

WHISPERS

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of the Past



Is RLM an “innie” or an “outie”?

By: Bill Stark, Associate Director

Every now and then, it is helpful to take a look at what is happening elsewhere in the museum field. It allows us to see what is happening in other institutions and where current trends are heading. Ideally, we'll apply that information to self-examination. More often than not, we can find inspiration for our own institution.

In a recent blog post for the Center for the Future of Museums, Founding Director Elizabeth Merritt wrote about how museums generally come in two types, much like belly buttons. “Innies” are museums that began with a passion and/or a collection that a person or group wanted to share with the public. This is much the way that the LSU Rural Life Museum came into being. “Outies,” on the other hand, are museums created by people with an outcome in mind (usually addressing a societal need) and use the format of the museum to address it. Merritt points to the wave of children's museums founded in the 1970s as a prime example. To this, I would also add the growth in museums of conscience, many tribal museums, and the additions to the Smithsonian in recent decades.

Merritt continues noting that traditional arts participation (museums, symphonies, etc.) has been in steady decline, informal arts engagement (dance, poetry slams, and other participatory art) remain robust. The silver lining however, is that the Public Participation in the Arts survey has seen an uptick for the first time since it began in 2002. She credits this to more museums that started as “innies” becoming “outies.” In other words, more museums are moving away from the notion that they have something special that the public should care about. Instead, the museums are attempting to use their uniqueness to relate to current and new audiences in a way that engages the public and fills a need.

The blog post continues with several strategies for, and examples of how museums are adapting their offerings to better reflect and engage audiences. But, I would like to point out a couple found elsewhere the news in the last few months. The New-York Historical Society has launched The Citizenship Project. The project offers

free preparation classes to legal permanent residents studying to take the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services naturalization exam. The classes utilize museum collections such as the poem “Defense of Fort M'Henry” (The Star Spangled Banner) and a calf brace worn by Franklin D. Roosevelt a touchstones for teaching history and civics. The idea... connect the artifact with the civics test and the student with the museum. The New-York Historical Society continues to meet its interpretive mission, but also addresses a societal need while reaching a new audience.

In the open air history museum field, Old Sturbridge Village is a 200 acre site in Massachusetts depicting New England life in the 1830s. The site has recently secured a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities in an effort to update its interpretation and staff training for the first time since the 1970s. The museum is embarking on a multi-year study to examine how it presents agriculture and food, civics, industry and economy, and race and gender. The study will help Old Sturbridge Village learn how best to remain relevant to existing and potential audiences, and to better compete for discretionary time and income.

So, where does this leave the LSU Rural Life Museum? It has already been pointed out that the museum began as an “innie.” Are we now, or can we become an “outie?” I would contend that we have begun the process of being more responsive to our audiences by creating and improving programs to better meet changing needs of the visiting public. Increased access to multi-lingual tours, both in person and self-guided is one example.

But we are just beginning. Reimagining what the LSU Rural Life Museum can be to our public, while still remaining true to the museum's mission and vision is an ongoing process. By being ready to recognize and take advantage of opportunities, the LSU Rural Life Museum can make a meaningful impact on the community and our support, relevance and mission will continue to thrive. (Sources: Center for the Future of Museums Blog, Nov. 20, 2018 aam-us.org; The Citizenship Project, Sept. 27, 2018 aam-us.org; Telegram.com, Aug. 29, 2018)

Director's Notes

By David Floyd

A DELICIOUS GIFT

I was a LSU student working at Steele Burden's Rural Life Museum in 1975. That was the year that I was introduced to the delectable concoction known now as Steele's Mint Julep. I have always been interested in horse racing and upon learning this, Steele Burden asked if I had ever had a mint julep. My youthful ignorance showed when I asked "what's it like?"

Mr. Burden began to explain that the mint julep could be traced to the Middle East from a drink made from water and rose petals called the Julab. The word itself is derived from the Spanish "julepe", from Spanish Arabic. The Julab certainly found its way to the new world, and the Julep was born probably somewhere in there. The Julep was a Southern drink. The bourbon based Mint Julep is rightfully associated with Kentucky and a gentleman named Henry Clay.

