

# Louisiana Archives and Manuscripts Association Newsletter

Spring/Summer  
2007

## LAMA News

### Annual Meeting

**Louisiana Archives & Manuscripts Association  
Annual Meeting  
November 17, 2006  
Nicholls State University, Thibodaux, LA**

**(NOTE: The following minutes have not been formally approved.)**

The Annual Meeting of LAMA was held at the Bollinger Student Union on the Nicholls State University campus.

President Nita Cole called the meeting to order and welcomed attendees and delivered the President's report. She reported that the November 2005 annual meeting of LAMA was a joint meeting with the Ark-La-Tex chapter of ARMA, held at the LSU-Shreveport Archives. Although the aftermath of Hurricane's Katrina and Rita prevented most members from South Louisiana from attending, the North Louisiana contingent did attend, and the meeting (which included a records management workshop conducted by Cindy Smolovik from NARA in Ft. Worth) was a success and cleared almost \$1000 for the LAMA coffers. Nita also talked about the personal rewards she experienced during her tenure as LAMA President and thanked the LAMA Board and officers for their support and contributions.

Vice-President (and host) Clifton Theriot presented the first of session: "Documenting Natural Disasters," with speakers Jennifer M. Abraham (T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History, LSU); Greg Lambousy (Louisiana State Museum); Michael Mizell-Nelson (Hurricane Digital Memory Bank, UNO); and Pati Threatt (McNeese State University Ar-

chives & Special Collections).

The Business Meeting followed:

1. Officers' Reports:

a. Vice-President's Report:  
Vice-President Clifton Theriot presented the slate of candidates for election:  
Rose Tarbell – Vice-President/President Elect  
Bruce Turner – Treasurer  
Elizabeth Dow – Board  
Howard Margot – Board  
There being no nominations from the floor, Carol Mathias moved that the slate be accepted. Doug Harrison seconded the motion. And the slate of candidates was elected by acclamation.

b. Scholarship Committee:  
Cliff reported that Russell James, LSU SLIS, was the recipient of the 2006 scholarship, which funded two SOLINET online workshops, one on metadata, and the second on the salvage and preservation of audio visual materials.

c. Secretary's Report:  
Secretary Irene Wainwright reported that she had little to report. Meeting and dues notices were sent out and the membership database was updated in response to the dues notice mailing.

d. Treasurer's Report:  
Treasurer Bruce Turner presented his report, showing that LAMA's bank balance stood at \$6622.28, as of Nov. 16, 2006. Cliff moved and Melanie Counce seconded that the report be accepted.

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## Annual Meeting (Continued)

### e. Newsletter Editor's Report:

Editor Phyllis Kinnison put together several "catch-up" newsletters which appeared on the LAMA website but were not distributed by mail. She hopes to send out paper copies of the Spring and Summer newsletters. Nita urged members to submit images along with news.

### 2. Old Business:

a. Nita noted that it was suggested that LAMA formally recognize Marie Wendell, long-time archivist at the University of New Orleans, who retired in 2005, for her contributions to LAMA. Several suggestions were made as to the form this recognition might take (an article in the newsletter, naming the scholarship after her, a certificate of recognition, a resolution). Carol Mathias moved and Bruce Turner seconded that the LAMA scholarship be named for her. LAMA will also send a certificate recognizing her contributions. Phyllis Kinnison will solicit comments for a newsletter article.

### b. Southern Archives Conference

SAC met in Lafayette in April, 2006, with about 50 attendees, mostly from Louisiana and Mississippi. SAC meets next 2008 in Tennessee. Additional information is not yet available.

### 3. New Business:

a. Updating the LAMA Directory: The LSU Student Chapter of SSA has offered, as a public service project, to update the LAMA Directory. Chapter president Russell James and Dr. Elizabeth Dow will organize the project. Russell distributed forms for members to fill out with current information.

Motion to adjourn the business meeting: Russell James moved and Ann Wakefield seconded and the membership adjourned for lunch.

Two sessions followed:

"Making Life a Bit Easier: Building a Function-Based Taxonomy for Institutional Archives and Records Management Systems (Russell James, LSU SLIS)

"The Ruin and Recovery of Jackson Barracks" (Sherrie S. Pugh, Jackson Barracks Military Museum and Library)

A tour of Laurel Valley Plantation followed for interested members, conducted by J. Paul Leslie, Professor of History at Nicholls.

Respectfully submitted,  
Irene Wainwright, Secretary

## Demographics of LAMA Membership

*By Bruce Turner*

The 2005 hurricanes disrupted the LAMA organization, and we are trying to determine who is still in Louisiana and who our current members are. One of the advantages of evaluating the membership list was the discovery of the type of members we have by employment, geographic location and gender. It also led to the discovery of some gaps in the make up of our membership, which in turn led to thinking about how to attract new members from the underrepresented areas.

