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COLLECTION
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A Mystical Bal Masqué

*75 Years
of the
Mystic Club*



Carnival Exhibition Opens

75 Years of the Mystic Club

Year after year New Orleans welcomes the revelry and merriment of Carnival, as weeks of costume balls and street parades transform the city into a land of make-believe, a place where daily cares can be set aside — if only for a short time. For most New Orleanians the carnival season lasts for a month or two: from Twelfth Night on January 6 through the movable festival of Mardi Gras, or Fat Tuesday. But the business of Carnival lingers all year for those who design and plan the parades and tableau balls that transport the viewer to a mythical Mount Olympus, perhaps, or to King Arthur's round table.

Costume balls, part of a long tradition in New Orleans, are rooted in ancient European customs. While organized street parades in New Orleans go back only to 1857, local celebrations date from the city's earliest colonial days. French Creoles were known for their love of dancing and their preference for the *bal masqué*, or masked ball. Following European fashion, costume balls in New Orleans became increasingly popular during the 19th and early 20th centuries.

The exhibition that opened in the Williams Gallery on January 14 allows the visitor a rare behind-the-scenes glimpse of a carnival ball and how it is



Queen's crown and jewelry worn by Mrs. L. Kemper Williams at the Mystic Club ball, 1936 (1981.128.1-3). Cover, drawing of queen's costume, 1973, by Leo Van Witsen, with attached fabric sample, for the 1974 ball, A Lenten Feast at Westminster Celebrating the Crowning of Katherine, Beloved Queen of Henry V (1985.109.45)

created. *A Mystical Bal Masqué: 75 Years of the Mystic Club* highlights some of the activities required for the annual ball of the Mystic Club, a non-parading krewe that is celebrating its seventy-fifth year. The queen and her ladies-in-waiting, whose husbands are members of Mystic, are chosen for their outstanding community service to such organizations as Lazarus House, the Arts Council of New Orleans, and the Audubon Zoo. The Williamses, founders of the Historic New Orleans Collection, were involved in the early history of the club: Kemper Williams was an original member and reigned as king in 1940. Leila Williams was chosen queen in 1936.

Organized in 1922, the Mystic Club presented its first ball the following year on February 7, a Wednesday. In 1925 the event was moved to the coveted Saturday evening before Mardi Gras.

Mystic royalty has reigned on this date ever since, except during World War II when all carnival festivities were canceled. Elaborate tableaux based upon historical events or lavish periods that lend themselves to display have become the hallmark of the Mystic Club. Story, sets, costumes, and music reflect a commitment to period accuracy.

The finished ball comes from the combined talents and efforts of researchers, artists, designers, arrangers, seamstresses, builders, printers, and musicians — not to mention caterers, waiters, and bartenders. All of this is accomplished under the guidance of the captain, a club member chosen to coordinate the design of the ball and to cue the cast and court during the ball as well.

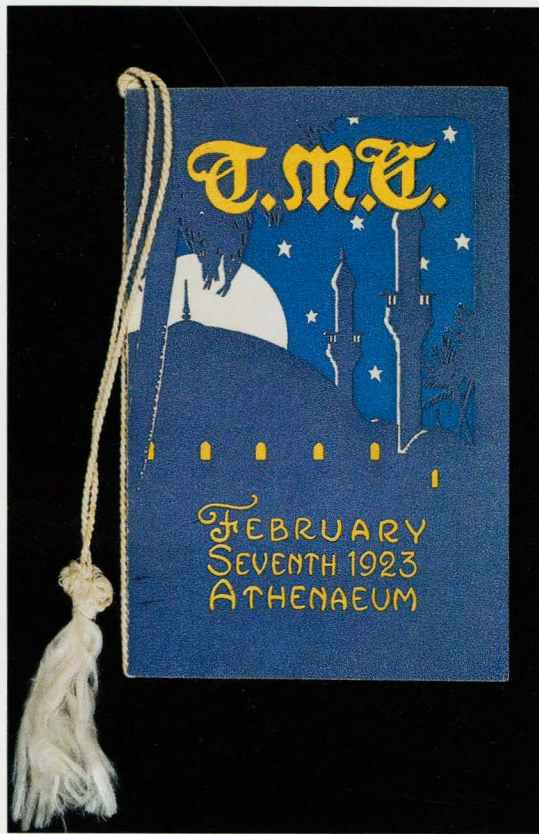
Work on the Mystic ball generally starts shortly after Mardi Gras with the choosing of a theme. The first ball recreated the Arabian Nights, whose mosques and minarets serve as inspiration for the Williams Gallery design of *A Mystical Bal Masqué*. Over the years Mystic has staged the 1838 coronation of Queen Victoria; the wedding of Jeanne de Boulogne and Jean, Duc de Berry, in 13th-century France; opening day at Ascot in 1902; a reception in mid-19th-century China; and Benjamin Franklin's sojourn in Paris. Costumes and throne rooms from the

most illustrious courts of Europe have been conjured up for a night — those of Louis XIV of France, Lorenzo de Medici, and Charles II of England.

A carnival ball — at first only an idea — begins with sketches in a note pad before taking final shape in detailed paintings and drawings. All aspects of a Mystic Club ball are arranged to evoke a particular time and place. The beauty is in the details, a careful harmonizing of sets, costumes, and music — underscored, in the tradition of Carnival, by an element of secrecy. The queen's identity, as with most carnival organizations, is revealed to members and guests the night of the ball.

But this is theater for one evening only. Some of the pageantry can still be recalled in the invitations and programs, favors, costumes, sets, and photographs that have been assembled for the

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*Early Mystic memorabilia:
top, first invitation, Arabian
Nights Ball, 1923, courtesy
Tulane University;
left, 1924 program,
A Mandarin's Joy Ride
(1961.69.7)*

“One of my favorite Mystic themes was the Eglinton tournament in Scotland — a costumed event in 1839 that paid tribute to the age of chivalry. So that year there was a costume ball of a costume ball.”

— John Magill

Curator of *A Mystical Bal Masqué*
75 Years of the Mystic Club

Of approximately 107 carnival krewes in New Orleans, the Mystic Club and 63 other organizations do not parade. The number of people these organizations employ to design and fabricate tableaux and floats is not known, but in 1995 spending for Carnival totaled \$929 million. Tourists brought in 90 percent of this money, according to the most recent annual study by economist Dr. James J. McLain of the University of New Orleans. Carnival krewes spent \$11 million in membership dues on floats, balls, and other activities. Individual krewe members spent another \$11.6 million for parade throws and expenses, and \$25 million on balls, dinner dances, and costumes—including \$2.3 million on tuxedos and tailcoats, \$6.9 million on gowns, and \$245,000 on hairdressers.

The bottom line for 1995 Mardi Gras: the private citizenry of New Orleans invested \$44 million. City and parish governments and the school and transportation systems reaped \$73 million in revenues. In 1995 the economic impact of the world's greatest free party totaled almost \$1 billion. Measured in financial terms, *bals masqués* may seem minor components of the carnival season, but then if measured by weight or volume the heart is a small part of the human body.

Carnival supports the creative community of New Orleans throughout the year. Its ripples extend even into the galleries and vaults of the Collection and the reading room of the Williams Research Center. Not long after mounted police have cleared the revelers from Bourbon Street in the early hours of Ash Wednesday, two things begin happening here. Friends of the Collection graciously remember us with donations of Mardi Gras invitations and designs, favors, posters, and memorabilia—and krewe captains and their assistants begin visiting the reading room to search for images and themes to inspire next year's episode of one of the world's most famous and fascinating festivals.

