GHOST SIGNS:
DELCATELY DURABLE, AN ANALYSIS OF THE COMPOSITION AND DURABILITY OF HISTORIC COMMERCIAL PAINTED SIGNS

A THESIS

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This work is dedicated to the memory of my father, Charles P. Zarrelli, who taught me to mix mortar, clean my tools, and always appreciate the work of the tradespeople who came before us.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ii
LIST OF FIGURES iv
INTRODUCTION 1
CHAPTER I. GHOST SIGNS 2
CHAPTER II. SURVIVING GHOST SIGNS OF NEW ORLEANS 12
CHAPTER III. HISTORIC PAINT 25
CHAPTER IV. HISTORIC NEW ORLEANS BRICK 41
CHAPTER V. INTERFACE OF HISTORIC MATERIALS 57
CHAPTER VI. TEST CASE 65
CHAPTER VII. PRESERVATION RECOMMENDATIONS 92
CHAPTER VIII. CONCLUSION 103
APPENDIX A: PHOTO SURVEY OF NEW ORLEANS GHOST SIGNS 105
APPENDIX B: ONLINE MAP OF NEW ORLEANS GHOST SIGNS 211
APPENDIX C: TABLE OF NEWSPAPER REFERENCES TO TEST CASE 213
BIBLIOGRAPHY 230
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1  Illustration, “St. Charles St. From Masonic Temple”  4
Figure 2  Photograph, “Ginger Mint Julep”, 315 Decatur St.  6
Figure 3  Photograph, “National Fruit Flavor Co.”, 1039 Constance St.  7
Figure 4  Photograph, 614-618 Gravier St.  9
Figure 5  Photograph, 4317 Magazine St.  10
Figure 6  Photograph, 4317 Magazine St.  10
Figure 7  Photograph, "600 Block Bourbon"  15
Figure 8  Photograph, "612 - 624 Bourbon Street"  15
Figure 9  Photograph, 624 Bourbon St.  16
Figure 10  Photograph, "841 Bourbon Street”  17
Figure 11  Drone Photograph, 730 Dumaine St.  18
Figure 12  Photograph, "437-441 Bourbon Street"  19
Figure 13  Drone Photograph, 429-433 Bourbon St.  20
Figure 14  Map Detail, 1895-96 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map  21
Figure 15  Photograph, 420 Jackson Ave.  22
Figure 16  Photograph, 420 Jackson Ave.  23
Figure 17  Photograph, 420 Jackson Ave.  24
Figure 18  Brochure, Averill Chemical Paint Co.  28
Figure 19  Brochure, The Gibsboro’ White Lead, Color and Varnish Works  33
Figure 20  Advertisement, E.P. Cleary  36
Figure 21  Advertisement, John Hoey  53
Figure 22  Advertisement, St. Joe Brick Works  56
Figure 23  Advertisement, Jarvis & Andrews  60
Figure 24  Photograph, “612, 614, 618 Gravier”  65
Figure 25  Map Detail, “City Of New Orleans”  68
Figure 26  Photograph, “Labarre.F.” Brick  68
Figure 27  Map Detail, “Charles F. Zimpel’s 1833 Topographical Map Of New Orleans And Its Vicinity”  71
Figure 28  Map Detail, “Robinson’s Atlas”  72
Figure 29  Advertisement, National Automatic Fire Alarm Company of Louisiana  74
Figure 30  Advertisement, National Automatic Fire Alarm Company of Louisiana  74
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Detail from Article, “New Quarters At 614 Gravier St.”</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Instagram Post, Cypress Building Conservation</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Drone Photograph, 614-618 Gravier St.</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Photograph, 614-618 Gravier St.</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Microscope Picture, Brick Sample 1</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Microscope Picture, Brick Sample 2</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Microscope Picture, Brick Sample 1</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Microscope Picture, Brick Sample 1</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Microscope Picture, Brick Sample 1</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Microscope Picture, Brick Sample 1</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Microscope Picture, Brick Sample 2</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Microscope Picture, Brick Sample 2</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>Microscope Picture, Brick Sample 2</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Microscope Picture, Brick Sample 2</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Microscope Profile Picture, Brick Sample 1</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Microscope Profile Picture, Brick Sample 2</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>Illustration, “Historic Signage”</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>Illustration, “Historic Signage”</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

Paint should wear in such a manner that in the course of say anywhere from four to six years, when the owner feels inclined to do so, he may have the property repainted without resorting to burning off or scraping. It should dust or flour off.¹

On the lands north of lake Pontchartrain, clay exists of an excellent quality and very pure, suitable for manufacturing not only the best bricks, but pottery of all kinds. It is to be hoped that this will remedy the great evil that New Orleans has hitherto experienced, by the use of a bad material for buildings. This has arisen from the employment of a substance too near the surface of the earth; whereas, by going a little deeper, a prime clay is obtained, that would bid defiance, when well burnt, to the humidity peculiar to this southern atmosphere.²

Painted signs on historic brick buildings, or “Ghost Signs,” are fragile artifacts of past materials. Paint, pre-WWI, was primarily composed of natural oils and pigments and was not designed for longevity. Hand formed, low-fired bricks, such as those commonly found in historic New Orleans buildings, are notorious for their porosity and lack of a protective, hard-fired “skin.” This paper will examine the characteristics of both historic paint and historic bricks to theorize how such delicate materials combined to create such enduring mementos. Attached to this paper is a photographic survey of surviving ghost signs of New Orleans.

¹ One Thousand More Paint Questions Answered: A Reference Encyclopedia Answering Knotty Problems that are met by the Painter, Decorator and Paint Manufacturer in their Daily Work (New York: The Painters Magazine, 1908), 43.

² Norman, Benjamin M., Norman’s New Orleans and Environs: Containing a Brief Historical Sketch of the Territory and State of Louisiana, and the City of New Orleans, From the Earliest Period to the Present Time (New York: B.M. Norman, 1845), 57.
CHAPTER I. GHOST SIGNS

Signage is a ubiquitous aspect of the American landscape. Text, symbols, and images surround us, from traffic signs on residential streets to towering billboards lining commercial corridors. Their size, placement, and subject give us constant subliminal clues as to our location within our daily landscapes. A lack of signage is disorienting and confusing when looking for the correct street to turn onto, the correct building number, or the entrance door in a sea of unmarked glazing. We have an expectation that what we are looking for will be clearly and explicitly labeled.

Commercial signage in the United States has evolved with that express purpose in mind—clarity. Early European settlements brought along their own traditions of signage in the form of the signboard. Knowing which building in a settlement was the inn or tavern was essential when few distinctions were made architecturally between commercial and residential buildings. “Because of the simple domestic appearance of the country inn or ‘ordinary’ of colonial America, the sign communicated its public function. Without such a feature, a traveler might mistake the structure for just another pitched-roof house.”

Figural representations on signboards are conventionally believed to be for the benefit of the illiterate; though they prove to be just as impactful in “literate” societies. A

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walk down Bourbon Street in New Orleans’ French Quarter, early in the morning with only delivery drivers and street cleaners present, shows you that humans’ more basic needs are still being advertised with figural representation. Everyone needs to know where they can procure a good sandwich.

As the country grew and expanded, time, tradition, and fashion marched on and commercial signage has evolved to the point where entire buildings can be lit to display a full color advertisement. Digital billboards are current, colorful, Wi-Fi connected, and capable of live updates. They market themselves to advertisers as “the most time-sensitive & flexible form of outdoor advertising.”

However, an older technology is making a resurgence in this country in the way of both advertising as well as public art— the hand painted sign. Murals and commercial signs are once again in fashion and are prominent in today’s social media culture with “hash-tagged selfies” plastered on Instagram and Twitter. They are popular in historic districts seeking a resurgence in attendance, activity, and commerce, as well as on the historic brick buildings in those districts that offer up entire lengths of buildings next to vacant lots and along prominent street corners.

Sign painting’s renewed popularity nationwide started in the 1990s, with the DIY movement and a generation that was keen on reviving other analog media and artisanal crafts, such as celluloid film, vinyl music records, and handmade wallets. ‘Everything is so digital and screen-oriented that people need a reprieve,’ says [Meredith] Kasabian [co-owner of Best-Dressed Signs in Boston]. ‘Having something handmade reminds you that you’re a human.’

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One reason colorful, graphic signs on historic brick buildings is considered acceptable is that most of these buildings have a long history of being painted. Even after electric lighting of signs transformed into signs composed of electric lights and glowing neon tubes, signs painted onto boards or directly onto the buildings themselves were still an expected means of commercial advertising well into the 20th century. It wasn’t until our society came to value disposability over craftsmanship that hand-painted signs fell out of favor in the second half of the 20th century, when paper plastered billboards and easily replaceable business sign panels became *de rigueur*.

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Figure 1 - “St. Charles St. From Masonic Temple.”, Page 16 From *Night In New Orleans*, Published By J. Scordill, New Orleans, Copyright 1911, Rice-Mitchell Pub. Co. Image Courtesy Loyola University New Orleans Special Collections And Archives.

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6 *Night in New Orleans*, Loyola University New Orleans Special Collections and Archives, Louisiana Digital Library, https://louisianadigitallibrary.org/islandora/object/loyno-p16313coll5%3A299
It was also a matter of style. In the 20th century “modern” became everything in design. Architecture, fashion, furniture, even entertainment all saw a new aesthetic of streamlined, sleek, bold and bright designs and composition. Then a new material took hold of the world—plastic.

In the decades after World War II signs were also transformed by a group of materials now known generically as ‘plastic.’ Plastic had several advantages over wood, metal and other traditional sign materials. As the name indicates, ‘plastic’ can take almost any shape. It can also take almost any color. Plastic is translucent. Lit from behind, it appears to glow. It is relatively durable. Above all, it is inexpensive and can be mass produced. Plastic quickly became the dominant sign material.\(^7\)

Cheap plastic wasn’t the only change in 20th century commercialism. Another change was the rise of national chain stores and franchises. Success for a national chain meant the consumer felt that they were going to be offered the same products and the same quality no matter where they were in the country. This extended to the store logos and trademarks, making recognition easy for the consumer on a crowded street. “The rise of mass culture, of which the national chain is but one expression, has meant the rise of standardization, and the elimination of regional differences and local character.”\(^8\)

When hand painted signs survive the elements and changes in ownership, fashion, and need, they are called “ghost signs.” They are usually faded, fragmentary, and sometimes hard to interpret, thereby earning their “ghost” description. Sometimes their survival is due to a neighboring building later blocking that wall from view then reappearing when the neighbor is demolished. Some ghost signs emerge when later paints


\(^8\) Auer, Michael J., “Preservation Briefs #25”, 5.
peel, flake, or are stripped off the surface of a building. Other signs are fully exposed to weather and sun and the luck of owners who either don’t mind the sign or recognize it as part of the building’s history.

Figure 2 - Advertising Ghost Sign, “Ginger Mint Julep”, 315 Decatur St, New Orleans, 2019.

There are two fundamental types of ghost signs: advertising and directional. Advertising signs promote a specific product or business. The age of the sign can sometimes be determined thanks to the incorporation in the sign of a company logo, the price of the product, or a version of a name that is known to have been in use for a specific period. Just as we see in modern advertising, advertising ghost signs tend to be more flamboyant, larger, and more noticeable than their directional counterparts.
Directional ghost signs include signs painted to indicate the name of the business housed in a specific building, building address, or “name” for the building. The signs certainly advertise the business, and occasionally products, but their primary function is to locate the business and identify the building the sign occupies. They are usually found across the face of the building, or, when streets are broad enough for multi-story buildings to be visible for one or more blocks, near the top corner of a side elevation so as to be visible as far down the street as possible.

Figure 3 - Directional Ghost Sign, “National Fruit Flavor Co. Home Of Orange Squeeze”, 1039 Constance St, New Orleans, 2019.
A sub-set of the directional signs could be termed “directory signs” located at the front entrance columns or pilasters of multi-story commercial buildings. Stone columns and lintels were common materials in the 19th century in commercial structures and provided a stable background for tenants within the building to advertise their location inside. As tenants came and went, a new sign could be painted over previous signs on the columns. However, ground floor entrances are vulnerable in two aspects. First, they are subject to the most wear as they are the most travelled areas of a building for people, material, and goods. Secondly, they are the most likely area of a commercial building to be re-designed over time.

The storefront is the most important architectural feature of many historic commercial buildings. It also plays a crucial role in a store’s advertising and merchandising strategy to draw customers and increase business. Not surprisingly, then, the storefront has become the feature most commonly altered in a historic commercial building.9

A pair of 1840’s era brick warehouses built side-by-side in the Central Business District in New Orleans have remnants of 19th century column signs that survived into the 21st century as the ground floor granite columns were covered by a 20th century storefront remodel.10 When the signs were uncovered during the building’s restoration, they began deteriorating due to the high traffic of workers and material entering and exiting the building. During conservation efforts to encapsulate the remaining signs, it was shown through cleaning and paint layer analysis that the granite had occasionally been painted in

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layers of faux graniting, presumably to cover previous signs or when the sizes of signs on a column had to be re-configured.

Directional column signs on stone entryways are not a subject of study in this paper but certainly deserve further study and documentation as they are highly susceptible to erosion and changes of fashion for storefront entries.

As painted signs are designed to be changeable, replaceable, and impermanent, they can be indicative of the use of a building that is not easily traced. When a building is constructed with a carved corner stone with the date, owner, and possibly the architect
included in the inscription, the earliest history for the building is literally set in stone. The same goes for carved lintels, decorative cartouches, or any other decorative physical building element specifically included to designate the owner, use, or function of the building when it was built.


