

# The Historic New Orleans Collection Quarterly

VOLUME XLIII  
NUMBER 2

SPRING 2026



**BREAKING GROUND:** Buried Treasures in the French Quarter

HNOC presents three days of  
**HOT MUSIC**, **COOL INDOOR SPACES**,  
*and* **LEGENDARY EXPERIENCES**  
*during*  
**French Quarter Fest 2026**

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15 | 6–7:30 P.M.**

Featuring legendary percussionist Bill Summers alongside historian and producer Ned Sublette, the 27th annual **Bill Russell Lecture** will explore the deep musical and cultural connections between Cuba and New Orleans.

**\$10 admission; FREE for HNOC members.**

**Registration required at [HNOC.org](http://HNOC.org).**

**Williams Research Center, 410 Chartres Street**

**THURSDAY, APRIL 16 | 2–3:30 P.M.**

Dive into sound, spirit, and ceremony with a **FREE screening** of Ned Sublette's ***Tierra Sagrada***, a documentary film following a powerful Afro-Cuban rhythmic journey in Havana. Featuring a post-film Q&A with filmmaker Ned Sublette.

**FREE and open to the public. No registration required.**

**Williams Research Center, 410 Chartres Street**

**SATURDAY, APRIL 18**

**Happy 100th birthday, Cosimo Matassa**—engineer, producer, and architect of the New Orleans sound! *American Routes* host Nick Spitzer will lead special guests in conversation as they explore Matassa's legacy, followed by a birthday party featuring the Mahogany Blue Baby Dolls and DJ Buy It Now spinning J&M Studio hits. There will be cake!

**Panel: 1–2:30 p.m., Williams Research Center, 410 Chartres Street**

**Party: 2:30–4 p.m., Helis Hall, 520 Royal Street**

**FREE and open to the public. No registration required.**

**GENERAL HOURS**

**520 Royal Street**

**Exhibitions, the Shop at the Collection, and the Café at the Collection\***

Tuesday–Saturday, 9:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

Sunday, 10:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

\*Café closes at 3:30 p.m. Wednesday–Saturday and 3 p.m. Tuesday and Sunday.

**410 Chartres Street**

**Williams Research Center**

Tuesday–Saturday, 9:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

Appointments are encouraged. Please email [reference@hnoc.org](mailto:reference@hnoc.org) or call

(504) 523-4662.

**EXHIBITIONS**

**CURRENT**

***The Trail They Blazed***

Through June 7, 2026

520 Royal Street

Lead sponsorship provided by the Edgar “Dooky” Jr. and Leah Chase Family Foundation

Media sponsorship provided by WBOK 1230 AM

***New Orleans Musicians in Art: Selections from the Permanent Collection***

Through May 16, 2027

520 Royal Street

With support from the Ruth U. Fertel Foundation

Media sponsorship provided by WWOZ

***American Revolution: The Augmented Exhibition***

March 20, 2026–January 17, 2027

520 Royal Street

Designed and produced by Histoverly

Media sponsorship provided by WVUE-FOX 8

Promotional support provided by the Louisiana

America 250 Commission and by New Orleans and Company

**CONTINUING**

***A Vanishing Bounty: Louisiana's Coastal Environment and Culture***

520 Royal Street

Lead sponsorship provided by Entergy

Media sponsorship provided by WVUE-FOX 8

**French Quarter Galleries**

520 Royal Street

***French Quarter Life: People and Places in the Vieux Carré***

520 Royal Street

**OFF-SITE**

***The Trail They Blazed (traveling)***

Loyola University New Orleans

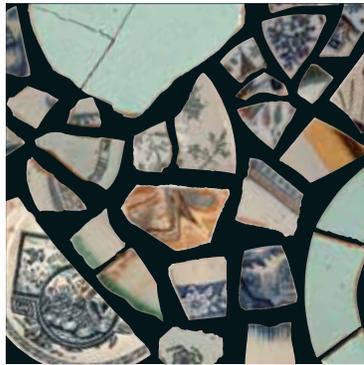
Through April 19, 2026

Monroe Library

6363 St. Charles Avenue

This traveling exhibition is part of HNOC's NOLA Resistance initiative, dedicated to preserving and sharing stories from the New Orleans Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s through 1970s. This project is supported through a grant from the African American Civil Rights grant program as administered by the National Park Service, Department of the Interior. It is available at no charge to host sites in the community.

For a full calendar of events, visit [my.hnoc.org](http://my.hnoc.org).



## ON THE COVER

### Archaeological finds from 714 Toulouse Street courtyard

2025.0028.1

For more detail on each piece, please see the inside back cover.



## FROM THE PRESIDENT

Our present is informed by the countless layers of history making up our past, and nowhere is that more evident than the ground beneath us. In the French Quarter, the sidewalks and pavement conceal untold objects buried in sediment, some of them dating from before the city's founding. Whether an old bottle, a pottery shard, or a Native American arrowhead, buried objects from the past illuminate bygone eras in ways that words alone cannot.

As discussed in this issue of the *Quarterly*, we have taken great care to incorporate on-site archaeology into our renovation plans for the 533 Royal Street complex. A monthslong archaeological dig beneath one of the courtyards has yielded hundreds of objects from nearly all stages of the site's development, shedding light on the lives of the diverse people who lived and worked there.

One wonders what incredible objects lie beneath the stretch of Tulane Avenue that served as New Orleans's Chinatown a century ago. In this issue, Winston Ho of our visitor services team shares the underdiscussed history of Cantonese-speaking laborers and merchants in New Orleans.

Where artifacts fall short, technology can help bridge the gap between past and present. This year we are excited to partner once again with the French traveling exhibition firm Histoverly to present *American Revolution: The Augmented Exhibition*, an immersive experience that brings the founding of our nation to life through augmented-reality devices. Visitors will travel back in time and across the United States in its infancy, witnessing milestones of the American Revolution.

At the Historic New Orleans Collection, we'll always remember the sometimes unglamorous history beneath our feet while finding new and innovative ways to bring the past into the present. —DANIEL HAMMER

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A

## EXHIBITION

### ***American Revolution: The Augmented Exhibition***

March 20, 2026–January 17, 2027

520 Royal Street

Free

*Designed and produced by Histoverly*

*Media sponsorship provided by  
WVUE-FOX 8*

*Promotional support provided by the  
Louisiana America 250 Commission and by  
New Orleans and Company*

# Independence Won

**An interactive exhibition immerses visitors in the events of the American Revolution, including Louisiana's role in the conflict.**

Lexington and Concord, Valley Forge and Yorktown: These are the places that most Americans associate with the Revolutionary War. Pensacola is seldom mentioned in that history—and yet the defeat of British forces at Pensacola had a significant impact upon the course of the war and the diplomacy that followed. The battle at Pensacola is among the 14 immersive experiences in *American Revolution: The Augmented Exhibition*. The new exhibition was developed to commemorate the 250th anniversary of American independence by Histoverly, the French technology firm that created *Notre-Dame de Paris: The Augmented Exhibition*, which HNOG hosted in 2022.

Each of the exhibition's chapters focuses on a particular aspect of the American Revolution, from colonial society to the Declaration of Independence, from famous battles to diplomatic relations and the creation of our country's Constitution. These experiences come to life through visitors' use of HistoPads—handheld devices that interact with gallery elements to display immersive 3D recreations of historic places, people, and events, as well as stories told from the perspectives of people who experienced these events firsthand.

The Pensacola chapter may be of particular interest to local visitors. Its focus is Bernardo de Gálvez, the Spanish colonial governor of Louisiana, and the part that he and his diverse army played in the American Revolution as they faced down British troops in what was then British West Florida. The inclusion of this little-known story will give visitors a more thorough understanding of the reach of the American Revolutionary War and its effects on varied peoples, even far from the Atlantic seaboard.

Gálvez had arrived in the Spanish colonial capital of New Orleans in December of 1776 to take command of the army's Fixed Louisiana Infantry Regiment. He almost immediately assumed the role of acting governor of the Louisiana colony on January 1, 1777. Gálvez was

A. A still image from the exhibition depicts George Washington preparing to cross the Delaware River in 1776. Image courtesy of Histoverly.

then 30 years old, an inexperienced administrator, and he would soon be faced with military and diplomatic problems that would have challenged any veteran governor or commander.

The young Gálvez owed his position in part to his family connections; his uncle José de Gálvez was the powerful minister of the Indies, overseeing Spain's American dominions, while his father Matias de Gálvez served as the viceroy of New Spain, or Mexico. Yet Bernardo had excelled in his own military career, having studied tactics and doctrine in France and serving with distinction in the prestigious Regiment of Seville in Spain, after which he was promoted to the rank of colonel and assigned to New Orleans.

It was not an enviable position. New Orleans was far from other Spanish colonial outposts such as Havana or Mexico City, and there was no large military force immediately available to keep order, so a citizen militia had to be carefully cultivated. Nor was Spain the only European colonial power in the region. Across Lake Pontchartrain from New Orleans was British West Florida, extending from Natchez and Baton Rouge east to Pensacola. There were British forts on the Mississippi from which attacks could be launched downriver. Only a token Spanish force guarded New Orleans. To complicate matters further, Great Britain's Atlantic seaboard colonies had declared their independence the previous summer, thus embroiling much of the continent in open warfare.

