THE HISTORIC NEW ORLEANS COLLECTION QUARTERLY

Volume X, Number 3 *Summer 1992*

Yo El Rey: S.

Spanish Louisiana In The Time Of Jean François Merieult 1762-1803

(Detail), Carte du Mexique, et de la Nouvelle Espagne… *(1972.2)*

EXHIBITION IN WILLIAMS GALLERY

JULY 14, 1992 – JANUARY 8, 1993

Half of the destroyed structures are already safely and solidly rebuilt, and the quantity of existing large and commodious commercial buildings foreshadows prosperous times.

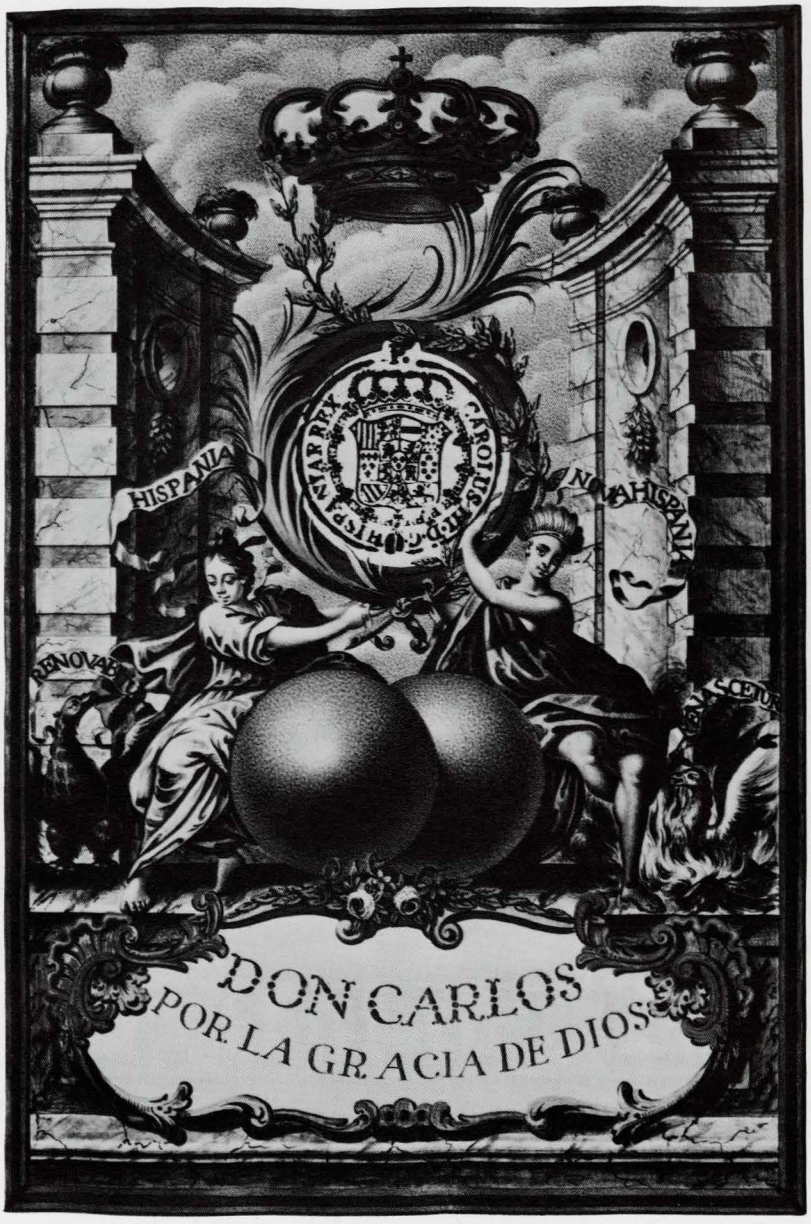
So wrote James Pitot about the fire of 1794 – New Orleans's second fiery catastrophe during the Spanish colonial period. Pitot's memoir, *Observations on the Colony of Louisiana from 1796 to 1802,* now on exhibit, is part of the wealth of documents, maps, and written accounts relating to the colony of "Luisiana" under the rule of Carlos III and Carlos IV of Spain, gathered for *Yo El Rey: Spanish Louisiana in the Time of Jean François Merieult, 1762-1803.*

Merieult, a prosperous merchant during the Spanish period, built the house that is now the site of the Collection's history galleries. Work on Merieult's eponymous building on Royal Street – the third on the site – commenced in 1792; this year, bicentennial of the Merieult House, prompted the Collection to offer an exhibit about colonial Louisiana under the flag of Spain. "Yo El Rey" ("I the King") of the exhibition title refers to the king's signature on official documents that touched almost every aspect of life in the colony.

"Louisiane," a slice of France in the wilderness, was ceded to Spain in 1762. Louis XV had persuaded his Bourbon cousin Carlos III to accept Louisiana; reluctantly, he agreed. Transferring the colony to Spain allowed France to position herself more advantageously before peace negotiations got underway to end the Seven Years' War. Time would prove that the territory was a well-placed buffer between Spanish Mexico and the English colonies to the east. But Spanish rule – finally asserted toward the end of the 1760s – was marked by an inauspicious beginning: a revolt, an expelled Spanish dignitary, and death by firing squad for some of the rebel leaders.

Members of the local Superior Council, unhappy with the King's governor, Antonio de Ulloa, had defied Ulloa's authority and forced him to leave. What happened next is a familiar story in Louisiana history. General Alejandro O'Reilly, an Irishman in the service of the king of Spain, arrived and put an end to the uprising, replacing the Superior Council with the Cabildo to oversee the affairs of the colony.

Fortunately for Louisiana, the governorships that followed – those of Unzaga, Gálvez, Miró, Carondelet, and Gayoso – saw a return to a milder regime. Manuel Gayoso de Lemos, governor of the Natchez district before his tenure in Louisiana from 1797 to 1799, brought about what scholar Jack D. L. Holmes refers to as the "halcyon days of Spanish rule."



The Spanish proved to be able administrators, contributing to the colony on many levels. A boon to the historian has been Spanish insistence on recording and preserving practically all their transactions. Socially, the Spaniards entered into the customs of the colony by marrying into the local families and by speaking the French language. They left a visual legacy as well. Much of the architecture of the Vieux Carré is of the Spanish period. Two devastating fires had destroyed many earlier structures; and the Spanish architectural vernacular – courtyards, thick walls, arcades to protect from the heat – was a felicitous response to Louisiana's long summers.