The use of a building throughout time can be quite different, however, from the original intent. When ownership changes or when a building is leased, new signage on the building can show passersby that a change has occurred. Commercial buildings can have
a very high turnover with either ownership or tenancy, depending on the location and financial strength of the time period. A ghost sign can capture a moment in time for a business or product that is not well known or well represented historically. A ghost sign may be the only indication that a specific building had a specific use at a specific time in history. Whereas architectural features can help in dating the construction, or the renovation of a building, ghost signs speak directly for the occupants, the use, and the human history of that building.
CHAPTER II. SURVIVING GHOST SIGNS OF NEW ORLEANS

Historic signs give continuity to public spaces, becoming part of the community memory. They sometimes become landmarks in themselves, almost without regard for the building to which they are attached, or the property on which they stand.11

The French Quarter neighborhood of New Orleans, locally known as the “Vieux Carré,” or “old square,” encompasses the area where the original colony was founded in 1718. It is a popular tourist destination due, in part, to the high density of historic architecture that remains in this neighborhood. Due to multiple large-scale fires in the 18th century, the majority of buildings in the French Quarter are brick, thanks to governmental regulations in an attempt to stem the outbreak of more fires.12 Though there are a few examples of 18th century structures, notably the Ursuline Convent and the Cabildo, the majority of historic buildings in this quarter were constructed in the 19th century. The neighborhood is a national historic district on the National Register of Historic Places and also a National Historic Landmark.

The 1984 National Register nomination form for the Vieux Carré as an historic district of national significance utilized and updated a 1968 architectural survey of the


12 Campanella, Richard, “Fiery catalysts; Devastating fires can spark shrewd revitalization” in Preservation in Print (Preservation Resource Center, New Orleans, June 2019), 12.
neighborhood that classified all structures by age and style. This survey listed six buildings as “French Colonial,” dating from 1718 to 1769, and thirty-three buildings as “Spanish Colonial,” dating from 1769 to 1803. These thirty-nine structures represented two percent of all structures in the French Quarter in 1984. “Post Colonial,” “Transitional,” “Greek Revival,” “Antebellum,” and “Late Victorian” architectural styles range in date from 1803 through 1900 and numbered 1,421 structures for 70.5 percent of all buildings in the French Quarter.

Walter Cook Keenan was a New Orleans-born architect who served on the Vieux Carré Commission (“VCC”) from 1937 through 1952, and in 1943 was appointed “Architect of the Commission,” equivalent to today’s Director position. Both Tulane University’s Southeastern Architectural Archive and the New Orleans Public Library maintain collections of images taken by Keenan of French Quarter architecture, presumably in his rounds of property inspections to document violations to regulations. These mid-20th century photographs give an indication of how prevalent painted signage was, even in the heyday of neon signs, and also how the painted signs have weathered, or not, in the past 70 years.

Appendix A of this paper is a comprehensive photographic survey undertaken in 2019 and 2020 by the author of over 65 surviving ghost signs of New Orleans, through the

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neighborhoods of the East Bank of the city. This does not presume to be totally exhaustive survey as some signs may only be seen from adjacent or nearby buildings and not visible from the street, found in archival photos, or referenced in material researched for this paper.

**624 Bourbon Street**

The three-story brick structure at 624 Bourbon Street was built around 1834, per the Vieux Carré Digital Survey.¹⁶ The sign painted on the Northeast, or St. Peters Street side, visible in a circa 1900 photograph shows a white field with a dark box and the words “Maryland” and “Rye” visible. Photos from the 1940s-50s by Keenen show that the white field of that sign is mostly gone by mid-century, with the words “Regent” and “$3.50” overlaying “Maryland” and “Rye.” There are few differences between Keenan’s photos and photos taken by the author in 2019. Some words and outlines have faded but the overall effect is identical with multiple layers of advertisements visible simultaneously. The areas of darker pigment appear to have weathered much more severely than the white pigment.

Figure 7 - "600 Block Bourbon," Morgan Whitney Louisiana Architecture Photographs, Southeastern Architectural Archive, Special Collections Division, Tulane University Libraries, c.1900.17

Figure 8 - "612 - 624 Bourbon Street," Walter Cook Keenan New Orleans Photographs Collection, Southeastern Architectural Archive, Special Collections Division, Tulane University Libraries. Photo Dated March 21, 1947.18


The three- and one-half story townhome at 730 Dumaine Street was built around 1832, per the Vieux Carré Digital Survey. On the Northwest, or Bourbon Street side, is arguably the most famous ghost sign in New Orleans, the most prominent “Uneeda Biscuit” sign, visible from Bourbon Street. Though not the focus of a 1945 photo by Keenan (who was focused on a Bourbon Street structure in this example), it is recognizable and shows a probable layering, or re-painting of the sign that did not quite line up with the original, and a second, smaller logo near the roof peak. The sign as shown in the 2019 photo has almost

no weathering compared to the 1945 photo. There have been some minor incursions into
the ghost sign from masonry repair.

Figure 10 - "841 Bourbon Street" [Foreground, 730 Dumaine At Photo Left], Walter Cook Keenan New Orleans Photographs Collection, Southeastern Architectural Archive, Special Collections Division, Tulane University Libraries. Photo Dated May 24, 1945 (Photo Cropped)²⁰

²⁰"841 Bourbon Street,” Walter Cook Keenan New Orleans Photographs Collection, Southeastern Architectural Archive, Special Collections Division, Tulane University Libraries. https://digitallibrary.tulane.edu/islandora/object/tulane%3A3660
429-433 Bourbon Street

A sign that has not held up as well as the preceding two signs is found at the Northeast, or Saint Louis Street side of 429-433 Bourbon Street. This four-story brick building was built, according to the Vieux Carré Digital Survey, in the mid-19th century as a three- and one-half story residence. Keenan’s 1946 photo of the corner building at 441 Bourbon unfortunately does not focus on the advertisement two buildings to the left. However, enough of the sign is visible to see tall script font above shorter block wording.

Today, this sign is mainly illegible, and it is unknown if anyone has attempted to

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physically remove the sign in the last seventy years or if the sign degradation is due to the multiple rounds of brick re-pointing and masonry repair visible in the 2020 photograph.

Figure 12 - "437-441 Bourbon Street" [429-433 Bourbon Picture Left], Walter Cook Keenan New Orleans Photographs Collection, Southeastern Architectural Archive, Special Collections Division, Tulane University Libraries. Photo Dated September 27, 1946

22 "437-441 Bourbon Street," Walter Cook Keenan New Orleans Photographs Collection, Southeastern Architectural Archive, Special Collections Division, Tulane University Libraries. https://digitallibrary.tulane.edu/islandora/object/tulane%3A3818
Ghost signs can also impart information for buildings that are no longer standing. An example of this stands near the corner of Jackson Avenue and Tchoupitoulas Street in the Irish Channel neighborhood of the Lower Garden District.

The riverfront (here just on the other side of Tchoupitoulas Street) has historically been in New Orleans where industry and commerce meet to distribute products first to ships and steamboats, then to railroad cars and shipping containers. In the 1890s the Southeast corner lots of the block bounded by Tchoupitoulas Street, Philip Street, Rousseau Street and Jackson Avenue were occupied by the New Orleans Brewing Association’s Louisiana Brewery. An 1895-1896 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map shows the complex had
multiple buildings and shows a direct connection south to the neighboring Illinois Central Railroad line from their property.\textsuperscript{23}

Figure 14 – 1895-96 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, New Orleans, Vol. 3, Sheet 202, Corners Of Philip And Jackson Avenue And Tchoupitoulas Street.

Today, fronting Jackson Avenue, only the building labeled on the 1896 Sanborn Map as the “Beer Cellars” is still standing. The “Bottling Department” at the corner of

Tchoupitoulas Street is a grassy vacant lot, and what was the “Engine Room” in between the two is now a parking lot.

For passersby without a copy of the Sanborn Map at hand, the former existence of a building abutting the standing structure is immediately obvious due to the South wall of the “Beer Cellars” building. This wall shows the scars of demolition and removal of a neighboring building. However, as there are no longer any other standing buildings on the site, a passerby would not realize that the four-story brick building was once part of a large commercial complex. Unless, that is, the passerby was to examine the ghost signs on the North face of the building and along the front façade.

Figure 15 - 420 Jackson Avenue, South Face Of Building, 2019
The North face’s ghost sign is still very clear and relates the full name of the company that operated out of this building. The text along the top reads “New Orleans Brewing Co.”

When you examine the front façade, you see “Brewing Co.” between the third and fourth floor windows. Also, whereas the white line that boxes in the right end of the sign is clearly within the front façade brickwork, the left end of the sign is not present and the “B” in Brewing lays right along the edge of the building. It is easy to imagine the buildings shown in plan on the 1896 Sanborn Map having “New Orleans” painted across their front facade, matching up to the remaining “Brewing Co.” sign. In tightly packed commercial
districts, buildings that share a wall are not always part of a complex or owned by the same people. Here, this remaining sign imparts a tremendous amount of information as to buildings that were lost long ago.

Figure 17 - 420 Jackson Avenue, East/Front Façade, 2019
CHAPTER III. HISTORIC PAINT

The purpose of a paint is to preserve and beautify, and whatever paint will do this is good.

Paint is composed of certain mineral substances, called pigments, mixed with oil. The oil holds the pigment in a liquid condition, so that it can be applied with a brush, and also acts as a ‘binder,’ which will dry and harden and preserve the pigment so that it cannot rub or wash off by the action of the weather.24

Humans have been manipulating pigment to record, instruct, enhance, possibly even simply to “decorate” their environment for tens of thousands of years. The cave of Altamira in northern Spain is renowned for the poly-chrome figures of bison, deer, and horse and archaeological excavations have shown that the art was created nearly 15,000 years before present. The excavations have also found remnants of the charcoal, red and yellow ochres, and iron oxide that was used to create the remarkable artwork overhead.25

Interestingly, these same elements, charcoal, ochres, and oxides, were still used in commercial and professional paint production up until the introduction of synthetic pigments. One driving force for that market was artists’ paint manufacturers looking for alternatives to pigments made from expensive raw material such as lapis lazuli for an intense blue color. Also, natural pigments have a tendency to fade when exposed to direct


sunlight and some synthetic pigments were replacements in this regard. Additionally, alternatives for toxic ingredients used as pigments or fillers, such as lead white, mercury, and arsenic, were being pursued. By 1845 there were approximately 50 synthetic pigments available to paint manufacturers in Great Britain.\(^{26}\) In the beginning of the 20\(^{th}\) century, when synthetic polymers were developed by the plastics industry, and in conjunction with the development of synthetic pigments, the paint industry radically changed from the preceding twenty thousand years of natural paint and pigments.\(^{27}\)

A polymer is a successive linking of small molecules, called monomers, in either long chains of molecules or in a two- to three-dimensional network of molecules.\(^{28}\) In historic paint, a commonly used binder for paint was linseed oil, a natural fatty oil made from flax. A binder is the medium that holds together the color (pigment) and body (filler) and allows the application to be applied to and hold to a surface. The filler creates the opacity and physical body of the paint. In many exterior white paints, lead white (or a combination of lead and zinc white) was commonly used as both the filler and the pigment. For all colors other than black, lead (or zinc or a combination of the two) was the filler, creating the opacity beneath the color imparted by the pigment. Quantity of pigment used had to be understood in relation to the lead white to create the desired strength of the color.

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\(^{27}\) Standeven, Harriet A. L., House Paints, 15.

For black paint lead whiting was omitted and lampblack, or soot or different charcoals, were used as pigment and filler.

An old maxim with painters is: ‘Put it on thick and rub it out thin.’ Remember that all pigments are originally dry powders, and that for outside work especially, *the oil is the most important factor* for durability. This, then, should be of good quality, *and plenty of it.*

Today, commercial paint utilizes synthetic polymers to create what is essentially a liquid plastic, a blend of multiple synthetic polymers to bind together the pigment and body in proportions to control the ease of flow of the paint, resistance to oxidation, and light fastness of the pigments. Though many signs were still being painted onto buildings through the 20th century, this paper will reserve its focus on what is now termed “historic paint,” i.e., natural based paints pre-dating the revolutionary change in commercial paints seen in the 1900s.

As paint applied on the exterior of buildings necessarily has to resist extreme weathering, there have always been major differences between paint utilized inside a structure as compared to the paint used on the outside.

Paints and varnishes based on natural products formed the basis of a range of oil paints, enamels, gloss paints, and varnishes. The quality of these finishes varied tremendously and ranged from tough, durable exterior coatings comprising high-grade oils and varnishes to cheap pigmented spirit varnishes at the lowest end of the interior paint market. Indeed, many manufacturers made a firm distinction between interior and exterior paints, as each system had specific requirements.

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30 Science for Conservators, Volume 3, 40.

Figure 18 - Averill Chemical Paint Co. Paint Sample Card, Distributed By Seeley & Stevens, New York, C.1890.\textsuperscript{32}

\textsuperscript{32} Averill Chemical Paint Co. Paint Sample Card, Building Technology Heritage Library, https://archive.org/details/AverillChemicalPaintCompany/mode/2up
Though ready-mixed paint was available for purchase by the mid-19th century, there were two reasons professional painters avoided their use. First, the quantity of paint needed to cover a two-story structure or a three-story sign on the side of a building, either using multiple coats, made purchasing paint in single gallons unreasonable for projects that might require multiple barrels. Secondly, early market ready-mixed paint was created using inferior products that produced poor results but was made cheaply and sold at profit. It also took time for manufacturers to understand the chemistry of canned paint and how to keep their product stable, reduce the separation of material, and eliminate solidifying of the product in the cans. This gave professional painters a lingering dislike of and mistrust in manufacturers claiming to have improved upon their ready-mix compositions.

An 1890 publication by paint manufacturer Harrison Brothers & Company of Philadelphia, makers of ready-mixed paint, acknowledged this antipathy. “Much condemnation of ready-mixed paints is heard because so many are inferior and give such unsatisfactory results.” Three years earlier, The Painter’s Hand-Book was published by The Eckstein White Lead Company of Cincinnati, and its author, B.S. Mills, Secretary of the Master House Painters’ Association, had this to say regarding ready-mixed paint:

A painter is somewhat amused at the statements made as to the covering capacity of the various ready mixed paints on the market. One will cover two hundred square feet, two coats to the gallon; another, two hundred and fifty feet, two coats; and another, three hundred feet, two coats; all of which statements are doubtless true, provided the power at the end of the brush is great enough.