Source: Dr. James J. McLain *The Economic Impact of Mardi Gras—1995* (New Orleans, 1996).

exhibition, along with the original art of the designers.

A Mystical Bal Masqué: 75 Years of the Mystic Club will present holdings from the Historic New Orleans Collection that include original program designs by Morris Henry Hobbs, costume designs by Leo Van Witsen, and the crown and jewelry worn by Leila Moore Williams. Other items include vintage 1920s photographs from the School of Design and from Tulane University. Also on display are photographs from the collection of artist Jean Seidenberg, who, with Lee Bailey, designed Mystic balls from the 1950s to the 1970s; original set designs from the archive of W. H. B. Spangenberg Studios; and original program and favor designs by artist Patricia Hardin. *A Mystical Bal Masqué: 75 Years of the Mystic Club* is free and open to the public, Tuesdays through Saturdays, through August 16, 1997.

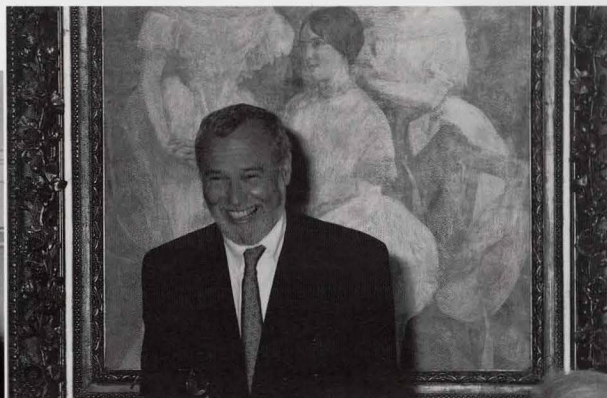
— John Magill

Weekly gallery talks are offered on Wednesdays at 12:30 p.m.



Twelve Men—The Mystic Club Crown Council, 1981, by Dolores Beaufield Alton (1984.233)

A DAY FOR ART



Laura Simon Nelson and George Jordan helped the Collection celebrate the publication of *Complementary Visions: The Laura Simon Nelson Collection at the Historic New Orleans Collection* on October 6. A lecture, book signing, and reception were the capstone of a nine-month-long exhibition of artworks that are part of the more than 300 items in the Nelson donation. Speaking on Louisiana art, critic George Jordan instructed and entertained a large audience in the Counting House before signing *Complementary Visions* along with Mrs. Nelson and curator Judith Bonner. Essays by Mrs. Nelson, Mrs. Bonner, and Mr. Jordan, along with an essay by William H. Gerds, are included in the book.

Top left, Laura Simon Nelson; top right, George Jordan; bottom, George Jordan, Laura Simon Nelson, and Judith H. Bonner

DIRECTOR

In April 1975, the Historic New Orleans Collection and the Louisiana Historical Association created the General L. Kemper Williams



Prizes to encourage excellence in research and writing about Louisiana history. These prizes have honored 19 books, a journal article, and 15 unpublished manuscripts by a distinguished company of historians. Colonial prize-winners include works by Glenn R. Conrad, Kimberly S. Hanger, and Daniel H. Usner, Jr. The Civil War, Reconstruction, and other 19th-century topics won prizes for Carl A. Brasseaux, Ann Patton Malone, Judith Kelleher Schafer, Joe Gray Taylor, and others.

Thomas Becnel, Edward F. Haas, Michael L. Kurtz, and Kim Lacy Rogers dealt with more recent decades, as did last year's honoree, Adam Fairclough, whose *Race and Democracy: The Civil Rights Struggle in Louisiana, 1915-1972* was published by the University of Georgia Press. These annual prizes are decided by a jury of scholars appointed by the Louisiana Historical Association. For more than a decade, this committee was ably chaired by head librarian Florence Jumonville — one of her many contributions to the Collection since 1972. Her committee's sound choices established the Williams Prizes as coveted emblems of literate scholarship and testimony to a flourishing field of study.

Recently the Collection and the Louisiana Historical Association agreed upon refinements to enhance this annual competition. Having fulfilled its purpose of encouraging scholarship, the manuscript prize will be discontinued. Beginning with the competition for 1997, the best book on Louisiana history will be honored with the renamed Kemper and Leila Williams Prize. After the annual prize is announced, we will invite the author to present a public lecture at the Collection later in the spring.

A future issue of the *Quarterly* will report on the Williams Prizes for works completed in 1996, but now, if you will excuse me, there is some last-minute reading to be done.

—Jon Kukla

DISCOVERING A POET: TÉRENCE ROUQUETTE



*Seul ne vient geïmir du
Non! jamais une larme amère
Ne m'arrive hélas! le cercueil enfantin
L'infortuné n'eût point de mère
oh! plaignez le pauvre orphelin.*
Tce. R. + xx.

Books of poetry by Adrien and Dominique Rouquette (59-102, 59-104, 87-681-RL) and unpublished poem by TERENCE ROUQUETTE, with signature (94-24-L)

Two of the better known French-speaking poets in Louisiana during the 19th century were Adrien Rouquette and Dominique Rouquette. Less well known is their brother TERENCE (1818-1859), whose poem “L’Orphelin” was originally attributed to Dominique. The poet’s identity has now come to light in an album contained in the Papers of the Dufour and Woolfley Families.

Adrien Rouquette and his brother Dominique published their work both in Paris and New Orleans. TERENCE, however, is not to be discounted. He wrote occasional bits of verse in ladies’ albums while living in New Orleans but eventually tired of city life and moved to Mandeville after his marriage to Aimée Faure. According to Adrien Rouquette’s *Antoniade*, TERENCE used to tramp the woods with a fishing pole, a gun, or an axe slung over his shoulder, depending on whether he intended to fish, hunt, or clear land on a given day. He nonetheless continued to love poetry and liked to recite it with his brothers. In 1839 he wrote “L’Orphelin” (the orphan). This poem can be found in an album kept by a niece of the Rouquettes — young Marie Adèle Donnet, who became Mme Numa Dufour — housed among the family’s papers in THNOC’s Williams Research Center.

Edward Larocque Tinker’s *Les Ecrits de langue française en Louisiane au XIX^e siècle* attributes the poem to Dominique Rouquette on the basis of a manuscript

copy found among Dominique’s papers. According to the manuscript, the poem was written in New Orleans in 1839. That Dominique Rouquette owned a copy — as did Marie Adèle Donnet — seems an inadequate reason for attributing the poem to this oldest of the Rouquette brothers, particularly in view of the fact that Dominique published his fairly important poetry collections, *Les Meschacébéennes* and *Fleurs d’Amérique*, in 1839 and 1856 respectively. Given the tastes of the era, “L’Orphelin” is a rather good poem that he almost certainly would have included in one or the other of these collections had he been the author. Nor would Marie Adèle have been likely to ascribe it to the wrong uncle. There is a clincher, though. “L’Orphelin” — which has never been published — is in TERENCE Rouquette’s unique handwriting, with the distinctive pen strokes that look like the swirls of a watercolor paintbrush and signed *Tce. R. xxx*. As Auguste Viatte pointed out in his *Histoire littéraire de l’Amérique française*, Edward Larocque Tinker was not above an occasional mistake.