The Patent of Nobility, *1783, awarded to Bernardo de Gálvez, an illuminated manuscript now in the Collection's holdings, contains illustrations such as the one at left (page 2),* Union of Spain and New Spain. *Pictured at right is the coat of arms authorized for Gálvez for his victories in Florida against the British (MSS 314).*

THE HISTORIC NEW ORLEANS COLLECTION QUARTERLY

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Visitors to *Yo El Rey* will find first-hand accounts of Spanish Louisiana: a report by Santiago Disdier from 1762; Francisco Bouligny's *Memoria* of 1776; and James Pitot's *Observations* of 1796-1802. Philip Pittman, whose *Present State of the European Settlements on the Mississippi* is on display, wrote the first English-language account (1770) concerning settlements in the Louisiana Territory.

Also on view is the *Diario* of Bernardo de Gálvez and his patent of nobility; his victories in Florida against the British earned him the royal coat of arms that is contained in an illuminated manuscript now in the Collection's holdings. The Gálvez Patent, as it is known, is divided into five escutcheons set off by crimson, gold, and silver fields; the escutcheon on the lower right depicts the brigantine *Galveztown,* a man, and the motto "Yo Solo" ("I Alone").

Understanding almost 40 years of Spanish colonial life sometimes comes from small insights. Take social courtesies, for example. The notes from Carondelet to Francisco Bouligny – he regrets a dinner party, he accepts an invitation to drink chocolate – and one from Gálvez – he thanks Madame Bouligny for her congratulatory message – evoke a feeling of immediacy, like catching history out of the corner of your eye. All three letters are on view.

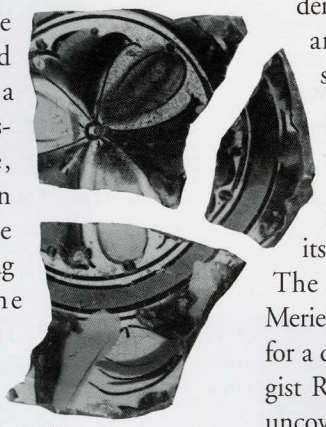
The name of Jean François Merieult (recorded as Juan Francisco, a sign of the times) is included in the chimney-tax records of 1796, a small reminder of the Merieult House that inspired the current exhibition.

In his *Observations,* James Pitot offered a point of view that often found fault with the Spanish administrations. "I have done everything that was expected of me to know the truth," he wrote in his introduction. "The errors of the Spanish government in Louisiana," he continued, "are those that perpetuate the mediocrity of a country." Wishing to "rescue Louisiana from oblivion," he had hopes of rekindling French interest in the colony. But Spanish rule had been kind to Louisiana; the port city of New Orleans was becoming a commercial stronghold.

Historian Barbara Tuchman addressed the problem of recreating an historical period: "Contradictions, however, are part of life, not merely a matter of conflicting evidence....No aspect of society, no habit, custom, movement, development, is without cross-currents....No age is tidy or made of whole cloth." Spanish Louisiana, with many steps forward and a goodly number backward, was no exception.

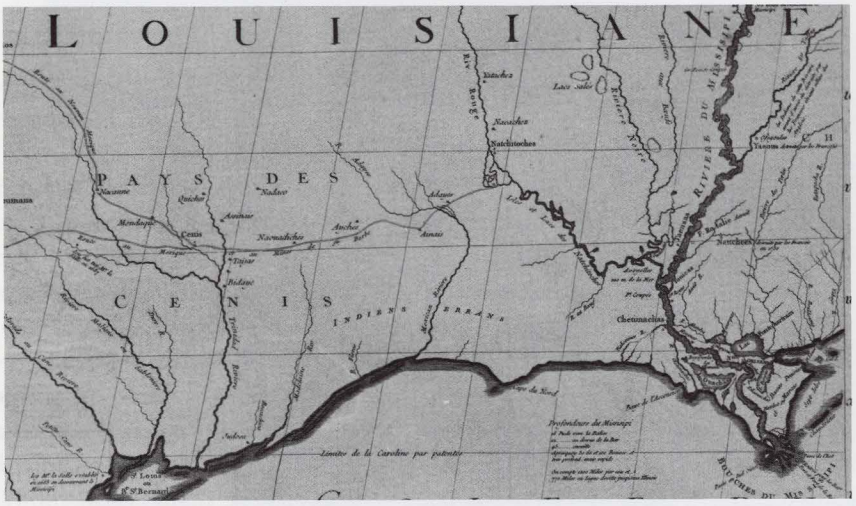
There was the authority of the royal presence of Spain, manifesting itself in an unlikely land defined by swamp, river, and gulf. There was New Orleans, commanding the most beautiful crescent of the river – but subject to mud, pestilence, and fire.

The Spanish period, building on the French settlement, gave important shape and substance to the city that the Americans acquired with the Louisiana Purchase. Latin in custom and language, New Orleans was an American city in name alone when a new flag was raised over the Plaza de Armas in 1803.



The exhibition, coordinated by John H. Lawrence, opened July 14 and remains on view until January 8.

– *Louise C. Hoffman*



(Detail), Amérique Septentrionale, *1777, by John Mitchell and G. L. Le Rouge (1982.230a). The map was used to determine peace settlements in both the French and Indian War and the American Revolution.*

Pieces of the Spanish Past

Archaeological artifacts are rare and finite resources, particularly in cities with pressures of construction, demolition, and heavy land use. Urban archaeology is a focus of modern scholarship because it can provide documentable information about a city's people and their cultures.

The Vieux Carré has been underexplored by archaeologists because of its history of continuous occupation. The installation of an elevator at the Merieult House provided an opportunity for a dig in December 1990 by archaeologist Richard C. Beavers. The excavation uncovered colonial artifacts, presumably from the household of Isaac Guinalt, a colonial silver- and goldsmith who occupied the Royal Street property for 30 years before the devastating fire of 1788.

Once a site is disturbed – by construction or vandalism – information is forever lost. The Merieult House excavation shows the fragility of urban cultural material. Renovations throughout its 200 years had created a disturbed zone of displaced material and architectural fragments, devoid of colonial artifacts.

Beneath the rubble, however, colonial remnants were discovered. They were primarily ceramic, including pieces of tin-glazed faience and majolica and lead-glazed and unglazed coarse earthenware, as well as partial remains of wine and bitters bottles, pork bones, and a clay pipe stem. Although the sample size is small, thus limiting interpretation, the time period (1750s-1780s) makes it probable that they are from the Guinalt household.

These artifacts will serve as a reference for future archaeological work in the Vieux Carré. The fragments, tantalizing in their incompleteness, give a hint of what remains buried beneath the present-day city.

– *Stan Ritchey*

FROM THE

DIRECTOR

Careful planning and persistence are hallmarks of research, but chance discoveries stick in a scholar's mind. Not long ago enigmas of early Southern intellectual history brought me to the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington. While waiting as the librarians fetched the rare book I needed, I looked up names of familiar Southern colonials in their card index to manuscripts. To my surprise, the index revealed three letters from 1652 that matched a fourth I had examined years earlier in Morristown, New Jersey – a revealing exchange of ideas from a generation who shaped the colonial South.