Spain was officially neutral toward both Great Britain and the American revolutionaries at the time of Gálvez's arrival, but he nevertheless began quietly planning for the possibility of war with the British by assembling an intelligence network with contacts in West Florida and the newly declared United States. Gálvez's predecessor, Governor Luis de Unzaga, had covertly aided the American cause by supplying gunpowder to patriot forces operating in the Trans-Appalachian West. Gálvez continued Unzaga's policies and went further by accepting American deposits at New Orleans, even opening the port to American privateers. He ordered the seizure of British smuggling craft in Louisiana waters. He also aided the Irish-born merchant Oliver Pollock, who acted as an American agent in New Orleans, in securing additional military supplies such as medicines and muskets, as well as Spanish dollars to help sustain the American war effort.

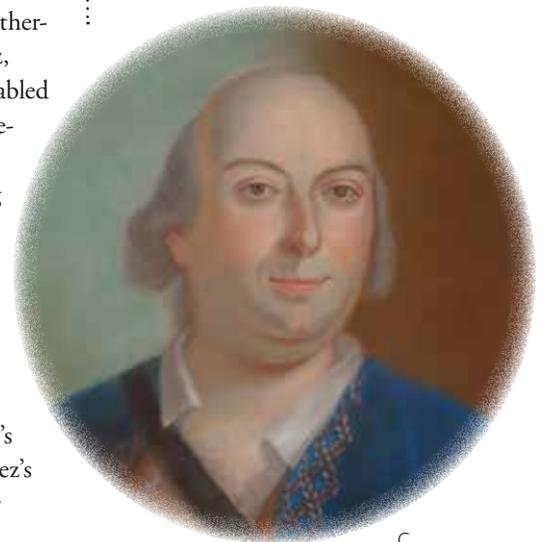
Gálvez set about improving New Orleans's defenses, raising additional troops, and gathering intelligence about the three British forts on the lower Mississippi River—at Natchez, Manchac, and Baton Rouge—that could threaten New Orleans. These preparations enabled Gálvez to take the initiative when Spain entered the war in the summer of 1779. He prepared to march upriver with a group of soldiers that included recruits from Mexico and the Canary Islands, free men of color, and American volunteers. They were joined along the way by 160 Indigenous volunteers, including Houmas, Choctaws, and Alabamas.

They reached their first objective, Fort Bute on Bayou Manchac near the Mississippi River, on September 2. Few men would have known the nature of their mission, and Gálvez chose this moment to announce that war had broken out between Spain and Britain, and that together they would attack the British posts on the Mississippi. His men responded with cheers and stormed the rudimentary log fort. Many of the British soldiers had evacuated upon seeing Gálvez's approach; of the remaining 21 men, Gálvez's men killed one and captured the remainder. This small victory greatly encouraged Gálvez's men, among them French-speaking Acadians who had no love for the British after their expulsion from Canada.



**B. Patent of nobility awarded to Bernardo de Gálvez by Carlos III of Spain (detail)**  
1783; ink and watercolor on vellum  
74-78-L.1

**C. Don Bernardo de Gálvez (detail)**  
between 1780 and 1786; pastel on parchment  
2000.80.1

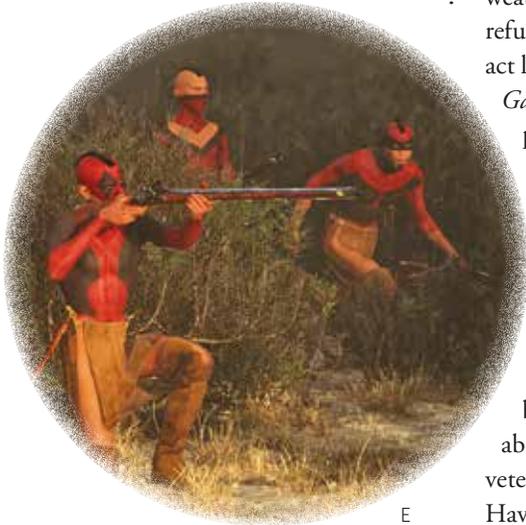


C



D. A still image from the exhibition shows four Louisiana militiamen during the 1781 siege of Pensacola. Image courtesy of Histoverly.

E. Choctaw, Chickasaw, and Creek warriors allied with the British were a formidable threat to Gálvez's men at Pensacola. Image courtesy of Histoverly.



Their next objective was the fort at Baton Rouge, which was significantly larger and held more than 400 troops, augmented by an additional armed force of civilians and enslaved men. The fort's cannons prevented a direct assault, so Gálvez resorted to misdirection, ordering a detachment to a nearby grove to noisily cut down trees and construct an earthwork during the night. While the British focused their fire on this distraction, Gálvez's remaining men hastily dug trenches on the opposite side of the fort to shield their artillery guns. When daylight came, British gunners saw their mistake and tried to redirect their fire to the new threat. However, Gálvez's artillery was too well protected, and after a few hours of mounting damage, the fort raised a flag of surrender. Thus did Gálvez and his men end British control of the lower Mississippi in September 1779 and retake the western half of British West Florida for Spain.

Having ensured the safety of New Orleans from an immediate threat, Gálvez set about planning his campaigns against the remaining British strongholds in Mobile and Pensacola. He spent the final months of 1779 gathering the necessary troops and supplies. Captured British boats were refitted as troop transports, and gunpowder and shot were shipped from Havana. In late January 1780, the expedition against Mobile left New Orleans. The troops included just over 750 men, crammed into 13 vessels. This fleet arrived at Mobile Bay in early February to begin operations against Fort Charlotte. The British commander of the fort, Elias Durnford, could not hope to prevail with his small garrison of fewer than 300 men. Though he turned down one demand for his surrender in early March, Durnford was compelled by Gálvez's siege guns to seek terms on March 13, 1780. Fort Charlotte had fallen, and only Pensacola remained.

Pensacola was the capital of British West Florida and the most difficult and well-defended objective that Gálvez faced. His counterpart, British general John Campbell, commanded a force of nearly 1,100 men garrisoning three forts and the town. Allied with Campbell's troops was a Native contingent of about 500 warriors.

Due to logistical problems and disagreements with military officials in Havana, Gálvez was forced to delay his Pensacola campaign to the following year, 1781. In March, as the Spanish fleet approached Pensacola Bay, Gálvez faced his first challenge. Citing fickle weather and insufficient knowledge about navigational hazards, Spanish naval officers refused to enter the bay, especially while under fire from British shore batteries. In an act later memorialized in his coat of arms, a frustrated Gálvez boarded the small brig *Gálveztown*, which he'd brought from Louisiana, hoisted a broad pennant signifying the presence of a flag officer, and entered the bay under heavy fire without suffering any significant damage. The army troops aboard the Spanish fleet cheered, while the naval officers decided that perhaps they had better follow Gálvez's example. His coat of arms includes a small vignette of Gálvez aboard his ship standing beneath a banner that reads "Yo Solo," or "I Alone."

The Pensacola chapter in *American Revolution: The Augmented Exhibition* provides visitors with an overview of Gálvez's entire campaign, from his arrival and initial landing of troops through the establishment of his fortified camp and multiple artillery batteries to confront the formidable British fortifications. Visitors will see and learn more about Gálvez's troops, which, like those who fought at Baton Rouge, were very diverse: veteran Spanish army regiments, white and free Black militia from New Orleans and Havana, Francophone Acadians, French volunteers, and Native allies including Houmas,



F

F. Under heavy bombardment, Spanish militia artillery troops fire upon British forts from sheltered batteries. Image courtesy of Histoverly.

G. Gálvez's troops can be seen within the fortified Spanish army encampment. Image courtesy of Histoverly.

H. Spanish officers observe the climactic moment when their artillery explodes a British fort's powder magazine. Image courtesy of Histoverly.

Alabamas, and Six Towns Choctaws. Animated 3D renderings will take visitors through the trenches to the Spanish forward batteries as British cannonballs whiz overhead.

The chapter concludes with the climax of Gálvez's campaign, on the morning of May 8, 1781, when a Spanish artillery shell struck the powder magazine of the outermost enemy fortification. Following the spectacular and devastating explosion, Gálvez ordered his troops to advance. British defenses soon collapsed. Visitors will see General Campbell raise a white flag over Fort George, signaling the end of hostilities, and they will learn more about the long-term significance of Gálvez's victory.

The loss of Pensacola and West Florida signaled a dramatic reversal of the dominance Great Britain had established in North America in 1763. The British decision to end military operations in North America was further hastened by another disastrous defeat, at Yorktown, which—along with Pensacola—provided further incentive for their eventual diplomatic recognition of an independent United States. —JASON WIESE



G

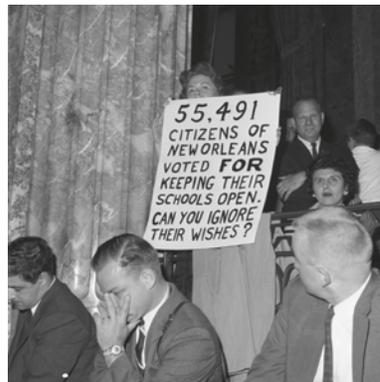


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OFF-SITE

# Signs of the Times

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



The **Norman Rockwell Museum** licensed 38 images for use in the documentary *The Problem We All Live With: The Story of an Iconic Illustration*. A film screening and panel discussion were held at HNOC on November 15.