Personally, I have no objections to mixed paints, only I think they should be made either out of pure goods, and mixed as a first-class painter would mix his paint for a job;

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33 Standeven, 12.

or they should be sold for just what they are, their composition being stated on the package. A purchaser would not then be deceived; he would know then whether he was getting the best quality of paint or only a substitute for pure goods. The mixed paints of to-day are made out of the cheapest materials, such as are used to adulterate lead paint with. They are sold at prices for which honest goods could be bought, and which, when mixed and used, would make a lasting job….

The sole advantage, then, that mixed paints have, is in their being mixed ready to be ‘put on.’ This is their only legitimate recommendation, and I think that if those who consume them only knew how easy it is to mix paint, and make it any color or shade desired, they would much prefer to buy their materials, and do their own mixing. 35

Both sides of this argument have their merits. An experienced professional painter would have the knowledge to know how to properly mix all the paint ingredients and how to judge the quality of those ingredients for purchase. Also, as every painting project has unique parameters and qualifications (interior/exterior, wood/masonry, gloss/matte), an expert could create the mix needed specifically for each job, in the quantities needed for that job.

However, the ready-mix paint manufacturers, those committed to producing a superior product, developed mechanization capabilities through the 19th century to finely grind pigments and fillers; and the ability to produce and contain large quantities of the same mixture. Yet with all their technical production ability, the Harrison Brothers wrote, regarding their ready-mix paint, that they “prefer that other paint be used by any one who will not employ a competent painter, because unskilled painters cannot do good work, and their lack of skill and experience leads to the condemnation of the paint used by them.”36

36 Chemistry of Paints, Harrison Brothers & Co., Philadelphia, 1890, 34.
The primary difference between hand-mixed and good quality ready-mix paints were the proportions of the ingredients, as professional painters would have access to obtain the same binders, fillers, pigments, and drying oils as the manufacturers. The experience and knowledge of the painter was just as variable as the project budget, the quality and quantity of paint, and the suitability and preparedness of the painted surface. Therefore, every painted surface of historic paint that remains today is indubitably a unique event.

In 1875, the sixteenth edition of *The Painter, Gilder, and Varnisher’s Companion* was published. The very long and detailed sub-title for the book includes a statement “of the diseases to which painters are peculiarly liable, with the simplest and best remedies.”

This section of the book begins with what they term “Painter’s Colic,” or what is today known as lead poisoning.

This disease, the most common and the most dangerous to which painters are liable, arises with them from breathing in the fumes and handling the different preparations of white lead. It is a violent species of colic, and may be produced by other causes; but when it proceeds from lead, it is always the most obstinate, and the most tedious and difficult of cure.

The recommended treatments for the early stages of “painter’s colic” include doses of castor oil, opium enemas, and avoiding consuming solid foods or liquor. They also state

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37 The Painter, Gilder, And Varnisher’s Companion: Containing Rules And Regulations In Everything Relating To The Arts Of Painting, Gilding, Varnishing, Glass-Staining, Graining, Marbling, Sigh-Writing, Gilding On Glass, And Coach Painting And Varnishing; Tests For The Detection Of Adulterations In Oils, Colors, Etc. And A Statement Of The Diseases To Which Painters Are Peculiarly Liable, With The Simplest And Best Remedies, (Henry Carey Baird Industrial Publisher, Philadelphia PA, 1875), title page.

38 The Painter, Gilder, And Varnisher’s Companion, 177.

39 Ibid, 177-178.
that if the painter recovers and returns to work, they must avoid all lead preparation to avoid a relapse. The desire to minimize lead poisoning, not just for the painter but also for everyone coming into contact with lead paint, lead to the development of other minerals as a replacement for lead whiting.

In 1908 *The Painter’s Magazine* published a volume of answers to questions submitted to the magazine by professional painters called *One Thousand More Paint Questions Answered*. In this volume they examine various white pigments and where they are best used in the profession. For white lead they describe it as “an indispensable paint material, that for many uses cannot be replaced by any other white pigment, because of its elastic nature.”[^40] However, they warn that it will discolor when exposed to “sulphur gases” and cannot be mixed with pigments that contain sulphides such as cadmium red, King’s yellow, ultramarine blue or green.[^41]

Sublimed lead sulphate is described as 95 percent lead sulphate and five percent zinc oxide and an alternative to pure lead whiting as it would not blacken and discolor when exposed to sulphur gases. However, is not as easily worked as pure lead whiting and is not suitable for priming layers. “In making elastic primings or grounds for exterior paints, sublimed lead must not be substituted for white lead, as it is most too brittle.”[^42]


[^41]: Ibid, 7.

[^42]: Ibid, 8.
Our specially prepared Pure Lead, guarantee $1000, owing to the care used in washing and grinding, is superior to any other, spreading further and retaining its whiteness much longer than any other brand of Pure Lead in the market.

Gibsboro' Pure Wh. Lead;

This is very fine in texture, of great body, made from selected Pig Lead, by the old English slow process, washed free and is not as liable to wash off as most leads in the market. The best to make body colors for graining.

Capitol White Lead,

A Finishing Lead, very finely ground, covers more surface and proved superior in color and durability to any other, domestic or imported. Fresco Painters give this the preference over all others.

Columbia White Lead,

A good color and body, works smooth and free. A better article than some first qualities in the market.

Diamond White Lead,

Color good, and spreads well.

Pearl White Lead,

The best in the market for the price.

Arctic White Lead,

Good for first coating. Works free

Baltic White Lead,

Good for first coating. Works free. A useful white for mixing with colored Paints.

Fire Refined White Lead,

Spreads freely, covers a large surface, and is one of the most durable whites.

Foster's Pure Eng. Wh. Lead,

Has no superior.

Gibsboro' Snow Wh. Zinc,

This article is one of our specialties, and is considered by practical workers in Paints, equal to the best French Zine, being whiter and superior in body to other American Zines.

OUR LOWER GRADES OF ZINC we can recommend for whiteness, body and fineness of grinding; for their quality we offer them at very low prices.

All of the above are Ground in Pure Linseed Oil.

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Zinc white is described with two separate entries relating to differing processes for creating the pigment. The “French process” or “China white” version is described as finer textured and a brighter white than the second type called the “American process.” This finer zinc white is recommended for “high grade enamel paints” whereas the “American process,” with a harsher texture and not as bright a white pigment, is described as “fully satisfactory” for exterior work.44

In the 19th century, the practice of being a professional painter was evolving. The early part of the century still maintained the established practice of masters, journeymen, and apprentices. The knowledge required by a journeyman painter was extensive.

The faithful journeyman possessed a set of invaluable skills not easily taught.

A good house painter combined the abilities of a craftsman, a chemist, and an artist. First he had to know the different types of wood and how best to preserve them whether it be with shellac, varnish, or paint. The journeyman painter was also a practical chemist, for rarely were these coatings ready-made…

…A journeyman had…to be prepared to work in any color desired, a difficult feat given the bewildering variety of vegetable and mineral pigments then in use and their lack of consistency in tone or hue. He also had to think ahead: every color would change under the impact of time and weather.

…Application was done with any number of specialized brushes and bristles. Journeymen judged a green hand [apprentice] simply by how he held a brush or by how he ‘bridled’ it, a process of tying off unused bristles close to the handle….

A journeyman painter also had to master a host of ‘allied trades.’ Before a drop of paint could go on, he had to prepare, or ‘point up’ his surface, filling cracks and holes with putty that he made of ‘whiting’ mixed with linseed oil, water, or glue….

The journeyman had to apply all of these skills according to a keen artistic sense. He needed an eye for harmony and balance and an ability to make fine distinctions in shade (light and dark) and hue (position in the spectrum). A journeyman who had mastered all

44 Ibid, 8.
of these skills had a great deal of which to be proud, and a master who employed him enjoyed a good reputation and could command a high price.⁴⁵

The system of apprentice to journeyman to master painter began to unravel in the mid-1800s and the financial crises that lead up to the Civil War. As the country expanded its borders and population, master painters moved to a workshop system with a heavy investment in mechanization.⁴⁶ Although painters had organized at the local level in New York, Baltimore, Philadelphia, and Boston, attempts to organize a national labor union had failed for many decades. It wasn’t until March 1887 that thirteen tradesmen met in Baltimore and founded the Brotherhood of Painters, Decorators and Paperhangers of America.⁴⁷ For the approximately 600 tradesmen they represented, the delegates adopted a constitution and approved issuance of a monthly journal.⁴⁸ The sub-heading for this journal enumerates the many different trades their publication encompassed:

Official Monthly Magazine Devoted to the interests of house, Sign, Pictorial, Coach, Car, Carriage, Machinery, Ship and railroad Equipment Painters, Decorators, Paperhangers, Hard Wood Finishers, Grainers, Glaziers, Varnishers, Enamelers, and Gilders.⁴⁹


⁴⁶ One Union, 13.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 9.

⁴⁸ Ibid, 22.

In the late 19th century there were many listings in the city directories for painters. The 1870 New Orleans directory, under “Painters, House, Sign, etc.” has 61 entries.\textsuperscript{50} In 1874, an E. P. Cleary advertised their services as a “House, Sign & Ornamental Painter” with the skills of “Graining, Gilding, Marbling, Plain Painting, Gilding on Glass, Flag and Banner Painting, Designs, &c.”\textsuperscript{51} In 1890 the city directory had 65 entries under “Painters. (House and Sign).”\textsuperscript{52}

![Figure 20 - “E.P. Cleary” Advertisement, Soards’ New Orleans Directory, 1874, Page G.](image)

Even if a painter was not part of a professional union, they were still bombarded with marketing information from paint, lead, oil, and pigment manufacturers whose catalogs often included testimonials or essays from “masters in their craft.” In 1899, the

\textsuperscript{50} Edwards’ Annual Director to the Inhabitants, Institutions, Incorporated Companies, Manufacturing Establishments, Business, Business Firms, etc., etc. in the City of New Orleans and Suburbs for 1870., (Southern Publishing Co., St. Louis Missouri, 1870), p. 732.

\textsuperscript{51} E. P. Clearly Advertisement, Soards’ New Orleans Directory, 1874 (L. Soards & Co., New Orleans, 1874), G.

\textsuperscript{52} Soards’ New Orleans City Directory, For 1890. (L. Soards, New Orleans, 1890), 1050.
National Lead Company published a booklet entitled “Nuggets of Wisdom from an Old House Painter.” At the end of the text there is a note:

Note.— This article was written by a practical house painter, who has been in the business for forty years. For obvious reasons we refrain from giving his name.\textsuperscript{53}

Many of the manufacturer’s publications, such as “Nuggets of Wisdom” have an obvious bias for the product(s) sold by the publishing company. However, many of the “tips” and advice given in these publications do mirror what professional organizations and trade magazines were also publishing. After examination of many of such examples, the author notices that what is recommended often seems to come from the personal experience of those authors and their experience and knowledge appears to have been wide ranging and variable in subject.

For example, there is great similarity in advice for preparing brick walls for painting between manufacturer-published material and tradesmen publications. Therefore, the author believes this advice to have been well disseminated information that can be considered probable common practice.

In 1903, the publishers of \textit{The Painters Magazine} published a book, \textit{739 Paint Questions Answered}. The questions were submitted to the magazine by painters, paperhangers, and decorators, and with that success, encouraged them to publish a follow up book, \textit{1000 More Paint Questions Answered} in 1908.\textsuperscript{54} The 1908 publication includes

\textsuperscript{53} Nugget of Wisdom from an Old House Painter (National Lead Company, New York, 1899), 9.

\textsuperscript{54} One Thousand More Paint Questions Answered (The Painters Magazine, New York, 1908), preface.
a section called “Painting Brick and Stonework” and lists 28 separate questions received by the magazine and their answers from the editorial staff.55

Renovation of Brick Fronts by Painting

One of the many perplexing problems that confront the house painter and decorator is that of the proper treatment of brick fronts and brick walls in general, not because the practical man is unable to produce the effect or finish desired, but in taking into account the conditions of the surface and to meet the demand for moderate cost and yet guarantee durability and wear.56

Recommendations for the preparation of old brickwork, to be painted brick (not signage), includes cleaning or replacing broken or crumbled brick, cleaning off of mold or mildew with acid, and cleaning off of efflorescence with dilute muriatic acid.57 For areas that were newly patched they recommended coating with a multi-coat system featuring varying percentages of Venetian red pigment, linseed oil, and drier for different thicknesses of the liquid. The first coat to be thick and the finishing coat to be “full gloss linseed oil paint of the proper color desired.”58

For newly built brick walls, the recommendation is still to use a primer of Venetian red for red brick or yellow ocher for “Milwaukee color,” thinned with raw linseed oil and “very little drier.”59 It is repeatedly mentioned that the brick needs to be dry before any painting work can begin. Other tips for painting brickwork include the application of a

55 Ibid, 71-86.
56 Ibid, 71.
57 Ibid, 71-72.
58 Ibid, 72.
59 Ibid, 72.
coat of oil and turpentine and hot linseed oil, prior to the priming coat, on newly laid pressed brick. Noticeably, there are several questions regarding painting of “soft brick” or fixing paint failures on “soft brick.”

There was a man who asked about painting a soft brick wall, from which the paint came off. If he would take a brick and soak it in water, he would be surprised to find how much water it will absorb. I don’t care how hard or soft a brick is, it is porous. It is astonishing how quick a brick will take the oil out of paint—it’s just like putting the paint on so much blotting paper. So, as there’s nothing to bind the pigment together, it isn’t strange the paint won’t hold to the brick.…

I would not wet the bricks before painting, but I would give them one or two coats of oil before painting. This same treatment would apply to a frame house that has stood until the white lead has got in a powdered condition and then commenced to chalk. The old surface will absorb the oil from the paint unless it is oiled first…. For outside painting we generally use from four to four and a half gallons of oil to a hundred pounds of lead, and paint mixed that way ought to stay where it is put on a good surface.61

Though 1000 More Paint Questions Answered does not include many questions regarding sign painting, one entry does discuss why the authors (The Painters Magazine) had advocated for the use of turpentine in sign painting.