Afterward I mused about serendipity. Luck or providence may have tossed this information my way, but it never would have happened without that card index to manuscripts. Books come and go, a friend once said, but good indexes are forever. And they don't exist without planning and effort.

Thinking about serendipity and indexes soon implicates the words themselves. Eighteenth-century printers set an index (or fistnote) in the margin near important texts, but we will never know precisely when or how so practical a word derived from an ancient Latin term for signs, pointing, and the forefinger. By contrast, we know exactly who coined *serendipity,* and when, and how: Horace Walpole on January 28, 1754, created the word from the fairy tale "Three Princes of Serendip" (a former name for Sri Lanka, or Ceylon) whose heroes "were always making discoveries, by accidents and sagacity, of things they were not in quest of."

Summer brings many scholars to the Collection for research about the South. Meantime, we are busily perfecting interdisciplinary data bases and indexes to enhance access to our collections. Serendipity is unpredictable, so we put faith in hard work and good indexes, too.

– *Jon Kukla*

Footnotes to History: EMILE JOHNS

Lucky discoveries, as any researcher knows, can frequently change the features of the known historical landscape. Research in the Archives of the Archdiocese of New Orleans about the musicians of St. Louis Cathedral accidentally uncovered new information on the performing career of Emile Johns, a leading New Orleans musician, music publisher, and businessman. It is now clear that, long after his supposed last public performance, Johns was employed as organist at the cathedral.

Born Paul Emile Johns in Cracow about 1798 and educated in Vienna, Johns spent most of his adult life in New Orleans. His early career was devoted to music. A pianist, he premiered the Beethoven piano concerti in the United States. Much of his fame rests on his friendship with Frédéric Chopin, who dedicated his Opus 7 Mazurkas to Johns.

In 1826, Johns founded a well-known New Orleans music store. There he sold fine Pleyel pianos imported from Paris; he also published music, including his own compositions. Most famous of those pieces is his *Album Louisianais: Hommage aux Dames de la Nouvelle Orléans,* published by Pleyel in Paris between 1831 and 1834 with Emile Johns of New Orleans listed as co-publisher. For many years, the *Album* was believed to be the only surviving example of Johns's music publishing.

Extant sheet music, the subject of recent scholarship, however, includes pieces dating from before and after the publication of the *Album Louisianais.* Johns and George Willig of Philadelphia appear as co-publishers of W. W. Waddel's "Governor Gilmer's Grand March" (1830). Johns's 1839 "Romance," with text by Dominique Roquette, is the first piece known, to date, to list New Orleans as the sole place of publication. His last known extant composition is a waltz, the publication of which is tentatively dated in the 1850s, based on the street address of the work's lithographer.

Now, the belief that Johns last appeared in New Orleans in a May 30, 1827, concert for the benefit of "Mr. Segura, leader of the orchestra and first violinist of the Havana Theater," has also been proved false. Johns's business activities, it was supposed, engrossed his time to the detriment of his music.

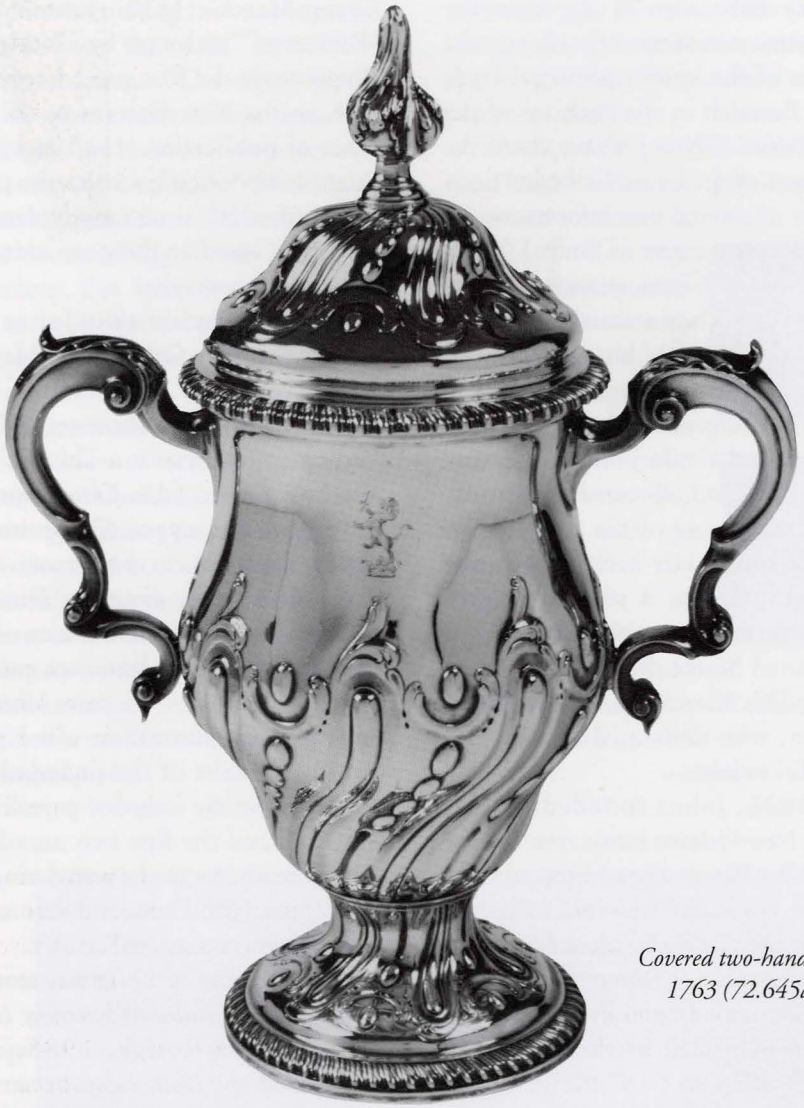
Enter the lucky discovery. Financial records of the church wardens of the cathedral[1] show that Johns was paid on October 1, 1842 – 15 years after the reported last performance – for his services as organist of the cathedral. He continued on the cathedral payroll during 1843 and the first two months of 1844. Clearly, for over a year during the 1840s, the New Orleans public could enjoy Johns's professional artistry.

After the sale of his music store in 1854, Johns abandoned his early career to become a cotton broker. On September 1, 1860, the *Daily Picayune* carried a brief notice of his death in Paris on August 10. Though his career seems to be well charted, there may be more surprises, like this discovery of his employment as cathedral organist, in store for the diligent – and lucky – researcher.

– *Alfred E. Lemmon*

1. Archives of the Archdiocese of New Orleans, "Compte de recettes & dépenses de la Fabrique de l'Eglise St. Louis de la Nouvelle Orléans de 1er septembre 1836 à 14 août 1844."