**Pro-segregation protesters outside William Frantz Elementary**

1960; gelatin silver print donated by NOLA Media Group, original materials © *The Times-Picayune*, 2015.0437.7

**Woman holding sign in favor of desegregation**

1960; photographic negative by Jules L. Cahn  
Jules Cahn Collection at the Historic New Orleans Collection, 1996.123.1.107.6

**Christmas card from Bob Wessner to Leona Tate**

1960  
gift of Leona Tate, MSS 799.118



The **Louisiana State Museum** borrowed two items for the exhibition *Gálvez and Louisiana in the American Revolution*, on view through May 15, 2027.

**Francisco Domingo Joseph Bouligny**

between 1770 and 1779; pastel on paper given in memory of Alma Baldwin Denègre by her children Nenette Denègre Reed, Capt. Thomas Bayne Denègre, USN, and George Denègre, 1980.255.1



The **John L. Loeb Jr. Database of Early American Jewish Portraits** requested use of two images of Louis Moreau Gottschalk for his biographical entry.

**Louis Moreau Gottschalk**  
between 1867 and 1869; albumen print by Gaspard-Félix Tournachon  
2018.0069.2



**Tipitina's Record Club** licensed nine photographs for use in the booklet insert of the Wild Magnolias' album *Outtakes + Live 1973-1974*.

**Bo Dollis of the Wild Magnolias**

1972; 35mm negative photograph by Michael P. Smith © Historic New Orleans Collection, 2007.0103.1.167.1

**Earl Turbinton with Willie Tee**

1975; gelatin silver print photograph by Michael P. Smith © Historic New Orleans Collection, 2007.0103.4.667

# East Meets West

Over the course of a century, two iterations of Chinatown in New Orleans shaped the city's landscape and culture.

Though largely forgotten today, New Orleans had its own Chinatown at the turn of the 20th century. For five decades, Chinatown consisted of shops, grocery stores, and restaurants on both sides of the 1100 block of Tulane Avenue between South Rampart Street and South Basin Street (modern Elk Place), next to what is now the Rampart-Loyola streetcar line and across from the current main branch of the New Orleans Public Library. Chinese American homes and other institutions could be found in the surrounding neighborhood. Chinatown was an important commercial and community center not just for local Chinese Americans, but for all Chinese travelers and residents across the Gulf Coast region.

Chinatown lay in a remarkably diverse part of the city. Toward the Mississippi River was the Faubourg St. Mary, a predominantly white area where many German, Italian, and other European immigrants and their descendants lived. Across Canal Street was the French Quarter, which was a mainly Sicilian neighborhood at the time. Downtown toward Basin Street, the Tremé neighborhood was home to mostly Creoles of color. Toward Uptown, on Saratoga Street, was a neighborhood of mostly Eastern European Jewish homes and



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A. Lettering from On Leong building, 530 Bourbon Street

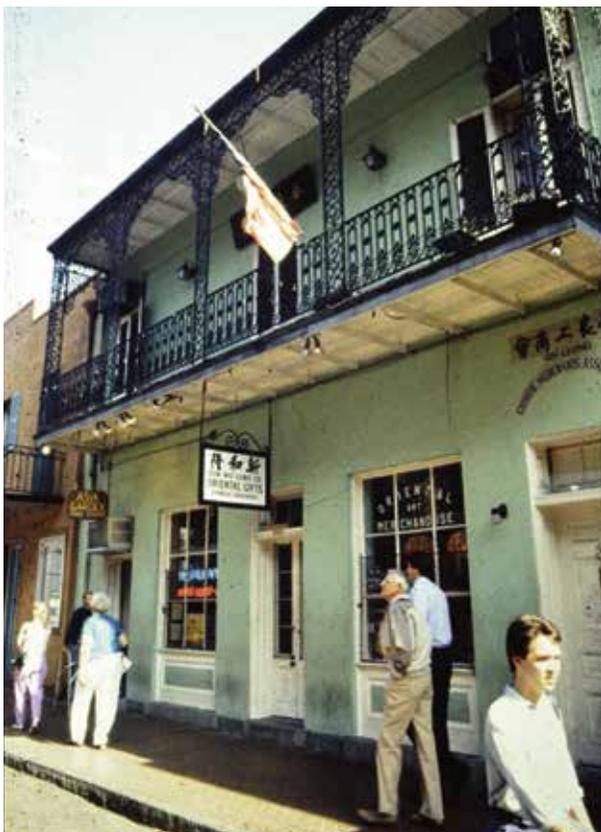
1987  
courtesy of Winston Ho

B. On Leong building, 530 Bourbon Street

1987  
courtesy of the Vieux Carré Commission Foundation

C. Sun Wah Lung Company, with Big Gee and Lee Sing, 1117 Tulane Avenue

1937  
courtesy of The Times-Picayune



B



C



**D. New Orleans, La. Chinese Church, Liberty Street**

between 1904 and 1909  
by Curt Teich and Company  
gift of Boyd Cruise, 1958.85.197

**E. Automobile parked at Ben Hong Low restaurant, 156 Basin Street**

1918  
gift of Mrs. Perlin M. Varenholt, 1983.159



businesses. And toward the lake was South Claiborne and the mostly African American “back o’ town” neighborhood.

Exactly when the Chinese first began settling in New Orleans is not known. A few Chinese residents appear in census schedules as early as 1850, and Chinese American tombs have been found in the St. Louis cemeteries dating as far back as 1848. However, the first major Chinese migration to the city took place between 1868 and 1872 during Reconstruction, when Louisiana planters began hiring thousands of Cantonese-speaking laborers to work on their sugar and cotton plantations. The laborers were soon followed by Cantonese merchants, who established import-export businesses, originally to

provision the laborers with tea, rice, traditional Chinese medicine, and other supplies. Nearly all of the laborers would flee from the low wages and poor working conditions on the plantations, abandoning the South entirely by the mid-1870s. But the merchants stayed, selling porcelain, silk clothing, lacquered furniture, jewelry, fireworks, and other East Asian luxuries to the local New Orleans market. Many other Chinese would follow, working in the seafood industry or establishing small laundries throughout the city.

In 1882, the Chinese Presbyterian Mission was founded at 215 South Liberty Street to minister to this growing Chinese population. The Chinese Mission provided scripture classes, as well as a Sunday worship and other spiritual services. However, it also provided secular services, including English-language classes and translation and immigration services, and it organized social events such as the annual Christmas and Chinese New Year celebrations. In the following years, benevolent associations such as the Chee Gung Tong and Bow Wong Wei established meeting halls near the Chinese Mission. By the 1890s,

businesses serving the Chinese American community also appeared on the 1100 block of Tulane, such as the On Yick & Company grocery at 1107 Tulane Avenue and the Sun Wah Lung grocery at 1117 Tulane Avenue. These groceries sold tea, rice, noodles, dried shrimp, candied fruits, spices, traditional Chinese medicine, and other goods that could not be found in Western groceries.

Chinatown was also the site of shops and restaurants that served mostly non-Chinese patrons, such as the Yee Wah Jen restaurant at 156 South Basin Street (modern Elk Place), later renamed the Ben Hong Low restaurant. According to a 1911 *Daily Picayune* article, Yee Wah Jen was a segregated restaurant, with both white and Black sections, but the restaurant would seat everyone. Louis Armstrong, who grew up nearby in the “back of town” neighborhood in the 1910s, remembers dining at a Chinatown restaurant with his

family. This restaurant was likely the Yee Wah Jen, which, according to Armstrong, served Americanized Chinese dishes like chop suey and yaka mein, alongside Creole dishes like red beans and rice.

The Sun Wah Lung grocery and many other Chinatown businesses were located in a single commercial property spanning the entire 1100 block of Tulane. During the Great Depression, the owner of that property wasn't collecting enough rent from the Chinese, so in the fall of 1937, he evicted all of his tenants and sold the property. The rest of the Chinatown businesses abandoned the neighborhood soon after. A few Chinatown businesses, including Sun Wah Lung and On Yick, moved to the 500 and 600 blocks of Bourbon Street, joining several Chinese American businesses that were already in the French Quarter and forming what the *Times-Picayune* described as a second Chinatown. Sun Wah Lung moved to 530–534 Bourbon, which was the site of other Chinese American businesses, a hostel for Chinese travelers, and a meeting hall for the On Leong Merchants Association. Founded in the Manhattan Chinatown in 1893, On Leong is a national benevolent association for Cantonese-speaking Chinese American businesspeople. Like the earlier Chee Gung Tong and Bow Wong Wei Associations, it assisted local Chinese in translation and immigration issues, finding jobs and housing, and starting businesses. On Leong also organized events like the annual Chinese New Year and Mid-Autumn Festival celebrations.

Like the original Chinatown, the French Quarter was the site of Chinese restaurants and shops that served mostly non-Chinese patrons. For example, the import-export companies often had storefronts that sold luxury goods from East Asia. These East Asian merchandise stores included the Chinese American Company at 721 Royal and later 719 Royal, and Honey Gee's Oriental Gift Shop at 641 Bourbon (corner of St. Peter Street). Tennessee Williams lived down the street from Honey Gee's, at 632 ½ St. Peter Street, when he wrote *A Streetcar Named Desire* in 1947: The "little Chinese shop on Bourbon" where Blanche buys her colored paper lantern is a reference to this shop.

