shop. Before Juanita took it over in the 1940s, it had been the shop of Dr. Isaac Cline, who helped start many local collections. I'm not certain just what had been disposed of when Juanita took over, but it appeared that nothing had been moved or cleared out for several generations.

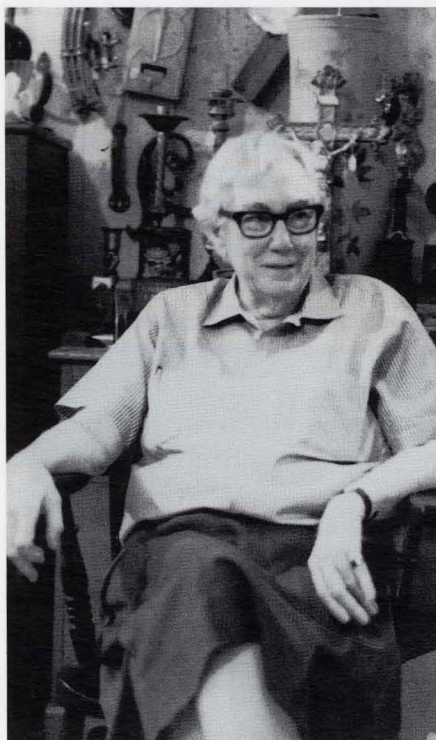
The floor seemed to sag from the weight of furniture and tables piled high. The walls were covered with old tools and anything that could be hung on a nail. If you happened to glance in the door, you would have thought it was a glorified junk shop and that most of it should have been carted off long ago to the city dump. But if you took the time and had the knowledge to ask Juanita if she might have a particularly rare and valuable item necessary for your collection, then you saw the treasures appear — if she felt that you would appreciate what she unearthed. These coveted pieces might range from a 1912 queen of Proteus jeweled diadem to a Ming vase or a rare piece of early American glass or textile. Wonderful items kept out of view were waiting for the knowledgeable collector to come and inquire about them.

Perhaps the best collector of early Louisiana items was Felix Kuntz. He shared his knowledge of furniture with Nita, and together they often went on treasure hunts across the bayou country. "During Prohibition," she would recall, "sometimes Felix and I would buy some good-quality whiskey and drive into these small Louisiana communities. Felix would talk to the local sheriff and persuade him to drive us around and introduce us to the families who lived in the older houses. We knew we couldn't just drive up and offer to buy any old furniture they might want to get rid of. But if the local sheriff went with us and introduced us, and perhaps shared a drink, then the owners were willing to listen to our offers."

From Juanita's summer travels, she acquired non-Louisiana items as well. There was a period in the late 1920s and '30s when Nita was enthralled by theater

people. She spent several summers in Vermont and New Hampshire working around summer stock.

"I'd take any job to be around theater people," she told me. "I didn't care if it was washing dishes. But while I was up there, I'd rent a barn close to some railroad tracks. I'd scout around the region in my car and buy antiques. By the end of the summer season I'd have a barn load of stuff ready to bring back to New Orleans. I'd make a deal



Juanita Elfert in her shop on St. Peter Street, early 1980s. Photograph courtesy George E. Jordan

with a train company to have a train stop by the barn, load it all, and bring it to New Orleans. It was a better deal than you might think, and it gave me a whole new shop of American country antiques."

Juanita loved all the arts. She had wanted to work as a float designer for the Crescent Scenic Studio when she was in her teens, but she didn't get the chance to create carnival designs because it was considered men's work. She was always hanging around the Arts and Crafts Club in the Quarter. Nita showed me a pair of candlesticks in the storage room of her shop one day. After

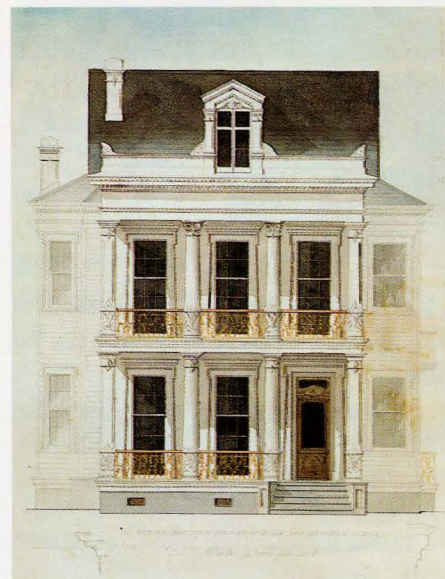
I admired them, she confessed that she had made them herself at the old Arts and Crafts Club. She designed the emerald ring she always wore on her little finger (and, I think, it was made by her, as well.)

The French Quarter in the 1930s, '40s, and '50s was an inexpensive haven for artists and writers. Nita rented apartments in various sections of the Quarter before she bought a house at 1122 Burgundy Street in the lower part of the Quarter in 1941 and renovated it with the help of friends and neighbors. What was considered a slum dwelling at the time was quickly transformed into a beautiful home with a goldfish pond in the patio. She lived there the rest of her life. I teased her once about getting such a bargain when she bought her house. She laughed and said that she had to buy on the lower end of the street — "if I had moved farther up toward Canal, I couldn't have bought at all. That's where all the best warehouses were and I couldn't afford one of those."