Since March, 2006 some 75 individuals or organizations have paid for LAMA memberships. Four of those paid before the renewal letter was sent out by LAMA Secretary Irene Wainwright in September. Several organizations that have joined did not specify separate individual members. One individual paid before and after the renewal letter. All of the above is to indicate that it is difficult to say exactly how many people belong to LAMA.

However...a look at the records and a break down of the numbers show LAMA has 51 individual members (2 paid at Sustaining level), which includes 7 seniors and 5 students, and 23 organizational members (most designated individual members; several did not). There have been 63 renewals (7 initial individual members and 2 initial organizational members).

Employment among LAMA members breaks down as follows: 28 at academic institutions, 9 at government agencies, 8 at religious archives, 7 at historical societies, 5 at public libraries, 5 students and 3 from commercial/ business establishments. There are 11 members from Louisiana State University (Hill Memorial Library and the School of Library and Information Science); 6 members from McNeese State University, but none from several major universities which have large archival and manuscript collections. There are 3 members from the Louisiana State Archives and 2 from parish clerk of courts offices. There are no members active in any other agency at the state level.

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## LAMA News (continued from page 2)

### Demographics of LAMA Membership (Continued)

Almost 40% of LAMA members work in academic institutions (48% when students are included). Only 13% work in government agencies and 10% in historical societies. This means LAMA is doing a very poor job reaching out to people who work with historical records in other than academic settings. There are no identified members from genealogical organizations or academic history departments. LAMA is not encouraging users of our records to join the organization.

The geographic distribution of LAMA members is as follows: 25 from the Greater New Orleans area, 21 from the Greater Baton Rouge area, 7 from the Calcasieu area, 5 from Acadiana, 4 from Central Louisiana, 4 from Northwest Louisiana, 3 from the Lafouche District, 1 from the Florida Parishes, 1 from Northeast Louisiana, and 2 from out-of-state. Sixty-three

percent of LAMA membership comes from the New Orleans and Baton Rouge regions. No other area has more than 10%.

As far as gender is concerned, 60% of our members are female, 39% male and 1% uncertain.

There was a good response to the LAMA Secretary's membership mailing sent last September. However, there are large segments of the community which cares for and uses historical records and archives in Louisiana who do not belong to LAMA. We need to do something to encourage wider participation in the organization. Suggestions made at the March 29, 2007 board meeting include individuals asking their co-workers to join, individuals displaying LAMA materials at other professional meetings and conventions, and including articles about LAMA in other newsletters. If anyone has other suggestions, please send them to Bruce Turner at [bturner@louisiana.edu](mailto:bturner@louisiana.edu) or Phyllis Kinnison at [pcasti1@lsu.edu](mailto:pcasti1@lsu.edu).

## LAMA at LHA

*By Phyllis Kinnison*

For the last two years the public school teachers who are members of the Louisiana Historical Association have asked LAMA to make presentations of primary source materials. On March 22, 2007, Laura McLemore (LSU-Shreveport), Mary Linn Wernet (Northwestern State University), and Phyllis Kinnison (LSU-Baton Rouge) comprised a panel that described the political papers collections held by their institutions. Cliff Theriot, LAMA president, chaired the panel.

McLemore's presentation was titled "Here Comes the Judges(s): The Papers of Ben C. Dawkins and Ben C. Dawkins, Jr., A Judicial Dynasty in the Western District of Louisiana."

When Ben C. Dawkins, Jr. succeeded his father, Ben C. Dawkins, in 1956 as federal judge for the Western District of Louisiana, it was the first time in United States history that a son succeeded his father on the federal bench. Judge Benjamin Cornwell Dawkins, Sr. (1881-1966) was appointed U. S. District Court Judge for the Western District of Louisiana by President Calvin Coolidge in 1924. He was followed on the bench by Ben C. Dawkins, Jr., who served until his retirement in 1979. Between the father and

son duo are fifty-five years of case law in the Western District of Louisiana, some of which had far-reaching implications not only for Louisiana but for the South and the nation as a whole.

This father and son act spanned ten presidencies, sixteen Louisiana governorships, the 1927 Flood, the Great Depression, the oil boom in Louisiana, the Civil Rights Movement, and three American wars. Their archives document social change and provide many intimate glimpses into Louisiana politics in the twentieth century.

Wernet's presentation described the Arthur Chopin Watson Collection. Watson, who was from Natchitoches Parish, worked to protect Natchitoches from periodic flooding of the Cane and Red Rivers. He also supported the Caroline Dormon Nature Preserve and the Louisiana Outdoor Drama Association and established scholarships at Northwestern State University in music and library science.