In sign work, the coats of paint are usually applied much heavier than in general housepainting [sic], hence, in order to obtain thorough drying and hardening and to keep each and every coat from sagging and wrinkling, a portion of a volatile thinner, like turpentine, is necessary, while the finishing coat should be dry with a subdued gloss in order to admit of lettering without creeping or crawling.62

Traditionally, exterior house painting and exterior sign work would have different expectations as to longevity. A homeowner would want the exterior paint to be as durable as possible in the hopes of lengthening the time between re-coating. A sign may have very

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60 Ibid, 73-74.
61 Ibid, 75.
62 Ibid, 488.
different expectations. The advertiser may want the sign re-painted multiple times to keep the image “fresh” and the product easily recognizable. If a building is sold the new owner may not want an advertisement on their property or they may sell a competing product. Additionally, products and prices change over time. Logos and company names evolve. By the very nature of advertising a painted advertising sign has no expectation of permanence.

The permanence of a directional painted sign would depend on if the business proclaiming their presence owned the building or was leasing the space. Leases end and tenants move on to new spaces. For the landlord, a tenant painting a sign on the outside of the building would not be of much issue as there’s always the prospect of the next tenant painting over the old sign or painting the entire façade.

Historically, exterior paints were designed to chalk gradually in order to retain a clean, bright surface. However, chalking of lead films did not commence until some time after the coating had been applied, and paints pigmented with lead, or lead and zinc combinations, were susceptible to a serious defect: blackening of the film. The discoloration tended to be attributed to dirt retention or film failure but was in fact most likely to be mildew or the reaction of pigments exposed to pollution. By the mid-1950s mold growth was a recognized problem, and formulators included greater quantities of zinc and fungus inhibitors such as phenyl mercury in their paints to prevent it.63

CHAPTER IV. HISTORIC NEW ORLEANS BRICK

If aristocracy prides itself on its ancient lineage and honorable service, then brick may claim to be a very aristocratic material. Or, if strength and refinement come to men through the experiences of trial and difficulty, then brick too may claim this sort of distinction…. It was very natural for the dwellers along great rivers, such as the Euphrates and Tigris, to notice on the banks the sunbaked and irregularly cracked clay blocks which, after a little crude shaping, proved suitable for building a wall.64

Making fired clay bricks is a relatively simple process that has taken place across the globe for centuries. There are six straightforward steps to making a fired brick:

1. Mining, or “winning” the clay;
2. Preparing, or tempering the clay;
3. Molding, or forming the bricks;
4. Drying the bricks;
5. Firing the bricks in a kiln; and
6. Sorting the finished bricks into grades.65

ASTM International, formerly American Standards for Testing and Materials, publishes modern brick standards, which are referenced by all model building codes in the United States.66 ASTM C62 is their Standard Specification for Building Brick and divides structural and non-structural brick into three grades based on their resistance to damage by

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64 The Story of Brick (American Face Brick Association, Chicago, 1922), 5.
freezing when wet: Severe Weathering; Moderate Weathering; or Negligible Weathering. Each grade has physical property requirements that individual and an average of five bricks must meet for compressive strength, maximum water absorption, and maximum saturation coefficient. Despite the technology and mechanization involved in the mixing of the clay and the forming of the bricks; despite the temperature controls and designs for the most consistent and efficient kilns, a modern brick is still a unique individual unit. The ASTM standards includes permissible variations in dimensions as even brick from the same firing can have differences in size as well as color, and also different physical properties when tested.

Each source of clay is unique and comes with a unique assortment of mineral inclusions. Each manufacturer has to decide which additives to add to the clay to reduce shrinkage or impart a desired characteristic. The physical shaping and forming of the units differ from manufacturer to manufacturer. And ultimately, even the placement of the brick inside the kiln can influence both the color and physical properties of each unit.

When the first European settlers arrived in what is now New Orleans in the early 1700s, they brought with them the building practices they knew and with which they were familiar. While there was no stone to quarry, there were vast expanses of cypress and pine trees and timber framed buildings were the first to be built.

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68 ASTM C62, 2.

69 Ibid, 3.
There was another local source of familiar building material close by with the easily accessible clay and sand deposits along the Mississippi River.

Bricks have always been manufactured locally, partly because of their bulk and weight and partly because the clay and sand from which they are made are found almost everywhere…. Bricks can be manufactured in improvised temporary facilities and were often made at the building site.\(^70\)

However, the soft, red bricks that were produced along the banks of the Mississippi river were porous and did not weather well. It is assumed that the temperatures used for the firing of the river bricks were not high enough to form the hard, protective “skin.” Also, the alluvial clay deposits may have a composition that lends itself to greater porosity when fired. Builders soon realized any structure utilizing these bricks needed to have a plank or stucco exterior to protect the brick from moisture.

The outer crust of each brick is harder and more dense than the material inside. Once this crust is removed by any means- rising damp, freezing and thawing or sand blasting- disintegration of the brick is greatly accelerated.\(^71\)

Bricks were being made in New Orleans very soon after the founding of the colony in 1718. The 1724 church designed by engineer Adrien de Pauger was originally designed for *colombage*, or timber frame construction, with timber buttresses at the sides for protection from hurricane winds.\(^72\) However, when the building was constructed the


\(^{71}\) Ibid., 56.

buttresses were eliminated and the walls were *briqueté entre poteaux*, or brick between posts.

In 1729, engineer Pierre Baron submitted plans for new military barracks in which he depicted two story brick buildings on what look to be solid stone footings, or a water table. At that time, suitable stone, such as granite, would most likely have been imported from France as the colony had no stone quarries. Baron’s barrack design was not constructed before he returned to France, but engineer Ignace Broutin’s brick barrack design, plans dated 1732, were built flanking the central square and they were similar two-story brick buildings over a stone water table.

Unfortunately, though the barracks cost a great sum of money and took many years to complete— they were not both finished by 1739— they were soon found to be badly constructed and by 1750 were showing signs of deterioration.

The first all-brick building built in New Orleans, a prison next to the church and facing the central square, or Place d’Armes (now Jackson Square), lasted slightly longer than Broutin’s brick barracks. The brick prison was planned and built in 1730 by Pierre Baron, and stood until 1769 when it was demolished to make way for the first Cabildo, the seat of the Spanish colonial government.

By the 19th century, the city had survived two major fires, the first of which was the Good Friday Fire of 1788, where 856 buildings were lost and four-fifths of the population

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74 Ibid, 54-57.
75 Ibid, 57.
76 Ibid, 9-16.
rendered homeless. In 1794 another 212 buildings were destroyed by fire. After these devastating fires the Spanish government enacted many building regulations to eliminate flammable roofing materials and limiting frame construction. One regulation required timber frame buildings to be fronted with masonry or covered with stucco.

Cabildo records state new houses ‘must be built of bricks and a flat roof or tile roof,’ and ‘two story houses…should all be constructed of brick or lumber filled with brick between the upright posts, the posts to be covered with cement, (plus) a flat roof of tile or brick.’ Extant houses had to be strengthened ‘to stand a roof of fire-proof materials,’ and their wooden beams covered with stucco. ‘[All] citizens must comply with these rules whenever they wish to construct a new building,’ declared the Cabildo.

By the 19th century, the demand for brick was high in New Orleans as the need to re-build the Vieux Carré was compounded by two economic booms to the region in the 1790s—the introduction of the cotton gin and the locally discovered process for granulation of cane sugar. The city’s population, boundaries, and economic industries were growing, along with the demand for the slave labor to power it all. Until the late 19th century, making bricks was an intense manual labor process, from the extraction of the clay through to the firing of the brick. The machinery introduced in the mid 1800s lessened

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78 Ibid., 12.

79 Ibid, 12.

some, but not all, of the burden, and until the turn of the 20th century the majority of brick manufacturers across the United States relied on vast quantities of laborers.

Early in the 19th century clay deposits were discovered north of New Orleans along the coast of Lake Pontchartrain. From one documented brickyard in St. Tammany Parish in 1826, the industry, on the far shore from New Orleans, expanded to fifteen brickyards listed in the 1850 records. Today, the bricks manufactured with clay from around Lake Pontchartrain are referred to locally in historic preservation as “lake bricks” or “hard tans,” in comparison to the Mississippi River clay bricks which are called “soft reds.” The difference in color between the fired bricks can be attributed to different mineral inclusions in the two separate deposits.

The alluvial clay along the river fires a red brick due to the presence of ferric oxide, also called iron oxide. Lake bricks may be the result of magnesia and alumina being part of the clay composition, as firing this mixture produces buff-colored bricks, whereas the inclusion of lime can produce yellowish bricks. The tradition locally is that these “hard tan” lake bricks were better quality, more durable, and fired with a harder skin than the “soft red” river brick. However, testing of brick of historic New Orleans structures shows

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82 McKee, 41.

83 Ibid.
that the method of manufacturing may be as important to the durability of a brick as the
source of the clay.\textsuperscript{84}

For his master’s thesis for the University of Pennsylvania, Justin Lynch tested
fourteen historic bricks from multiple New Orleans structures. Seven were classified as
“soft reds” and seven as “hard tans.” All red bricks were assumed to have been sourced
from Mississippi River clay, and all tans were assumed to have been sourced from Lake
Pontchartrain clay. The bricks were subjected to physical property testing for water
Sampling and Testing Brick and Structural Clay Tile}.\textsuperscript{85} Capillary rise was tested based on
Water Absorption Coefficient by Partial Immersion}.\textsuperscript{86}

Lynch’s conclusion was that “brick deterioration is not dependent upon age [of the
brick].”\textsuperscript{87} The close examination of the fourteen samples enabled Lynch to hypothesize as
to the method of manufacture for each brick due to tell-tale physical clues in their texture
and shape. His final “Brick Vulnerability Matrix” shows that some “soft red” bricks
performed better than some “hard tan” bricks. He attributes this to the highest-ranking reds
being produced through stiff-mud extrusion and showing properties of a high-fired fire

\textsuperscript{84} Lynch, Justin, Soft Reds and Hard Tans: Developing an Index of Vulnerability for New
https://repository.upenn.edu/hp_theses/673

\textsuperscript{85} Lynch, Justin, Soft Reds and Hard Tans: Developing an Index of Vulnerability for New
Orleans Brick, 40.

\textsuperscript{86} Lynch, 47.

\textsuperscript{87} Ibid, 60.
brick. He encourages further testing be done on a larger sample of brick and utilizing more complex analysis, such as x-ray diffraction to better understand the clay matrix.

As manufacturing processes improved through the 18th century, it is possible that by the 1800s the manufacturers of the red river brick had improved the strength of their brick mixture and the effectiveness of their kilns so that the “soft reds” durability began to match that of the “hard tans.” Both the Vieux Carré and the American Sector (now Central Business District) still have many examples of exposed red brick buildings constructed during the population boom of the 1830s to 1850s.

The process of brick making transformed substantially in the 19th century. The century saw the full range of hand formed, low fired bricks to full mechanization and industrial kilns. Though many manufacturers had very individual processes, there are still four overarching categories for fired bricks: hand formed; soft mud; dry press; and the stiff mud method.

The earliest fired brick is the hand formed brick. This is traditionally a slow process requiring a tremendous amount of manual labor. As the extraction and tempering of the clay is quite arduous, wherever slave labor was available, brickmaking was usually the work of slaves. The clay mix for hand formed bricks is tempered the least of the four methods, often in a pit with water and either animals or slaves powering a wheel to process

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88 Ibid, 59-60
89 Ibid, 61.
the mixture. The tempered clay is then pressed by hand into wooden (later metal) molds and a striker board with a flat edge would be used to level out the mixture in the mold. The brick would then be turned out to dry before firing.\textsuperscript{91}

There were multiple means by which the brickmaker might ensure their unfired brick released from the mold, including the use of water, oil, lard, or soapy water.\textsuperscript{92} When the mold was dipped or wet with water before the clay mixture was added, the resulting bricks are called “water struck.” “Sand struck” bricks are termed so when the mold was dipped in water then sprinkled with smooth river sand. “Oil bricks” had the mold lubricated with linseed oil, train oil, and sometimes hogs’ lard.\textsuperscript{93} Today, using microscopy, researchers look at the surface of historic bricks to determine if the surfaces indicate the bricks were water, sand, or oil struck and can even determine if the brick was extruded and cut by wire.

A soft mud process brick was very similar to hand formed bricks but introduced machinery to the process. “The clay is thrown into a soft mud machine with enough water to bring it to about the consistency of clay that is used for making brick by hand.”\textsuperscript{94} Soft mud machines introduced the pug mill to the brickmaking process.

Early pug mills are described as wooden tubs with a vertical shaft attached with a series of blades placed so that they would not follow directly after each other through the

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{91} Graham and Thomas, 12-13.
\textsuperscript{92} Gurke, Bricks and Brickmaking, 15.
\textsuperscript{93} Ibid, 16.
\textsuperscript{94} Graham and Emery, Audels, 15.
\end{footnotes}
mixture. Clay and additives were added at the top and were mixed by the action of the blades and deposited into molds at the bottom. The molds would be struck level, same as in the hand formed method, then removed from the molds.

The dry press method of brickmaking is similar to the soft mud method but utilizes less water and much greater pressure. Pug mills are usually not required as the contents of the matrix are thoroughly dried and ground into a fine powder. Under very high pressure, the mix would be pressed into bricks in molds. Due to the high pressure, the molds were made of steel and were easily interchangeable in the press to manufacture different sizes and shapes. “Brick made by this process are characterized by being very dense and having very smooth surfaces and sharp corners.”

The final method is the method that is still being used today to form brick, the stiff mud process. The stiff mud method used multiple machines to mix the clay, which then extrudes a drier mix than the soft mud composition through a metal die into rectangular tubes of clay.