The Care of Silver



Covered two-handled cup, 1763 (72.645a,b WR)

Silver, the "queen of metals," has been used for ornamentation since Neolithic times. This element is desirable for its color, rarity, resistance to corrosion, and its ability to be polished to a bright luster. With properties of malleability and conductibility, silver also lends itself to a variety of fabrication and decoration techniques, including casting, spinning, drawing, hammering, enameling, chasing, and engraving.

Structural damages to silver pieces require the advice of and treatment by a trained objects conservator. But individuals can prolong the life of objects in the home through proper handling and by providing sympathetic care and storage. Preservation of this precious metal involves understanding its corrosive agents, protecting it from these contaminants in storage or when in use, and rendering conservative treatment for tarnish removal.

Silver is chemically inert and does not oxidize in air, but it is very susceptible to tarnishing from minute amounts of atmospheric pollutants, particularly sulfur compounds or chloride salts. These contaminants are found in human perspiration, rubber, coal gas, and in some industrial environments.

Plants and many foods and condiments are also corrosive. If silver must be used to display floral arrangements, a barrier of an inert material such as Mylar is recommended to prevent direct contact. Florist clays are corrosive and should never touch the metal. Silver that has been in contact with salt, sugar, vinegar, citrus fruits, nuts, vegetables, and eggs must be cleaned with extra caution.

Silver becomes tarnished when it is in contact with pollutants. It is important to remember that cleaning and polishing, even with the least abrasive polishes, lead to loss of surface detail. The way silver is polished helps avoid excessive damage.

To care for silver properly, one should attempt first to reduce the likelihood of tarnish through proper handling and storage, then to choose a polishing technique that will scratch the least and remove a minimum of metal. Dipping, replating, and buffing should be avoided. Mild abrasives may be used sparingly.

A gentle cleaning paste can be made from precipitated chalk (whiting or calcium carbonate) and denatured alcohol. If commercial polishes are used, creams and foams are believed to be the least abrasive. Commercial polishes do have the advantage of containing tarnish inhibitors. Polish should be applied with clean, cotton-tipped applicators or cotton diapers. It is essential to wash objects with water and a mild soap, such as Ivory Liquid, to remove all traces of polish. Any residue left in crevices will corrode and pit the metal. All-purpose

Remove all traces of polish to prevent pitting.

metal cleaners are much too strong to be used on silver.

Because silver is soft and easily worn by polishing and handling, objects should be in an environment that will keep tarnishing to a minimum. Materials used for silver storage should be carefully chosen; unstable substances will release harmful contaminants. Steel, brass, and aluminum are non-reactive with silver and are highly recommended for storage enclosures. Wood should not be used for storage unless it is antique or adequately sealed. Other materials to exclude in the storage area include all rubber products and fabrics containing sulfur (such as wool), fire retardants, sizings, and bleaches. To protect from pollutants, wrap corrosion-free silver in several layers of acid-free tissue, then in cloth treated with tarnish inhibitors. Never wrap silver in newsprint or Saran Wrap.

An appropriate environment – as important as avoiding potentially harmful materials – is essential for safeguarding metal objects. Whereas objects made from wood, paper, and leather are stable in 55% humidity, all metals benefit from low humidity, ideally below 35%. Relative humidity above 70% greatly accelerates tarnishing. An acceptable temperature range is between 68-70 F.

More information about the care of silver will be available in *Preservation Guide 8: Silver,* a forthcoming publication.

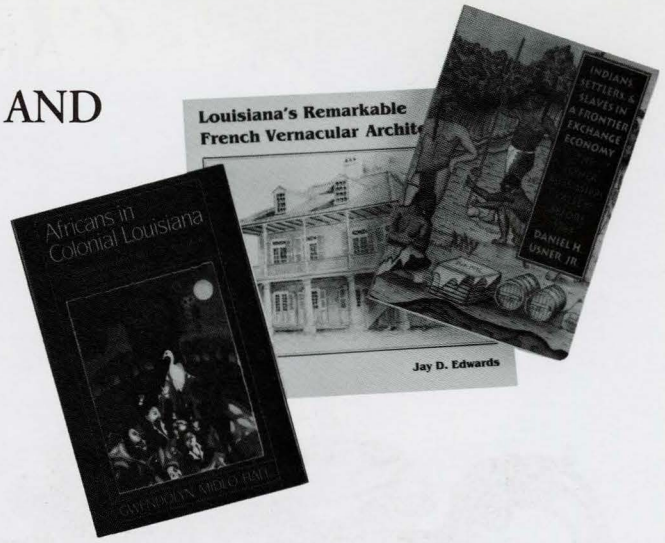
– *Maureen Donnelly*

Source: Per E. Guldbeck and Bruce A. MacLeish, *The Care of Antiques and Historical Collections* (Nashville, 1972).

(1978.175.11)

Symposium

Resilience and Diversity: Legacies of 18th-Century Louisiana



The Historic New Orleans Collection will present a symposium entitled "Resilience and Diversity: Legacies of 18th-Century Louisiana" on Thursday and Friday, October 1-2, 1992. Examining a variety of primary sources, scholars are reinterpreting the familiar social, economic, and architectural history of 18th-century New Orleans and the Lower Mississippi region. This symposium, which coincides with the Collection's new exhibition, *Yo El Rey: Spanish Louisiana in the Time of Jean François Merieult, 1762-1803,* and the 200th anniversary of the colonial Merieult House, provides an occasion to weigh and discuss the findings and implications of these current trends in scholarship.

Three leading scholars and their recent work will provide the focus for discussion. Professor Daniel H. Usner, Jr., a historian at Cornell University, is the author of *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy: The Lower Mississippi Valley before 1783* (Chapel Hill, 1992). By thoroughly examining the economic interaction between native Americans, free and slave African-Americans, and European settlers, Professor Usner's book portrays resilient and diverse economic networks whose characteristics continued into the 19th century and perhaps softened the unyielding Southern plantation labor system that accompanied the transition to an economy based on cotton.

Professor Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, a historian at Rutgers University, is the author of *Africans in Colonial Louisiana: The Development of Afro-Creole Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (Baton Rouge, 1992). As a visiting professor at the University of New Orleans, Professor Hall is currently directing a two-year computerized research project entitled "Africans in Colonial and Early American Louisiana"– a project that will expand upon her newly published findings about African-American life and culture in the 18th century.