Watson, a member of the anti-Long camp, was a state representative from Natchitoches from 1940-1943. He served on the Louisiana State Democratic Central Committee from 1940-

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## LAMA's web address

<http://www.louisianaarchivists.org>

## LAMA News (continued from page 3)

### LAMA at LHA (continued)

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1976. All those accomplishments, both on the local and state levels, were made in spite of the fact that Watson suffered from several severe health problems.

The collection includes eighteen boxes of records of the Democratic State Central Committee of Louisiana as well as Historical and Genealogical Research and Personal Papers. It contains minutes, campaign materials, caucus information, convention papers, correspondence, reapportionment information, political materials, publications, reports, biography materials and photographs.

Kinnison's presentation was titled "Three Political Papers Collections at LSU Libraries Special Collections." It described the recently processed collections of Gillis Long and Cathy Long and gave an update of the current work on the John Breaux Collection.

Gillis W. Long, a cousin to Huey P. Long, served in the U. S. House of Representatives as a Democrat from 1963-1965 and again from 1973 until his death in Washington, D.C., on January 20, 1985. Long represented the Eighth District which included Rapides Parish at that time. Long was the second ranking Democrat on the House Rules Committee, which was an extremely powerful arm of the House leadership that withheld or scheduled all legislation for House debate and set the rules for amendments and voting. Long made two unsuccessful bids for the Louisiana governor's office in 1963 and in 1971. His wife Cathy was elected to complete his term

when he died in office in 1985. In addition to being the seventh Long to serve in Congress, she was the first female veteran to be elected to the House of Representative.

The Gillis W. Long Collection is an excellent example of a complete and well organized set of primary materials. Long saved almost everything and made sure his staff kept good records. The collections contains 323 linear feet of material. The Catherine S. Long Collection consists of 15 linear feet of her U. S. House of Representative records.

John Breaux served as a U. S. Representative from 1972 to 1986 and as a U. S. Senator from 1986 to 2005. The Breaux Collection is a rich source of wetlands protection, flood control, and hurricane protection materials. It also contains many records concerning transportation, the aero-space industry, telecommunications and the aging of the United States population.

The collection is about half processed at this time. Once a year an update of the work is posted to a web page on the LSU Libraries Special Collections web site (<http://www.lib.lsu.edu/special/breaux.html>).

The teachers who attended the LAMA presentation expressed an appreciation for the effort made by the panel as well as the materials presented. They hope there will be more LAMA presentations at future LHA annual meetings.

## News from LAMA Institutions

### OFFSHORE OIL AND GAS HISTORY PROJECT NEARS COMPLETION

*By Cliff Theriot*

In 2001, the New Orleans region Minerals Management Service (MMS) of the U.S. Department of the Interior sponsored a project to study the historical evolution of the offshore oil and gas industry and its effects on the people, businesses, communities, and institutions of the coastal and regional economy. The project was a collaborative effort by scholars from the University of Arizona, the University of Houston, University of Louisiana at Lafayette, and the Center for Energy Studies at Louisiana State University.

The main objective of the project was to document the offshore oil and gas industry through interviews with workers, company owners, family members, and others who were affected

by the industry. The study focused on the period from the 1930s to the 1970s. Between 2001 and 2006, over 450 interviews were recorded for the project. The interviews took place throughout southern Louisiana and Texas as well as other remote locations. Many of the interviewees were discovered by references from other interviewees.

The interviews provide a glimpse into the history of the offshore oil and gas industry as well as the impact of the industry on the men and women who worked in it. These oral histories will prove to be of great value to future researchers and will help to fill a gap in the recorded history of offshore oil and gas.

Copies of the oral histories and transcripts will be available at several archives and libraries including the Center for Energy Studies at LSU, University of Louisiana at Lafayette, Nicholls State University, Morgan City Archives, South Lafourche Parish Public Library, and the University of Houston.

# Join LAMA today!!

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# News from LAMA Institutions (continued from page 4)

## New Web Site for SAEC

By Elizabeth Dow

The SAEC (Southeast Archives Education Collaborative) has a new web site and a new domain name:

<http://www.archiveseducation.info>

Funded by an IMLS Leadership Grant in 2002, the SAEC developed a collaborative administrative protocol which enables five graduate archives education programs to share courses at virtually no additional cost to the programs or students involved.

By delivering courses using interactive compressed video over Internet 2, faculty at one school teach students in all partner schools. The collaborative now offers three courses each semester which the partners use to augment the curriculum each offers on its own campus:

- The Department of History at Auburn University
- The School of Library and Information Science at Indiana University
- The School of Library and Information Science at Louisiana State University
- The Department of History at Middle Tennessee State University
- The School of Library and Information Science at the University of Kentucky

Although the grant funding will end on October 1, 2007, the SAEC expects to continue indefinitely.