After the bar of clay comes out of the die, it is now ready to be cut into the proper lengths, which is done on a specially designed cutting table equipped with cutting wires. These wires leave a rough side where they pass through, but as this is usually on the side of the brick where the mortar joint occurs when the bricks are set in the wall, it is not objectionable.

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95 Gurcke, Bricks and Brickmaking, 10.
96 Ibid, 22.
97 Ibid, 22.
98 Graham and Emery, Audels, 19.
99 Ibid., 20.
After the 1803 signing of the Louisiana Purchase and the 1809 arrival of over 9,000 refugees from Saint-Domingue (now Haiti), the population of New Orleans grew exponentially. The American Sector developed upriver from the Vieux Carré, which was where the Creole population’s business and financial centers were located. Across Canal Street in a new suburb laid out in response to the 1788 Good Friday fire, many Americans relocating to the United States’ newest port began constructing their own center of business and industry along the river front. It was also close to where the new U.S. Custom House was built, on the site where the Spanish government located their Custom House, at the base of Canal Street with easy access to the wharves.

The new American Custom House was designed by the country’s Surveyor of Public Buildings of the United States, Benjamin Henry Latrobe, in 1807. Considered the “founder of professional architecture in America” for being the first professional architect working in the country, Latrobe worked on the U.S. Capitol building and was appointed chief engineer of the U.S. Navy. Designed in D.C. by Latrobe and built by a re-located Washington D.C. builder, Robert Alexander, the design is credited with bringing the Federal Style of exposed red brick and white columns and trim to New Orleans.

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100 Campanella, Richard, New Orleans Timeline of Economic History, 8.


102 Cangelosi, Jr. Robert, Benjamin Latrobe, 64 Parishes website, https://64parishes.org/entry/benjamin-latrobe

103 Christovich, Mary Louise, et. al., New Orleans Architecture Volume II: The American Sector (Faubourg St. Mary), 11.
When Latrobe’s son, John H.B. Latrobe, visited New Orleans in 1834, he noted brickyards along the riverfront as his ship sailed upriver to dock at the port.

From the battle ground [Chalmette Battlefield] to New Orleans the shore is lined with houses and presents the appearance of a continuous street. I noticed several immense brick yards among other things. The clay is procured from the bank of the river. In some instances a coffer dam of stakes is built at some small distance from the shore, and the clay is taken from within it to a depth of several feet below the surface of the water. When the river rises the coffer dam is of course overflowed, and before the time when clay is wanted the alluvion deposited has been sufficient to fill it, and from this alluvion bricks are made and the coffer dam emptied to be filled again in the same manner.¹⁰⁴

John Latrobe spent a few days in New Orleans exploring and decried the American influences in architecture he saw in both “The City” (Vieux Carré) and American section (CBD). In the American sector he saw few buildings older than fifteen years and also remarked on how the American style of “granite basements [water tables] & columns of the North are to be seen intermingled with the quaint and stuccoed fronts of the old Spanish buildings” in the Vieux Carré.¹⁰⁵

In 1848 an advertisement in the local newspaper, The Daily Picayune, invited all comers to John Hoey’s brick yard a quarter of a mile “above” (up river) the Railroad depot to view the operation of “Hall’s patent machine.” “Preparations have been made to have a large supply of ‘bricks’ so that each person can carry a sample home in his ‘hat,’ if he


chooses.” According to Patent No. 10,845, issued October 2, 1845 to Alfred Hall, the brick making machine was a pug mill and pressing plate.

The description of Hall’s brick making machine sounds like a soft mud machine. A pug mill with fixed knives and plates to temper the clay then forced the mixture into a chamber with a pressing plate that pressed the clay through a grating and into a set of molds. Per an 1848 broadsheet, Alfred Hall claimed that “Three Hundred Millions of

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108 Ibid.
Brick were made with this machine, within the last five months,” and that “Messrs. Hubbell & Abott, of Charlestown, Mass.” produced “150,000 brick per day with this machine.”

The New Orleans advertiser for the Hull machine, John Hoey, had a 600 acre estate north of the town of Carrollton, which he called the “village” of Hoeyville. The village stretched from the Mississippi River to the shores of Lake Pontchartrain. This is where he operated what was called “the largest brickyard in Hoeyville in the South” in an item published in another local paper, *The Daily Crescent*, in 1848. Hoey operated a daily omnibus route from his store on Poydras Street to Hoeyville four times a day, with a stop in Carrollton.

There are ten buildings in this yard, which, when steam power will be brought to act upon the machinery, will be capable of turning out 100,000 bricks per day – sufficient to build a three story house. A canal is being cut from Hoeyville to the new canal. This will enable Mr. Hoey to float down his bricks in scows to New Orleans in an exceedingly short time and at a very cheap rate. An engine of thirty horse power, with a shaft of four hundred feet in length, is shortly expected form the North. This, once in operation will afford many facilities to builders, and we hope render a fortune to the enterprising proprietor of ‘Hoeyville.’

New Orleans’ economic boom in the 19th century was curtailed by the Civil War. Though the city was occupied by federal troops without a battle, and therefore suffered no losses to the city’s infrastructure, the resultant loss of slave labor forever changed the

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111 Ibid.

112 Ibid.
economy by which the city had previously been enriched.113 In St. Tammany parish the 1870 census listed only eleven brickmakers, down from fifteen in 1850; but three more than the eight listed in the 1860 census, which was attributed to the financial panic that preceded the war.114 Demand for brick in New Orleans must have remained somewhat consistent and may have been improving by 1870. However, one brick manufacturer who reported his “worth” to be $95,000 in 1860 reported a value of $8,000 in 1870.115 Though the demand for brick may have been consistent, the price must have plummeted.

As for the brick manufacturers in New Orleans, the 1861 city directory listed twelve businesses that sold brick and/or sand.116 The 1870 directory added the separate heading of “Brick Manufacturers” and listed four brick yards.117 Six brick yards were listed in both the 1880118 and 1890119 city directories. The 1900 city directory again listed four brick yards.120

113 Campanella, New Orleans Timeline of Economic History, 8.
115 Ibid, 156.
117 Edwards’ Annual Director to the Inhabitants, Institutions, Incorporated Companies, Manufacturing Establishments, Business, Business Firms, etc., etc. in the City of New Orleans and Suburbs for 1870., (Southern Publishing Co., St. Louis Missouri, 1870), 669.
119 Soards’ New Orleans City Directory, For 1890., (L. Soards, Publisher, New Orleans Louisiana, 1890), 990-991.
The St. Joe Brickworks company, in Pearl River, Louisiana, is the last remaining operational brickyard in St. Tammany parish. The yard was founded in 1891 and purchased in 1895 by the same family that still operates the plant today. It has been in continuous operation for 129 years and still utilizes the soft mud process where bricks are formed individually into wooden molds. The molds still imprint the same distinctive “ST. JOE” makers marks as the original 19th century bricks. The company offers a variety of color choices today from grey, light brown, beige, pink, creamy yellow, and a range of reds. The company may have utilized multiple clay sources historically as this St. Tammany parish brick yard did produce many “soft red” bricks that are now found in historic New Orleans buildings.

Figure 22 - Advertisement, *The Times-Picayune*, New Orleans, Louisiana, November 8, 1925, Page 45. Note, This Brickworks Had Been Established Thirty-Four Years Prior To Advertisement. It is unknown if the family that purchased the brickyard in 1895 had previous brick making experience.

CHAPTER V: INTERFACE OF HISTORIC MATERIALS

When oil-based paint meets porous brick, the bond between the liquid and solid is based on surface tension and capillary action. If the liquid has a low enough surface tension, then it can spread easily on the surface of the brick. When the liquid encounters pores, cracks, and fissures on the brick surface, capillary action draws the liquid into the brick. The wider the capillary (pore, crack, or fissure) the smaller the capillary rise of the liquid.\textsuperscript{122} If the brick has not been properly cleaned and the liquid encounters grease or wax, it may not bond properly with the brick.

[White lead] must be finely ground; so fine that when rubbed with the finger on a piece of glass or smooth slate with an excess of oil, no gritty or hard substances will be perceptible.\textsuperscript{123}

The components of oil paint are carried along with the oil binder onto the surface being painted. Ideally, both the pigment and the filler would have been ground finely and smooth so that their particulate size would be quite small. Finely ground dry materials are more easily mixed, creating a better blend and more even color. They are also more easily incorporated into the oil binder which creates a more consistent, homogenous suspension. When the liquid paint dries it also becomes a solid, with the pigment and binder hopefully consistently dispersed in an even thickness over the surface being painted. If the particles


\textsuperscript{123} Mills, The Painter’s Handbook, 56.
of lead white and other pigments are fine enough, they would be carried into the pores, cracks, and fissures of the brick by the oil.

Linseed oil, the most common paint binder for exterior work throughout the 19th century and into the 20th, is a triglyceride with a low viscosity when compared to other plant seed oils. Traditionally, turpentine has been used as a solvent to thin oil-based paints. The viscosity of linseed oil could also be changed by heating the oil. Stand oil is created when linseed oil was heated slowly over multiple days with an absence of air. Boiled linseed oil was a combination of heated oil with metallic driers. This process shortens the drying time and increases the polymerization of the oil, creating a tight seal to the painted surface.

Linseed oil is an edible oil derived from the flax plant. It is high in a-linoleic acid and has unique hydrophobic properties that help it to reduce moisture and seal porous surfaces.

The process where oxygen from the air is taken up by the linseed oil and solidifies is autoxidation. The dry film that results from the polymerization is the cross-linking of

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the molecules into a three-dimensional bond. It is this bond that breaks down over time when the hard film of the dried paint begins to crack and paint begins to flake.

The filler and pigments used with linseed oil to create the paint emulsion can affect how the paint dries with age. A 2012 study on how linseed oil paints age found that the inclusion of lead white changes the chemical reaction of the oil as it oxidizes. The paint samples used in the study were prepared for a separate study over ten years prior to this referenced report.

In most cases (67% of the samples) the paints with lead white show the highest oxidation level…. The paints are generally more oxidised than the unpigmented dried oil film…. The fact that most of the paints prepared with lead white are the most oxidised is not surprising, as lead is known to catalyse oxidation reactions. The paints containing vine black are much more oxidised than the dried oil sample alone (without pigment). … [T]his finding is most likely due to the fact that the dispersion of the pigment particles in the binder increases the contact of the binder itself with oxygen, thus favouring its oxidation. 128

[T]he data suggest that the pre-treatments that produce oils with significant differences from the chemical and rheological point of view when they are still in the liquid form, do not seem to significantly influence the ageing pathway of the paint layer. As a result the composition of an aged oil paint seems much more related to the pigments present and the conservation conditions than to the original pre-treatment of the oil. 129 [emphasis retained from the original]

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The force of attraction for the molecules in the paint is known as cohesive force. When the paint molecules adhere to the brick molecules that is an adhesive force.\(^{130}\) When the paint fully oxidizes and solidifies into a solid, capillary action has drawn the liquid into the porous surface and there is now also a mechanical bond between the paint and brick.

The appearance of a deep red, hard fired, pressed brick has always been desirable to Americans. A wall created from these brick looks solid and durable and reliable. Unfortunately, many regional brick manufacturers were not able to reproduce the same look in their fired bricks, be they ever so hard fired and well pressed.

Recommendations for painting of brick walls is regularly featured in guidebooks and tips for painters. The painting of a newly constructed brick building appears to have been a popular choice through much of the 19\(^{th}\) century and into the early 20\(^{th}\) century. This painting was not to impart a different color that could not be obtained from a fired

\(^{130}\) Siddiqui, Nazima and Adeel Ahmad, A Study On Viscosity, Surface Tension And Volume Flow Rate Of Some Edible And Medicinal Oils, 1318-1326
brick, but either to enhance the actual brick color or to mimic a brick that was not used in the construction.

The painting of the brick front of a residence or other building is done for ornamental purposes, more than for preservation. A front built up of the best Philadelphia pressed brick is a treat to the eye. When it still retains its original freshness it cannot be improved by the painter’s art, but when, as it frequently happens, the best selection has not been used in the wall or when atmospheric conditions have set in their work of decay, the services of the painter are called in requisition. The cost of pressed brick being rather high, the builders of cities outside of Philadelphia, notably New York and Brooklyn, are employing a cheaper grade of bricks and painting the fronts. This practice is to be commended, not only from the painter’s point of view, but also because the paint acts as a preservative and utility and decorative effects are obtained at one operation. Thus a good imitation of pressed brick can be obtained...  

Whereas paint manufacturers were marketing their range of ready-made colors and their willingness to create a custom paint color for a customer, tips to painters for painting brick walls gave proportions and ratios for pigment mixtures that could mimic red, yellow, or tan bricks.

A paint application to red brick in the 1887 *The Painter’s Hand Book*, may be very close to the paint application to the façade bricks of the Test Case buildings in the succeeding chapter, Chapter VI, 614-618 Gravier Street. Anecdotal evidence from Cypress Building Conservation (‘Cypress’) regarding their renovation work on these structures suggests that a liquid application that included Venetian red pigment had been applied to the face brick of the buildings. Areas of the wall where mortar was missing allowed them to see what appeared to be a ‘paint line’ equidistant on all four sides of the brick coming back from the edges of the face of the brick. Then, while using the Quintec Rotec® Vortex cleaning system to remove the flaking paint from the surface of the façade, Venetian red

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pigment appeared to be running from the brick. The Rotec® Vortex cleaning system is a low-pressure water wash that can utilize very fine micro-abrasive powders.\textsuperscript{132} Per Cypress, they utilized calcium carbonate as their abrasive. The following may be describing a similar paint application to what was applied to the façade of 614-618 Gravier Street.