Mr. Clay, a famous Kentucky Senator, known as the "Great Compromiser", loved a Mint Julep. Mr. Burden went on to explain that Senator Clay made the Mint Julep famous at the world renown Willard Hotel's Round Robin Bar in Washington DC. His fellow congressmen no doubt took that drink and shared it along with his passion to constituents in their districts.

All of this was interesting yet I still wondered "what does it taste like?". On the Friday afternoon before Derby Day, I was greeted with Mr. Burden holding a large silver tray mounted with two frozen, silver julep cups with silver straws and linen napkins. He also had an assembly of grapes, sugar, mint and of course bourbon. Mr. Burden explained the process as



Steele Burden outside of the garden house at Windrush

he began to assemble his concoction. "Always freeze the cups so that you can write your initials in the frost. Next always use snow ball ice and fresh mint. Build the julep in layers of ice and mint. Pour the bourbon over the ice until the glass is full. And always garnish the julep with grapes, a rose bud, and powdered sugar". Mr. Burden's mint juleps were a picture to behold and unbeknown to me, Mr. Burden's mint juleps were legendary. I learned later that Steele's Mint Julep was described in detail by author Frances Parkinson Keyes in her book, "The River Road". I will never forget that day when I first experienced Steele Burden's Mint Julep. It is unlike any other Julep that I have ever had and I adhere in every detail to Mr. Burden's recipe at my annual Derby Day Celebration.

Oh by the way, how did my first mint julep taste? Sublimely Delicious.

A FRIEND INDEED

We at the LSU Rural Life Museum recently lost one of our longtime friends, Butch Spielman. The Spielman family have always been dedicated supporters of the museum, yet it was Butch's love of the museum and the Burden legacy that influenced everyone he met.

Butch was an early board member of the Friends of the LSU Rural Life Museum, acting as its President in the late 1990s. During his time as President, Butch and the Friends Board held many early morning breakfast events for Baton Rouge business leaders. Through these breakfast events, Butch gained the support of all who attended.



Butch also was on the Whispers of Change fund raising team, which eventually raised 5.2 million dollars for the new museum Visitor Center. After retirement from Albermarle Corporation, Butch became a Rural Life Docent and he enjoyed meeting and educating our guest on Louisiana's culture and history. Butch also enjoyed photographing the museum and Burden property and he always was willing to share his images.

Butch's large heart, dedication and consistent support of the museum will be missed. He was indeed truly a friend.

Tea Fashion and Fancies

Saturday, February 23, 2019

2:00 pm until 4:00 pm

Featuring MIMOSA Handcrafted Jewelry

For more information, please call: 225-765-2437



MIMOSA is Madeline & Dawson Ellis, a husband-and-wife team who graduated in landscape architecture but now work side by side as full-time jewelers. They're joined by an A-team of wildly talented women. Each piece is created start to finish in their South Louisiana home studio using the ancient art of lost-wax casting.

MIMOSA Handcrafted began when Madeline took her lifelong passion for making and pursued it after her day job, late into the night, on weekends and with any free moments in between. As a Landscape Architect, she craved creating and making with her hands and found making jewelry satisfied. Eventually,

MIMOSA became her full time endeavor. Since then, she's been joined by her husband, Dawson, and a team of hardworking ladies. Using the ancient art of lost wax casting, they bring each bronze, sterling silver and 14K gold wearable piece to life in the studio behind Madeline and Dawson's Louisiana home. Madeline's committed to creating wears and wares with story and soul. Where she once used her creativity to design spaces for people to have experiences in, she now creates pieces for the wearer to have experiences with. Her pieces tell the story of everything from culture to history to landscape and invite conversation and opportunity for connection around things that matter to the heart.