For more information about course offerings, go to the web site and click on CLASSES. For more information on administrative structure, click on ABOUT. Or, contact Elizabeth H. Dow, Assoc. Prof., School of Library and Information Science, Louisiana State University, [edow1@lsu.edu](mailto:edow1@lsu.edu).

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## New staff at New Orleans Notarial Archives Research Center

By Ann Wakefield

Yvonne Loiselle has joined the staff of the New Orleans Notarial Archives Research Center as an Archival Assistant. Yvonne graduated from LSU's School of Library and Information Science with an MLIS (emphasis in archival studies) in May 2004 after which she moved to Canada to pursue a Ph.D. at the University of British Columbia. She was drawn back to the city in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, currently putting her studies on hold while contributing to the renewal of New Orleans.

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**LAMA web page**  
<http://www.louisianaarchivists.org>

## LE COMITÉ DES ARCHIVES DE LA LOUISIANE

By Judy Riffel

At its annual meeting on September 24th, Le Comité des Archives de la Louisiane elected the following officers to serve for 2007: Damon Veach, President; Louis Altazan, 1st Vice President; Karen Ortolano, 2nd Vice President; Cheryl Forbes Montgomery, 3rd Vice President; Doris Falkenheiner, Secretary; and Judy Riffel, Treasurer. Board members at large are: Ann DeVillier Riffel, Margie Luke, and Audrey Nabors Jackson.

The society published one new book in 2006, *Guide to the Louisiana Miscellany Collection, 1724-1837*. This is a guide to a collection of miscellaneous manuscripts at the Library of Congress.

In 2007, the society published *Natchitoches Baptisms, Abstracts from Register 6 of St. Francis Catholic Church, Natchitoches, Louisiana*.

The society is currently holding Used Book Sales to raise funds to purchase new books for the Louisiana State Archives Research Room Library. These sales will feature used genealogy books and periodicals donated to the society by its members and friends. Sales are scheduled for April 21st, June 9th, and July 14th.

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## New facilities for Archdiocese of New Orleans archives

By Charles Nolan

On March 2, 2007, the Archdiocese of New Orleans archives completed its return to New Orleans. Since Hurricane Katrina, the archives has been operating in part from facilities at the Diocese of Baton Rouge archives. The new archives facilities are located at the main administration building and the 1000 Howard Avenue building. The archives is no longer located in the Old Ursuline Convent which now serves as part of the Catholic Cultural Heritage Center.

The new archives address, telephone number, fax and email are:

Archdiocese of New Orleans Archives  
7887 Walmsley Avenue  
New Orleans, LA 70125  
Tel: 504-861-6241  
Fax: 504-866-2906  
Email: [archives@archdiocese-no.org](mailto:archives@archdiocese-no.org)

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**Encourage a friend  
to join LAMA**

# Exhibitions/Events

## HISTORIC NEW ORLEANS COLLECTION KICKS OFF SPRING CULINARY LECTURE SERIES

By Teresa Devlin

March 19, 2007, New Orleans, LA — In conjunction with the exhibition *What's Cooking in New Orleans? Culinary Traditions of the Crescent City*, The Historic New Orleans Collection is launching a weekly series of free lectures beginning Wednesday, March 28. Each lecture begins at 6:30 p.m. and will be held at The Collection, 533 Royal Street. Speakers will cover a range of topics sure to whet many appetites.

### **Spring Culinary Lecture Series Schedule**

Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. at The Collection, 533 Royal Street

All events are free and open to the public. Seating is limited. For reservations, call (504) 598-7171. More details are available at [www.hnoc.org](http://www.hnoc.org).

#### **Wednesday, March 28, 2007**

*South of South: Creole Cooking and the Cuisines of the South*

by Lolis Eric Elie

#### **Wednesday, April 4, 2007**

Screening of the documentary *We Live to Eat: New Orleans's Love Affair with Food*, produced for the exhibition *What's Cooking in New Orleans?*

by Kevin McCaffrey, Filmmaker

#### **Wednesday, April 18**

*Open-Hearth Cooking*

by Richard Scott, Curator of Collections at the Hermann-Grima/Gallier Historic Houses

#### **Wednesday, May 9, 2007**

*Present at the Creation: The Birth of Louisiana Gumbo and the Case for a St. Domingue/Haiti Connection (1791–1810)*

by Dana Little, former journalist with *The New York Times*, *Smithsonian*, and *Saturday Review* who is currently writing a comparative culinary history of St. Domingue/Haiti and New Orleans

#### **Wednesday, May 16, 2007**

##### **The Plantation Kitchen**

by Dr. Jack Holden, a nationally recognized preservationist of both early Louisiana architecture and gardens.