She continued buying and selling until the end of her life even though she gave up her St. Peter Street shop in the mid-1980s when many charming shops in the French Quarter were forced out by high rents. Juanita's dusty place of knowledge, with its treasures hiding among the junk, became a clean well-lit T-shirt shop. And I did, in fact, buy the Art Nouveau table for \$500, the one that I mentioned at the beginning of this article. It had been used for a perfume display in the old D. H. Holmes department store, founded by relatives on Juanita's maternal side.

A footnote that reads "information courtesy of Juanita Elfert" often will accompany articles in old magazines about furniture, or about early 19th-century artists like George Washington Sully, or WPA artists who came to Louisiana. Her knowledge was immense, and her generosity just as great. There was never time for her to write a book; instead, she shared a lifetime's knowledge of collecting.

— *George E. Jordan*



Design for the residence of James McConnell, 1887, by Richard Fourchy (1959.201.13)

Footnote to History RICHARD FOURCHY, ARCHITECT

The recent donation of an architect's drawing has brought to light the name of Richard Fourchy, who practiced architecture in New Orleans in the late 19th century. The depiction of the Thibaut residence and grocery at 800 Bourbon Street, corner of St. Ann, is a gift in memory of Juanita Elfert (see preceding article.) Some of Fourchy's drawings and papers are housed in the Collection's Williams Research Center, but information about Fourchy himself is scarce.

Richard Fourchy was born in 1868 or 1869 into a large and prosperous New Orleans family. His father, Paul François Fourchy (1832-1899), was a lawyer and president of the Merchant's Mutual Insurance Company of New Orleans, enabling him to provide a comfortable life for himself, his wife Elizabeth Antoinette, and their 11 children. In 1866 he bought a home at 735 (old 137) Bourbon Street, where Richard would live for the duration of his time in New Orleans.

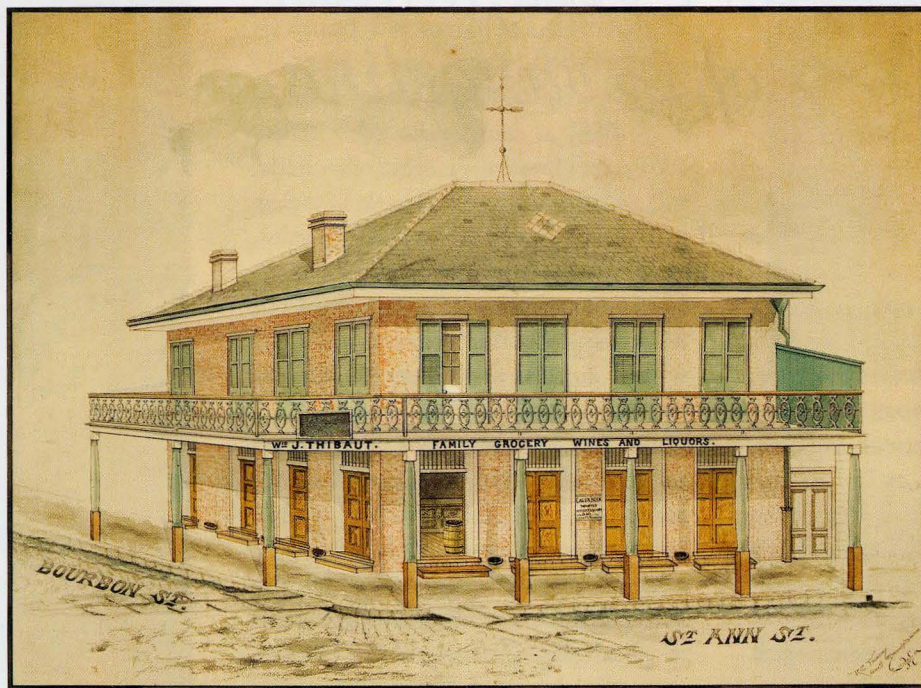
Not surprisingly, much of Richard's work revolved around family. He and his

older brother André formed the firm Fourchy and Fourchy, Civil and Naval Architects, Builders, and Contractors. Though not listed in the city directory until 1892, the business partnership existed in some, perhaps less official, form as early as 1887. Their older brother Paul L. Fourchy, an attorney for their father's insurance company, also advised Richard and André in business and legal matters.

Fourchy's earliest known work, done in December 1884 when he was about 16, is an awkward ink sketch, entitled "Maison de Compagne [sic]," consisting of a simple plan and elevation for a five-room country house with a porch on two sides. This drawing must be among Richard's first attempts at design. In 1885 he appears in the city directory for the first time, listed rather prematurely as an architect. His development as a draftsman, however, proceeded quickly: his boat design for Fourchy and Fourchy in 1887 shows a charming and professionally rendered watercolor vignette of a man in a sailboat.

While André's focus was on naval contracting, Richard's interest remained in domestic architecture. A drawing of the Beugnot-Beaugard House at 1631 Esplanade Avenue, for example, was probably done in 1888 to advertise the January 1889 auction of the house. Tiny pin pricks from the needle of his compass are visible, a reminder of the exacting nature of architectural drawing. The Thibaut drawing (see illustration this page) exhibits light, spidery lines, solid blocks of watercolor, and a slightly awkward sense of perspective, typical of

Fourchy's style. The drawing is probably personal — the Thibaut grocery was a stone's throw away from the Fourchy family home.