Dominique, Adrien, TERENCE, Félix, and their sister Adèle, whom the boys called Louise, were unusually close. Dominique and Adrien addressed or dedicated poems to each other and their siblings. Thus Adrien’s *Les Savanes* is dedicated to Adèle. His *Antoniade* contains a poem to TERENCE called “Le Pionnier solitaire.” Many of Dominique’s poems are addressed “A M. Adrien R.” [to

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Mr. Adrien R], and there is one “A M. Félix R” [to Mr. Félix R]. The children grew up on Royal Street, also spending time on Bayou St. John and the family plantation in St. Tammany Parish. Their father, Dominique Rouquette, Sr., died in 1819, when they were quite young, and their mother died five years later. Fortunately, relatives stepped in and took care of the orphaned Rouquettes and saw to their education. Nevertheless, there is a profound sense of loss in the brothers’ poetry and an acute awareness of being alone in the world.

Far from being exercises in self-pity, the compositions reveal tender recollections of the parents that the children lost so early in their lives. T rence was a year old when his father died and six when his mother died. His poetry and that of Adrien and Dominique reveals that all three brothers were well abreast of what was going on in French literature at the time. Romanticism was the order of the day — highly personal and meditative — and the brothers were in the mainstream.

As a poet, T rence lacked the verbal dexterity of his more experienced older brothers, but the poem’s emotional content holds the reader and sustains the verse. The theme is stated at the very beginning. Happy is he, the poet announces, who has a loving mother to sit beside his cradle and sing to him. With characteristic Romantic exaggeration, he goes on to declare that children growing up deprived of this sustaining love are wretched individuals who would rather be dead. “Oh, pity the poor orphan,” the poet exclaims in his recurrent refrain. “L’Orphelin” makes it clear that, although other interests kept him from writing as much as his older brothers, T rence Rouquette did have his share of their talent. And “L’Orphelin” comes with its own bit of drama — a wait of more than 150 years to be paired correctly with its creator.

— Harry Redman, Jr.

Sources: Dagmar Renshaw LeBreton, *Chab-ta Ima: The Life of Adrien Emmanuel Rouquette* (Baton Rouge, 1947); Edward Larocque Tinker, *Les Ecrits de langue franaise en Louisiane au XIX^e si cle* (Paris, 1933); Auguste Viatte, *Histoire litt raire de l’Am rique franaise* (Paris, 1954).

Within a Scrapbook’s Pages



(90-7-L)

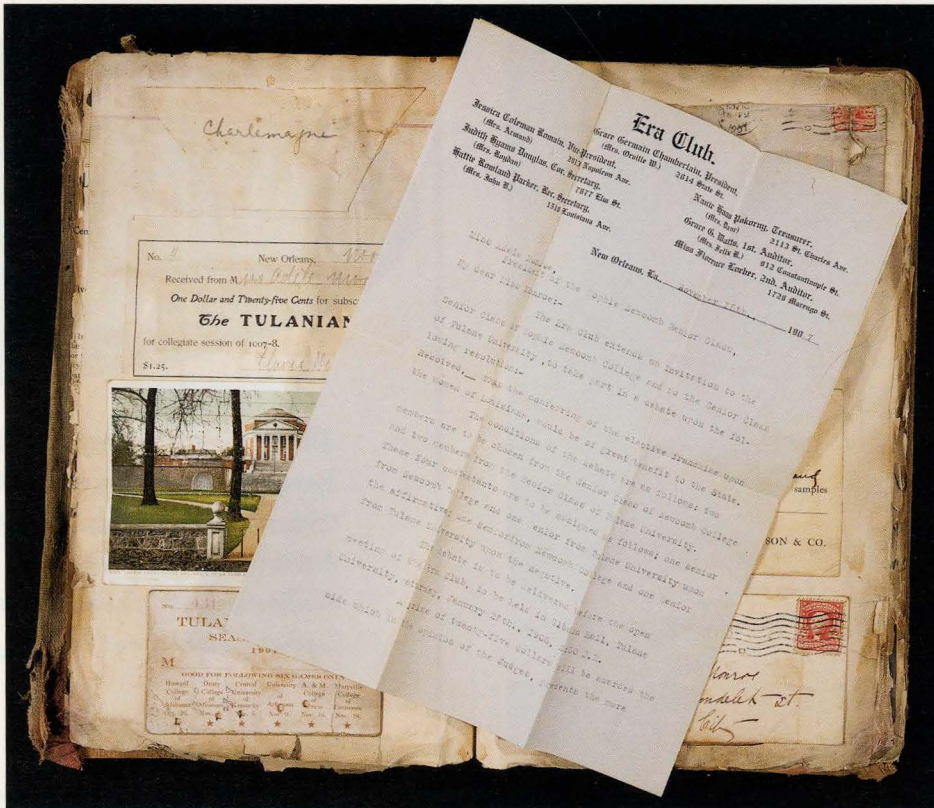
Remember your grandmother’s scrapbook?

So familiar — yet, of all the collecting phenomena in history, the humble scrapbook remains the most overlooked representation of the ordinary past.

When did such books first appear? In the Renaissance, noble schoolboys used a form of the scrapbook to write out speeches and poetry. In the 18th and early 19th centuries, the word *scrapbook* itself appeared, and its use as a means of self-education was available to all with access to any ledger. The evolution of the scrapbook continued as advances were made in color lithography, printing, publishing, and literacy. Thus, an “archaeological” analysis of a scrapbook from 1825 might reveal tiers of manuscript, paste, printed text, and brightly colored cards. Around the mid-1800s, such layering was expanded even more: book-

binders and stationers increased their supplies of blank books and albums, printers responded to new methods of creating colored paper of all sorts, and the number of newspapers increased dramatically, paving the way for what was to become a scrapbook mania throughout Europe and North America.

A few years after the turn of the century, a senior at Newcomb College kept a scrapbook that is now in the Collection’s manuscript holdings at the Williams Research Center. Ad le Monroe (later Mrs. George Williams) turned a ledger into an album that documented her year as class president in 1908 and her passage into adulthood. In this transformation, both of self and of ledger, she clipped and pasted diverse items — articles on suffrage, handwritten formulas for organic chemistry, her



Scrapbook of Adèle Monroe, 1908 (90-7-L), with invitation to attend a debate on woman suffrage

class schedule, theater announcements, letters from young men, chocolate box labels, and other materials.

College women's scrapbooks represent one of the last phases of the scrapbook mania. Overall, late 19th- and early 20th-century albums that survive in great numbers today fall into three major categories: albums focusing on a specific collecting interest — primarily theater, dance, film, or medicine; albums that are a compilation of many kinds of printed-paper ephemera, saved for the novelty of color printing; or albums devoted to the memorabilia of an individual life. Of these three types, the personal scrapbook became increasingly the domain of women. About 1880, scrapbooks were prefabricated with specific headings. One book of this type, "The Girl Graduate: Her Own Book," reflected the emerging interest in the higher education of women. In gathering and selecting what to save, in juxtaposing specific items next to one another, each individual maker fixed an image of herself within the context of

both a changing society and a changing self, leaving a document that is helpful to social historians.

Around the time that young Adèle compiled her book, Newcomb students were pictured in newspaper accounts as studious but still beautiful and charming:

The Picayune hails the fair bachelors of Sophie Newcomb. Bachelors of science and of arts, they are withal girls, bright, tender and sweet. And what if their pretty little heads be stuffed with philosophic theses and parallelopedons and Greek prepositions. There is just as much room as ever for thought of flounces, frills, and furbelows and all the charming frivolities of girl life.

Other local articles attested to the fact that, though educated, Newcomb's students were still attractive and indeed made better wives than uneducated women. Scrapbooks, perhaps, let women reflect upon this combination of images. Adèle's scrapbook shows a young

woman content with the community she had within the college walls — fun-loving but more serious about basketball and academic courses than the newspaper descriptions would have one believe.