The exhibition *What's Cooking in New Orleans? Culinary Traditions of the Crescent City* explores the city's 300-year culinary love affair through an eclectic display of cookbooks, menus, kitchen gadgets, and images from yesterday and today. These items chronicle the colorful art of Creole cooking, from the earliest interactions between Native Americans and European settlers to the multifaceted, multiethnic culinary customs of today. The interactive components of the exhibition allow patrons to keep the city's culinary traditions alive and well by sharing their favorite memories and recipes. *What's Cooking in New Orleans?* is on display at 533 Royal Street. The exhibition is free and is open Tuesday through Saturday from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and NOW ON SUNDAYS from 10:30 a.m. -4:30 p.m. The exhibition is appropriate for all ages.

Founded in 1966, The Historic New Orleans Collection is a museum, research center and publisher dedicated to the study and preservation of the history and culture of New Orleans and the Gulf South region. For more information about The Historic New Orleans Collection, please visit [www.hnoc.org](http://www.hnoc.org) or call (504) 523-4662.

*The Historic New Orleans Collection – Preserving our Past for a Brighter Future.*

Contact:

Mary Mees, The Historic New Orleans Collection  
(504) 598-7138 / [marym@hnoc.org](mailto:marym@hnoc.org)

Teresa Devlin, The Historic New Orleans Collection  
(504) 598-7170 / [teresad@hnoc.org](mailto:teresad@hnoc.org)

# Exhibitions/Events (continued from page 6)

## 2007 Academy of Certified Archivists Certification Exam To Be Offered in Baton Rouge

By Laura McLemore

The 2007 exam for archival certification will be held August 29 at the Louisiana State Archives in Baton Rouge thanks to the hard work of SAA-LSU, the SAA student chapter of the School of Library and Information Science at Louisiana State University. The deadline for applications to take the exam is May 15.

The task of exam administration, carried out by the Academy of Certified Archivists' Regent for Exam Administration, involves, among other things, answering any and all questions of would-be applicants. Some of the questions fielded in this year's crop included questions like:

----- A widow called to ask how to locate a student processor to work on her husband's papers.

-----An Employment Consultant called on behalf of her client, an archivist who just returned from England after a long sojourn and would like to re-enter the archival profession. How should she go about becoming a Certified Archivist?

---Do I need to send transcripts?

--- A candidate with a Russian education wished to know what papers she needed to send in with her application.

---A librarian wants to become an archivist and would like to begin with Certification.

---A candidate who had the educational credentials but whose archival experience was a number of years old wanted to know if it still counted.

---A person with thirteen years of archival experience and a B.A. degree wanted to know if we required a master's.

---A person with an "online" master's from a relatively unknown institution wanted to know if this degree would be accepted by ACA.

Don't see your question listed? If you are thinking of taking the ACA Certification Exam and have a question about the application process or the administration of the test, send your inquiry to the Regent for Exam Administration, Connell B. Gallagher, CA, [connell.gallagher@uvm.edu](mailto:connell.gallagher@uvm.edu).

## LSUS Archives to Host Texas Eastern Transmission Corporation Display

By Laura McLemore

Former employees of Texas Eastern Transmission Corporation will commemorate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of the company's headquarters in Shreveport with a display of pictures, publications, and memorabilia at LSUS Archives and Special Collections from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. on March 31, 2007.

In the 1940s natural gas was beginning to have a profound effect on the economy and reputation of the Ark-La-Tex area. One of the earliest companies to contribute to the growth of this new industry was Texas Eastern Transmission Corporation, with its Big Inch and Little Inch pipelines. The company moved its offices from Cincinnati, Ohio, to Shreveport in 1947, where its

operations continued to expand from its headquarters at Milam and McNeil streets. By 1957, Texas Eastern employed over 775 workers at its general offices.

In the mid-1950s, the company converted from the transmission of natural gas to shipments of crude oil and refined petroleum products. In the 1960s the Little Big Inch pipeline was extended to the East Coast with the completion of 213 miles of pipeline in Ohio.

Texas Eastern continued to expand through the 1970s and 1980s. In 1989, it was acquired by Panhandle Eastern Corporation, and the headquarters were moved from Shreveport thereafter. Though its presence is less visible now, for more than forty years, the company was among the greatest contributors to the area's economy and national status.