Ione E. Burden Symposium

Presents

Death among the Magnolias;

Plagues and Pestilence

of

Old Louisiana

Saturday, March 9, 2019

8:00 am until 3:30 pm



Take a journey back to the 18th through early 20th centuries with well noted speakers on such topics as yellow fever "yellow jack", malaria, ageing over 65, influenza, and their treatments and customs.

Speakers include: Elizabeth Schexnyder, Dr. Diane Stephens, and Dr. Trent James
Dr. Wright Kennedy

Zapp's International Beerfest XV

The 15th annual Zapp's International Beerfest will be held Saturday, March 30, 2019 from 3:30 until 6:00 pm. More than 200 foreign and domestic beers, ales and homebrews will be made available for tasting during this popular annual event benefiting the LSU Rural Life Museum. This fun filled afternoon is for patrons aged 21 years and older. A proper I.D. must be presented upon entering the event.

Tickets on sale through BonTempTix.Com:

<https://bontempstix.com/>

Tickets are \$35.00

Designated Driver tickets available for \$20.00 each which will also include one meal ticket.

Only 2500 tickets will be sold

VIP Tickets are now available!

Entrance into festival

1 hour early!

- Beer Tastings not available to general ticket holders
- Complimentary food court 2:30 pm – 4:00 pm
- Souvenirs
- \$100.00 each



Origin of the Easter Bunny and Rural Life Museum's Old Fashioned Easter Celebration

By Steve Ramke

As we put the Christmas holiday season behind us and move on into Mardi Gras and Easter season, I thought it would be fun to look at one Easter tradition that is the heart of the holiday for children all around the country. The tradition I wanted to look at and find its origin in America was the Easter Bunny. A little bit of research on the internet showed that the exact origins of the Easter bunny are unclear. The rabbit has been adopted as a symbol of fertility and new life. It is believed that the Easter Bunny as we have come to know him today originated from German immigrants to Pennsylvania in the 1700's. The German version of the Easter Bunny was known as the "Osterhase" or "Oschter Haws." In the German tradition, the bunny would lay colored eggs in nests built by children. As this tradition spread across America through the years, nests turned into today's Easter baskets and colored eggs turned into candy, toys, and other gifts (some still placed in plastic colored eggs). It also became a tradition for carrots to be left out for the Easter Bunny to snack on as he hopped around delivering its treats for children much like cookies are left for Santa Claus as he treks around the globe on Christmas Eve night. It was a fascinating and relatively simple origin for such a heartwarming aspect of Easter.



Spring is on the horizon and with it comes that always welcomed sunshine, warmer weather, and the Rural Life Museum's Old Fashioned Easter Celebration on Sunday, April 14! There will be many fun Easter events for the family to take part in. Join us for Easter egg hunts for children ages 3 and under, 4-5 years old, and 6 years old and up, Easter crafts, and a visit from the Easter Bunny. Learn about and participate in traditional Louisiana Easter activities such as egg dyeing, spoon races, egg paquing, and storytelling. The festivities begin at 1:30 pm and end at 4:00 pm. General admission is \$5 per person.

Cast Iron Letterpress

By: David Nicolosi

Also known as a book press or screw press, this press was used by Thomas D. Boyd, President of Louisiana State University from 1896 until 1927. Screw presses were first used around 100 A.D. by the Romans in the production of wine and olive oil. Screw presses were used near the same time



period in the production of books but did not surpass the use of the scroll until hundreds of years later. To use this letterpress, a stack of papers (pre-printed or blank) would be placed between the base and the screw plate. The lever would be turned till the plate came in contact with the uppermost paper and tightened until the paper would not move, leaving a half-inch of the pressed paper overhanging so that glue and binding could be applied. After the glue dried, hard or soft backing can be applied to create a book or pamphlet.