A scrapbook can offer information that is not accessible in other histories. Adèle's scrapbook tells of the work of Newcomb's first librarian, a person undocumented in almost any other source on the college. Similarly, scrapbooks of Adèle's classmates show the work of Newcomb's gardener, cook, and laundresses.

Scrapbooks also revealed how women still attended to the societal roles expected of them. The keeping of scrapbooks was condoned publicly in 1897, when the New Orleans *Times-Picayune* promoted such an activity in the middle of the society column, writing:

A Memory Book is an interesting tablet for the girl of the present time to keep.... One New Orleans girl who is famous for her beauty and favoritism in the social world, and who has many times been selected to take part in the most prominent social functions of the carnival season and other affairs, has a record of her social triumphs perpetuated in her memory book, as well as several very charming sketches of herself.... Among other things which add to the interest of this memory book also are signatures and poems dedicated to herself... which will no doubt give the owner great pleasure in the years to come when she will open its pages; reminders of a happy past.

Resistance and conformity — both are found within the scrapbook's pages. Adèle Monroe's own packed book reveals a young educated woman in the early years of the century, looking backward and forward at the same time.

—Susan Tucker
Curator of Books and Records
Center for Research on Women
Newcomb College

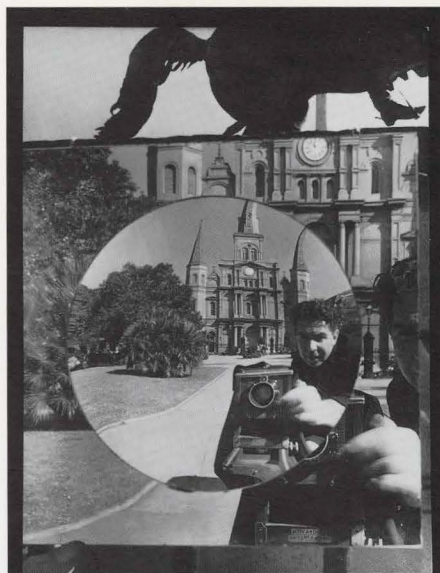
Sources: *Daily Picayune*, June 14, 1894; *Times-Picayune*, June 13, 1897.

The late 1930s were a particularly fertile period for the visual and literary arts in New Orleans,

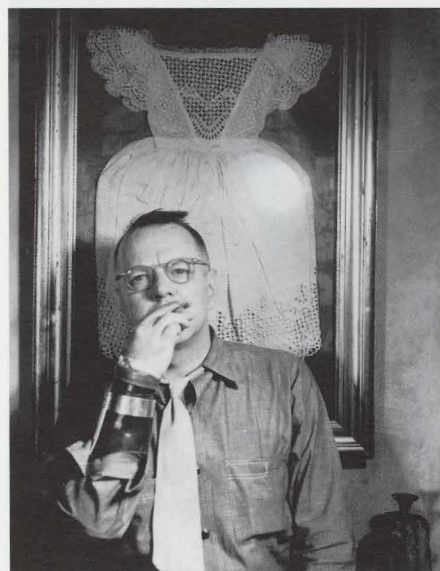
spurred by the federal government's commitment to support creative artists during the Depression and, more important, by the considerable talents of writers, painters, sculptors, and photographers. Lyle Saxon, leader of the Federal Writers

Project in Louisiana, had achieved prominence in the 1920s and 1930s as a writer and popular historian. A young Clarence John Laughlin, at the beginning of a career that would secure his place in the not-yet-century-old medium of photography, was fast becoming a champion of photographic modernism in New Orleans. Saxon and Laughlin were to collaborate on a book project for Houghton-Mifflin until Saxon's failing health forced him to abandon the project. Laughlin, however, continued, with the advice and encouragement of his friend Weeks Hall and paired this time with author and southern man of letters David Cohn.

The Clarence John Laughlin Archive housed in the Williams Research Center is a trove of correspondence that illuminates the twists and turns on the path to the publication of *New Orleans: And Its Living Past* (the title of the final work) in 1941. Many of the letters about Laughlin's hopes, fears, and desires for this work were written to Weeks Hall, himself a painter and photographer, whose family home, The Shadows, in New Iberia, is now a property of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Laughlin wrote to his friend:



Self-Portrait of the Photographer as a Metaphysician, 1941, by Clarence John Laughlin (1981.247.3.339)



Possessed by the Past, 1939 (portrait of Weeks Hall), by Clarence John Laughlin (1983.47.3.487)

According to a recent communication from Houghton Mifflin Co, it seems that Mr. Lyle Saxon is going to be asked to relinquish his contract. He has tied up the New Orleans book for over two years (although he was ill part of the time, of course.) I sincerely cannot understand his attitude....I certainly cannot see any reason why I should not have gotten credit for the Notes [to the photographs] on the title page of the book — if I had really written them myself.

CLARENCE JOHN LAUGHLIN HIS FIRST PUBLISHED WORK

*The Historic New Orleans Collection at Tulane University, in partnership with Houghton Mifflin Brown and Company, will publish Houghton Mifflin's first published work by Clarence John Laughlin in the fall of 1941. The book, *New Orleans: And Its Living Past*, by Lyle Saxon, David Cohn, Lawrence, Andrei Codrescu, Ellen G. Williams, Albert Belisle Davis, and John Williams. Look at Laughlin and his first published work.*

The concern that Laughlin had for his written contributions to the work would be repeated throughout his dealings with this publisher and in each successive publishing venture.

While it is evident that Laughlin had direct communication with Houghton-Mifflin about nearly every aspect of the book (its contents, both photographic and written, his expenses, the design and method of reproducing his work), there are few letters between Laughlin and Saxon, and just one between Laughlin and Cohn in the Collection's archive. A note to Laughlin from Paul Brooks, the managing editor at Houghton-Mifflin, dated September 25, 1940, notified Laughlin of the change in authors. Weeks Hall, who was acquainted with Cohn, wrote to him about Laughlin, saying in part:

One of my serious solaces in these last few years has been the prints of Clarence John Laughlin, and now he writes me that you are to have something to do with a book in which they are to come out....What I want to say is that I am so glad that you will work on this splendid collection....