The Texas Eastern display will be located on the third floor of Noel Memorial Library on the LSUS campus and may be viewed through the month of April between 8:00 am and 4:30 p.m. on weekdays and from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. on Saturdays except during the Easter weekend.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Forum Event in Pointe Coupée Parish to be held Saturday October 6<sup>th</sup> 2007 at the Julien Poydras Center in New Roads, LA

by Julie Eshelman-Lee

### Foundations of the French Colonial Period in Pointe Coupée 1745-1769

Creole West Productions, together with co-sponsors Le Cercle Historique, Les Creoles de Pointe Coupée and other community organizations, brings together a group of authorities of colonial Pointe Coupée on Saturday October 6<sup>th</sup> 2007 for the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual forum of the *Foundations of Community: Pointe Coupee et environs Series*. Open to professionals and community alike, the forum will offer a congenial conversation of history with academic integrity.

The foundations of community for Pointe Coupée *et environs* is a result of the confluence of peoples, their cultures and traditions along the banks of the meandering Mississippi in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century. Each year eminent experts in history, culture, anthropology, ethnology, archeology, architecture, language, religion and traditions will gather for a conversation of history enhanced by exhibits on selected topics of the various facets of the foundations of this community, and its contribution to the history and culture of Louisiana and the United States.

Profoundly stated by renown historian Winston DeVille in 1978: "The importance of Pointe Coupée is not only its initial impact on the early settlement of Louisiana during the formative years, but its prominence later in the 18<sup>th</sup> century as a *carrefour* for traffic and commerce . . . the study of Pointe Coupée history is essential to a thorough understanding of a very large portion of the entire state." Twenty eight years later, the historical narration of Pointe Coupée remains relatively unknown.

(Continued on page 8)

## Exhibitions/Events (continued from page 7)

The 2<sup>nd</sup> annual forum features the Foundations of the French Colonial Period in Pointe Coupee 1745-1769 as told by a unique panel of experts who are also descendants of the early founding families together with special guest speakers. The presenters and panelists will bring the story alive through cartographic depictions, meticulous research from the original church and civil Superior Council, censuses, official correspondence of the colonial officials, and encyclopedic knowledge of the people, as well as conversations in Creole with native community speakers. Topics to include:

- Brian J. Costello—*Rivers: Catalysts for Pointe Coupée's Settlement and Growth*
- Glenn C. Morgan and special guest Dr. Jack Holden—*Foundations of the Built Environment: The Fort, Church, and Early Creole Structures*
- Julie Eshelman-Lee and panel—*First Community Côte de Pointe Coupée: Trinity of Peoples—Colonists, Indian and Africans*
- Dr. Tom Klingler with Christophe Landry Hogan, Brian J. Costello and Les Creoles de Pointe Coupée members —*Pointe Coupée's Creole Dialect Foundations: Creole Conversations with Native Community Speakers*  
*Epilogue – Pointe Coupée's Oath of Allegiance to Spain*

Our inaugural forum in 2006 brought over 150 people from the community, throughout Louisiana, as well as California, Texas, Mexico, Colorado, Ohio, Pennsylvania and New Jersey! Please join us at our 2<sup>nd</sup> annual event for an engaging conversation of history with experts, special guest speakers, generous audience interaction, exhibits, vendors, a comprehensive program publication and refreshments!

Saturday October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2007 | Julien Poydras Center | 500 W. Main Street, New Roads, LA | 9 am – 4 pm

### Historic Treasures in the Pointe Coupée Parish Courthouse Archives

By Julie Eshelman-Lee, *Historian*  
(reprint of article which appeared in *The Pointe Coupee Banner* 3/15/2007)

In April of 2006, while assisting research for other records for my forthcoming project *The Best Seat on the Bus*, historian Brian J. Costello randomly found an 1868 Voter Registration ledger in a closet on the third floor of the courthouse. Not certain how long it had been up there but what a find! Not only does this registration ledger have great significance to the project—a historical novel about the genesis of Civil Rights in America based on relatively unknown true experiences of ordinary people from Pointe Coupée taking extraordinary strides in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century—but it is an invaluable historical record for the community! This ledger captures a glimpse into times in the parish just after the Civil War when the distinction of race and class was eliminated by the new state legislation which extended voting rights to all adult men.

It wasn't until later in the year during a visit in October that I had a chance to see this ledger in person. Turning each page together Brian, I, and others looked at the roster of names—like a guest list of family from the past coming alive in this 21<sup>st</sup> century. Each entry represented a male from the community who made the effort to travel to the courthouse from all stretches of the parish to register to vote, many for the first time. Some signed their names and others unable to sign made their "X" mark. A very significant moment in our history! Absolutely moved by the experience, I knew this book had to be preserved for all generations to experience.