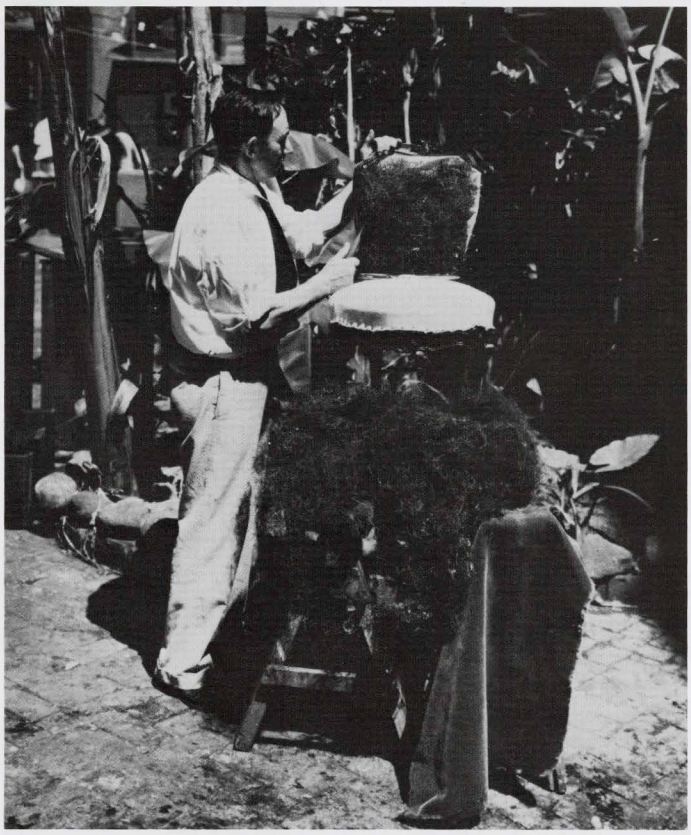
Professor Jay D. Edwards teaches anthropology, folklore, and vernacular architecture at Louisiana State University and is the author of *Louisiana's Remarkable French Vernacular Architecture, 1700-1900* (Baton Rouge, 1988) and *Louisiana's French Vernacular Architecture: A Historical and Social Bibliography* (Monticello, Ill., 1983). Professor Edwards's abundantly illustrated presentation reflects his two decades of research – in Europe, the West Indies, England, Ireland, and French Canada – into the continuities, adaptations, and social context of Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley vernacular architecture.

The symposium "Resilience and Diversity: Legacies of 18th-Century Louisiana" will afford scholars and the public an occasion to explore new findings and work in progress about colonial Louisiana. The complete symposium schedule and registration information will be available in August.

Open window by Eugene Delcroix (1989.122.1)

Eugene Delcroix: Master of the Soft-focus Lens

The death of Eugene A. Delcroix in 1967 at the age of 76 ended a career devoted exclusively to the pursuit of photography. Delcroix's unceasing involvement with the medium produced a large body of work with two distinct aspects: the sharply focused images of architecture and industry and genre scenes, used by commercial clients; and the softly rendered reveries of Vieux Carré landmarks and the bayou country outside of New Orleans. He often used moss-covered oak trees and lush vegetation as a background for model and figure studies. According to family members, Delcroix never photographed outside Louisiana.



Stuffing a chair with moss by Delcroix (1990.8.4)

Photography took hold of Delcroix at an early age. Though born in the Carrollton section of New Orleans, he spent part of his youth in Grand Isle, Louisiana, where his mother was a teacher. His familiarity with the rural areas around New Orleans allowed him to scout locations for photographs and to know what time of the day or year to return to a site when the quality and direction of light would be suitable for the photograph he had in mind.

Later in his life, the beaches of Grand Isle provided the setting for outings he made with the Orleans Camera Club, an organization he was associated with for many years. He served the club officially as president and print judge and unofficially as a photographic ambassador, giving lectures and exhibiting his pictorialist-style work, both here and abroad. The catalogue to the 1953 annual exhibition of the camera club was dedicated to Delcroix, "our president, counselor and very good friend, whose devotion to the art of pictorial photography has been our inspiration for this exhibit." These club activities notwithstanding, those who knew Eugene Delcroix acknowledge that he preferred to work alone in the field or with the subject he was photographing.

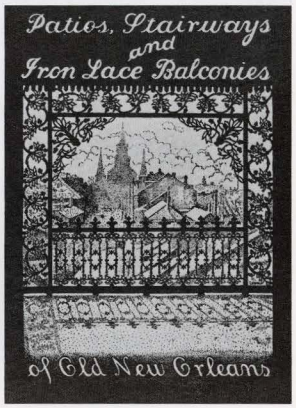
By the time Delcroix married Aimée Bienvenu in 1914, he was already a practicing photographer. He worked as a portraitist for both the C. Bennette Moore Studio and the firm of Anthony H. Hitchler before striking out on his own in the 1930s. He continued to make portraiture a part of his commercial practice, but the photographs of Vieux Carré courtyards, rafts of exotic water hyacinths, and mysterious tangles of Spanish moss descending from tree limbs are the subjects for which he is most remembered. In 1938, local printer J. S. W. Harmanson published a small volume of Delcroix's photographs entitled *Patios, Stairways and Iron Lace Balconies of Old New Orleans.* That same year, a portfolio of these scenes was published in the journal *Pencil Points.*

Even by the standards of his day, Delcroix's technical approach to photography was dated. Long after sheet film became the staple for photographers using a view camera (a camera mounted on a tripod and focused under a dark cloth), he continued to use glass-negative materials as his primary "film." Even his commercial assignments, many of them done for the *Jefferson Review,* were recorded on glass. This choice must have been dictated by aesthetic considerations, because the greater weight of the plates and their susceptibility to breakage would have made them much more difficult to use away from the studio. The results of his extra effort, however, were worth the trouble. When viewing Delcroix's noncommercial work, it is easy to see how he earned the sobriquet "master of the soft-focus lens."

– *John H. Lawrence*

The Collection is planning an exhibition within the next few years of Delcroix's photographic career. Anyone who has work by Delcroix or who knew the photographer is asked to call John H. Lawrence, senior curator, at 523-4662.

Sources: New Orleans *Times-Picayune,* April 11, 1967; New Orleans *States,* August 15, 1945; transcript of interview conducted by Kay Mattei with Delcroix's grandson Joel Jurgens and niece Marie Louise La Noue, courtesy New Orleans Museum of Art.



Book of photographs by Delcroix (1950.62.34)

Research Center Acquisitions

The Historic New Orleans Collection encourages research in the library, manuscripts, and curatorial divisions of its research center 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