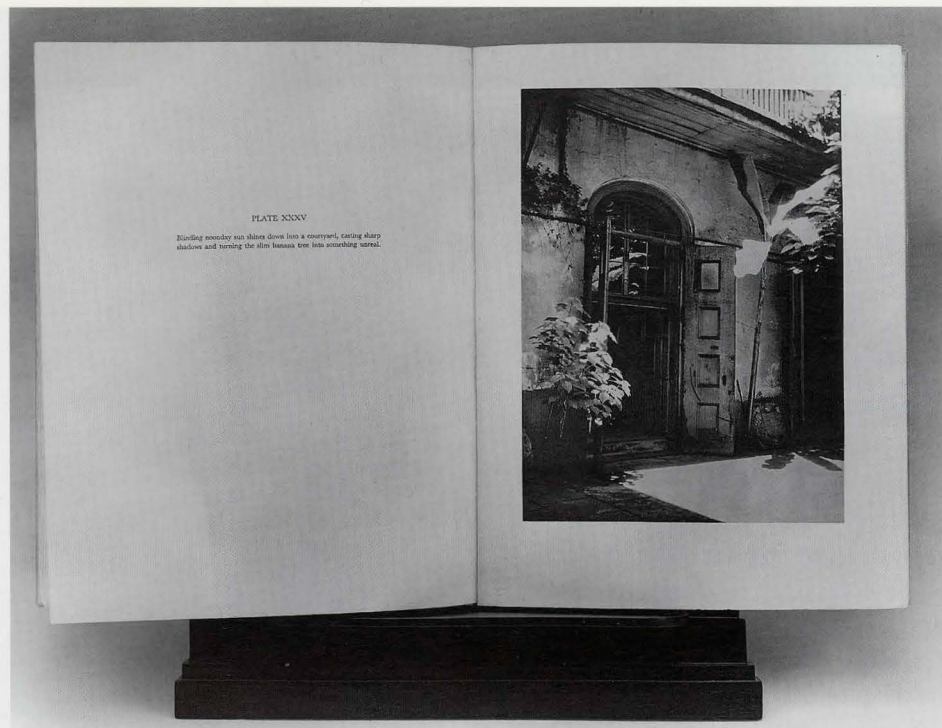
JOHN LAUGHLIN: BEST BOOK

and Bulfinch Press, a division of Little, Brown and Company, publisher of *Counting House of Ruins: The Photography of John Laughlin* of 1997, with essays by Jon Kukla, John Wilchrist, Shirley Ann Grau, Jonathan Wood. The following article takes a look at the book.

Laughlin had specific ideas on the way the book should be produced, which were sometimes at odds with the wishes of the publisher. He was greatly concerned with the treatment of his “notes” to the photographs. In another letter to Brooks he wrote:

I'd like to know exactly what [Cohn] plans to do with my Notes and Foreword? Re-write them merely?...The Notes and Foreword for this book are my personal property — they are not covered by my contract, and were written by me at Mr. Saxon's request and without any promise of special remuneration from Houghton Mifflin Co....I have decided that the Foreword has definitely no place in this book...

There were no more letters about the book for nearly a year, then in the summer of 1941 Laughlin's concerns again surfaced. He wrote to Brooks with a flurry of questions asking about his revised notes, the exact number of pictures to be used, whether his titles for the pictures would be retained, if the



Laughlin's photograph of the Counting House of the Historic New Orleans Collection, before restoration, from *New Orleans: And Its Living Past* (73-358-L)

images would bleed off the page, what size they would be, when would he see proofs, and if his original title *Old New Orleans Seen Anew* would be used.

During this period, Laughlin continued to use Weeks Hall as a sounding board, not only about the ups and downs with Houghton-Mifflin, but about his other pursuits as well: his initiation of a new series of photographs, his exhibition at the Julien Levy Gallery in New York, and prospective employment as a fashion photographer with *Vogue* magazine. Exchanges of letters between the two in July and August of 1941 highlight these and other concerns.

Upon receiving the final revisions for the book in September, Laughlin wrote once more to Paul Brooks: “[Cohn] has simply extracted the bare facts from my Notes — ‘lifting,’ at times, whole lines of my text — and left it at that. Any school boy could have produced that sort of ‘revision’ in a few days.” There is no record that Cohn and Laughlin ever communicated after the former's brief letter in October 1940, although some time later Laughlin wrote to Hall that Cohn had visited the city in mid-1941 without bothering to look him up.

In spite of not meeting Laughlin's expectations, *New Orleans: And Its Living Past* was an exemplary book for its day: published in oversize format, slipcased, and offered in a limited edition of 1,000 copies signed by Laughlin and Cohn. It sold for the steep price of \$10.00. More important, the book gave Laughlin his first wide public as a photographer of compelling individuality whose approach could capture the essence of architecture.

On December 5, 1941, Brooks wrote to Laughlin at 821 Leontine Street in New Orleans: “*New Orleans: And Its Living Past* is published today with an advance sale of 443 copies.” Laughlin began work on a book called *Lost New Orleans* soon after he realized the Houghton-Mifflin book would not meet his critical expectations. As early as May 1944, he was shopping the project to J. J. Augustin in New York. The manuscript was never published and is part of the Laughlin Archive at the Collection.

— John H. Lawrence

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).

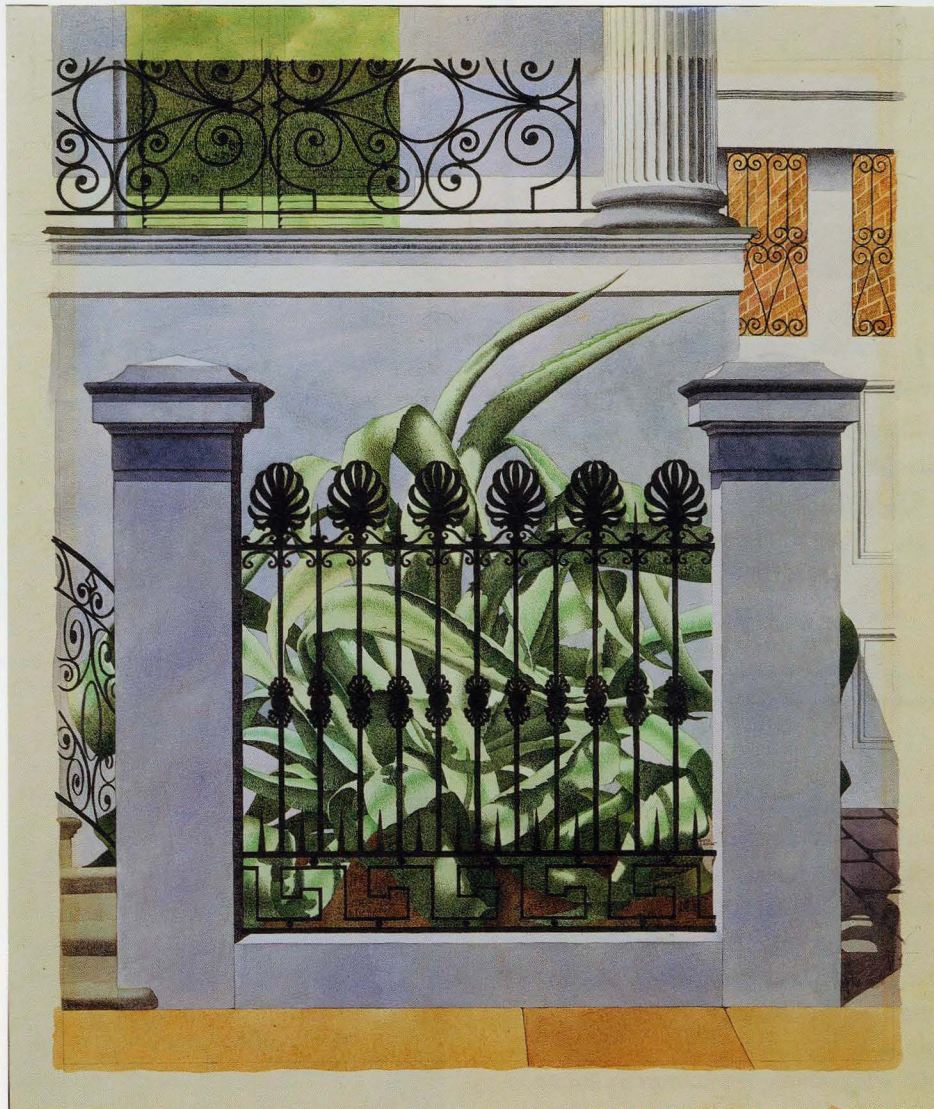
Cataloged materials available to researchers include books, manuscripts, paintings, prints, drawings, maps, photographs, and artifacts about the history and culture of New Orleans, Louisiana, and the Gulf South. Each year the Collection adds thousands of items to its holdings by donation or purchase.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

CURATORIAL

George Jordan has donated several items in memory of Juanita Elfert, long-time New Orleans art and antique dealer. The donation includes photographs of Elfert and her French Quarter shop, Country Antiques, as well as a relief sculpture of Albert Rieker, probably executed by Alexander Calder. An anonymous donation of a watercolor by Richard Fourchy, ca. 1890, depicting the Thibaut grocery at St. Ann and Bourbon Streets, is also in memory of Juanita Elfert.