The treasure of history in the courthouse archives of civil and criminal records dates back from 1771, the genesis of the Spanish period. These records include criminal records, docket books, judicial proceedings, marriage licenses, old suit books, civil and probate records, legal and conventional mortgage books, naturalization records and succession books. The records are primarily in French with some in Spanish. (French was the most common language in legal records in Louisiana well into the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.)

The records are on a cotton-fiber paper scribed in iron ink by the various notaries and parish officials. They are in fairly good shape because of the paper's low acid content. As each century passes, the records continue to be at risk for deterioration or damage—such as those damaged and lost during a 1992 fire that tore through the Clerk's office.

The earlier colonial civil and criminal records, pre-1771 for the parish, are in the guardianship of other archives, namely the Superior Council Records at the Louisiana State Museum and various collections nationwide, the largest in the Natchez Trace Collection at the University of Texas—Austin. The church colonial records are archived at the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

Grateful to the clerks of the past for their efforts holding onto these valuable records, some having perished over the years from unfortunate circumstances as fires, the baton of guardianship of these treasures transferred to newly elected Pointe Coupée Parish Clerk of Court Lanell Swindler Landry in July 2000. Immediately she felt a need to preserve the irreplaceable collection of the record of the area's history now in her charge. Her steadfast commitment to preserving these records began at once and continues to this day.

Since 2000, Landry has been able to preserve some of the old record books. This process includes cleaning and removing moisture from each page to retard deterioration, then encapsulating each page in protective plastic. After the de-acidification, encapsulation, and rebinding process, the documents are also being microfilmed and archived digitally on CD-Rom format. The progress has been slower than she would prefer due to limited funding in her office, only affording her the ability to process a few at a time. Looking to other resources, she continues to apply for grant

The preservation of the 1868 Voter Registration ledger by Creole West Productions is the first private sponsorship for the parish for preserving the records. When approached, Landry welcomed this sponsorship without hesitation! This first step offers others to follow and contribute to the preservation of the irreplaceable history of the parish.

## Exhibitions/Events (continued from page 8)

The preservation of the 1868 Voter Registration ledger by Creole West Productions is the first private sponsorship for the parish for preserving the records. When approached, Landry welcomed this sponsorship without hesitation! This first step offers others to follow and contribute to the preservation of the irreplaceable history of the parish.

The sum of these records stitches our past to today, telling the history of the community—bringing the experiences of our ancestors alive. Together we all can make a difference in preserving our history!

The Honorable Lanell S. Landry extends an invitation to all—school and community fund raising projects, local historical and civic organizations, family foundations, non-profit groups, and individuals alike—to consider sponsoring the preservation of the records. You can sponsor either individual books or a group of books waiting to be preserved. For your generosity, an inscription dedicated to the group or individual sponsor can be included on the book. For further information on how you can participate, please contact Clerk of Court Lanell Swindler Landry at 225.638.9596.

### LAFOURCHE PARISH CELEBRATES 200 YEARS (1807-2007)

By Cliff Theriot

On March 31, 2007, Lafourche Parish celebrated its 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The celebration included a full day of music, food, and cultural exhibits. The entertainment for the event included performances by local musicians and bands. Local civic organizations participated by preparing Lafourche specialty dishes such as gumbo, etouffee, fricasee, grillades as well as many other local favorites. The cultural exhibits provided a glimpse into the history and traditions of the communities in the parish. Each community was represented by a display of artifacts, photographs, documents, and artwork. Local traditions and crafts such as duck carving, quilting, cistern making, and boat-building were also represented.

Lafourche Parish is situated along the Gulf Coast in the south-eastern portion of the state. The parish stretches approximately ninety miles in length and is fifty miles at its widest point. It is bordered by Assumption, St. James, St. John the Baptist, St. Charles, Jefferson, and Terrebonne Parishes. Lafourche or “the fork” is the name given by French explorers to the bayou that branched off of the Mississippi at present day Donaldsonville. Bayou Lafourche runs through the heart of the parish and once served as a major transportation route.

Lafourche was organized as a district by the Spanish in the 1700s and was known as “Districto de La Fourche de Los Chetimachas.” After the Louisiana Purchase, the territorial legislature renamed the area the County of Lafourche. On March 31, 1807, the legislature reorganized its territorial subdivisions into nineteen “parishes.” The land to the south of Assumption parish was called “Lafourche Interior.” Later, in 1822, the parish was divided a final time to form Terrebonne Parish. The parish seat for Lafourche was established at Thibodaux.

### LSU EXHIBIT DEMONSTRATES THE VALUE OF PRIMARY SOURCE MATERIALS

The current exhibit at LSU Libraries Special Collections is “An Unnatural Metropolis: Wrestling New Orleans from Nature,” an exhibition based on the award-winning book by Craig E. Colten.