The 500 and 600 blocks of Bourbon Street were already lined with bars and nightclubs when the Chinatown businesses moved there in 1937. French Quarter Chinese restaurants were open late, the food was cheap, and the portions were large, so they became popular with tourists, locals, and workers in the entertainment industry alike. The restaurants became part of the culture of the French Quarter, and they became so popular that yaka mein, a noodle soup commonly served in Chinese American restaurants at the time, became known as "old sober," the secret hangover cure of the French Quarter. These French Quarter Chinese restaurants included the China Town Cafe at 627 Bourbon Street, Dan's International at 601 Bourbon Street, Chinese Village at 532 Bourbon Street, Fong Restaurant at 609 Decatur Street, and the Mee Hong Restaurant, better known as Gin's Mee Hong, at 739 Conti Street.

But by the 1940s, the Chinese were already migrating from the city to the suburbs of Lakeview and the East Bank of Jefferson Parish, taking their businesses and institutions with them. Today, Jefferson Parish has the largest Chinese and Asian American populations in Louisiana. The last of the French Quarter Chinatown businesses closed at the end of the 1980s when their owners retired, their children having long since graduated from college and moved on to careers in medicine, engineering, and law. In 1988, the On Leong Association moved from the French Quarter to Metairie, and in 2011 to Kenner, where its office is still located today. The Chinese Presbyterian Mission still exists but moved out of Chinatown in 1924, moving to several locations before it was absorbed by the Chinese Presbyterian Church in 1957 and finally relocated to Kenner in 1997.

More recently, several new Asian American businesses have moved into the French Quarter, including restaurants like Dian Xin and Zhang's Bistro, both founded by relatively recent immigrants from mainland China. However, none of the historic Chinese American businesses still exist. The English- and Chinese-language sign over the door of the On Leong building at 530 Bourbon is the last visible evidence that the New Orleans Chinatown ever existed. —WINSTON HO 何嶸



F



G

**F. Gin's Mee Hong Restaurant, 739 Conti Street**

1987  
courtesy of the Vieux Carré Commission  
Foundation

**G. Gin's Mee Hong Restaurant menu**

between 1987 and 1988  
by Boyd Cruise, designer  
gift of Mrs. William K. Christovich, 2007.0175.2



**ON THE JOB**

## Annabelle Zakaluk

**POSITION:** General manager of retail, on staff since 2024

**ASSIGNMENT:** Support HNOC’s mission through retail product development and merchandising

When guests enter the Shop at the Collection through our Royal Street doors, they often don’t realize we are associated with a museum. While I’m proud that we stand on our own as a destination boutique, our goal is always to bring visibility and visitation to HNOC. The question that drives all my decisions for the Shop and Café at the Collection is “How can I best support the institution’s mission and exhibitions?”

I have a degree in visual art and writing, and I find that the same creativity applies to brand presentation and marketing in a retail setting. In nearly 20 years of retail management —14 of which were in visual merchandising—I’ve developed a particular love of product and how it shows up in-store through merchandising and storytelling.

Working in the nonprofit setting of HNOC offers a unique retail opportunity to prioritize quality and education. When ordering products, we make purchases with certain key criteria in mind: Is it locally made in New Orleans or the Gulf South? Does it relate to New Orleans culture or history, or to an HNOC exhibition directly? Is it sustainably made or Fair Trade Federation certified? Is it distinctive and high quality, worthy of being in our retail space? I always aim to set a high standard for exceptional products that set us apart from other French Quarter shops.

I also ensure our offerings stand out by creating custom products that feature objects from HNOC’s collections. These include a replica pin and keychain of the 1919 New Orleans streetcar token that is on display in the

French Quarter Galleries, a magnet and hand mirror modeled after a

Pontchartrain Beach amusement park coin, and postcards featuring archival Mardi Gras imagery.

Creating these custom products is some of the most fun I have had here at HNOC. But before the fun starts, there are some logistical considerations: I am constrained by which archival objects we have copyright permissions to reproduce, or which are old enough to have passed into the public domain. And companies that offer customized products often have high setup fees or high minimum order quantities. So I need to be confident in the item and its ability to sell in the Shop, in addition to navigating the issues of reproduction rights and cost of goods.



A

A. An amusement park coin from Pontchartrain Beach served as the inspiration for this custom-made hand mirror.

B. A custom-designed keychain features a reproduction of a 1919 streetcar token.

C. In partnership with local bakery Dough Nguyen’s, the Café at the Collection offered Vietnamese lunch specials during the run of *Making It Home: From Vietnam to New Orleans*.



B

Community partnerships have also brought unique offerings to the Shop and Café. The 2025 exhibition *Making It Home: From Vietnam to New Orleans* explored the oral histories of Vietnamese elders in our community and spoke to the 50th anniversary of the fall of Saigon and subsequent migration of people from Vietnam to New Orleans. As we planned Shop and Café initiatives around the exhibition, I was connected with Thuy Pham, who runs the NOLA Nite Market,

a specialty fair celebrating local Asian cultures. She introduced

me to so many local artists, products, and food vendors whom I was thrilled to support and bring into our retail spaces. Among them were illustrator Sam Nga Blum and her vending machine of mini art prints, celebrity chef Nini Nguyen, glass artist Michelle Dinh, ceramicist Christian Đinh, and author Susan Do Zuniga.

We were excited to partner with local Vietnamese bakery and cafe Dough Nguyener's to develop a trio of lunch specials to serve in the Café at the Collection: chicken or tofu bánh mì, vermicelli bowls and salads, and pandan and ube cookies. We also sold Dough Nguyener's king cakes in the Shop during the 2025 Carnival season, and they were so popular we brought them back for 2026.

This is really a dream job for me! I have a wonderful retail team who make it easy to operate our business. I have diverse, interesting responsibilities developing retail products and food offerings that reflect the museum's programs and exhibitions. Everyone at HNOG is here because we love history and New Orleans culture, and that offers daily inspiration. —ANNABELLE ZAKALUK



#### IN MEMORIAM

### Patricia Brady

The Historic New Orleans Collection was saddened by the December 15 passing of Patricia Brady, the institution's first director of publications. A historian and writer, Brady established the publications department in 1982 and a year later launched the *Historic New Orleans Collection Newsletter*, now the *Quarterly*. Over her 20-year tenure at HNOG, she oversaw the publication of a host of books, including *Nelly Custis Lewis's Housekeeping Book*, *Complementary Visions of Louisiana Art: The Laura Simon Nelson Collection at the Historic New Orleans Collection*, and *Queen of the South: New Orleans, 1853–1862*, *The Journal of Thomas K. Wharton*. After retiring from the Collection, Brady continued to write, publishing biographies of First Ladies Martha Washington and Rachel Jackson and contributing an essay to HNOG's 2010 book *In Search of Julien Hudson: Free Artist of Color in Pre-Civil War New Orleans*. An engaged historian, adept storyteller, and tireless advocate for the literary arts of New Orleans, Brady made a lasting mark on the Collection and the community at large. —MARY GARSAUD



C

INTERN SPOTLIGHT

# Oliver Ball

**PLACEMENT:** Decorative Arts of the Gulf South program, researching the lives of Black artisans

**SEASON:** Fall 2025



Oliver Ball, a senior at Loyola University New Orleans, has a background in historic research within African diaspora studies, with a specialized focus on West Africa and the diasporic cultures of the Atlantic World. His studies have equipped him with a nuanced understanding of the complex cultural exchanges and historical narratives that shape the experiences of African-descended populations across continents.

Oliver's research at HNOC

will support the development of a 2027 exhibition that will focus on New Orleans's long history of free artisans of color owning businesses and training the next generation. Like previous HNOC interns, he used research methods devised by the Black Craftspeople Digital Archive project to gather biographical details about the Black New Orleans artisans previously overlooked by traditional decorative arts scholarship. In collaboration with Decorative Arts of the Gulf South (DAGS) Project Manager Sarah Duggan, Oliver added to prior intern research on Black cabinetmakers and metalworkers. He explored other trades practiced by residents of New Orleans's historic French Quarter and the Tremé neighborhood, long a site of Black cultural resilience and artistic innovation.

Consulting census records, city directories, and other archival materials, Oliver gleaned detailed information about the lives of African American artisans such as shoemakers, bricklayers, and jewelers who contributed significantly to Louisiana's material culture yet have often remained marginalized in historical accounts. His work helps to illuminate the socioeconomic roles and identities of these craftspeople within their communities, providing essential insights into how racial identity intersected with occupational practices in the region over time. —SYDNEY

WESSINGER

STAFF NEWS

Staff Changes

**Brian Lavigne** is now project management administrator. **Nick Weldon** is now interim director of publications. **Siobhán McKiernan** is now publications managing editor.

Continuing Education

Human Resources Coordinator **Kelsi Dougherty** received the Society for Human Resource Management Certified Professional certification.

Senior Interpreter **Joanna Robinson** and Interpreters **Terri Rushing**, **Susie Trenka**, and **Jacob Williams** received their tour guide licenses from the City of New Orleans.

Speaking Engagements

At the annual meeting of the National Association for Interpretation, Associate Curator **Libby Neidenbach**, **Joanna Robinson**, and **Jacob Williams** gave a presentation on the process of developing conversational tours for the exhibition *Captive State: Louisiana and the Making of Mass Incarceration*.

Photographer **Amber Johnson** presented on the 19th-century photographer and Ursuline nun Mother St. Croix as part of the 2026 Women of Photography 24-Hour Conference-a-Thon.