Thibaut residence and grocery at St. Ann and Bourbon Streets, ca. 1890 (1996.95), anonymous donation in memory of Juanita Elfert

In about 1890, Fourchy began to design his own projects in styles consistent with then-current architectural fashion, exemplified in his eclectic design of a two-story side-hall residence. Elements of Queen Anne, Italianate, and Shingle styles co-mingle on the facade, creating a whimsical hodgepodge effect typical of 1890s vernacular style. Fourchy's 1895 design for the addition of an Italianate front porch to the Lamarié residence at 1805 Esplanade Avenue is a fluid pencil drawing, showing both the technical details of construction and the aesthetic details of the millwork. The business papers of Fourchy and Fourchy include receipts for lumber and millwork.

While practicing architecture in New Orleans, Richard began work with the construction department of the United States Treasury, which at the time oversaw the construction and development of all federal buildings. In 1890, Richard took a position as foreman with the construction

department. He was laid off at the end of 1891 because of lack of work, but in 1894 he again worked for the department, this time as inspector, U.S. Buildings. He traveled throughout the

Southeast, from the post office in Jacksonville, Florida, to the U.S. customhouse in El Paso, Texas, reporting problems with contractors' work directly to the supervising architect in Washington. His report concerning the U.S. courthouse and post office in Tallahassee contains more than 50 items. He noted improper substitutions of inferior materials, plaster ornamentation executed upside down, and tile laid in an incorrect pattern.

Richard's thoroughness put him in good stead with the department. In 1895 he left New Orleans for Washington to assume a management position with the lengthy title of chief computer supervising architect of the Treasury Department. André, too, left the city in late 1895, moving, at least temporarily, to Quintana, Texas, to build a lighthouse station on the Brazos River. In 1896, the brothers dissolved Fourchy and Fourchy, officially ending Richard Fourchy's career in architecture in New Orleans.

— Kate Holliday

Sources: *Bee*, Sept. 15, 1888; *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Louisiana* (New Orleans, 1892); *Daily Picayune*, Jan. 16, 1899; Fourchy drawings and papers, THNOC; David Gebhard and Deborah Nevins, *200 Years of American Architectural Drawing* (New York, 1977); *Jewell's Crescent City Illustrated* (New Orleans, 1873); *Times-Democrat*, Mar. 8, 1895, Jan. 16, Jan. 22, 1899; *Times-Picayune*, Jan. 12, 1942; U.S. census records, 1870, 1880, 1900.

A Celestial Brightness: 150 Years of *Evangeline*

One hundred and fifty years ago, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow wrote *Evangeline*, creating one of the most enduring mythic figures in American culture. Described in the poem as “a celestial brightness,” the character of *Evangeline* was the embodiment of Longfellow’s spiritual ideal. An inspiration to countless 19th-century readers, the effect of *Evangeline*’s fictional presence can still be felt in Louisiana.

Longfellow set his story against the historical backdrop of the Acadians’ expulsion, in 1755, from what is now Nova Scotia. Although the poet consulted Thomas C. Haliburton’s *Historical and Statistical Account of Nova Scotia*, published in 1829, it was never his intention to document historical events. The deportation served as an appropriate starting point for a paradise-lost motif and gave Longfellow an opportunity to depict numerous American landscapes.

In the poem, Acadia was depicted as a place where “peace seemed to reign upon earth, and the restless heart of the ocean was for a moment consoled.” As a result of war between France and England, the Acadians were forced from this paradise and scattered across the continent. Longfellow’s poem described the tumultuous events of their dispersal, the separation of two young lovers, and *Evangeline*’s desperate quest to find Gabriel.

Having learned that Gabriel had settled in the Attakapas district of

Louisiana, *Evangeline* followed the Mississippi to the Atchafalaya River where she was soon lost in “a maze of sluggish and devious waters.” Longfellow had never been to the region but provided a vivid portrait of the landscape based on William Darby’s 1816 *Geographical Description of Louisiana*, which was available to him at the Harvard University library.

Evangeline discovered that Gabriel, unsettled by grief, had left his new home, and thus the heroine’s lifelong search began as she wandered the American frontier looking for her lost love. As an old woman, she abandoned the search and joined the Sisters of Mercy in Philadelphia, dedicating her life to the service of others. Only then did she find Gabriel — who was at that moment dying. She embraced him and at last “the restless, unsatisfied longing” came to an end, “all the dull, deep pain, and constant anguish of patience.” *Evangeline*’s search — a metaphorical quest for transcendence — made her “more worthy of heaven,” but it was only when she gave up her private pursuit and helped to alleviate the world’s suffering that she was given a glimpse of paradise.

Longfellow, undoubtedly the most prominent American literary figure of his time, was conscious of his role in the creation of a national literature. *Evangeline* provided an ideal opportunity for a poetic description of the country’s varied landscapes, from the luxuriant forests of Louisiana to the deserts of



Evangeline, with shadow of Gabriel, illustration by Howard Chandler Christy

“It was the month of May. Far down
Past the Ohio shore and past the
Into the golden stream of the broad
Floated a cumbrous boat, that w

— from *Evangeline*



Andler Christy for Evangeline, 1905 (88-444-RL)

own the Beautiful River,
mouth of the Wabash,
and swift Mississippi,
was rowed by Acadian boatmen.”

Evangeline by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

the American West. Evangeline’s journeys were especially appealing to Americans, many of whom had themselves been uprooted.

A number of regional writers sought to capitalize on the popularity of the fictional Evangeline. Sidonie de la Houssaye, a schoolteacher from Franklin, wrote *Pouponne et Balthazar*, a novel that explored the same theme, in 1888. A St. Martinville judge, Felix Voorhies, was the author of *Acadian Reminiscences: The True Story of Evangeline* (1905). These two works, both claiming to be retellings of family legends, contributed to the popular notion that Evangeline had been a historical figure.