If, then, there be sufficient reasons for making a good appearance at the start, better put on a coat of cement wash the color of the brick, made (if this be red) principally of water, cement, Venetian red, and a little lime or lime-water and salt. This will make it look all right for a year or so, it will not prevent the evaporation of the water, and will allow the caustic lime to act upon the sand of the mortar and harden it. When the wall is properly seasoned (if it has holes or cracks, point these up with Portland cement and sand, \textit{using no lime}), cut off the lumps and rub off the surface with a brick. It is now ready for painting. If red brick is desired, give the wall two coats of good oil paint; the first may be a good iron mineral paint, the second of best English Venetian red, ground in oil, and the third of flat brick red, if it be desired flat, which is certainly the best for appearance. But clear oil paint with a gloss, may last a little longer. [emphasis retained from original]\textsuperscript{133}

Brick buildings that utilized a painted façade to mimic a similar, yet different masonry product, wanted to project a very specific image. In the case of mimicking a hard fired, Philadelphia pressed brick, the builders of 614-618 Gravier Street may have wanted the buildings to appear as the most up-to-date “American” buildings they could be. This will be explored in the next chapter.

The application of the wash must also be considered as a modification to the surface of the brick, possibly in keeping with the preparation or priming of brick surfaces to receive painted signs. Priming of the brick surface, in both new and old brick walls, is regarded as absolutely necessary so that the bricks do not absorb the oil carrier from the paint in the sign paint layers. It would be an interesting point of further study to test if a tinted cement

\textsuperscript{132} “Our Process”, Quintek website, https://www.quintek.net/our-process/

\textsuperscript{133} Mills, \textit{The Painter’s Hand Book}, 63-64.
wash allowed for greater surface area of the brick, allowing for a higher percentage of mechanical attachment; or if it filled the cracks, pores and fissures of the brick surface, lowering the percentage of mechanical attachment of the paint layers.

Very high-quality oil paint could be achieved by hand by experienced painters who knew how to distinguish high quality ingredients, knew how to process them and how to blend them. As the chemistry of paint developed, paint manufacturers were also able to achieve consistent, high quality paint if they used high quality ingredients and processed them to a very high standard. Again, these are ideal situations whereas reality often deals in matters of supply of materials, adverse weather conditions, inadequate budgets, and sadly, not everyone available for work is going to have the level of experience and knowledge desired.

Yet, demonstrably, there are many buildings around the world that still have historic paint present. Top quality ingredients and best practice application may not be as important to durability as the adhesive and mechanical bonds created by historic oil paint to historic brick. However, as historic paint ages it becomes vulnerable to chipping and flaking.

White lead paint becomes excessively hard after a few years (and zinc more so) so that even sand-paper will scarcely take hold of it. If it be painted over in this state with a dark color, or is grained, a slight blow will break it off. This is the very annoying fault called chipping, and it has probably caused more hard feeling against a painter, than any other operation in his line.\textsuperscript{134} [emphasis retained from original]

One reason why we see paint loss in ghost signs on brick walls is that have undergone masonry repair and/or tuck pointing. The interaction with the sign by the

\textsuperscript{134} Mills, The Painter’s Hand Book, 49.
masonry tools perform a mechanical cleaning of the brick whereby the paint layers are physically separated from the face of the brick through this chipping action. The paint, once cracked, may also separate from the brick substrate when vibrations from the masonry tools travels through the grout lines and paint layers. The mechanical bond between the historic paint and the historic brick is broken.

The surviving ghost signs of New Orleans are remarkable for having endured year-round humidity, numerous hurricanes and tropical events, industrial pollutants from river traffic and industry, and loss by mechanical intervention. The increase in property development to buildings along Canal Street and within the CBD district in the last hundred years must surely increase the possibility of sign loss on nearby building signs from mechanical abrasion, vibration, chipping and flaking. The signs are a direct, if fleeting connection to past centuries of human occupation of this city and need to be well documented in order to preserve the historical information they impart.
The buildings chosen for the test case for this paper are paired four-story brick commercial structures, 614-618 Gravier Street. The buildings share a common wall and architectural detailing such as granite pillars at the storefront entrances and dentil molding along the cornice. A metal fire escape straddles the shared dividing wall on the front
façade. They are built on two lots of land that Paul Tulane purchased at a bankruptcy auction in June 1842 for $4,100 and $3,900, respectively. 135 Tulane was the New Jersey business man whose largesse to the public University of Louisiana led to the institutional and name changes to the private Tulane University. Tulane owned both buildings until they were included in the massive Act of Donation that funded the Tulane Educational Fund in June 1882. 136

This block of Gravier Street is bound by St. Charles Avenue to the north and Camp Street to the south. It is in the heart of what is now called the Central Business District (“CBD”) but was originally Faubourg Ste. Marie (or suburb of Saint Mary). After the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, the population of New Orleans grew exponentially and the American business owners that relocated to this international port city built their business district across the neutral ground of Canal Street, opposite the historic Creole town center of the French Quarter.

After the great fire of Good Friday, March 21, 1788, had devastated a large part of the city, Madame Gravier and her husband decided to subdivide their plantation and allow the city to expand upriver beyond the fortifications that had been built around it by the French in 1760. A plan was drawn up at the plantation on April 1, 1788, by Carlos Laveau Trudeau on which the Spanish Royal Surveyor explained that his plans showed ‘the front part of this plantation divided into lots, cut by three cross streets with four perpendicular streets and one oblique.’ These cross streets probably were

135 Notarial Records of Hilary Breton Cenas, Record of Sale, June 15, 1842, William C. Micon, assignee of estate of John Richardson to Paul Tulane, Lots 2 & 3.

136 Notarial Records of Charles Andry, Act of Donation, June 13, 1882, Donation by Paul Tulane and accepted by Administrators of the Tulane Educational Fund, Article 5 130 Gravier and Article 6 132 Gravier.
Magazine, Camp and St. Charles, the perpendicular streets being Poydras, Girod, Julia and Foucher, the oblique being given the name Gravier after the plantation’s owners.\textsuperscript{137}

The original addresses for 614 and 618 Gravier Street were 130 and 132 Gravier Street, respectively, and indicate how close this block was originally located in reference to the river. The corner of Camp and Gravier Streets in the 1840s was two- and one-half blocks from the bank of the Mississippi River. Sloping concrete floors from the original front entrances, in addition to elevators that accessed all four floors, makes it easy to assume the buildings were originally planned and constructed as warehouses for the storage of goods transported to and from the river.

The buildings are constructed from “soft red” river bricks. The interior bricks have some visible makers marks of “LABARRE. F.” The face bricks had a darker red finish applied to the front face only, that would have made the facades appear to have been harder fired bricks in the “American” style. No bricks from the façade of either building has been seen to have a maker’s mark stamp.

Figure 25 - Detail Of “City Of New Orleans” Map, January 8, 1829, Francis B. Ogden, Courtesy Of The Historic New Orleans Collection. Red X Marks Location Where 130-132 Gravier St Would Be Built In The 1840s.\textsuperscript{138}

Figure 26 - “LABARRE. F.” Brick From Interior Wall, 614-618 Gravier Street.

In 1836 Joseph Nelson LaBarre and Valcour LaBarre bought a brickyard located on the West Bank of the Mississippi, downriver from the Dubreuil Canal. The Dubreuil Canal was built in the 1730s, in the area now known as Harvey, Louisiana, to connect the Mississippi river to the Bayou Barataria, which then went on to allow direct access to the Gulf of Mexico. The LaBarre brickyard was located on a smaller canal built sometime in the 18th century and also featured a sawmill on site. The 1833 map by Charles F. Zimpel showing New Orleans and surrounding development label this property as owned by a “L. Faures.” The LaBarres would most likely have purchased the property from Faures two years later. The location of this canal on the West Bank of the river is directly opposite St. Mary and Felicity Street in the Irish Channel neighborhood of the Lower Garden District. This would place the canal, sawmill, and brickyard owned by the LaBarres in modern day Gretna, Louisiana, and a very short distance upriver from the building site of 130-132 Gravier Street. [See Figure 27.]

The LaBarre family were French but came to New Orleans in the 18th century by way of Canada while the colony was still governed by France. Nelson and Valcour LaBarre were brothers and their partnership saw a success not just of their brickyard but

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140 Ibid, 19.

141 Ibid, 25.


143 Arthur, Stanley Clisby, Editor, Old Families of Louisiana (Claitor’s Publishing Division, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 1971 reprint), 98.
also of their sawmill, which supplied materials for the development of both the East and West banks.\textsuperscript{144} An 1850 succession of the estate of a Joseph Nelson LaBarre described the brickyard as encompassing two kilns, sand beds, sheds, racks, stables, a residence, slave cabins, outhouses, and a kitchen.\textsuperscript{145} The LaBarre family are credited with being very influential in the development of the town of Gretna.

As the batture grew along the East Bank, developers began to build on this “new” land between what had been the natural levee and the river’s edge. A batture is the alluvial deposit that accumulates over time at a river bend. A loss of land usually occurs on the opposite river bank as the river channel slightly changes course. Maps of the 18\textsuperscript{th} and 19\textsuperscript{th} centuries show that the batture along the East Bank grew considerably in less than a hundred years.\textsuperscript{146}

\textsuperscript{144} Goodwin & Associates, 25.

\textsuperscript{145} COB B, Folio 339, Jefferson Parish Courthouse, as referenced in Goodwin & Associates, 31.

Figure 27 - Detail From Charles F. Zimpel's 1834 *Topographical Map Of New Orleans And Its Vicinity*, Image Courtesy The Historic New Orleans Collection. Red X Marks Location Where 130-132 Gravier Was Constructed In 1840s; Blue X Marks Location Of Canal Where Labarre Brickyard Was Located.\textsuperscript{147}

In response to the change in the river bed and the development of a new rivers’ edge, ports and wharves moved with the river and the city constructed a new levee. This added multiple blocks along the East Bank; how many blocks dependent upon the width of the batture. By 1883, when the *Robinson’s Atlas of the City of New Orleans* was published, 130-132 Gravier Street is shown as being located at just over seven blocks away from the riverfront.\(^{148}\)

Starting in the 1860s, local newspaper references for 130 or 132 Gravier Street advertise diverse tenants such as real estate agents, ship and steamboat captains, and champagne dealers working out of either building. There are also regular advertisements for the availability to lease either building or specific floors of the buildings.

In the 1890s, the city of New Orleans decided to re-number the streets to reflect a standard “hundred block” system and to incorporate the new blocks added by the movement of the levee. In January 1894, a notice by the Westfeldt Brothers, of 132 Gravier Street, was published in *The Daily Picayune* advertising themselves as local agents for Dennistoun, Cross & Co, a London bank. In March 1894 a notary public, John T. Michel, Esq. is mentioned in a notice as working at 130 Gravier Street.

By the end of the year, the re-numbering of Gravier Street had taken place as a new tenant first advertises in November 1894 that “No. 618 (old 132) Gravier street” is now home to the National Automatic Fire Alarm Company of Louisiana.

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149 See Appendix C for a list of newspaper articles/advertisements for 130-132 (614-618) Gravier Street from 1865-1957.

150 “Street Name & Number Changes”, New Orleans Public Library Louisiana Division/City Archives, website, http://nutrias.org/~nopl/house2/nochanges.htm


OFFICE National Automatic Fire Alarm Company of Louisiana, New Orleans, Nov. 21, 1894 — The annual election for directors of this company to serve the ensuing year will be held on MONDAY, Dec. 3, 1894, at the office of the company, No. 618 (old 132) Gravier street, between the hours of 1 and 2 o'clock p.m. JOS. H. DEGRANGE, Secretary.

Figure 29 – Advertisement, Times-Picayune (Published As The Daily Picayune), November 28, 1894, Page 5.

Figure 30 – Advertisement, Times-Picayune (Published As The Daily Picayune), August 27, 1899, Page 1.
The National Automatic Fire Alarm Company of Louisiana was, aside from alarm systems, also a dealer in Edison phonographs and records. The company leased both 614 and 618 Gravier Street and regularly advertised from 1894 through 1907 at this address. Sometime between 1894, when the company first occupies the buildings, and August 1899, when the first known advertisement with the words “Edison Building” is published, the tenants decided to add a directional sign between the second and third floor windows. The sign is in white paint with a white line border and runs basically edge-to-edge with the two buildings on either side of this pair. It is likely that with the change in street numbers that occurred on this block in 1894, the new business sought to make finding their business easier by “naming” the building with the name of a prominent product they sold.

Still owned by the Tulane Educational Fund, after The National Automatic Fire Alarm Company of Louisiana leaves 614-618 Gravier Street in 1907, newspaper advertisements and articles mention various companies working out of these buildings. In 1924 the *Times-Picayune* reported on the recording of two leases for the addresses. A five-year lease for 614 and a nine-year lease for 618 Gravier were both taken out by a J. P. Stern.¹⁵⁴

Interestingly, a sign painter temporarily occupied 614 Gravier Street in 1935 following a fire at his nearby premises. Homer W. Smith, or “Smith The Sign Man” as seen on multiple existing signs in the city, advertised in July 1935 in *The New Orleans Item* of his temporary office due to a fire at Camp and Gravier Street on July 23rd of that year.¹⁵⁵

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In 1939 it was reported that all four floors of 614 Gravier Street were leased for five years by the Office Equipment Bureau, Inc. company and that the building was to be remodeled. On November 28, 1939 the grand opening of the Office Equipment Bureau’s

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156 “4-Story Building Leased”, Article, *The Times Picayune*, September 26, 1939.
new premises was reported along with a photograph of the new entrance. Unfortunately the black & white photograph only shows the first two stories of the building but it does appear that the entire façade was painted a light color, possibly white.

The Tulane Educational Fund sold 614 Gravier Street in 1980. It was purchased by the E. Lorenz Borenstein Gallery, Inc. Separate sale records for 618 Gravier Street by the Tulane Educational Fund were not found during this research. The two separate lots (614 as Lot #2, 618 as Lot #3) were combined into one legal property, Lot 11A, in 2015. 618 Gravier Street was occupied by the Robert Norman Jewelry store from the 1960s until 2011.