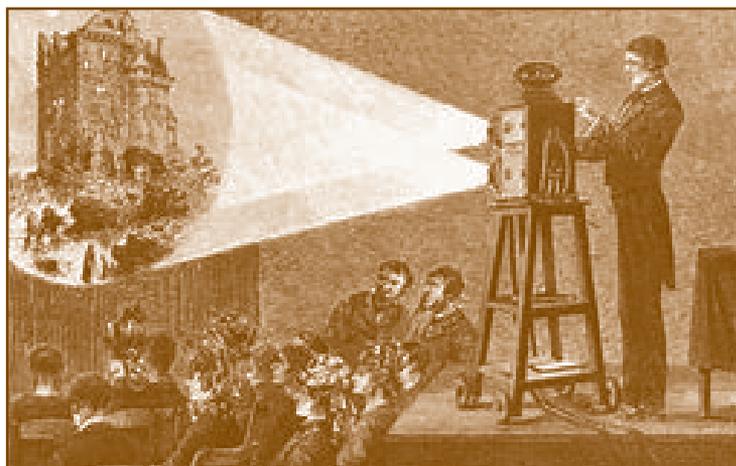
President Boyd used this press to produce and distribute circulars and handbills from his office. Thomas Duckett Boyd was born in 1854 in Wytheville Virginia to Thomas J. Boyd, a wealthy lawyer. He was best known for creating the Law School and the Department of Education. Thomas D. Boyd started his career at LSU while his brother, David Boyd was president. David Boyd was among the first faculty members under Superintendent William T. Sherman at LSU, which was then known then as Louisiana State Seminary of Learning located in Pineville, Louisiana.

Magic Lantern

By: Katherine Fresina

The first magic lantern was invented in the 1600s functioning as an early form of image projector. A light source inside the lantern would shine through a translucent image slide. This image would then be projected onto a wall. The term magic lantern comes from early performances utilizing the lantern. Images would be shown on a wall leading audiences to believe they were witnessing a magic trick. The first lanterns were lit with candle light. In the 18th century oil lamps and later kerosene lanterns were used. Advancements in the lighting source allowed for children to use the lanterns, thereby, increasing lantern popularity. By the 20th century the lanterns became readily available due to the use of electric lighting.

Early slides for magic lanterns consisted of hand painted images on glass slides. By the middle of the 1800s printed slides became popular. Printed images were applied to or transferred onto the glass pieces. Printed slides were easily mass produced leading to their popularity as children's toys. The magic lantern did not see the first photographic slides until 1848. Early forms of photographic slides were only



available in black and white, however, as production continued hand colored photographic slides became more common.

Lantern shows were a popular form of entertainment in the 18th century. Early performances were mainly educational and produced by professors and scholars. However, shows also consisted of more entertainment based production utilizing songs and stories. Phantasmagoria was yet another performance type. Phantasmagoria shows displayed images intended to frighten the viewers. The images would be projected on smoke to add to the frightening effect. Showmen would move the projector closer and farther from the screen to give the effect of the image was getting larger or smaller.

The Rural Life Museum currently has a magic lantern and several slides on display in the toy display case.



1919

By: Carrie Couvillon

With the start of 2019, how about a look back to a century earlier? The year 1919, like any other year, had high and low moments, and the following are just a few things that happened a hundred years ago.

Former President Theodore Roosevelt died in his sleep at the age of 60. America was introduced to cartoons when the first cartoon character Felix the Cat appeared in "*Feline Follies*." The 18th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution went into effect. The Treaty of Versailles was signed. And, the Black Sox Scandal happened.

On January 29, 1919, the 18th Amendment was ratified. It prohibited the manufacture, transportation and sale of intoxicating liquors, which today is better known as *Prohibition*. It was hard to enforce the new law because while it was illegal to sell alcohol it was not illegal to drink it. Any alcohol purchased prior to Prohibition could legally be consumed in private homes and doctors could still prescribe alcohol for medicinal purposes. Despite these legal loopholes, it still was not easy for everyone to legally obtain alcohol. So, with Prohibition came the illegal distribution of alcohol in a variety of ways.