Voorhies claimed that Longfellow based *Evangeline* on the life of an Acadian woman named Emmeline Labiche. Although there is no evidence to indicate that such a person existed or that the poem was a product of anything but a fertile imagination, Voorhies’s view was widely accepted as truth. Many of the Louisiana landmarks that are associated with Evangeline were established according to Voorhies’s story.

There has been a persistent desire to turn the mythological figure of Evangeline into a real person. Tourism has helped create the image of the beautiful *acadienne* in a setting of Louisiana live oaks. At the same time, Louisiana’s Acadians have sought to link their culture more closely with the Acadian community in Nova Scotia. But perhaps the most important factor in the desire to make Evangeline real has been the compelling story of lost love and the ideals embodied in Evangeline’s celestial brightness.

— Mark Cave

Sources: Carl A. Brasseaux, *In Search of Evangeline: Birth and Evolution of the Evangeline Myth* (Thibodaux, La., 1988); Gale Research, Inc, *Nineteenth-Century Literature Criticism*, vol. 2 (1982), vol. 45 (1994); Andrew Hilen, *The Letters of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow* (Cambridge, 1972); Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, *Evangeline* (Indianapolis, 1905); Rita Ross, *Evangeline: An Acadian Heroine in Elite, Popular and Folk Culture* (Berkeley, 1993); Felix Voorhies, *Acadian Reminiscences with the True Story of Evangeline* (Opelousas, La., 1907).



Dolores Del Rio as Evangeline, 1929 (1993.132)

Evangeline on View at WRC

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s epic poem *Evangeline* first appeared in 1847. An exhibition of books, photographs, paintings, and manuscripts relating to *Evangeline* has opened at the Williams Research Center to commemorate the sesquicentennial of Longfellow’s poem.

Was the faithful *acadienne* a figure drawn from life? Sometimes fictional creations that express poetic truths are interpreted as history — such is the case with the mythic image of Evangeline. The popularity of Longfellow’s work, telling the story of Evangeline’s search for her lover Gabriel, soon gave the poem’s main character a life of her own. Many Americans came to believe that Evangeline was a historical figure, caught up by world events and transplanted from Nova Scotia to Louisiana.

The exhibition, *A Celestial Brightness: 150 Years of Evangeline*, a look at both myth and fact, will remain on view at the research center, 410 Chartres Street, through September 20, 1997.

WILLIAMS RESEARCH CENTER ACQUISITIONS



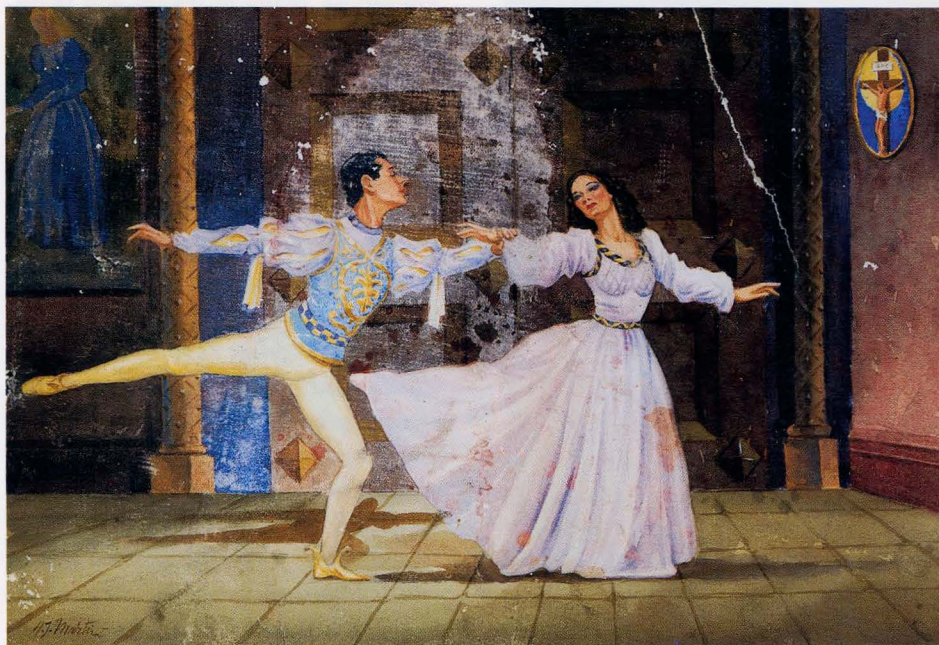
THE HISTORIC NEW ORLEANS COLLECTION encourages research in the Williams Research Center at 410 Chartres Street from 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday (except holidays).

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

MANUSCRIPTS

The performing arts, a vital part of the New Orleans cultural scene, are reflected in two recent donations.

Royes Fernandez (1929-1980), a native of New Orleans, achieved worldwide acclaim in dance. Fernandez began the study of dance with Lelia Haller at age eight and moved to New York when he was 16. Shortly after his move, Fernandez made his 1946 debut with the original Ballet Russe at the Metropolitan Opera House. While a principal dancer with the American Ballet Theatre for many years, he also performed with Australia's Borovansky Ballet, the Ballet Alicia Alonso (now the Cuban National Ballet), and London's Festival Ballet. Known for his technical excellence in both classical and contemporary works, Fernandez partnered many leading ballerinas. In later years, he shared his technique with students of dance while teaching in New York. The papers of Royes Fernandez, approximately 18 linear feet of materials that have been donated by his sister **Jeanne Bruno**, provide insight into the world of dance. Included are news clippings and press releases, programs, cards, posters, photographs, music, and a scrapbook.