Exhibition Designer **Cecilia Moscardó** was part of a panel at the Society for Experiential Graphic Design conference in San Francisco addressed to design students, emerging designers, and career changers.

At a meeting of the National Society of the Colonial Dames of America in the State of Louisiana, Collections Cataloger **Kevin Harrell** gave a presentation on Alexander McGillivray and the 1790 Treaty of New York between the United States and the Muscogee (Creek) peoples.

## MILESTONES

# Jessica Dorman

HNOC recently bid a fond farewell to Dr. Jessica Dorman, who served as the institution's director of publications for 21 years. During her tenure at the Collection, Dorman worked assiduously to promote awareness of the region's history and culture through high-quality publications, scholarship, and exhibitions, as well as community



outreach. She managed the publication of numerous award-winning books and oversaw the growth of the publications department from three staff members to nine. Under Dorman's leadership, HNOC's books program made strides not only in bringing to light neglected histories from marginalized groups but also in reaching underserved communities, inviting a broader audience to engage with local history.

To that end, Dorman cultivated relationships with independent booksellers, librarians, educators, and literacy organizations—often finding creative and unconventional ways to put books into the hands of readers. For example, she partnered with the proprietors of local po'boy restaurant Melba's, who run an acclaimed "Eat and Read" literacy program that brings authors into the restaurant for lunchtime meet-and-greets and book giveaways. Through this collaboration, Melba's has hosted the creators of several HNOC books and distributed hundreds of copies of these titles to its customers and staff. Another collaboration, with One Book One New Orleans, has brought HNOC books into adult literacy programs and incarceration facilities.

Dorman generously shared her energy and resources as a mentor to countless authors, researchers, and editors, both within the Collection and in the broader scholarly community. She consistently made time to work with aspiring writers and those interested in publishing careers, offering considered feedback and suggestions for next steps. She was also the chief organizer and booster of HNOC's unofficial softball team, as well as an excellent utility player, equally at home as catcher and second baseman.

"Since Jessica first became director of publications here, she has understood the great value of the work HNOC did, while also seeing the great potential for HNOC to be even more relevant, more impactful, and do more for the community," said President and CEO Daniel Hammer.

"All of us at HNOC will long remember and be grateful for her devotion to this institution's success and its potential."

Dorman brought a spirit of thoughtfulness, humility, and camaraderie to her work at HNOC and in the community. She will be dearly missed by her colleagues, and we wish her the very best in her future endeavors. —HNOC STAFF



Jessica Dorman with Senior Editor Mary Garsaud in 2023. Photos courtesy of Jessica Dorman.

Interim Director of Publications **Nick Weldon** and Curator/Historian **Eric Seiferth** spoke on a panel at Loyola University New Orleans College of Law about the book *Captive State: Louisiana and the Making of Mass Incarceration*, alongside members of the exhibition's community advisory board.

### In the Community

Senior Historian **Mark Cave** and Visitor Services Assistant **Winston Ho** participated in the National Asian Pacific American Museum Commission's listening session to help inform the creation of a national Asian Pacific American museum.

Editor **Cathe Mizell-Nelson** joined the editorial board of the American Association for State and Local History.

Senior Communications Strategist **Amanda Frentz** is serving on the Loyola Women's Leadership Academy Advisory Board for 2026.

Media Producer and Strategist **Xiomara Blanco** has joined the board of RIDE New Orleans.

### Awards

Family Historian **Jari Honora** was honored as the 2025 Louisianian of the Year by the *Times-Picayune / New Orleans Advocate* for his work uncovering the New Orleans heritage of Pope Leo XIV. The Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society also recognized Honora with the Elizabeth Clark-Lewis Genealogy Award.

*Captive State*, curated by **Eric Seiferth**, **Kevin Harrell**, and Curatorial Cataloger **Katherine Jolliff Dunn**, received the 2025 Exhibition of the Year award from the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities.

President and CEO **Daniel Hammer** was included in the New Orleans 500 List, an annual publication from *Biz New Orleans* magazine that profiles top local business leaders.



## FOCUS ON PHILANTHROPY

## Catherine Whitney

Catherine Whitney's handsome French Quarter residence is filled with art, but her impressive collection isn't just the work of an art enthusiast: Whitney, a New Jersey native, found a part of herself and her family history through her exploration of New Orleans art—and it all started with a visit to the Historic New Orleans Collection 20 years ago.

Whitney, a vice president of risk management, had left New Jersey and was living in southern Florida when she began making trips to New Orleans in the 1990s. She knew that her grandfather had been a painter there in the 1920s; she grew up looking at the portrait of her grandmother that he painted in 1925. "It survived several moves in the family," she says.

Right away, she felt a kinship with the city. "I was amazed at its beauty and uniqueness, particularly the French Quarter—the people, the food, everything," she says. "I felt an inexplicable connection."

Whitney continued visiting regularly, savoring hours of relaxed follow-your-nose exploring that she calls "floating days—just walking around, open to anything." On one trip to the city in 2006, she floated

into HNOC at its original 533 Royal Street location. She mentioned her artist grandfather, Daniel Webster Whitney, and staff told her she could learn more at HNOC's Williams Research Center around the corner. Even though the reading room was in the midst of reorganizing its records, Reference Associates Mary Lou Eichhorn and Sally Stassi took the time to locate HNOC's artist file on Daniel Webster Whitney.

"I'll never forget their kindness," Whitney says.

Whitney opened the file and saw the painting of her grandmother, Catherine Wainwright Whitney, staring back at her: It was featured in a news clipping announcing Catherine's marriage to Daniel. "Vieux Carré Startled by Paint-Box Romance," read the headline. Catherine was a well-to-do uptown socialite; Daniel was her art instructor at the Arts and Crafts Club. They fell in love, and Catherine fell in with Daniel's downtown art friends. Daniel, from Baltimore, had studied at the Maryland Institute College of Art and the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts before coming to New Orleans. "He was very

much a loner, but when he came to New Orleans, I think he really felt at home and welcome," Whitney says. "There were so many other artists, it was fabulous. He found his community."

That community included Alberta Kinsey, Lyle Saxon, Conrad Albrizio, and other denizens of the French Quarter art and literary world. When Whitney decided to move to New Orleans in 2016, she began assembling works by contemporaries of her grandfather's. Her collection includes original works by Ellsworth Woodward and Albrizio. The dining room is dedicated to her grandfather: In addition to the painting of her grandmother that started it all, she has obtained a number of Whitney prints from original paintings held at HNOC.

She also befriended Jimmie de Buys, nephew of her grandfather's second wife, who was living in the North Shore home where Daniel had lived out the rest of his life. They quickly became two peas in a pod, sharing threads of family history and locating pieces in Daniel's catalog. One of Daniel's paint palettes hangs in Catherine's house. Among the other original works in her collection are a John Clemmer triptych, *Swamp Idyll* by Colette Pope Heldner, a James Michalopoulos painting, and two pieces by Andrew LaMar Hopkins, from "before he got famous."

Since her transformational experience at the Williams Research Center, Whitney has become an HNOC stalwart, joining the Laussat Society in 2007 and attending 10 HNOC Travel trips and numerous other events. "The Collection is so global!" she says. "It's so far-reaching. Really, for me, it was life-altering."

"I've received many gifts from the HNOC, but the most important benefit has been the wonderful people that I've met, many of whom have become friends."

—MOLLY CLEAVER

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On January 6, Caillot Circle members welcomed Carnival with a reception and balcony viewing of the Joan of Arc parade. Guests enjoyed champagne and king cake to kick off the season.

A. The parade passed in front of HNOC's Chef Paul Prudhomme Building.

B. Laura Keller and Vincent Hamblin

C. Ben Mount and Scot Pilié

D. Treva Lincoln Durr and Johnathan Durr



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(ages 21–45)

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- private, guided tours of HNOC collections and exhibitions (by appointment)
- one additional guest admission for exhibition opening receptions

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*Full Founder Family benefits plus:*

- NARM benefits at more than 1,400 member institutions
- private, guided tours of HNOC collections and exhibitions (by appointment)
- special members-only experiences
- two additional guest admissions for exhibition opening receptions

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*Full Founder Family benefits plus:*

- NARM benefits at more than 1,400 member institutions
- private, guided tours of HNOC vault, collections, and exhibitions (by appointment)
- special members-only experiences
- invitation to annual gala evening and private patron event
- three additional guest admissions for exhibition opening receptions

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### BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

There has never been a better time to join the Historic New Orleans Collection. All HNOC members enjoy the following benefits for one full year:

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- subscription to the *Historic New Orleans Collection Quarterly*
- free admission to select tours
- special invitations to events and trips

Members at the Merieult level and above receive benefits from the **North American Reciprocal Museum** program at more than 1,400 member institutions across the US, Canada, and Latin America. For more information, visit [www.narmassociation.org](http://www.narmassociation.org).

### HOW TO JOIN

Visit [www.hnoc.org](http://www.hnoc.org) and click the **Support** link, or complete and return the enclosed envelope.

For more information about membership levels, please contact HNOC's development office at (504) 598-7172 or visit [www.hnoc.org/support/membership](http://www.hnoc.org/support/membership).

ON THE SCENE

# A French Toast and a Festival of Food



HNOC supporters, board members, and staff enjoyed a November reception at the residence of the Hon. Rodolphe Sambou, consul general of France in Louisiana.