Choupique Holdings, LLC purchased 614 Gravier in June 2013 and purchased 618 Gravier in August 2014. Cypress Building Conservation has offices in the building and have been working on the restoration and renovations since this purchase. Thus far, the roof has been replaced, the top two floors have been converted to residential apartments, the second floor to office spaces, and the ground floor to a coffee house and performance space.

157 “Congratulations to The Office Equipment Bureau, Inc”, Advertisement, Times-Picayune, November 28, 1939.


159 Declaration of Title Change by Subdivision attached to 2013 Act of Sale, Purchase of 614 Gravier Street by Choupique Holdings LLC
Cypress has also worked to reinstate what is believed to be the original configuration of the ground floor entrances closer to how they may have appeared in the mid 19th century. The 20th century façade wraps on both buildings that encased the granite columns and the later (possibly 1870s era) cast iron columns were removed and uncovered the last painted directional signs on the granite.

When cleaning the 20th century paint from the front facades (peeling white paint on 614 and intact pink paint on 618), the citrus gel stripper removed paint down to the surface of the painted word “BUILDING” on 618. When purchased, the peeling white paint on 614 had already exposed the word “EDISON” and the white line border on that façade, and

then newly exposed wording on 618 completed the historic directional sign. Low pressure water micro-abrasion with calcium carbonate abrasive powder was sufficient to remove the 20th century paint from both facades but Cypress was careful to not remove any additional paint or applied brick surface from inside the border line box of the ghost sign. Though the micro-abrasion did remove the applied dark red coating to the façade bricks from the majority of face bricks, some portions of the coating are still visible on the 614 Gravier side between the lettering.

Figure 33 - 614-618 Gravier Street, “Edison Building” Directional Sign After Cleaning, Photo by Drone, W. Redding Operator, 2020
Figure 34 - 614-618 Gravier Street, “Edison Building” Directional Sign and Front Façade After Cleaning And Restoration, 2019
Test Samples

On January 8, 2020, two brick samples were removed from the façade bricks of 614 and 618 Gravier Street for analysis, one sample per building. Both samples were from bricks close to third story windows and were taken from the corner of bricks that had visible remnants of the ghost sign paint. Both samples were chosen and acquired by Michael Shoriak of Cypress for their accessibility and visible paint coverage within the “EDISON BUILDING” directional sign.

First sample removal was attempted via a ¼-inch, diamond head core drilling bit near the corner of the selected brick on 614 Gravier. The softness of the brick was such that the sample could only be removed from the drill bit by prying with a metal object, rendering the sample to dust. The hole left by the drilling did allow for the corner of the brick to be easily removed by the chisel edge of a metal “painter’s tool.” This sample is Sample 1. Sample 2, from 618 Gravier, was acquired through the same process, by drilling close to the corner of the selected brick and removing the corner by chisel.

Sample 1 measures approximately 15.51 mm long by 6.10 mm deep. Sample 2 measures approximately 12.10 mm long by 5.60 mm deep. These measurements were taken by a Leica DMS300 digital microscope which utilizes a CMOS (complementary metal-oxide semiconductor image sensor) camera with high definition resolution up to 30 frames per second and lit with an LED-ring light with diffuser. Measurements shown on the sample photographs were applied using the digital microscope’s LAS EZ software.
Figure 35 - 614 Gravier Brick Sample. Photo Shows Interior Composition Of Brick.

Figure 36 - 618 Gravier Brick Sample. Photo Shows Interior Composition Of Brick, Center Of Photo Is Drilled Surface From Sample Removal.
Figure 37 - 614 Gravier Sample, Face Of Brick With Remnant Paint From “EDISON” Sign.

Figure 38 - 614 Gravier Sample, Face Of Brick, Close Up Of View In Figure 37.
Figure 39 - 614 Gravier Sample, Top Edge Shown Is Face Of Brick. Dark Red Line Running Along Edge Is Extent Of Absorption Of The Vermillion Red Brick Paint Coat.

Figure 40 - 614 Gravier Sample, Top Edge Shown Is Face Of Brick, Close Up Of View In Figure 39. “EDISON” Sign Paint Is 118.44 Microns At The Thickest Shown. Absorption Of Brick Paint Coat At Same Point Is 203.04 Microns.
Figure 41 - 618 Gravier Sample, Face Of Brick With Remnant Layers Of 20th Century And “BUILDING” Directional Sign Paint.

Figure 42 - 618 Gravier Sample, Face Of Brick, Close Up Of View In Figure 41. The White Paint Of The “BUILDING” Sign Appears To Have Be Laid Over An Older Paint Layer.
Figure 43 - 618 Gravier Sample, Top Edge Shown Is Face Of Brick. Irregularity To Surface Of Brick Face At This Angle Does Not Show Extent Of Absorption Of Brick Coat Paint.

Figure 44 - 618 Gravier Sample, Top Edge Shown Is Face Of Brick, Close Up Of View In Figure 43. Thickness Of Remaining Paint Layers Varies From 5.1952 Microns To 797.22 Microns. There Appears To Be A Thin Dark Layer Of Paint Below The First Application Of White Paint.
The preceding photographs of both samples were taken by digital microscope and show both the composition of the bricks behind the brick “skin” fired surface, but also the remnants of multiple paint applications to the brick facade.

Analysis of the samples’ microscopic pictures show that both bricks appear to have multiple sizes of varying aggregates and inclusions throughout their matrix. Both samples fractured with irregular surfaces around these aggregates and inclusions. Both samples show a non-homogenous matrix with swirls of different colored matrix.

Sample 1 from 614 Gravier fractured off the remaining brick in such a way that a clear profile view of the brick was achievable. Figures 39 and 40 clearly show the presence of the line of absorption for the vermillion red paint coat the façade was given, possibly even shortly after construction of the buildings. The extent of the absorption leads one to infer that this brick paint coat was very thin with low viscosity. It is also possible that the face bricks could have been left to soak, face down, in a vermillion solution in order for the brick to absorb the liquid. It would be necessary to examine other buildings in New Orleans, built in the same time period, to see if a similar brick paint coat was applied to other bricks in an attempt to mimic hard fired pressed bricks. A detailed comparison of buildings may allow for the determination of how the coating was applied, either by soaking prior to construction, dipping into a solution at time of construction, or by brush after wall assembly.

Unfortunately, Sample 2 fractured in such a way that the bore hole utilized to access the sample obscures most of one face of the sample. All other faces are so irregular that no clear profile from the face edge down was achievable. The surface of the face is very
irregular, and the surface painted finish is observable from all side angles. The digital camera of the microscope used for examination focuses along a planar surface and a focused image was only found in the angle seen in Figures 43 and 44. This angle does not show the absorption line from the brick paint coat, but it is still assumed to have been applied to this brick.

After digital microscopy photographs were taken of both samples, they were returned back to Cypress to be processed for paint layer analysis along with a larger batch of paint samples taken for a company project. The Gravier Street brick samples were cast in acrylic resin and cut with a rotary blade after curing. The photographs were taken by digital camera from an optical microscope image.

The paint layer analysis photograph of Sample 1, 614 Gravier Street [Figure 45] shows that the word “EDISON” was painted on the surface of the face brick in a thick layer of what is most likely lead white oil paint. Small black inclusions are visible in the white paint and from the microscopic surface views of this sample they do appear to be spread throughout the paint. The inclusions may be dirt caught in the wet paint or pollutants acquired over time while the sign was exposed. These inclusions are also visible in the 618 Gravier brick sample.

This profile view of Sample 1 appears to show the absorption line of the brick paint coat as an irregular line and may have penetrated almost one third of the way through the

Figure 46 - 618 Gravier “Building”, Paint Layer Analysis. Multiple Layers Of Paint Visible.
depth of the sample in this plane. There is a darker red area from the surface of the brick, close to the surface under the white paint layer in the top left of the photo and continues diagonally in a sinuous line to the bottom right of the photo. If this is the absorption line, rather than a non-homogenous mix of the matrix, then the irregularity of the brick matrix may account for the differing levels of absorption.

The photograph of Sample 2, 618 Gravier Street [Figure 46] shows multiple applications of paint on the surface of the brick. It also shows the first clear view of the absorption line of the brick paint coat for the 618 Gravier sample. This is seen as the very dark red line that follows very closely to the face edge of the brick. Not as clear in this sample photograph is the thin dark paint layer that preceded the white “BUILDING” sign paint that was visible in the overhead and profile microscopic views of the sample.

Should any further masonry work take place at 614-618 Gravier Street, or when regular maintenance requires another round of tuck pointing, it would be an opportunity for entire bricks to be carefully removed from the façade for a short period of intense examination. If an entire brick could not be removed for examination, then additional samples could be taken for FTIR testing of both the brick and paint compositions.

Fourier Transform Infrared Spectroscopy, or FTIR, analyzes and identifies organic, polymeric, and sometimes inorganic materials of sampled objects. This type of testing would be an excellent way to expand the scope of the materials research that was not possible for this study.

Understanding the material composition of the façade brick, and the paint coat that was applied to them, would allow a greater understanding of brick-making technology and
construction methods/techniques available in 1840s New Orleans. The composition of both the façade brick’s paint coat and of the sign paint would also further our understanding of exterior finishes in 19th century New Orleans. The more information gathered regarding the material components, the greater our understanding of how they interact, an important aspect of maintaining historic building envelopes.
CHAPTER VII: PRESERVATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Commercial signs that endure long enough on a building’s exterior to reach the status of “ghost sign” become an integral component of a building’s exterior envelope. Therefore, the conservation and preservation of those signs should be of importance and consideration when maintaining an historic structure. Just as you need to understand the physical characteristics of historic masonry, wood windows and trim, and slate roofing tiles, so too do you need to understand the physical characteristics of the painted signs. What binder was used? What pigment remains? Knowing what the components of the historic paint are will assist in drawing up a comprehensive plan when considering any alterations to the building’s exterior.

When the National Park Service released their Preservation Brief 11, Rehabilitating Historic Storefronts in 1982, their recommendations were primarily for the restoration of the original architectural features of the building. The brief details strategies and recommendations regarding restoring the physical material of the structure. Signage was presented as a secondary aspect and a negative when physical signs obscured any architectural detail. The removal of projecting 20th century signs from 19th century, or earlier, buildings was encouraged; however, painted signs and advertising were considered of historic interest and they encouraged their retention.

Signs were an important aspect of 19th and early 20th century storefronts and today play an important role in defining the character of a business district. In examining historic streetscape photographs, one is struck by the number of signs— in windows,
over doors, painted on exterior walls, and hanging over (and sometimes across) the street. While this confusion was part of the character of 19th century cities and towns, today’s approach toward signs in historic districts tends to be much more conservative. Removal of some signs can have a dramatic effect in improving the visual appearance of a building…. Retention of signs and advertising painted on historic walls, if of historic or artistic interest (especially where they provide evidence of early or original occupants), is encouraged.161

Preservation Briefs are released to the public to assist private owners and city planning officials in evaluating historic structures and to aid in developing guidelines for historic district regulations. Recommendations published by the National Park Service are seen as standards to meet when attempting to register a building or a historic district on the National Register of Historic Places.

In 1991 the National Park Service released Preservation Brief 25, The Preservation of Historic Signs.162 This publication delved further into the history of signage used on American commercial structures and also includes recommendations on how and when to preserve historic signs.

Signs often become so important to a community that they are valued long after their role as commercial markers has ceased. They become landmarks, loved because they have been visible at certain street corners--or from many vantage points across the city--for a long time. Such signs are valued for their familiarity, their beauty, their humor, their size, or even their grotesqueness. In these cases, signs transcend their conventional role as vehicles of information, as identifiers of something else. When signs reach this stage, they accumulate rich layers of meaning. They no longer merely advertise, but are valued in and of themselves. They become icons.163


The National Park Service again recommends retaining historic signs whenever possible. Significant factors to consider include:

Association with historic figures or events; Evidence of the history of a product, business or service; Reflecting the history of the building or development of the district; Characteristic of a specific era or advertising style; or Integral to the building’s design or fabric. ¹⁶⁴

Photo archives are a tremendous asset in studying how building features change over time and how painted ghost signs weather. Photographs show that the greatest threats to ghost signs are not the physical removal of the sign from the building but their being covered by paint, obliterated by renovations, or the loss of the historic building itself. The lack of historic district regulations that protect ghost signs as a significant feature of the building is why the majority of commercially painted signs are gone.

The reason so many 19th century buildings are still standing in the 21st century Vieux Carré of New Orleans is thanks to historic district regulations. New Orleans has the distinction of being the first city in the United States to pass an ordinance creating a historic district. ¹⁶⁵ The Louisiana State Constitution had been amended in 1921, calling for the preservation of the historic architecture of the Vieux Carré. Unfortunately, the municipal body created in 1925 by the Commission Council of New Orleans had no regulatory control over the district and only advised the Council. The state constitution was amended again in 1936 authorizing the City Council to create a regulatory body, the VCC, to protect the

¹⁶⁴ Ibid, 7.

neighborhood as a whole from wide scale demolition of the historic structures that make this neighborhood a unique “textbook” of 19th century architecture.\textsuperscript{166}

Thanks to this regulation and the understanding that protecting the neighborhood as an environment, not simply as a collection of individual buildings, the French Quarter has preserved a mix of building styles, shapes, and heights. Today’s design guidelines, for the rare opportunity to build “new construction” within the French Quarter, require that principles of proportionate scale in both height and width to neighboring buildings be maintained in order to receive permit approval by the VCC.\textsuperscript{167}

The proportions of a new building and its relationship to neighboring buildings establish its compatibility within the neighborhood or block. The height-width ratio is a relationship between the height and width of a street façade and should be similar in proportion to neighboring buildings. New construction should be neither visually overwhelming nor underwhelming when compared to its neighbors.…

\textit{It is Generally Appropriate to…}

\begin{itemize}
\item Construct a new building that is similar in height and width to buildings on adjacent sites
\item Construct a new building larger than adjacent buildings by breaking the building mass, dividing its height or width to conform with adjacent buildings
\item Construct taller portions of a new building away from the street\textsuperscript{168}
\end{itemize}

The regulatory restrictions that now protect this historic district preserve a time with no such regulations and when construction was carried out to the fancy of the owner.