Royes Fernandez and Jocelyn Vollmar in Francesca da Rimini (96-92-L)



Medal of the Ballet Alicia Alonso, now the Cuban National Ballet (96-92-L), included in the Royes Fernandez Papers

Mrs. E. B. Ludwig (1935-1992) was a generous patron of the arts. Her son, **E. B. Ludwig, Jr.**, and grandchildren, **E. B. (Trip) Ludwig III** and **Penny Pirri**, have donated nearly 58 linear feet of materials that document Nella Ludwig's efforts to enrich the community with quality performances. She was instrumental in the development of the New Orleans Opera Guild and, under

its auspices, brought the Metropolitan Opera, the Bolshoi Ballet, the American Ballet Theatre, the Royal Ballet, the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, and internationally acclaimed soloists to New Orleans. Her financial support, coupled with her vision of the performing arts in New Orleans, resulted in many opportunities to experience the finest in opera, theater, music, and dance. The close relationships that Nella Ludwig established with performers are evident in her notes and photographs. Her boundless energy and continuous efforts to support the arts are reflected in the files, contract arrangements, and news clippings that she maintained. Also included in the donation are correspondence, press releases, fliers, programs, minutes, periodicals, books, tapes, and a scrapbook about the Metropolitan Opera in New Orleans.

■ Adding copies of Louisiana-related documents from foreign archives is a continuing project. Five reels of microfilm from the National Archives of Cuba

have been added to the 33 reels previously acquired (see *Quarterly*, vol. XIII, no. 3 and vol. XIV, no. 3). The new microfilm is concerned primarily with the years following the Louisiana Purchase and includes information about commerce and migration between New Orleans and Cuba.

■ Additional microfilm comes from the Centre des Archives Diplomatiques de Nantes: 19 reels of microfilm from the archives of the Consul General of France in New Orleans, Diplomatic Correspondence, vol. 138-261, 1818-1918 to complement the previously acquired 22 reels (see *Quarterly*, vol. XIII, no. 2). The new materials include documentation of France's interest in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, Missouri, Texas, and Louisiana.

— M. Theresa LeFevre

CURATORIAL

Through the bequest of **Elmire Villere Mufson Drackett**, the Collection has received three half-length portraits of members of the d'Auberville and Bouligny families: *Monsieur Vincent Guillaume Le Senechal d'Auberville*, *Madame Vincent Guillaume Le Senechal d'Auberville*, and *Mademoiselle Marie Louise Aimee d'Auberville*. D'Auberville was the Intendant Commissary of Louisiana from 1752 to 1757 and the son of the Royal Naval ensign and head of the Company of Vallerenne in New France.

■ *Pitcher Plants*, a 1951 watercolor by Boyd Cruise, comes through the bequest of **Edwin A. Zelnicker, Jr.** *Mexican Flowers in a Banana Stalk*, a watercolor painted by Cruise in 1979, and a 1971 oil painting, *People Eating Watermelon* by Clementine Hunter, are the donations of **Mr. and Mrs. G. Henry Pierson, Jr.**

■ New acquisitions include a significant number of 20th-century Louisiana artworks. **Jerah Johnson** has donated 60 works by George Febres as well as works by other artists. *Midnight Serenade*, a 1996 acrylic on canvas by **Todd W. Williams**, is a gift of the artist. A 1977 oil painting by **James Thomas**, titled



Mme Vincent Guillaume Le Senechal d'Auberville (1996.79.2)



Pitcher Plants by Boyd Cruise (1996.76)

The Saints Going Marching In, is a gift of **Zella Funck** and the artist. **Mr. and Mrs. Eugene C. Daymude** have given a large group of photographs, transparencies, and negatives by Jack Beech portraying jazz musicians and French Quarter artist Noel Rockmore. The Daymude donation includes photographs of paintings by Rockmore and other artists.

■ **Laura Simon Nelson** has given additional paintings from her collection: *Man Sharpening an Axe* by Ellsworth Woodward; *Henderson Point, Mississippi* by William Woodward; *A Louisiana Indian* by James Carter Beard; *Hat Full of Cherries*

by Marie Madeleine Seebold (Molinary); *The Spring Fiesta Art Show* by Clarence Millet; and a 1971 oil portrait of Mrs. Nelson by Laurence Christie Edwardson.

■ The Collection has been enriched by a number of gifts of photographs during the last quarter of the year that provide a record of New Orleans and its environs. From **Robert J. Whann III** come nine views of the Leidenheimer Bakery shortly after its construction about 1905. The building still stands at the corner of Simon Bolivar Avenue and Martin Luther King Boulevard (formerly South Franklin and Melpomene Streets). **Betty L. Moss** has donated 100 photographs of residences, churches, and places of business in the Tremé neighborhood taken during the late 1950s, many showing buildings that have since been destroyed or altered in appearance. The **Arts Council of New Orleans** has given a group of 115 photoprints by Owen Murphy commissioned for the 1988 construction of the Mississippi River bridge. A collection of 31 aerial views, donated anonymously, shows sites of the 1984 Louisiana World Exposition as well as sites of the 1987 visit of Pope John Paul II, specifically the university and uptown areas, downtown and the central business district, the lakefront, and eastern New Orleans. Fifteen early 1940s views of New Orleans and environs are the donation of **Geno Vogt**. A photograph of the U.S. Coast Guard cutter *Davey* comes from the U.S. Coast Guard. A donation from **Coralie Guarino Davis** includes photographs, drawings, and souvenirs pertaining to New Orleans. **Mrs. P. Roussel Norman** has given a ca. 1985 photograph that pictures Mrs. Norman with photographer Clarence John Laughlin.