Throughout the 1920's, *bootlegging*, the manufacturing and selling of illegal alcohol, became popular along with the operation of *speakeasies*, which were stores or nightclubs secretly selling alcohol. People smuggled alcohol across state lines and they also made moonshine and bathtub gin. Prohibition lasted until its repeal in 1933. The country was in the middle of the Great Depression, and the need to create jobs and the tax revenue that could be obtained by legalizing the alcohol industry made Prohibition less appealing. In February 1933, Congress adopted a resolution, and in December the 21st Amendment was ratified. Of the 27 amendments to the U. S. Constitution, the 18th is the only amendment to ever be repealed.

The actual fighting from the Great War ended on November 11, 1918, known as Armistice Day. However, it took until June 28, 1919 for the Allied peace negotiations to conclude with the signing of the Treaty of Versailles. Although the treaty was signed by President Woodrow Wilson at the Paris Peace Conference, it was never ratified by Congress. The Treaty of Versailles failed to get ratified in the Senate largely due to American opposition to joining the League of Nations. Instead Congress passed the Knox-Porter Resolution in July 1921 to formally end hostilities between the United States and the Central Powers. Then in August 1921, the United States signed three separate peace treaties with Germany, Austria and Hungary.

The circumstances around Black Sox Scandal at the 1919 World Series began after the White Sox first baseman, Chick Gandil, and a gambler discussed the

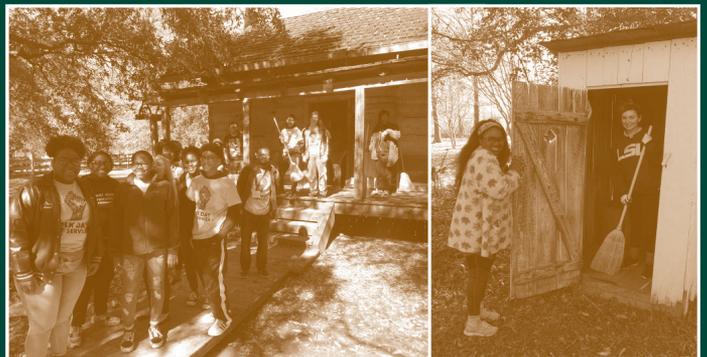
White Sox players throwing the World Series. At the time, the Chicago White Sox had 3-1 odds of winning the World Series over the Cincinnati Reds. Gandil and eight other White Sox players eventually agreed to throw the series in exchange for \$100,000 each.

Suspensions rose and the odds shifted after people in the know began putting large amounts of cash on the Reds. Rumor spread further after the Reds won the first game 9-1. By October 6, the series stood at 4-1 in favor of the Reds. Then, the scheme started to fall apart. Gandil and his co-conspirators were supposed to receive five \$20,000 installments, but it was not delivered. After game five, the angry ballplayers supposedly decided to play to win. The Sox won the next two games 5-4 and 4-1. Reneging on the deal proved unwise and some of Sox players later claimed they received threats against their families. It is, therefore, unclear if the Sox losing the last game was an honest loss or if it was due to coercion, but the Cincinnati Reds acquired their first ever World Series win.

The 1919 World Series went unquestioned until August 1920, when evidence surfaced that gamblers rigged a game between the Cubs and the Phillies. It brought suspicion back to the World Series. In October 1920, the White Sox players, now known as the "Black Sox," were indicted on nine counts of conspiracy. Then in June 1921, the charges were dropped after the records on their grand jury confessions mysteriously vanished. Despite their acquittal every Black Sox player was banned from the National Baseball League.

A Day of Service

In honor of Martin Luther King Jr. Day, many people chose to spend the holiday giving back to the community. At LSU Rural Life Museum, 25 volunteers were organized through LSU's Office of Multicultural Affairs. The enthusiastic youth spent the day cleaning historic buildings and artifacts in preparation for the many school groups that tour the museum each spring.



BOB AND KAY HAWTHORNE – HONORARY OVERSEERS FOR EVENING AT WINDRUSH 2019

By: Frances and John Monroe

Bob and Kay Hawthorne have been selected as the Honorary Overseers for this year's Evening at Windrush celebration. No one has been more involved or contributed more over many, many years, mostly behind the scenes, to the planning and implementation of the Burden gift to LSU including the LSU Rural Life Museum and other features of the Burden property.