A. Rodolphe Sambou

B. Joseph Dunn, board member E. Alexandra Stafford, and Amelia Dunn

C. Barbara S. Beckman, Jeanne Williams, and Colombia Barrosse

D. Aulston Taylor, Heather L. Hodges, Gabi Grenier, and Williams Research Center Director Rebecca Smith



The Collection welcomed former French defense minister General François Lecointre to the Williams Research Center, where he and his group viewed objects related to the Battle of New Orleans and General Louis Fortier.

E. François Lecointre and Curator Howard Margot



In December, HNOC dedicated its newest property at 416 Chartres Street, the former home of K-Paul's Louisiana Kitchen. The 1834 brick structure will now be known as the Chef Paul Prudhomme Building.

F. President and CEO Daniel Hammer, Paul Miller, Board Chair Bonnie Boyd, and Marty Cosgrove



The Williams Research Center hosted a group of content creators from the Philippines for a discussion of local Filipino history.

G. Jonas Tayaban, Shayne Fucion, Jacque Manabat, and Raymor Cuevas



The 2025 Food Forum celebrated the culinary traditions and unmatched hospitality that make home gatherings in Louisiana special—from backyard boils to elegant dinner parties.

H. Attendees enjoyed local favorites at the Food Fête.

I. Julie Vaucresson, M. Christian Mounger, and Ronald R. Harrell

J. Dr. Jessica Harris, Daniel Hammer, Jessica Carriere, Joel Poole, Jessica Ortiz, and Marty Cosgrove

K. James Clesi, Rien Fertel, and Jason Seither

L. Rodney Mason, ÎFÉ, and Larry Underwood



M



N

In November, the New Orleans Chamber of Commerce brought its networking event, Chamber After 5, to the Collection.

M. Teresina Sandino-Reyes, Samira Medina, and Clare Martin. Image courtesy of Anthony LaMothe Photography.

N. Ashley Hillsman and Terry Carter. Image courtesy of Anthony LaMothe Photography.



K



L



O

HNOC hosted two October screenings as part of the 2025 New Orleans Film Festival.

O. Sascha Just, Oscar Rossignoli, and Ina Fandrich

In partnership with **PhotoNOLA**, HNOC presented the annual Jules L. Cahn John H. Lawrence Photography Lecture on the theme of "New Orleans in the '90's."

P. John H. Lawrence and Gus Bennett

Q. Associate Curator Mallory Taylor, Digital Collections Archivist Catie Sampson, Jane Hill, Gus Bennett, Bruce Sunpie Barnes, and Cheryl Gerber



P



Q

**A. Gunflint**

early 18th century; stone  
2025.0028.1.15

B. Archaeologists from Chronicle Heritage begin digging in the 714 Toulouse courtyard, summer 2024.

**C. Teaspoon with “JFM” monogram**

1792; sterling silver  
made in London, England  
2025.0028.1.17

**D. Lea and Perrins Worcestershire sauce bottle**

between 1877 and 1920; glass  
by Salem Glass Works (Salem, New Jersey)  
2025.0028.1.11

**ACQUISITION SPOTLIGHT**

## Hidden Depths

**Archaeological finds from 714 Toulouse Street courtyard**

2025.0028.1

As the Collection works to restore and reopen its original 533 Royal Street campus, clues to the site’s history abound—some in plain sight, others tucked away in hidden layers. Staff had long wondered why a small courtyard behind the Townhouse at 714 Toulouse Street was nearly 40 inches higher than the other courtyards on the site. Exhibition plans for 533 Royal will lead visitors through this courtyard, which is being lowered to improve flow. Before construction began, HNOC contracted Chronicle Heritage to conduct an archaeological investigation of the courtyard, which is enclosed by the Townhouse, Service Wing, Williams Residence, and an alley wall.

As it turned out, the explanation for the courtyard’s unusual elevation was rather boring—a 1960s drainage solution—but once digging started, the archaeologists found more evidence



of a rich and complex human history, excavating 1.4 meters of earth before hitting the water table. They uncovered and processed 902 artifacts, each enhancing our understanding of the people who lived and worked on this site from the 18th to the mid-20th centuries.

The artifacts fall into three periods of heavy use on the site. From about 1730 to 1750 a French colonial barracks extended along Toulouse Street between Royal and Bourbon Streets. In this layer, archaeologists uncovered a brick-and-cobblestone gutter, which supported drainage around the barracks; a gunflint from early weaponry; and French ceramics used for everyday cooking and eating.

Between 1794 and 1818, the courtyard facilitated the work of laborers enslaved by the Merieult family. Here Julie, Henriette, and others cooked, washed dishes, and butchered animals out of sight of the formal living and business areas. In this layer, archaeologists uncovered animal bones, shells, and broken dishes, glassware, and wine bottles. They also found evidence of the Merieult family's wealth and global connections: A glass perfume bottle from Paris and a silver spoon made in London and marked with Jean-François Merieult's initials indicate access to luxury goods from around the world.

The current building at 714 Toulouse Street was constructed by 1829. Archaeologists found very few objects from its first 60 years, when the structure was home to the Consolidated Association of the Planters of Louisiana. But the layer associated with the period from the 1880s through 1920s, when the property was a boardinghouse, yielded plentiful evidence of the men and women who lived here. A plastic comb, shell buttons, and a Lea and Perrins Worcestershire sauce bottle are evidence of less affluent residents of the early 20th century.

Some of the artifacts from the excavation will be on display in the Townhouse when it opens to the public after the renovation, restoration, and reimagining of the 533 Royal Street campus.

—LYDIA BLACKMORE



C



D

## RELATED HOLDINGS



### Toulouse Street buildings (detail)

1993; watercolor on paper  
by Jim Blanchard  
1993.38.2



### 714–716 Toulouse Street

1967  
Collins C. Diboll Vieux Carré Digital Survey at HNOC



### Passport of Jean-François Merieult issued by the American legation in Paris

1810  
MSS 579.1.12

RECENT ADDITIONS

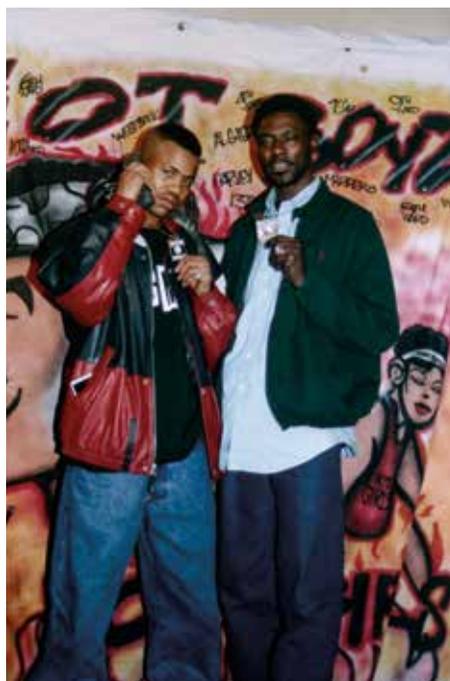
# Bounce Music, a Batture, and Brotherly Love

**Polo Silk photographs**

© Selwhyn Sthaddeus “Polo Silk” Terrell, 2025.0220

Selwhyn Sthaddeus “Polo Silk” Terrell (b. 1964) has photographed Black nightlife in New Orleans for nearly 40 years, capturing fashion trends and personal style at bars, clubs, and block parties around the city. His work documents performers and fans of hip-hop and bounce music (a unique subgenre of hip-hop indigenous to the city)—particularly those related to Cash Money Records, the internationally known record label started in New Orleans by Bryan “Baby” Williams and Ronald “Slim” Williams. Through his personal relationships with the artists and producers, Polo had unmatched access to Cash Money rappers, producers, and events. His photos mark the label’s emergence in New Orleans in the early 1990s and its meteoric national success in the early 2000s.

Polo Silk learned to take photographs as a teenager at the Boys Club on the West Bank. In 1987, he first brought his

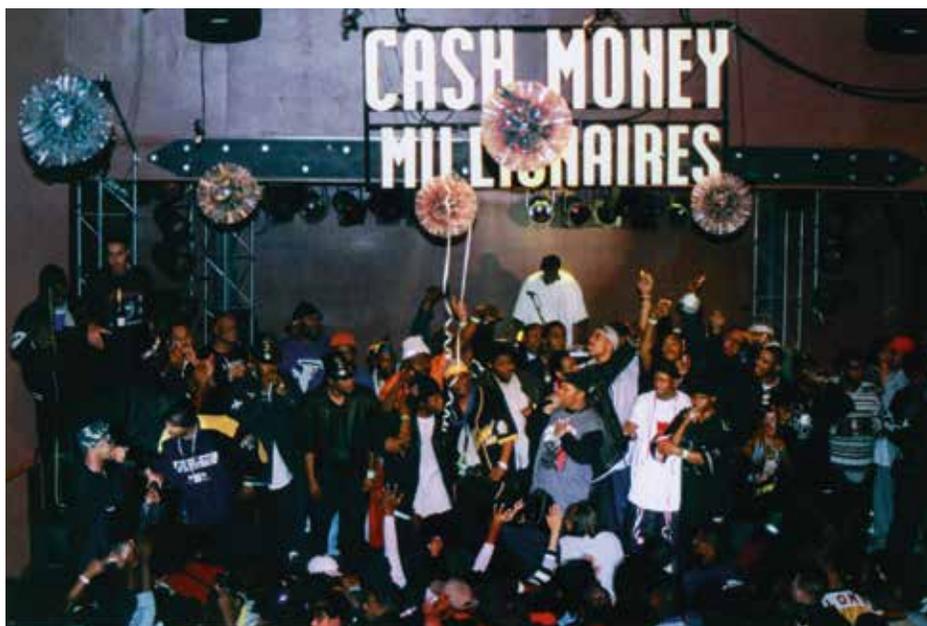


Polaroid camera to take pictures of his fellow partygoers at Club Adidas, a teen hangout in Marrero that later moved to Canal Street and Claiborne Avenue in New

Orleans. By the early 1990s, Polo and his camera were a fixture at uptown clubs like Big Man’s. Known as the Picture Man, Polo brought the photo studio to the nightclub, complete with hand-painted backdrops by his cousin Otis Spears. The colorful backdrops were designed to capture the latest trends: clothing labels, shoe styles, sports teams, and, of course, the hottest songs being introduced in the clubs. Clubgoers posed in front of the backdrops alone or with friends while Polo captured their sartorial performances and memorable nights out. He then sold these Polaroid portraits to club patrons.