■ A group of postcards given by the **Charleston Museum** shows French Quarter views, landmark architecture, business and commercial establishments, residences, and Mardi Gras scenes. The **Chicago Historical Society** has donated a group of trade-card advertisements for local business establishments located in the city between 1880 and 1900.

■ **Richard Knight** has provided a lottery ticket from the Louisiana Lottery Company of New Orleans and Kansas City, dated January 8, 1895. From **Thomas B. Favrot** comes a Proteus carnival bulletin dated February 12, 1923. ■ **Captain and Mrs. F. Winter Trapolin** have donated a pair of Old Paris mantel vases that complement their previous donation of an Old Paris centerpiece bowl. The three items once decorated the Counting House when the Trapolin family owned the property that is now the site of the Historic New Orleans Collection.

— *Judith H. Bonner*

LIBRARY

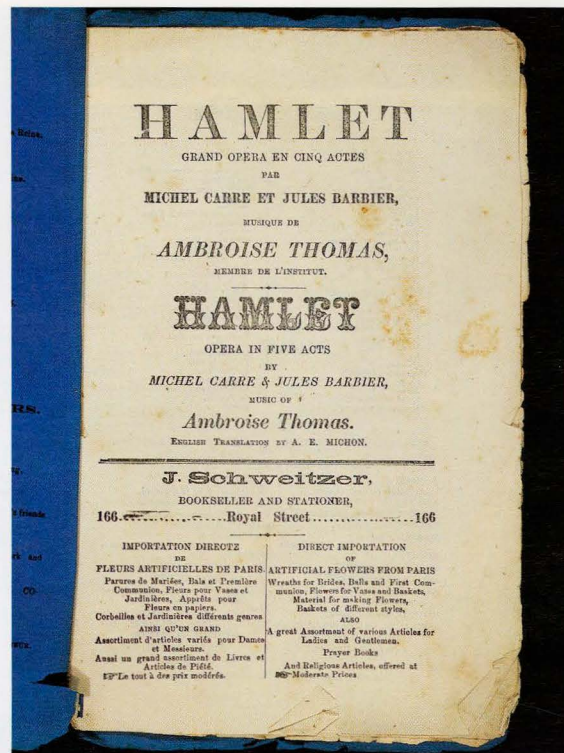
For more than 200 years, opera has been an important part of the New Orleans cultural scene. During the 19th century, New Orleans claimed one of the foremost opera troupes in the nation. A significant number of European operas had their American premieres here as well. Beginning with the 1830s, several local printers issued libretti that provided French and English texts in parallel columns on each page. Recent donations are the libretti of *Faust* by Charles Gounod and *L'Africaine* by Giacomo Meyerbeer, both published by Hummel & Duncan, and *Hamlet* by Ambroise Thomas, publisher unknown. The three libretti were published for New Orleans performances about 1870.

■ The many volunteer fire-fighting companies of the 19th century were the precursors of today's New Orleans Fire Department. Beginning with the founding of Volunteer Company No. 1 in 1829, additional companies composed of citizens of various nationalities were quickly established in all areas of the city. Two issues of the rules and regulations of volunteer company Louisiana No. 10 were recently acquired. Organized in 1836 by men of Spanish ancestry, Louisiana No. 10 was reorganized as a company of German-speaking volunteer fire fighters in 1843. Both issues of the company's rules and regulations, dated

1849 and 1858, were published locally in German and include membership lists.

■ Literary piracy was once a common practice, and the competition to produce the first American edition of popular European works — regardless of legal niceties or royalty payments — was fierce. Although piracy was not as prevalent in New Orleans as in other parts of the country, one short-lived New Orleans firm — in business only during 1854 — offered nothing but pirated reprints. Burnett & Bostwick turned out a succession of travel accounts, histories, and novels. Their edition of *The Loves of the Angels, A Poem* by Irish poet Thomas Moore (1779-1852) was recently acquired. Moore's poem is probably the first local publication of his work in book form, although many of his poems were set to music and issued in New Orleans as sheet music.

■ Dr. Rudolph Matas (1860-1957), internationally recognized physician, surgeon, lecturer, and a founder of the American College of Surgeons, was senior surgeon at Charity Hospital from 1894 to 1928, professor of surgery at



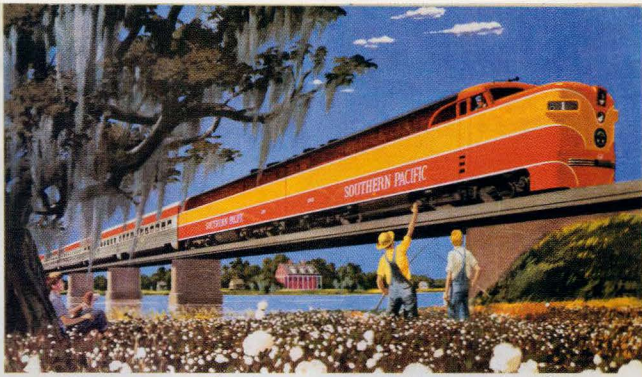
Opera libretto, Hamlet (96-563-RL)

Tulane University from 1895 to 1927, and chief senior surgeon at Touro Infirmary from 1905 to 1935. He was a prolific author of articles about medicine and surgery, and in his later years, wrote many memorial tributes to his colleagues. A collection of his many writings was recently donated by Dr. Edward S. Lindsey.