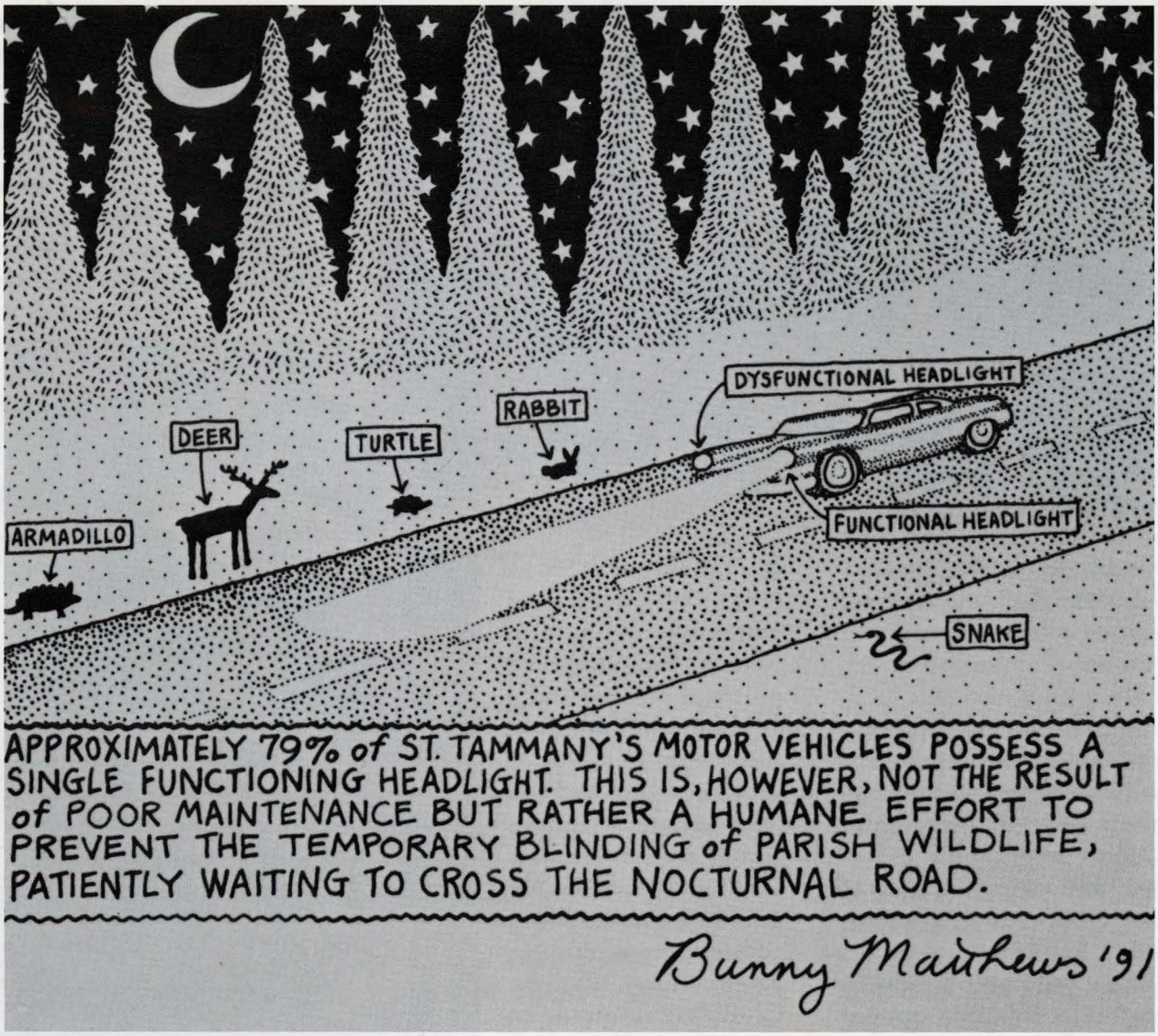
The carte-de-visite (photographic calling card), introduced from Europe, became very popular in the United States in the 1860s and 1870s. Primarily used to disseminate likenesses of popular political, military, and cultural figures, the format sometimes also recorded views or scenes. A recent acquisition of cartes-de-visite pertains to the Battle of Port Hudson, Louisiana, during the spring of 1863.

Photographed by McPherson & Oliver, the 37 cards depict scenes of the battlefield just upriver from Baton Rouge and views of the capital city itself. Together, the group represents what is likely the most comprehensive photographic record of military action in Louisiana during the Civil War. It is a complementary addition to the album of carte-de-visite portraits of soldiers from the Port Hudson campaign, assembled by Colonel Cyrus Hamlin and acquired in 1991.

■ A donation from New Orleans photographer Owen Murphy is from his series on Creoles of color in New Orleans. The two photographs depict scenes from a 1987 dance.

■ The Collection has acquired materials and artwork related to *My Cousin the Saint,* an exhibition conceived by artist George Febres. The paintings, drawings, and constructions include works by Robert Warrens, Dan Piersol, Dorothy

Dance, 1987, by Owen Murphy (1992.1.1)



Drawing by Bunny Matthews (1992.40.4)

Furlong Gardner, Jackie Bishop, and Douglas Bourgeois, and constitute a virtual Who's Who of artists working in New Orleans during the late 1970s and early 1980s. This focused collection also includes other materials related to the formation of the exhibition.

■ Adding to the Collection's extensive carnival holdings, Timothy Trapolin has donated two photographs, each depicting a queen of Comus. Emily Mary Poitevent is shown in 1895 as queen of the city's oldest carnival krewe. Her daughter, Emily Hayne Walker, who reigned as Queen of Carnival in 1923, was Queen of Comus in 1925.

■ Area cartoonist Bunny Matthews has delighted newspaper and television audiences for more than 20 years. A recent acquisition of his work includes a series of humorously instructive drawings published as Tammany 'Toons. Each drawing in the series portrays an episode in the history of St. Tammany Parish. The subjects range from how the town of Covington received its name to Governor Earl K. Long's confinement to the state hospital in Mandeville, all portrayed with Matthews's characteristic wit and style.

– John H. Lawrence

MANUSCRIPTS

In response to the Collection's recent exhibition *Over Here!* and other World War II commemorative events, several individuals have donated war-era materials to the manuscripts division. Lola Maduell and Dr. Henry G. Simon are two such donors whose contributions of letter collections provide insight into New Orleanians' activities during that era.

Dr. Simon's donation is vast, consisting of over 650 letters written by Dr. Hippolyte P. Marks (1913-1956) to the Simon family in New Orleans, particularly to the donor's aunt, Irma Simon. Marks was born in Monroe and attended Tulane Medical School, graduating in 1936 and taking his internship in pediatrics at Touro Infirmary. He was a member of the Tulane medical faculty when called to duty in 1942 with the 24th General Hospital, a unit staffed primarily

by Tulane medical graduates and staff.

The letters were written from Fort Benning, Georgia; North Africa; and Italy. Marks often wrote on a daily basis during his three year period of service (1942-45), providing a comprehensive chronicle of his war experiences.

■ Kay Fulgham of Fort Worth, Texas, has donated three Civil War-era letters of James Thorn, her step great-great-grandfather. Written from New Orleans in 1860-1861 to his wife Susan Edwards Thorn, the letters concern cotton trading and public opinion in New Orleans on the war's outcome.

In general, Thorn hopes for a peaceful separation from the Union, boasts of the South's strength and confidence in victory, and emphasizes the South's economic dependence on cotton cultivation and trading, his area of professional specialization. On a more mundane level, Thorn notes that New Orleans hotels are not well patronized except for the "first people" of New Orleans who prefer residency there to home ownership. Additionally, on the eve of war he foresees both a "dull winter in the way of parties" and a need to conserve expenses and prepare for hardships.