HNOC recently acquired 13 Polo Silk photographs of Cash Money Records artists. These images highlight Polo’s talents behind the lens and include a range of portraits, action shots, documentation, and street photography. They depict important figures in the development of New Orleans hip-hop and bounce who influenced the genre at a national level, including Terius “Juvenile” Gray, Dwayne “Lil Wayne” Carter Jr., Christopher “B. G.” Dorsey, and Byron “Mannie Fresh” Thomas. The photos also show the spaces in which these music scenes evolved, such as Club Whispers and Odyssey Records. Two of the photos selected for acquisition feature Spears’s backdrops, including a self-portrait of Polo posing with Juvenile.

Now established as a prominent artist, Polo Silk has held five solo exhibitions and has participated in group exhibitions in New Orleans, Cincinnati, and Miami Beach. His photography was featured in



Collections items featured in Acquisitions might not be immediately available to view online or in the Williams Research Center reading room. Researchers can inquire about availability by emailing [reference@hnoc.org](mailto:reference@hnoc.org).

the book *Smithsonian Anthology of Hip-Hop and Rap* (2021), and he has collaborated with Reebok on a footwear collection. His body of work serves as a unique archive of Black portraiture, neighborhood establishments, and creative expression in late 20th-century and early 21st-century New Orleans. —LIBBY NEIDENBACH

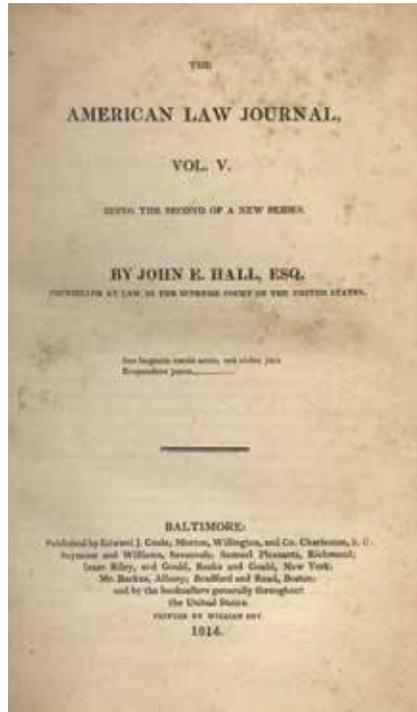
**American Law Journal, vol. 5**

*gift of the Lauscha family, 2025.0331*

The alluvial land between the Mississippi River and its levee, referred to as a batture, has played an interesting role in the legal history of New Orleans and the federal government. In 1719, the French crown granted former governor Jean-Baptiste Le Moyne, sieur de Bienville, a land parcel along the Batture St. Mary, which spanned the length of the current Warehouse District. Part of the lot nearest the city was eventually inherited by developer Jean Gravier (ca. 1738–1834), in 1797.

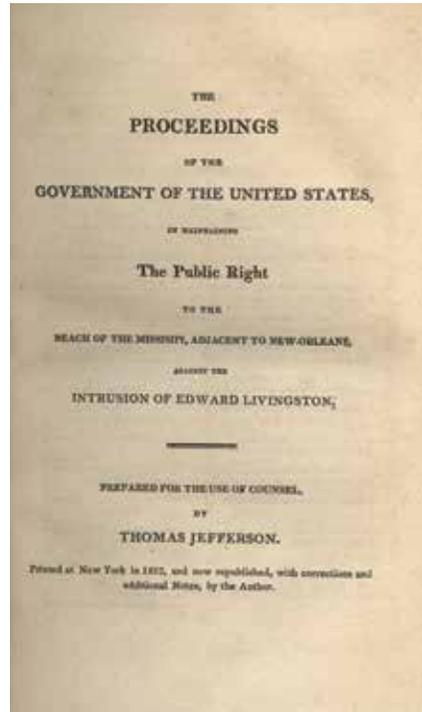
As alluvial deposits from the Mississippi naturally widened the batture, Gravier built a new levee and claimed the land on its batture side in order to increase the size of his land holdings. He began this work in 1803, causing a confrontation with the city and an outcry from New Orleans citizens: The batture was not only a meeting space with pleasant river breezes, but also a source of soil used as construction material for buildings and roads. With Edward Livingston (1764–1836) as his lawyer, Gravier sued the city over ownership of this stretch of batture, and in 1807, the Louisiana Superior Court awarded judgment to Gravier. Livingston received payment in the form of one-third of Gravier’s portion of the batture.

Livingston had big plans for his share of the riverfront property, including a private dock and levee. As local protests grew, Governor William C. C. Claiborne



(1775–1817) called upon Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826) for federal intervention, arguing that the French colonial government had never ceded ownership of the batture to Bienville, instead preserving the land for public use. By this logic, the US government had assumed the French colonial government’s role with the Louisiana Purchase and should therefore protect the batture from private ownership. Jefferson agreed, realizing that control of the batture was both commercially and defensively advantageous to the federal government. In 1808, the federal government claimed the property, and Livingston was expelled by a US marshal. Livingston immediately secured an injunction, and the legal fight continued until his “Donation of 1820,” in which he granted use of the batture—including wharves, storage, and recreation—to the citizens of New Orleans.

HNOC recently acquired volume 5 of the *American Law Journal*. The volume was entirely dedicated to the ongoing legal battle over the Batture St. Mary. It was published in 1814, six years before the controversy was settled, and contains reprints of previously published pamphlets and legal cases, providing a holistic view of the situation to that point. Though the batture



was the focus, the case and the literature surrounding it provided in-depth views of how New Orleans and Louisiana were legally being incorporated into the United States during the transitional territorial period. —NINA BOZAK

**Simplicio Daquigan correspondence**

*2025.0094*

Simplicio Daquigan (1896–1967) was a native of the Philippines who traveled extensively through his work as a sailor. He first arrived in the United States in 1916. During the 1930s, he primarily sailed out of the Port of New York to ports of call in the Caribbean. He also spent time in Florida, marrying 16-year-old Louisa Benjamin there in 1933. The couple would remain married until 1955, when a divorce decree was issued in New Orleans. Daquigan appears to have established some form of residence in New Orleans by the 1940s, taking his oath of citizenship here in September 1947. By the early 1950s (prior to his divorce) he had a daughter with Virginia O. Goins Parish (1911–2003), a New Orleans beautician active in the Civil Rights Movement. His 1967 obituary lists surviving relatives including his daughter, a brother, and a sister.