■ The **Morris Museum of Art** in Augusta, Georgia, has donated three of its recent publications featuring the work of New Orleans artists Marie Seebold, Will Henry Stevens, and Ida Kohlmeyer.

SOLINET OFFERS WORKSHOPS

SOLINET (Southeastern Library Network) is offering "Managing Preservation for Diverse Collections," a series of three coordinated workshops. First in the series is "The Nature of Library and Archival Materials" scheduled for July 15-19 at SOLINET in Atlanta. The second workshop, "Environmental Hazards to Preservation," will be held at the Historic New Orleans Collection October 14-18. The series concludes with "Collection Management Issues in Preservation" in March 1998 at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee. The workshops are designed for staff with responsibility for preservation at public and academic libraries, archives, and museums. Between sessions, participants will work on projects at their home institutions. To request a brochure or registration form, call Ginger Edmondson at 800-999-8558 or 404-892-0943, extension 285.



Southern Pacific proudly presents

THE NEW **SUNSET LIMITED** NEW ORLEANS-LOS ANGELES

"THE STREAMLINED TRAIN WITH THE SOUTHERN ACCENT"

(96-575-RL)

■ A promotional booklet issued by Southern Pacific introduced the new "Sunset Limited" railway service carrying passengers from New Orleans to Los Angeles in 42 hours. The 1952 booklet bragged of "The Streamlined Train With the Southern Accent" and its special amenities such as the French Quarter Lounge, the Audubon Dining Room, and the Pride of Texas Coffee Shop.

— Pamela D. Arceneaux



THE HISTORIC NEW ORLEANS COLLECTION QUARTERLY

Editors:

Patricia Brady
Louise C. Hoffman

Head of Photography:

Jan White Brantley

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Estate of Edwin A. Zelnicker, Jr.

STAFF



Patricia Brady

Dr. Patricia Brady was elected vice-president of the Louisiana Historical Association at the LHA annual meeting in March; she will become president in 1998.

IN THE COMMUNITY



John Magill

John Magill was interviewed about the current exhibition, *A Mystical Bal Masqué*, by WWL, WBYU, WWNO, and the Baton Rouge *Morning Advocate*. He presented a talk, "The Vieux Carré, Circa 1930," at the Tennessee Williams/New Orleans Literary Festival, as well as at the Festival's Sundays in the Bookshop, the Southern Louisiana Chapter of the Romance Writers of America, the Vieux Carré Property Owners Association, and Le Petit Salon. Steve Sweet designed the electronic matrix board animations featured at Super Bowl XXXI. Dr. Patricia Brady served as program chair of the Tennessee Williams/New Orleans Literary Festival and as moderator of a panel. Louise Hoffman also moderated a panel at the Festival. WDSU and television stations in Madison, Wisconsin, and Boston interviewed Dr. Jon Kukla when the Super Bowl was held in New Orleans; Dr. Kukla spoke to the Chalmette Chapter of the United States Daughters of 1812 and was interviewed on the WYES documentary "Holy New Orleans." Judith H. Bonner spoke to the

Louisiana Pediatric Post-Graduate Education Council and was interviewed on WBYU. Mark Cave spoke to the Circle Book Club and Dr. Alfred E. Lemmon, to the Music Library Association.

MEETINGS

Pamela Arceneaux, Eileen Thornton, and Ann Middleton, Louisiana Library Association conference; Jon Kukla, American Historical Association and History News Service; Louise Hoffman, Publishers Association of the South.

ARTICLES PUBLISHED

Judith Bonner, *Southern Quarterly*; John Magill, *New Orleans Magazine* and *Preservation in Print*.

AT THE COLLECTION



Jon Kukla and Japan's Ambassador to the United States Kunihiko Saito.

Chantel Guidry (B.A., UNO) has been named manuscripts assistant. Byron Leger has accepted a position in the systems department at the Sheraton Hotel. Interns at the Collection are Ann Tenold, UNO, and from Loyola, Rachel Lyons, Dorimer Siviero, and Debbie Reynolds.