■ One of the buildings occupied by Union troops in the Carrollton section of New Orleans still stands at 914 Dante Street, a four-bay townhouse, built in 1852, that was owned by F. C. Zeller. Later renovations have altered the 19th-century character of the house, once one of Carrollton's finest residences.

A recently acquired letter written by Joseph P. Sanborne of New Hampshire describes the use of this house in 1862. Sanborne, a Union soldier, was assigned duty at the "large two story house...a very good place" which served as dormitory and hospital for wounded Union soldiers. While not ignoring harsh details of hospital work or the fact that 50 soldiers had died there during his first month of duty, Sanborne states that life in Carrollton is secure, "comfortable and handy," with hourly rail service to New Orleans.

– *Joseph D. Scott*

LIBRARY

The personal library of the late Jack D. L. Holmes, a noted scholar of Louisiana's Spanish period, included several scarce guides to foreign collections of Louisiana-related primary materials. Among those recently acquired are *Indice de los Expedientes Matrimoniales de Militares y Marinos Que Se Conservan en el Archivo General Militar (1761-1865),* (Madrid, 1959), and *Guía de Fuentes Para la Historia de Ibero-América Conservadas en España,* (Madrid, 1966-1969).

■ Pauline Cushman (1835-1893), actress and Union spy, was born in New Orleans to a Spanish political refugee and a Frenchwoman. At age 18 she went to New York to earn her living and was recruited there by the manager of the New Orleans *Varieties* for his show. She and her husband, another performer, toured throughout the country. When the Civil War erupted, he enlisted in the Union army as a musician; she continued to perform until commissioned as a secret agent by the federal government in 1863 with instructions to penetrate as far south as possible. Apprehended by Confederate forces near Tullahoma, Tennessee, she was tried and sentenced to hang in June 1863. Fortunately for her, she was left behind when the advancing army of General William S. Rosecrans forced the Confederates to retreat. Although her usefulness as a spy came to an end, she returned to the stage, lecturing throughout the North in a federal uniform to great acclaim.

Cushman's glamorous but slightly shady profession, in addition to her feats of espionage, was ideal material for the dime novels of the day. A recent acquisition, *Maud of the Mississippi,* is based on the adventures of "Miss Pauline D'Estraye" and is one of several such novels that appeared during the war years. The heroine, Maud Melville – the Cushman-based character – gathers intelligence for General Grant as she performs in towns along the lower Mississippi River.

(92-167-RL)

■ The holdings of locally produced sheet music have been augmented by the acquisition of four bound volumes containing a total of 179 pieces. Most of these titles were published between the mid-1840s and mid-1860s, with a few

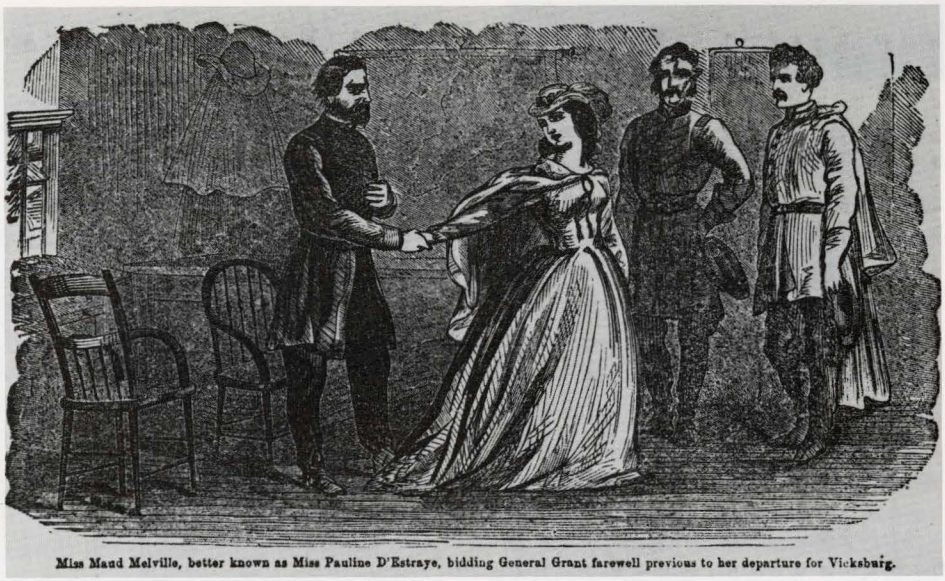
pieces dated as late as 1870. Music shops bound loose pieces of sheet music into books as a service to their customers. The customer's name could also be gold-stamped on the cover. Two of these music books were owned by a mother and daughter of the Zorn family and the others by Anna Wagner. Apparently they were friends: Miss Wagner's books contain music given to her by Mrs. Zorn.

■ The selections include popular songs such as "The Dearest Spot of Earth to Me is Home" (ca. 1855) and "The Girls and the Flowers" (1854); patriotic hymns such as "The Celebrated Marseilles Hymn" (ca. 1852) and "Fall of Fort Sumpter [sic]" (1861); dance melodies such as "Lafayette Polka Mazourka" (1857), "The Bouquet Schottisch" (1858), and "The Napolonide" (ca. 1860); Stephen Foster favorites such as "Old Dog Tray" (1853); and excerpts from operas such as *Anna Bolena, L'Africaine,* and *The Bohemian Girl.*

– *Pamela D. Arceneaux*

In Memoriam

Henry C. Pitot, long-time friend of the Historic New Orleans Collection, died on June 12, 1992. Mr. Pitot, who had a keen interest in history, donated a manuscript to the Collection, which he also translated, entitled *Observations on the Colony of Louisiana from 1796 to 1802* by James Pitot (see lead article). The Louisiana State University Press published the translation in 1979. Mr. Pitot, a direct descendant of James Pitot, made several important donations to the Collection, including a portrait of Françoise Gabrielle "Rosa" Montegut Pitot, an early work (ca. 1838) by the prominent painter Jacques Amans. The staff of the Collection honors the memory of Henry Pitot and extends sympathy to his family.



Miss Maud Melville, better known as Miss Pauline D'Estraye, bidding General Grant farewell previous to her departure for Vicksburg.

Illustration from Maud of the Mississippi *(92-167-RL)*

Donors: January-March, 1992

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STAFF

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Mary Louise Christovich

Mary Louise Christovich, president of the board of directors, received the 1992 Distinguished Alumna Award, in April, from the Tulane Alumni Association, which recognized her contributions as author, historian, and preservationist.

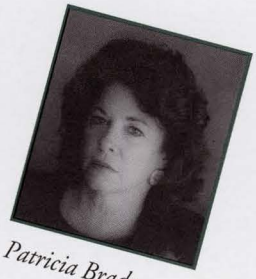
Dr. Jon Kukla, director, chairs a Louisiana Association of Museums committee creating a new museum directory for the state...he is also a member of the charter and by-laws committee of the Louisiana Historical Association.