■ A watercolor by the late Boyd Cruise, who served as the Collection's first director from 1971 to 1974, is a recent donation from Clare Yancey Crews, Catherine Yancey Crews, Janet Crews Barrow, and Elinor Clare Crews. His watercolors are distinguished by exceptional drafting skills and meticulous attention to historical detail, perhaps best demonstrated in his renditions of New Orleans buildings and street scenes.

Caged Cactus (1945) depicts a portion of the Xiques Mansion in the 500 block of Dauphine Street in the French Quarter. Cruise painted a full view of this same subject in 1947 using a more traditional treatment. The present painting has an element of surrealism: a large agave cactus, whose leaves



Caged Cactus: Xiques Mansion by Boyd Cruise (1996.49)

appear as writhing tentacles, presses the limits of the iron fence that attempts to contain it. The painting is a slightly sinister testament to the luxuriant vegetation in New Orleans, which, left unchecked, seems capable of spreading over everything in its path.

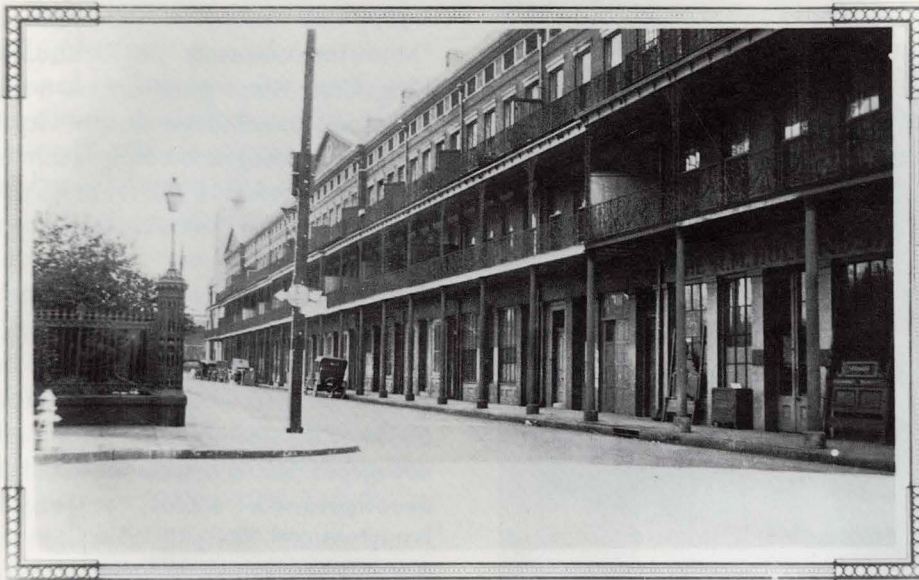
■ Former staff member Sarah Jumel has donated five serigraphs by Robert Gordy. The artist's proofs of bathers in a landscape are done in the highly stylized and patterned treatment that Gordy popularized during the 1970s.

■ Several years ago the Alfred and Elizabeth Bendiner Foundation in New York donated a number of works by Alfred Bendiner, a New York architect

and artist. The foundation has augmented that gift with a group of 11 drawings, watercolors, and lithographs made by Bendiner during his visits to New Orleans between 1950 and 1964.

■ Thirty-two float designs by Alice Peake Reiss have been donated by the School of Design. Reiss, who worked for many years for several carnival krewes, designed floats for the Rex organization between 1948 and 1968. Florence Parker Whitten has given a photograph of the dignitaries of a St. Patrick's Day Parade in the Irish Channel on March 16, 1957, by an unknown photographer.

■ Other donations of photographs document the city's more serious side. From



The upper Pontalba building at Jackson Square, Vieux Carré, New Orleans (1996.51.13)

Lin Emery comes a group of 92 photographs relating to the political career of Mayor deLesseps Story "Chep" Morrison, taken between 1940 and 1964. A collection of snapshots showing the Vieux Carré, New Orleans street scenes, the 1927 flood, Beauregard Plantation, and other residences come to the Collection through the generosity of Ibbey Biby. The Historical Museum, Metro-Dade Cultural Center, in Miami, Florida, has given two views of weather surveyors maps for a WPA project sponsored by the U.S. Weather Bureau in New Orleans, between 1939 and 1943.

— Judith H. Bonner and John H. Lawrence

LIBRARY

Helen Keller (1880-1968), stricken with an illness that left her blind, deaf, and dumb when she was 19 months old, made a remarkable transformation from a child tortured and isolated by her infirmities to an eloquent spokeswoman for the disabled. *The Miracle Worker*, the 1960 play by William Gibson, chronicles her early training. Under intensive tutelage from Anne Sullivan, a teacher from Boston's Perkins School for the Blind who became her lifelong companion, Keller learned to read and write in Braille and graduated *cum laude* from Radcliffe College in 1904. She then



Brochure (96-501-RL). See page 12.

devoted her life to aiding the deaf and blind and toured the world extensively to promote education for the handicapped. Keller had learned to speak by placing her fingers on her teacher's larynx to "listen" to the vibrations of spoken sounds, but because her voice was never fully intelligible, she employed a translator when she lectured.

Recently acquired is a brochure announcing Helen Keller's New Orleans appearance at the Orpheum Theatre for the week beginning Monday, April 11, 1921, featuring her photograph and the description, "The Most Talked-of



Brochure to announce Keller visit, 1921 (96-491-RL)

Woman in the World." She was accompanied by her tutor, Anne Sullivan Macy, now married. Keller was the headliner on a bill which included vaudevillians Edith Clasper and Boys, Billy Arlington and Company, Leon Paulus, and the LeGrohs.

■ Stanford Emerson Chaillé (1830-1911), Natchez-born physician, research scientist, lecturer, and administrator, was instrumental in the development of medical services and education in New Orleans. His address to the graduates of the Medical Department of the University of Louisiana (Tulane University) on March 29, 1882, entitled "The Importance of Introducing the Study of Hygiene into the Public and Other Schools," has been added to the holdings. He states that if a single generation were properly trained in hygienic practices, instead of relying on the "foolish counsel of ignorant nurses, of prejudiced grand-mothers, and of silly and officious neighbors," one-fourth of the babies who died in New Orleans before their first birthday could be saved. Chaillé published more than 150 articles, co-authored the new constitutions and by-laws for the medical societies of Orleans Parish (1878) and the state of Louisiana (1879), and served as editor of the *New Orleans Medical and Surgical Journal*.



Fan owned by author Grace King (96-83-L)

■ The American Frog Canning Company, “Originators of Canned Frog Legs and Frog à la Queen,” was located at 3800 Jefferson Highway during the 1930s. Recently acquired are several of their brochures promoting frog raising as a means of increasing income. Under such titles as “The Truth About Frog Raising...,” “Important Questions Answered,” and “Extra Breeders Given!,” the company outlines its plan for supplying breeding frogs, for creating the ideal environment for frogs in the backyard, and for selling the mature frogs back to the company. Testimonials are included from satisfied frog farmers throughout the country.