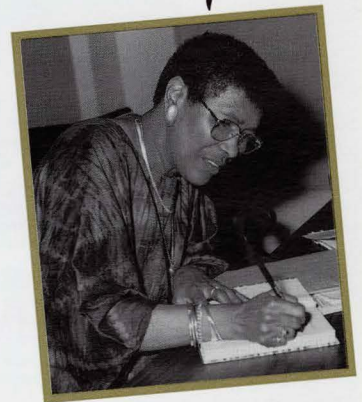


Chantel Guidry



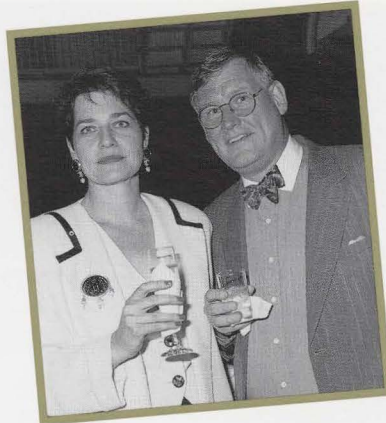
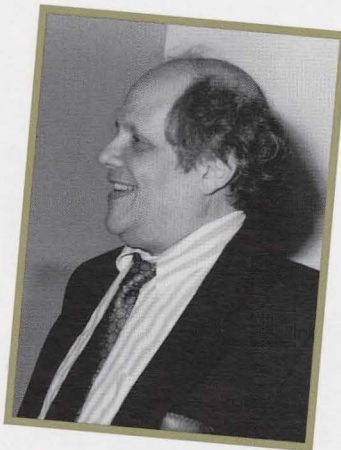
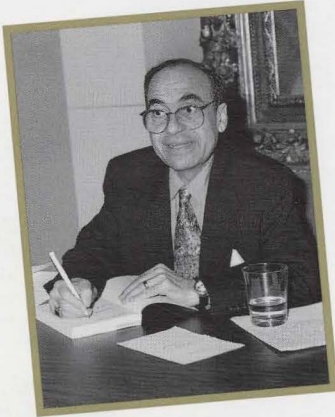
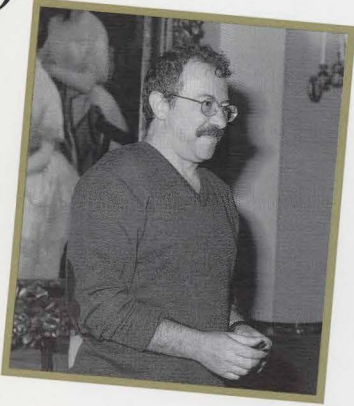
Interns Ann Tenold, Debbie Reynolds, Dorimer Siviero, and Rachel Lyons

Inspired



The eleventh annual Tennessee Williams/New Orleans Literary Festival was held March 20-23 at Le Petit Théâtre du Vieux Carré. The Counting House of the Historic New Orleans Collection served as the location for the Master Classes that traditionally launch the four-day celebration of literature, theater, and music. Leading the discussions about the art and craft of writing were Jean Redmann and Laura Joh Rowland, "The Mysterious Lure of the Mystery;" Gloria

by Tennessee



Wade-Gayles, "Having Your Say: The Personal Essay;" Leon Forrest, "Mapping Your Fictional Universe;" Jonathan Dolger, "The Author/Agent Relationship;" Wendy Wolf, "On the Bridge to the 21st Century: Survival Strategies in Contemporary Publishing;" Andrei Codrescu, "Writing About Your Family/Yourself;" and Kaye Gibbons, "Connecting All the Dots." On Friday evening, the Collection held a reception for Festival participants.

Top row, left to right: Gloria Wade-Gayles; Andrei Codrescu; Kaye Gibbons. Middle row: Wendy Wolf; Leon Forrest; Jonathan Dolger. Bottom row: Mary Louise Christovich; Peggy Scott Laborde and Alec Baldwin; Kate and Jon Kukla

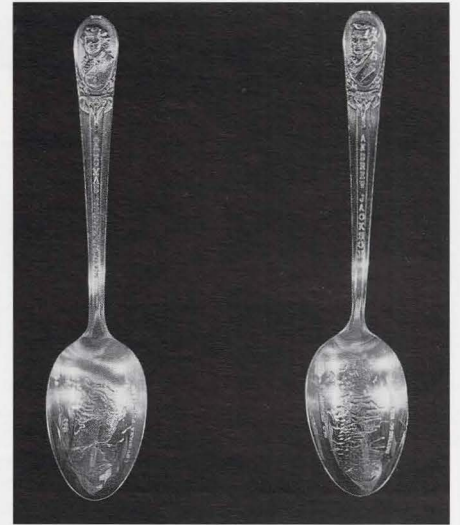
THE SHOP

An assortment of distinctive gifts — some rarities and curiosities — are available at the museum shop.

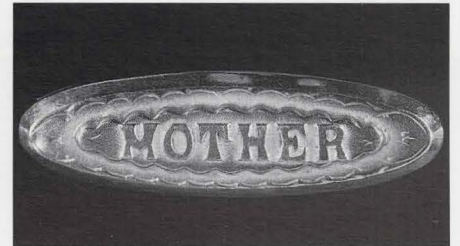
Pictured at right is a Rex ducal medal from 1902, made of foil-backed paste stones and designed in France for the School of Design. More than a piece of costume jewelry, the medal is an intimate piece of New Orleans carnival history.



Two souvenir spoons from a set of presidential spoons. Shown here are Thomas Jefferson, with a map of the Louisiana Purchase etched in the spoon's bowl, and Andrew Jackson, with a depiction of the Battle of New Orleans, both "scenes" referring to major events in the presidents' careers. The spoons were made by the William Rogers Company; on the reverse of each are two flags and 13 stars.



Gold Victorian bar pin with "Mother" spelled in relief, from the Shop's antique jewelry collection.



Call the Shop at 504-598-7147 for more information.



STILL MYSTICAL

Currently on view in the Williams Gallery is the exhibition *A Mystical Bal Masqué: 75 Years of the Mystic Club*, which continues through August 16, 1997. Included among the items on display is a photograph of the 1937 Mystic Club ball by John N. Teunisson (1993.72.8).



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