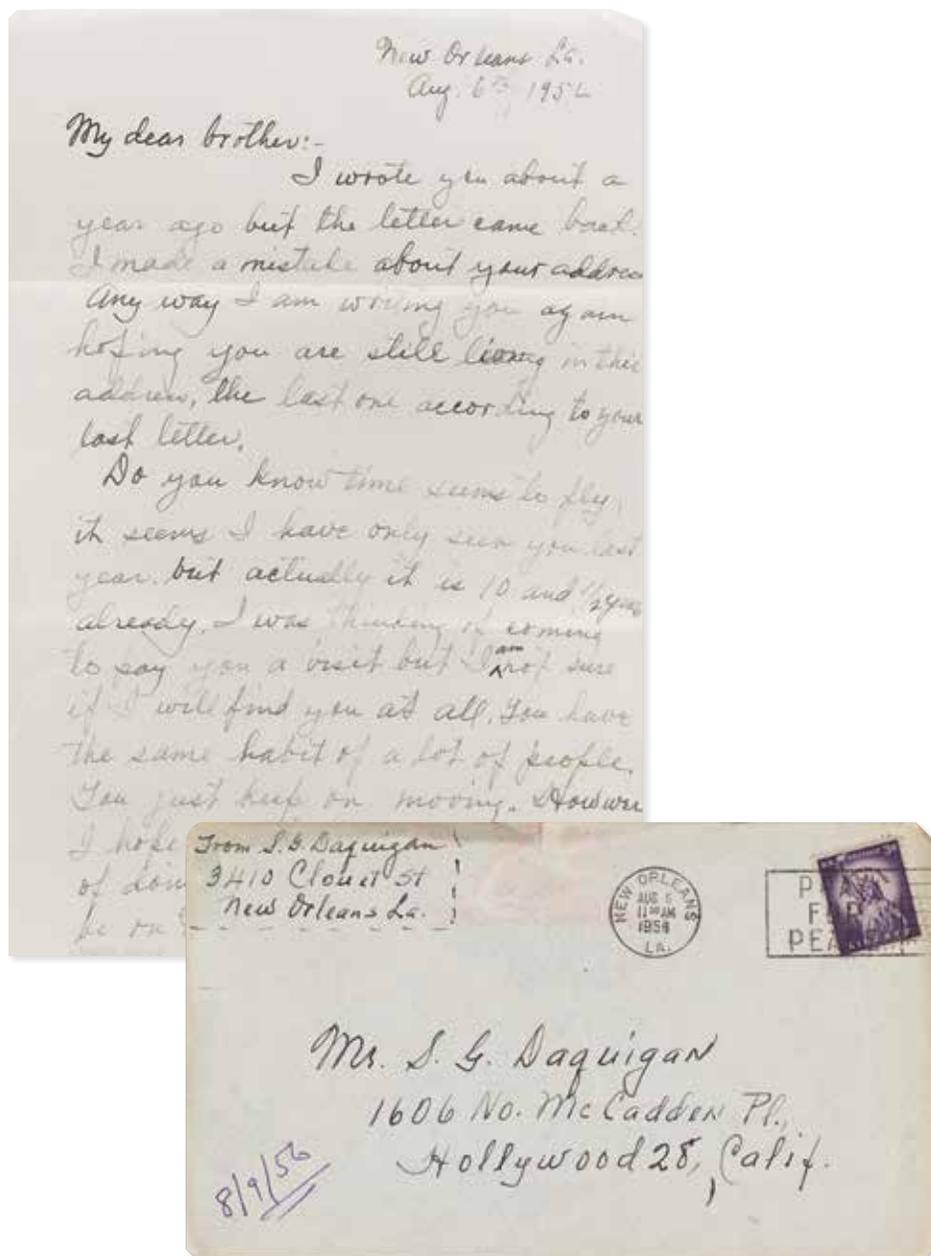
## ACQUISITIONS

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The Collection recently acquired a group of five letters written by Daquigan between 1956 and 1962 to his brother in California, Samuel Daquigan, also known as Sammy Dana. The letters include family updates from Simplicio, including the news of the recent death of their mother, concern about his brother's faltering eyesight, and details regarding his own financial difficulties. Throughout the yearslong correspondence, Simplicio expresses a persistent desire to travel to see his brother again after more than a decade apart, but he is repeatedly forced to cancel his plans due to financial constraints. It's unknown whether the two

were reunited between the final letter from this set, sent in 1962, and Simplicio's death five years later.

Local and regional repositories hold limited manuscript documentation of Louisiana's Filipino community, and HNOC's own holdings include only this group of correspondence and the mid-20th-century diaries of Celina Padilla Hidalgo (2018.0060), a young woman of Filipino descent born and raised in Jefferson Parish. These important primary documents offer intimate glimpses into the personal lives and community ties of local Filipino residents. —AIMEE EVERRETT



## The Historic New Orleans Collection Quarterly

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### HEAD OF PHOTOGRAPHY

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## The Historic New Orleans Collection

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The Historic New Orleans Collection is a nonprofit institution dedicated to the stewardship of the 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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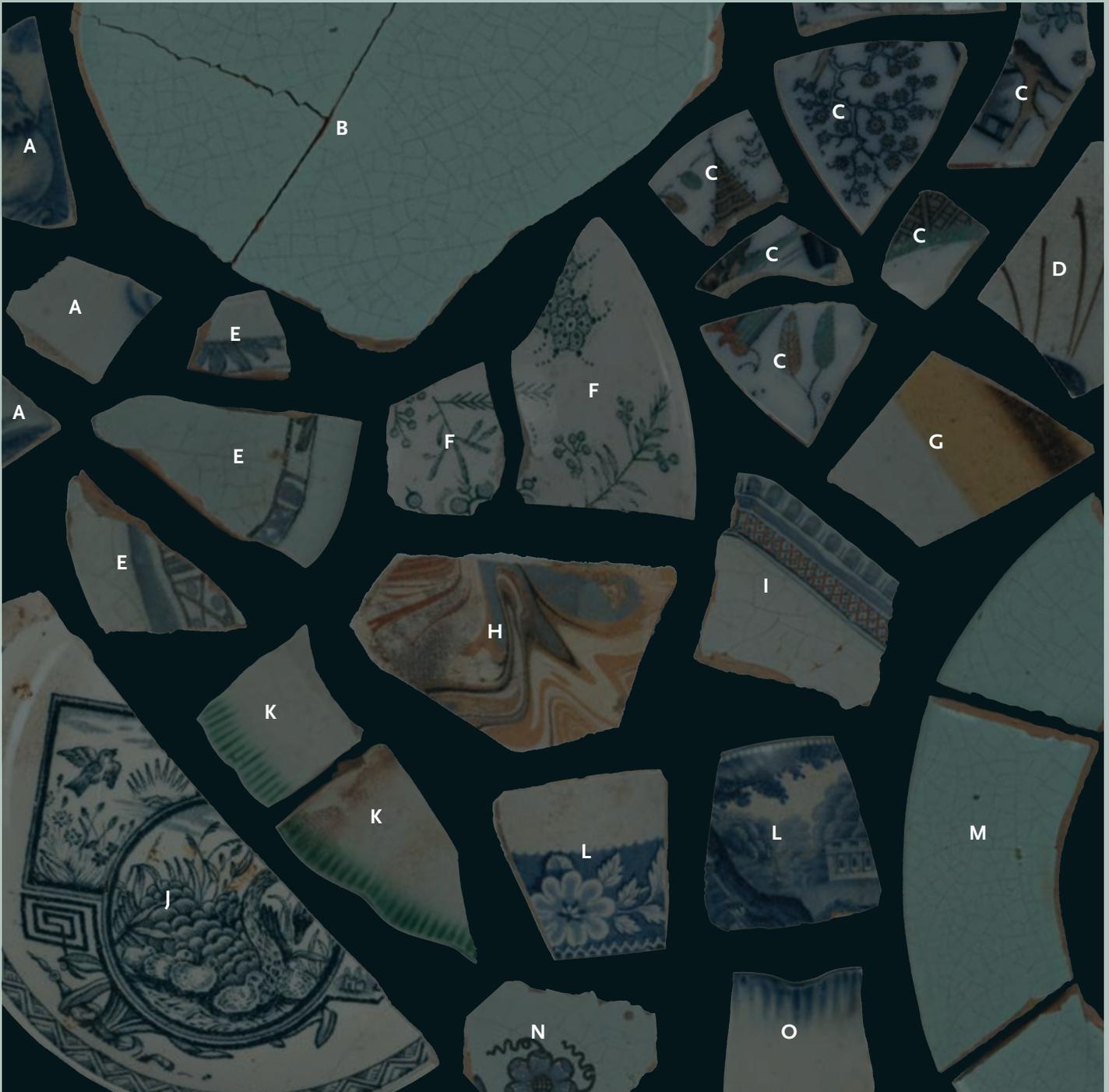
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Daniel Hammer

520 Royal Street | 410 Chartres Street  
New Orleans, Louisiana 70130  
(504) 523-4662  
www.hnoc.org | wr@hnoc.org  
ISSN 0886-2109

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**ON THE COVER:**

A. **Pearlware fragments**; between 1775 and 1840; ceramic; 2025.0028.1.35

B. **Rouen Plain faience plate fragments**; between 1740 and 1790; ceramic; 2025.0028.1.18.1

C. **Pearlware teacup fragments**; between 1775 and 1840; ceramic; 2025.0028.1.38

D. **Pearlware fragment**; between 1775 and 1840; ceramic; 2025.0028.1.34

E. **Rouen Polychrome faience flatware fragments**; between 1740 and 1790; ceramic; 2025.0028.1.21

F. **Whiteware jar lid fragments**; between 1775 and 1840; ceramic; 2025.0028.1.33

G. **Creamware fragment**; between 1762 and 1820; ceramic; 2025.0028.1.29

H. **Marbleized creamware fragment**; between 1762 and 1820; ceramic; 2025.0028.1.20

I. **Seine Polychrome faience rim fragment**; between 1690 and 1765; ceramic; 2025.0028.1.7

J. **Chinoiserie transferware bowl fragment**; between 1870 and 1900; ceramic; 2025.0028.1.8

K. **Pearlware fragments**; between 1775 and 1840; ceramic; 2025.0028.1.30

L. **Pearlware fragments**; between 1775 and 1840; ceramic; 2025.0028.1.36

M. **Rouen Plain faience plate fragments**; between 1740 and 1790; ceramic; 2025.0028.1.18.2

N. **Seine Polychrome faience fragment**; between 1690 and 1765; ceramic; 2025.0028.1.16

O. **Pearlware fragment**; between 1775 and 1840; ceramic; 2025.0028.1.31

The Kemper and Leila Williams Foundation

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## FROM THE SHOP

### For the Birds

Spring is the perfect time to celebrate the beauty and history of Louisiana's natural environment. Visit HNOC's exhibition *A Vanishing Bounty: Louisiana's Coastal Environment and Culture*, and shop exhibition-inspired products in the Shop at the Collection. Find a reproduction of the iconic Audubon *Birds of America* folio, also on display in the exhibition—plus hand-carved wood ducks, prints by local artists, puzzles, mobiles, cards, and more.



## The Shop at the Collection

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