John H. Lawrence, senior curator, contributed the catalogue essay on photographer Elemore M. Morgan, Sr., for an exhibition at the Alexandria (Louisiana) Museum of Art...two of his photographic works were selected for the City of New Orleans art collection. He also served as a juror for the photography competition sponsored by *New Orleans* magazine.

Leslie Johnston, documentation coordinator, and **Susan Massey**, manuscripts cataloger, conferred with Willoughby Associates in Chicago to complete a project to transfer data from the OCLC network into THNOC's Quixis System.

John Magill, associate curator, spoke to a senior architecture class at Tulane University.

PUBLICATIONS



Patricia Brady

Dr. Patricia Brady, director of publications, contributed an article, "Literary Ladies of New Orleans in the Gilded Age," to *Louisiana History*, and excerpts from her introduction to *George Washington's Beautiful Nelly* were featured in the July issue of *Virginia Cavalcade*. She also contributed reviews to the *Journal of American History*, *Louisiana History*, the *Times-Picayune*, and the *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*. Reviews by **Jon Kukla** appeared in the *North Carolina Historical Review* and in the *Times-Picayune*. A review by **Louise Hoffman** also appeared in the *Times-Picayune*. **John Magill** contributed an article, "Classic New Orleans," to *Preservation in Print*.

MEETINGS

Dr. Alfred E. Lemmon, curator of manuscripts, attended the Southern Archives Conference in Nashville, Tennessee, where he served as chairman of a session on music and archives...he also traveled to Norman, Oklahoma, for the annual meeting of the Society of Southwest Archivists.

Jon Kukla attended the annual meeting of the Organization of American Historians in Chicago. **Leslie Johnston** took part in the Computerized Interchange of Museum Information Task Force on Cultural History Information at the National Museum of American History in Washington...she also visited the Canadian Centre for Architecture in Montreal to discuss system development and documentation.

CHANGES

Marie Louise Martin

Marie Louise Martin is working in the manuscripts division during the summer. **Dr. George Reineke** is a volunteer in the manuscripts division.

SPEAKERS BUREAU

Staff members have recently made presentations to the following organizations: **John Magill**, France Amérique de la Louisiane; Literary Study Group...**John Lawrence**, Alexandria Museum of Art.

AT THE COLLECTION...

*Former preparator Alan Balicki, **left**, lecturing on book preservation. **Above**, John Lawrence, and, **far right**, Jon Kukla, with director emerita Dode Platou at the reception honoring her retirement.*

Williams Prizes, Fellowships Awarded

Hair, Usner Honored

William Ivy Hair, whose book *The Kingfish and His Realm: The Life and Times of Huey P. Long* was published last year by Louisiana State University Press, and Daniel H. Usner, Jr., author of "'Fragments of This Erratic Race': American Indians in Nineteenth-Century New Orleans," have won the 1991 General L. Kemper Williams Prizes in Louisiana History. Florence M. Jumonville, chairman of the Williams Prize Committee, presented the awards at the Louisiana Historical Association's annual banquet in Lafayette on March 13.

William Ivy Hair has placed Long's extraordinary, meteoric career in historical context. Huey Long claimed, "I was born into politics, a wedded man, with a storm for my bride." Indeed, during his tumultuous career he and Louisiana politics were as one. Describing the political climate during the last year of Long's life, Hair wrote, "the Great Depression, more traumatic than the one Huey Long was born in, still gripped the nation in 1935. As a true demagogue – and admitting he was one, by his definition – Huey envisioned millions of unhappy voters turning to him and his Share the Wealth panacea in 1936, with more millions to follow in 1940....The Kingfish planned to rule the United States as president for sixteen years, and in the process destroy both the Democratic and Republican parties." Hair's political history is rich in flamboyant and influential characters, but Huey was truly the Kingfish.

Daniel Usner's prize-winning manuscript, "'Fragments of This Erratic Race,'" considers Indians in early 19th-century New Orleans. Before the Louisiana Purchase, Spanish officials courted the allegiance of area tribes. Through yearly visits to New Orleans, the Indians were able to safeguard their autonomy. In the decade after 1803, representatives of neighboring Indian nations continued to visit the Crescent City. Eventually, however, the absence of political protection, the growing population of the city, and other factors forced the tribes into the Louisiana backcountry. Nevertheless, Daniel Usner claims, "New Orleans actually became more important than ever before to Indians who were now devising new means of coping with the loss of political autonomy and with the socioeconomic displacement suffered during the early nineteenth century. Peddling and casual labor by Indians in the burgeoning commercial center became part of a wider seasonal round of itinerant economic activities performed in the surrounding countryside."

Usner concludes that, in addition to "contributing to their livelihood, the exchange of a particular combination of foods and wares in and around New Orleans also provided American Indians with a means of expressing their distinct identity.... By finding a social niche compatible with their own customs and needs, Louisiana Indians participated in the larger nineteenth-century society without losing their separateness."

Entries in the 1992 Williams Prize competition are now being accepted. Additional information is available from the Collection.

Seven Fellows Named

This spring the Collection awarded seven Williams Research Fellowships to encourage scholarship on Louisiana subjects in regional, national, or international contexts. During 1992 the fellows will conduct their research in the manuscripts, library, and curatorial holdings of the research center.

Two senior fellows were announced by director Jon Kukla. Dr. Margaret Barnett, University of Southern Mississippi, is writing a biography of health reformer Horace Fletcher, and Dr. Robert L. Paquette, Hamilton College (New York), is working on the Louisiana slave revolt of 1811.

The five graduate fellows are candidates for the Ph.D. degree in history, researching their dissertations. They are Elizabeth A. Baker, City University of New York, "The Transition from Slavery to Free Labor in Louisiana's Sugar Parishes, 1860-1880"; Lauren Ann Kattner, University of Texas (Austin), "German-Americans and their Female Slaves in the Louisiana/Texas Subregion, 1719-1860"; Karen Leathem, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, "Women and Carnival in New Orleans, 1870-1941"; and Karen Erdos, University of Pennsylvania, "Southern Jews or Jewish Southerners? Jews in New Orleans, 1870-1920."

The first Williams fellow, Dr. Reid Mitchell of Princeton University, completed a book manuscript while at the Collection. *Go See The Mardi Gras,* a scholarly treatment of carnival, is currently in the hands of a publisher.

Eligible for support by the Williams fellowships are post-doctoral projects or dissertation research in history, art history, architectural history, and related disciplines. Inquiries may be directed to Dr. Kukla, 533 Royal Street, New Orleans, Louisiana 70130.

Karen Leathem, Williams Fellow

THNOC Staff

Photo by Jan Brantley and Judy Tarantino

THE HISTORIC NEW ORLEANS COLLECTION QUARTERLY

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