■ *La Maison Française* (LSU, 1981) is an illustrated booklet that chronicles the history of Louisiana State University’s French House, a student housing facility that promoted immersion in French culture. The narrative is drawn from newspaper accounts, a letter written by a former student-resident, and the recollections of Anita Olivier Morrison, “chatelaine” at French House for 23 years and mother of deLesseps “Chep” Morrison, former New Orleans mayor. The offices of LSU Press are now located in the former French House.

■ Mrs. John E. Walker has donated an

invitation for the commencement “hop” held on June 30, 1869, at the Louisiana State Seminary near Alexandria. A donation of several carnival booklets representing various krewes between 1939 and 1949 is from Mrs. Coralie G. Davis. A copy of the 1996 directory which commemorates the 75th anniversary of St. Matthias Catholic Church is a gift of Mary Ann Marx.

— Pamela D. Arceneaux

MANUSCRIPTS

Personal possessions, letters, and scrapbooks that belonged to several distinguished Louisiana authors have been added to the manuscripts holdings.

■ Grace King (1852-1932) is one of the few southern literary figures of her era to gain distinction writing both local history and fiction. David C. Coxe, King’s great-grandnephew, has donated several items including tickets to social events, monographs, an autograph book, photographs, and letters from family members and friends to Grace King, her mother, her sisters (Nan, Nina, and May), and others. Forty-five letters from S. A. Gayarré to King chronicle a cherished friendship. At the outset of the correspondence, the letters are signed “As always your friend,” a complimentary

closing that changed over the years to “Much love devotedly.” R. Richardson King, Grace King’s grandnephew, made a donation toward the purchase of a legal document relating to the King family as well as a letter (1890) from Susey Clemmons, Mark Twain’s daughter, to Grace King.

■ Mollie Moore Davis (1844-1909), born in Talladega, Alabama, and raised in Texas, moved to New Orleans in 1879 when her husband, Maj. Thomas E. Davis became an editor of a local newspaper. She is known for detailed descriptions of a cross section of Louisiana and Texas life expressed in poetry, short stories, sketches, novels, and informal historical writing. Her home at 406 Royal Street served as a literary salon where writers and artists shared ideas and mutual interests. A small ledger containing notes, guest list, and wedding preparations for the marriage of Davis’s daughter, Mary Pearl, to Paul Frederick Jahncke; photographs; published letters from Davis to Katherine L. Minor; news clippings; and Davis genealogy booklets were recently acquired at auction and will strengthen current Davis holdings.

■ Thomas Wharton Collens (1812-1879) wrote newspaper columns and books primarily concerned with social issues. Interest in developing social reform led Collens to study law; he was admitted to the bar at age 21. After serving as clerk and reporter of the state senate, he acted as chief deputy clerk of federal circuit court and eventually became district attorney of Orleans Parish. Continuing his literary efforts throughout his career as a district court judge, he wrote a play depicting the trials of Frenchmen seeking to gain independence from the Spanish authority in 1769. He was also the author of *Humanics* and other works that advocated a Utopian society. Copies of his publications and several scrapbooks of letters, notes, original drafts, and news clippings compiled by Collens (his own and those of others) are included in the donation by his great-grandchildren, Thomas Wharton Collens and Frances

Collens Curtis. One scrapbook contains columns from several newspapers penned by "Fabiola" that family lore attributes to Collens's wife, Marie Aménaide Milbrou Collens.

■ Opera in New Orleans has a distinguished 200-year history. During the 19th century, the American premieres of French and Italian operas often came to New Orleans — the foundation of a strong operatic tradition that continues today. The New Orleans Opera Association has donated scrapbooks documenting the organization's activities during the years 1943 to 1995. Included are news clippings, programs, invitations, and fliers. A microfilm copy of the scrapbooks has also been acquired for researchers.


■ John Milliken Parker (1863-1939), born in Bethel Church, Mississippi, moved with his family to New Orleans in 1871 where his father was a successful cotton factor. Parker ran for governor in 1916 as the Progressive Party candidate. His grandson, Blanc Parker, donated copy books, brochures, and ledger scrapbooks containing news clippings related to Parker's unsuccessful attempt. Each scrapbook is devoted to a single Louisiana newspaper, with one composed solely of political cartoons from several papers. Parker's 1920 campaign as the Democratic nominee was successful; he served as governor until 1924.

— M. Theresa Lefevre

IN BRIEF

■ A group of 15 artworks in various media relating to New Orleans cemeteries, *Ars Longa, Vita Brevis: Artists' Response to New Orleans Cemeteries*, is on view at the Williams Research Center through March 8. Included in the exhibition are a wool tapestry of ghosts in St. Louis Cemetery, photo-prints by Clarence John Laughlin and Ralston Crawford, drawings by James Gallier, Sr., and J. N. B. de Pouilly, and works by Zella Funck on loan from Estudio/Gallery.

■ On March 11-13, the Collection will host a workshop presented by the Northeast Document Conservation Center on preservation microfilming. The three-day, intensive training program is made possible by grants from the Pew Charitable Trusts, the H. W. Wilson Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Humanities. For further information, please contact Susan Wrynn, Director of Reprographic Services, at NEDCC at 508-470-1010 or wrynn@nedcc.org.



THE HISTORIC NEW ORLEANS COLLECTION QUARTERLY

Editors:

Patricia Brady
Louise C. Hoffman

Head of Photography:

Jan White Brantley

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

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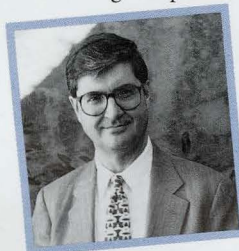
Maureen
Donnelly

Maureen Donnelly, curator of the Williams Residence, has accepted the position of curator of decorative arts at the Louisiana State Museum beginning in January. During her 15 years at the Collection, Ms. Donnelly has held various positions in the registrar's office, serving as senior registrar before assuming full-time curatorial duties for the Williams Residence. She is the author of *Preservation Guide 4: Furniture*. She has studied metals conservation at the Winterthur Museum and is also the author of *Preservation Guide 7: Silver*. She was selected by the American Association of Museums and the Institute of Museum Services to be a Museum Assessment Programs peer reviewer. A graduate of Newcomb College, Ms. Donnelly is a potter and contributed an article on Newcomb Pottery to the summer 1996 issue of the *Quarterly*.



John
Lawrence

John H. Lawrence, director of museum programs, has been selected as photographer-in-residence at the Ecole Nationale de la Photographie in Arles, France, for a month in February. His time will be divided between teaching and private study.



Alfred
Lemmon

Dr. Alfred E. Lemmon, curator of manuscripts, received the Grace King Award from Save Our Cemeteries for leadership in the field of cemetery preservation. He was also honored for his contributions to Spanish-

FLORENCE M. JUMONVILLE ACCEPTS POSITION AT UNO



Head librarian Florence M. Jumonville has accepted the post of head of Louisiana and special collections at the Earl K. Long Library at the University of New Orleans. She began her new duties in January.