The catastrophic flooding accompanying hurricanes Katrina and Rita is only the latest episode in the ongoing struggle between the Crescent City and nature. “An Unnatural Metropolis” outlines the history of this battle between people and place, illustrating the many obstacles faced by founders and citizens during more than two centuries. The exhibition documents yellow fever epidemics, flooding, drainage, sewage and sanitation issues that have challenged New Orleanians since 1718. The exhibition also explores the 20th century push to “reclaim” lands from the surrounding swamp for commercial and residential use, which proved to be a major factor in the magnitude of destruction suffered by New Orleans in 2005.

Colten collaborated with Leah Jewett, the exhibition coordinator for LSU Libraries, to develop the exhibition based on the research for his prize-winning book. “An Unnatural Metropolis” makes clear the continuing relevance of the historical, primary source documents that are preserved in Special Collections libraries, such as the one at LSU.

The exhibition is free and is open to the public until June 2, 2007. Hill Memorial Library is open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, and 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturdays. When classes are in session, the library is also open Tuesday evenings until 8 p.m.

### Ways LAMA Membership Can Help Your Local Clerk of Court

- Provide an authoritative source of knowledge about historical documents
- Provide a source of disaster prevention and recovery information
- Provide expert advice about document preservation and conservation
- Provide a network of professionals to answer questions concerning the documenting of local history

**Invite your local clerk of court to join LAMA!**

## Exhibitions/Events (continued from page 9)

### **SOCIETY OF SOUTHWEST ARCHIVISTS 2007 ANNUAL MEETING**

The Society of Southwest Archivists is holding its annual meeting in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, from May 30 to June 2 this year. The committees have planned workshops and special events as well as two days of break-out sessions.

The conference has added a full day to the schedule to accommodate more workshops. Wednesday, May 30, is dedicated to two workshops. The morning workshop will be conducted by Stan Gunn, University of Texas, and is titled "Free as in Speech: Why Your Organization Doesn't Have to Pay for Software." The afternoon workshop "Preserving You Community Heritage with Oral History Projects" will be presented by Roger Harris, Oral Historian, and Mary Jane Warde, PhD, former Indian Historian, Oklahoma History Society.

The opening plenary session speaker will be Patricia Loughlin, Associate Professor of History, University of Central Oklahoma, author of *Hidden Treasures of the American West*. Dr. Loughlin's talk will be based on her experiences researching Angie Debo, Muriel Wright and Alice Marriott for her book and her expertise in Oral History.

The eighteen break-out sessions offer a wide range of topics and many educational opportunities. Some of the topics include information about the Academy of Certified Archivists Exam, preserving digital manuscript material, writing NHPRC grants, the creation and use of descriptive metadata for images,

disaster preparedness and recovery, minimum standards processing and automated archives. Those sessions will be held on Thursday and Friday.

Two events will offer an opportunity to interact with colleagues and to visit two local institutions. The Thursday night reception will be at the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum. Charles (Chuck) Rand, Research Center Director, will host the event. The museum has a wealth of art, artifacts, and interesting exhibits. Music will be provided by the Falderal Band.

The event on Friday night will be a behind-the-scenes tour of the Oklahoma History Center conducted by Bill Welge, Director of the Research Division. Located on eighteen acres of land across from the State Capitol, the Oklahoma History Center offers both indoor and outdoor activities, including oilfield exhibits and a 1/4-mile Red river Journey walking tour. Exhibit areas will be open that evening and a hearty buffet will be served.

The program for the Saturday morning breakfast will include speaker Mark Greene, president-elect of SAA, the business meeting and SLOTTTO. Don't forget to bring plenty of SLOTTTO items to Oklahoma City with you!

The SSA Local Arrangements, 2007 Committee is chaired by Kay Bost. The committee members include Jeanne Gaunce, Stan Upchurch, Jeri Silvers, J. J. Compton, Jerri Smalley, Kathleen Haynes, Bill Welge, Brad Robinson, Garry Harrington, Charles Rand, Victoria Sheffler, Misty Smith, Kate Blalack, Christina Wolf, Chad Williams, and Rebecca Perry.

**SSA Annual Meeting**  
**May 30-June 2, 2007**  
**Oklahoma City, Oklahoma**  
*Please join us there!*

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lama/lama.htm](http://nutrias.org/lama/lama.htm)

## **LAMA Newsletter**

It is never too early to send in news items for the next LAMA newsletter. Deadlines are March 15 for the Spring/Summer issue and September 15 for the Fall/Winter issue. Please send items to Phyllis Kinnison, Louisiana State University, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library, Baton Rouge, LA 70803. E-mail: [pcasti1@lsu.edu](mailto:pcasti1@lsu.edu).