Bob Hawthorne's involvement with the Burden family began shortly after he began his legal practice, in the early 1960's. The Burdens created The Burden Foundation as a conduit for gifting Windrush, their ancestral property to LSU. It was also given the role of monitoring uses of the property after they were gone. This plan was devised by Alvin Rubin, Luther Jordan and others. Scott Barton, Sue Turner and other prominent citizens were early board members. Scott's daughter, Annette, serves on the board today. Sue Turner continues to serve. Bob became involved soon after this process began. After Rubin's appointment as a judge in the federal district court in New Orleans, Bob became the legal advisor to the Burden family and assumed a leadership role with The Burden Foundation, including as its primary contact with Louisiana State University. He served as board secretary for ten years and became president in 2008 succeeding Paul Murrill. During Paul's long tenure, he and Bob, as board secretary, updated and implemented a number of changes to make the relationship with LSU more effective. He has served in that capacity for the past ten years.

Bob emphasizes that much of the credit for the success of the LSU Rural Life Museum should go to "the docent, volunteers, and staff. They deserve all the credit we can give them. The same is true for the LSU AgCenter's Botanical Gardens and their stewardship of the entire place. LSU should be congratulated -- it has not only embraced; it has enhanced the Burden dream. We should also remember all of the early supporters and donors of the Burden family's vision."

When asked what they treasure most about their experiences with Burden, Bob and Kay answered "all



the wonderful people we have worked with and gotten to know at Burden."

This year, Tom Meek has taken the reins passed to him from Bob as president of the Foundation board. Tom said that in preparation for the task, he read over all of the minutes and other documents he could find and he is "in awe of the untold hours Bob has spent in 'caring and feeding' The Burden Foundation as an organization, particularly attending to the details and in generating, documenting and preserving written records of Burden Foundation activities." He has the utmost respect for the work Bob did. "He kept a wonderful record".

Kay shares Bob's enthusiasm for and dedication to the Burden mission. She commented that she "witnessed the mental time and effort spent deftly dealing with the many and varied issues which have arisen over the years." She commented that she is pleased to see more and more young families and children engaging in activities at Burden. She and Bob are pleased to watch their family support the effort. Their son, Trippe, was elected to The Burden Foundation board in 2014 and is now serving as the board secretary. He has also served on the board of the Friends of the LSU Rural Life Museum. Trippe also had the rare privilege of working during his college years as a summer student intern under Steele Burden.

Evening at Windrush is a traditional annual fund-raiser for the LSU Rural Life Museum. This year it will be held on Friday, April 26th.





Friends of the LSU Rural Life Museum
 P. O. Box 14852
 Baton Rouge, LA 70898

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UPCOMING EVENTS

For more information, please contact the

LSU Rural Life Museum at (225) 765-2437

- An Old-fashioned Tea February 23
- Ione E. Burden Symposium March 9
- Zapp's International Beerfest March 30
- An Old Fashioned Easter April 14
- An Evening at Windrush April 26

LSU Rural Life Museum Staff

David Floyd, *Director*

Bill Stark, *Associate Director*

David Nicolosi, *Registrar Conservator*

Steve Ramke, *Curator of Education*

Elizabeth McInnis, *Marketing Director*

Carrie Couvillon, *Information Specialist*

Katherine Fresina, *Assistant Registrar*

Ken Owens, *Horticulturist Assistant*

Butch Gendron, *Docent Coordinator*

Frances and John Monroe, *Editors*

LSU Rural Life Museum

OPEN DAILY: 8:00 am until 5:00 pm

4560 Essen Lane

*(Exit 160 I-10 at Essen Lane
 at Burden Museum and Gardens)*

Baton Rouge, LA 70809

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P.O. Box 80498, Baton Rouge, LA 70898

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