Miss Jumonville came to the Collection in 1972 during the tenure of THNOC's first director Boyd Cruise. She left in the mid-1970s to serve as librarian at Belle Chasse State School, returning to the Collection in 1978. She has seen the institution grow from a handful of people managing a small collection of historical materials into a major regional research center employing more than 50 staff members. She is the author of the comprehensive *Bibliography of New Orleans Imprints, 1764-1864*, published in 1989, and the editor of *Bound to Please: Selected Rare Books About Louisiana from the Historic New Orleans Collection*, 1982, as well as the contributor of numerous articles to scholarly publications. Recently she was invited to present a paper in England at a conference sponsored by the Cambridge Project for the Book. She was elected to membership in the American Antiquarian Society and was appointed as alternate delegate to the White House Conference on Library and Information Services. Miss Jumonville also presented a paper at the Society for the History of Authorship, Reading, and Publishing at the Library of Congress. She has served as editor of the Louisiana Library Association's quarterly, *LLA Bulletin*, and on the Advisory Council of the State Library of Louisiana. Miss Jumonville is a doctoral candidate at the University of New Orleans.

language publications and activities by the Sociedad Española.

Round Table Club; **Pamela D. Arceneaux**, Rotary Club; **Jon Kukla**, Orléans Club.

IN THE COMMUNITY

Jan White Brantley is the secretary of the New Orleans/Gulf South chapter of the American Society of Media Photographers. One of her photographs is on the cover of the spring 1996 issue of the *Xavier Review*. **John Lawrence** served on a panel organized by the Arts Council of New Orleans and as technical expert for a project on the work of photographer Florestine Perrault Collins, funded by the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities. **Doug MacCash** is an advisor to the Fine Arts Department of Loyola University. **Kate Holliday** presented a paper at a meeting of the Louisiana Archives and Manuscripts Association. **Pamela D. Arceneaux** was interviewed about the Williams Research Center for an article in "Vieux Carré Verité." **Judith H. Bonner** was interviewed about William and Ellsworth Woodward on WBYU.

ARTICLES PUBLISHED

Doug MacCash, *Art News*; **Judith Bonner**, **John Lawrence**, **Kate Holliday**, **David Dibble**, *New Orleans Art Review*; **Bettie Pendley**, *Preservation in Print*.

SPEECHES

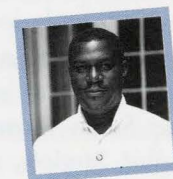
Maureen Donnelly, Southwest Pottery Collectors Association; **Judith Bonner**,

MEETINGS

Judith Bonner, South Central Modern Language Association Conference and the Southeastern Museums Conference; at the SEMC she served as chairman of the curators committee exhibition competition. **Dr. Patricia Brady**, Southern Historical Association; **Carol Bartels**, Louisiana Archives and Manuscripts Association; **Kate Holliday** and **Carol Bartels**, a workshop, "Automating Finding Aids," sponsored by the Society of American Archivists; **Jon Kukla**, American Historical Association.

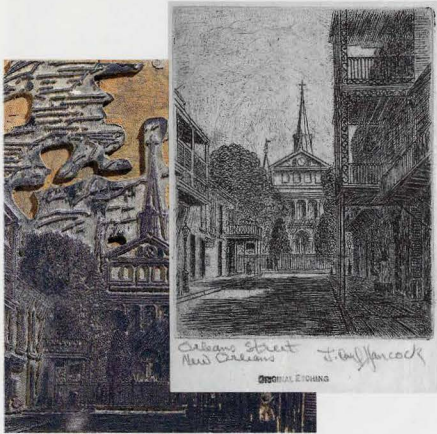
AT THE COLLECTION

Eileen Thornton has accepted the position of assistant librarian left vacant by **Jessica Travis**, now with the Jefferson Parish Library. **Kelvin Joseph** has joined the maintenance staff.



Kelvin Joseph

THE SHOP



Orleans Street print and line-engraving block

Original prints of French Quarter scenes by James Carl Hancock (1898-1966) are available in the museum store. Also for sale are the line-engraving blocks that match these prints. For 30 years, beginning in the 1930s, Hancock traveled throughout the South sketching landscape and architecture. His New Orleans prints depict the Brulatour Courtyard, Labranche building, Rouquette house, Pirates Alley, St. Louis Cathedral, and other familiar landmarks of the Vieux Carré.

The Shop is also offering several items that relate to William and Ellsworth Woodward, subjects of the last exhibition. The Collection's television documentary *Brothers in Art: Ellsworth and William Woodward & Their Life in the South* (which premiered on WYES in October and will be featured again in January) and the exhibition of the Laura Simon Nelson Collection highlighted the works of these talented artists. Videotapes of the documentary, as well as colorful post-cards of seven scenes of the French Quarter by William Woodward are now available for purchase.

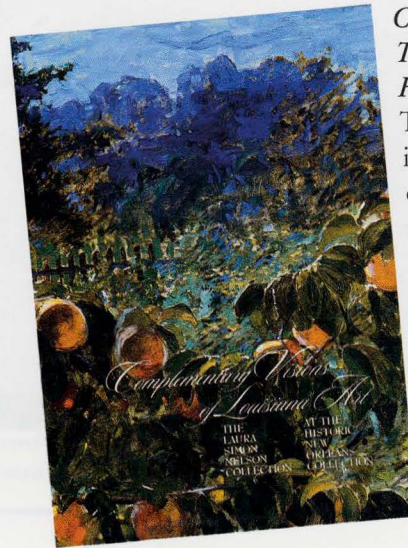
Also available are three Ellsworth Woodward engravings — Madame John's Legacy, the French Market, and the Old St. Mary's Market — printed by Professor William J. Kitchens of Loyola University's Visual Arts Department from plates at the Collection. Call 504-598-7147 for more information.



WOODWARD DOCUMENTARY RECEPTION

Gathered at the Williams Research Center in October for an advance viewing of the WYES-TV documentary, *Brothers in Art: Ellsworth and William Woodward & Their Life in the South*, are Jon Kukla and Peggy Scott Laborde, executive producers; Armand Le Gardeur, whose firm, Carl E. Woodward Inc., was the major underwriter of the film; and Karen Snyder, producer-director of *Brothers in Art*.

NEW PUBLICATION FEATURES THE LAURA SIMON NELSON COLLECTION



Complementary Visions of Louisiana Art: The Laura Simon Nelson Collection at the Historic New Orleans Collection

The Collection's latest publication provides an in-depth look at Laura Simon Nelson's major donation of Louisiana art and places these artworks in the context of the holdings of the institution. The book includes essays by Mrs. Nelson and by critic George Jordan on the Nelson donation, an essay on the permanent collection by THNOC curator Judith H. Bonner, and an essay on the significance of Louisiana art by art historian William H. Gerdtz. *Complementary Visions* (96 pages, 80 color illustrations, 9x12) is available in both hard-cover and soft-cover from the museum store,

533 Royal Street, New Orleans, LA 70130.

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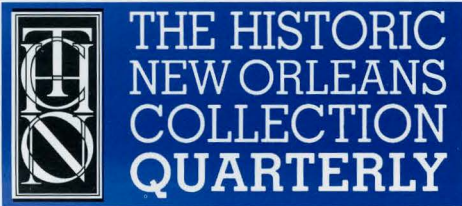
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MYSTIC CLUB EXHIBITION ON VIEW

A Mystical Bal Masqué: 75 Years of the Mystic Club opened January 14 in the Williams Gallery and remains on view through August 16, 1997. Included in the exhibition are costumes, sketches of set designs, invitations, photographs, and memorabilia that provide a behind-the-scenes look at the creation of a carnival ball. The Mystic Club, a non-parading krewe, stages elaborate tableau balls based upon historical events.



Drawing of king's costume, 1937, by H. C. Warren, for 1938 ball, Her Majesty's Masque to Commemorate the Centennial of Queen Victoria's Accession to Her Throne (1983.117)



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