Restrictions as to height, style, and placement of buildings had more to do with the owner’s budget than city regulations. Many streets in the French Quarter display wide swaths of brick at the side of taller buildings when adjacent to shorter structures. Sometimes these walls still display vestiges of historic signage. The tradition in New Orleans to build “up to the lot line” to maximize narrow lot sizes and allow for rear courtyards also provides an immediacy to ghost signs as many are visible a block or more away. Therefore, multiple examples of ghost signs can be seen in the French Quarter. Historic photos of the Vieux Carré show that many more have been covered by paint. We can hope that some of these may one day be uncovered, similar to how 614-618 Gravier Street has resurrected their “Edison Building” sign in the Central Business District.

As of March 2020, there are 18 additional historic districts in New Orleans aside from the Vieux Carré. They are all under the jurisdiction of the Historic District Landmarks Commission (“HDLC”), with the Central Business District permit applications falling under a separate commission board and meetings. Of these 18 districts, thirteen are considered “Full Control” districts whereby “the HDLC has jurisdiction over everything that is visible from the public right-of-way. All work to the exterior of a building (excluding paint color) in a Full Control district must be reviewed and approved by the HDLC prior to beginning work.”


There is a subtle but important distinction between the level of control in an HDLC Full Control district and the Vieux Carré. As the HDLC states, their jurisdiction is over “everything visible from the public right-of-way.” This is in contrast to the VCC, which has jurisdiction over everything on the exterior of the building, whether or not it is visible to the pedestrian, and has authority to review selected paint colors.

Regulating all repairs, alterations and construction that affect any building element exposed to outside air (whether visible from the street or not) of any building situated on private property in the French Quarter. This includes carriageways, alleyway, rear buildings, etc. [emphasis added by author]

This vital distinction helps define the level of control the VCC holds over the French Quarter compared to the level of control the HDLC holds over most of their historic districts. Both commissions recommend not painting a structure that has no known history of having been painted, but again these are recommendations, not statutes. An argument could also be made that a brick building with a long history of advertising and directional signs painted directly on the masonry does qualify as “previously painted.” Painting of historic masonry can be quite harmful to the brick as an elastomeric, or non-breathable paint layer will trap all moisture in the brick and mortar. The VCC’s “Guidelines for Masonry & Stucco” advises that when “selecting paint, it is important that the new paint be compatible with all earlier coats of paint” and “generally recommends mineral silicate paint for the best long-term adhesion” though “lime-based paint can be applied.”

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171 Vieux Carré Commission, City of New Orleans website, https://nola.gov/vcc/

Mineral silicate paint includes lime and silicate that bind to masonry, providing long-lasting durability and weather resistance. Lime-based paint is appropriate for historic masonry, although it is not as weather resistant. If the building has been painted previously, it is important to select a type of undercoat and paint appropriate for the existing surface coating on the building and apply them according to the manufacturer’s recommendations.\textsuperscript{173}

Important to note, however, is that property owners in any historic district in the City of New Orleans have the right to appeal either commission’s rulings and to have their request put before the City Council with the intent of maneuvering around regulations.

As for ghost signs on buildings within New Orleans historic districts, only the VCC’s Guidelines mention them specifically in their “Guidelines for Signage & Awnings.” Under their “Does Not Allow” list is “[a]dhering a paper sign or graphic film to glazing or a wall surface— A historic painted sign on a wall surface can remain but cannot be repainted.”\textsuperscript{174} [emphasis by author]

Directional ghost signs are tangentially mentioned in both commissions’ guidelines in a call out detail for historic signage, both emphasizing signage in the form of architectural detailing and both with identical wording encouraging retention of historic signs. The guidelines are not championing retention of the signage, but, rather, mildly ‘encouraging’ retention of the signs in a detail caption.

\textsuperscript{173} Ibid.

Figure 47 - “Historic Signage” Detail From Vieux Carré Commission “Guidelines For Signage & Awnings”, Page 4.

Figure 48 - “Historic Signage” Detail From Historic District Landmarks Commission “Guidelines For Commercial Buildings”, Page 13.\(^\text{175}\)

The larger number of ghost signs remaining in the Central Business District may be the result of different factors. First, as this area was developed as the American business district in the beginning of the 19th century, the first buildings constructed were often multi-story commercial structures. Though the development of skyscrapers in the 20th century brought many examples of such to tower over historic structures nearby, there are still many instances where very tall historic buildings still display ghost signs over neighboring historic buildings.

A second factor may be that for almost one hundred years, a vocal percentage of the residents of New Orleans has championed historic preservation. Since the organization of the first Vieux Carré Commission in the 1920s, supporters of historic preservation have rallied to save first the Vieux Carré but then later for almost all of the city neighborhoods that still possess historic structures. Though the retention of ghost signs is not promoted at the city, state, or national level in guidelines, the culture of preservation in New Orleans may have helped to retain many of the signs we still see.

A third, more cynical yet perhaps more realistic view, is that New Orleans has a long history of ‘letting nature take its course.’ Vines climbing along wooden siding, saplings sprouting from gutters, paint weathered down to bare wood on shutters, and mold growing on crumbling stucco is often described as ‘antique,’ ‘vintage,’ ‘atmospheric,’ and the proverbial ‘patina’ of Old New Orleans in photographs and travelogues. Though city regulations call for regular maintenance of property, property owners doing minimal maintenance to buildings in New Orleans is not uncommon.
The addition of verbiage in historic district regulations encouraging property owners to view ghost signs as important historic details worthy of retention could lessen the number of signs that are lost behind façade renewals. Inpainting of signs that have been well documented to show prior condition could be allowed to increase legibility of the ghost sign. When communities are recording entire neighborhoods for the creation of historic district designations or for the application of historic district designations at the national level, then the recording of ghost signs by photograph on the historic structures would provide a more complete picture of that neighborhood within a specific time period. That time period would most likely be within the period of significance for the district, and if later than that period, would be on record for if the sign survives long enough for the period of significance for the district to be expanded at a later date.

Photographs through time of ghost signs show that if the building isn’t demolished, or if the sign isn’t painted over, then the mechanical removal of the sign as a byproduct of masonry repair and tuck pointing creates the most loss within the sign itself. As a matter of proper maintenance, all masonry facades should undergo periodic maintenance and repair to ensure a water tight building envelope. Whenever masonry repair and tuck pointing occurs within the boundaries of a ghost sign, it can be expected that the sign will suffer from paint loss, even under experienced hands. Building owners should not be discouraged from performing proper and regular maintenance to their buildings. If they reside within a historic district, however, the district regulations should advise building owners to fully document the ghost signs before and after such repair and to only employ masons with proven experience with historic brick structures.
As all the recording of signs being recommended in this paper would lead to the inevitable issue of storage and archiving of these images, the author hopes that any governmental body that oversees a regulated historic district can cooperate with all archives, libraries, and organizations that study and record local history. Organizing, digital storage, and the digital dissemination of the historical knowledge these ghost signs impart, for both the buildings they adorn and the neighborhoods they inhabit, would be a great service to all researchers of history.
CHAPTER VIII. CONCLUSION

Buildings are three-dimensional history books that reflect the comings and goings, successes and failures, aspirations and follies of real people.\textsuperscript{176}

Over time, certain building shapes became associated with the function of a building. What began as a Greek temple a few thousand years ago became a popular form for municipal buildings and banks in 19th century America. Rectangular structures with a tower are immediately recognizable as churches. When historic buildings are adapted for reuse the form remains and passersby can reliably assume that the building that now functions as a small office complex, hotel frontage, or upscale condo began its life with a completely different function. A visual history of the building is retained through the form which in and of itself may have a complicated architectural history. As stated by Venturi, Brown and Izenour in \textit{Learning From Las Vegas},

\begin{quote}
\ldots architecture depends in its perception and creation on past experience and emotional association and that these symbolic and representational elements may often be contradictory to the form, structure, and program with which they combine in the same building.\textsuperscript{177}
\end{quote}

When commercial buildings change their use, the history of that building is usually more difficult to guess as compared to a residence being converted for commercial use. For those who have studied architectural history, visual clues such as historic store front

\textsuperscript{176} Lane, Mills, Architecture of the Old South (New York: Abbeville Publishing Group, 1993), 7.

\textsuperscript{177} Venturi, Robert, Denise Scott Brown and Steven Izenour, Learning From Las Vegas (The MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, 1977), 87.
windows, warehouse entry ramps, and corner store entrance configurations tell the initiated that what might now be a private residence or apartment complex once functioned as a commercial space. For those that look closely, carved lintels and cornerstones, when they remain, offer more descriptive histories of the buildings.

A ghost sign, however, requires no background to understand, other than an ability to read the language. Signs give clues as to the age of the sign through style of font, product or price advertised, and descriptors that are demonstrably out of date (i.e., the entrance to a hotel lobby displaying both the hotel name and also an historic “marketplace” sign). When a passerby notices a ghost sign, they know that the building is at least as old as the sign, if not much older, and that provides historical context for all the buildings on that block. Ghost signs are wonderful resources for piquing people’s interest in historic buildings and neighborhoods, an important first step in gaining more advocates for historic preservation.

Ghost signs have survived because of the mechanical bond that was created when the oil-based paint was absorbed by a porous brick. They were applied at a specific time in history, in a specific position on the building, for a specific reason. Sometimes that time and reason can be discovered through historic research.

For people without the knowledge or access to the historic research materials, the ghost signs inform them of the commercial past of the building and/or block. It can give them an idea of the nature of business that took place in that area. They don’t have to know the sequence of architectural styles in American architectural history. They don’t have to distinguish architectural features. They just have to notice the sign.
Appendix A

Photographic Survey of the Ghost Signs of New Orleans

The following survey is organized according to the commission under whose jurisdiction the property falls under. The Vieux Carré Commission (“VCC”) has jurisdiction over an area bounded by Iberville Street, North Rampart Street, Esplanade Avenue and the Mississippi River. All local historic districts in the city outside of the VCC jurisdiction are under the jurisdiction of either the New Orleans Historic District Landmarks Commission (“NOHDLC”) or the Central Business District Historic District Landmarks Commission (“CBDHDLC”).

The designation of historic district was determined by the city’s Property Viewer Website which lists an address’ Conditional Use, Zoning, Overlays and Interim Zoning Districts, Local Historic District Jurisdiction, and if it is part of a National Register of Historic Places district.

When the city lists no Local Historic District for an address, the City Zoning designation is listed in its stead.


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Photograph:
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Jurisdiction:  CBDHDLC
Photograph:
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Historic District: Lafayette Square
Jurisdiction: CBDHDLC
Photograph:

Drone Photograph
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Jurisdiction:  CBDHDLC
Photograph:

St. Charles Ave façade, Drone Photograph

St. Charles Ave façade, Drone Photograph
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Historic District: Warehouse District
Jurisdiction: CBDHDLC
Photograph:
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Magazine St façade
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Photograph: Girod St façade, Drone Photograph
Girod St façade, Drone Photograph

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St. Joseph St façade, Drone Photograph
Andrew Higgins Blvd façade, Drone Photograph

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Photograph:  Drone Photograph
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Historic District:  Warehouse District
Jurisdiction:  CBDHDLC
Photograph:  Andrew Higgins Blvd facade
Andrew Higgins Blvd façade
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Historic District: Warehouse District
Jurisdiction: CBDHDLC
Photograph: St. Joseph St façade
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John Churchill Chase St façade
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John Churchill Chase St façade
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<td>Faubourg Marigny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jurisdiction:</td>
<td>NODHDLC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photograph:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Address: 420 Jackson Avenue
Historic District: Irish Channel
Jurisdiction: NODHDLC
Photograph: Jackson Ave façade
Jackson Ave façade
Rousseau St façade
Address:  2225 Tchoupitoulas Street
Historic District:  Irish Channel
Jurisdiction:  NODHDLC
Photograph:
Address: 2134 – 2126 Magazine Street
Historic District: Lower Garden District
Jurisdiction: NODHDLCC
Photograph: Jackson Ave façade
Josephine St façade
Address: 3530 Tchoupitoulas Street
Historic District: Uptown
Jurisdiction: NODHDLC
Photograph:
Address: 210 Decatur Street
Historic District: Vieux Carré
Jurisdiction: VCC
Photograph: Iberville St façade, Drone Photograph
Iberville St façade, Drone Photograph
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Address:</th>
<th>315 Decatur Street</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Historic District:</td>
<td>Vieux Carré</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jurisdiction:</td>
<td>VCC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photograph:</td>
<td>Conti St façade</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Address: 330 Exchange Pace
Historic District: Vieux Carré
Jurisdiction: VCC
Photograph:
Address: 401 Bourbon Street
Historic District: Vieux Carré
Jurisdiction: VCC
Photograph:
Conti St façade
Address: 429 Bourbon Street
Historic District: Vieux Carré
Jurisdiction: VCC
Photograph: St. Louis St façade, Drone Photograph
Address:  521 Royal Street
Historic District:  Vieux Carré
Jurisdiction:  VCC
Photograph:  St. Louis St façade
St. Louis St façade, Drone Photograph
Address: 537 Iberville Street
Historic District: Vieux Carré
Jurisdiction: VCC
Photograph: Chartres St facade
Chartres St facade
Address: 624 Bourbon Street
Historic District: Vieux Carré
Jurisdiction: VCC
Photograph: Toulouse St façade
Toulouse St façade
Address: 627 Decatur Street
Historic District: Vieux Carré
Jurisdiction: VCC
Photograph:

Wilkinson St façade, Drone Photograph

Wilkinson St façade, Drone Photograph
Address: 707 Toulouse Street
Historic District: Vieux Carré
Jurisdiction: VCC
Photograph:
Address: 730 Dumaine Street
Historic District: Vieux Carré
Jurisdiction: VCC
Photograph: Bourbon St façade
Address: 831 Saint Louis Street
Historic District: Vieux Carré
Jurisdiction: VCC
Photograph:

Bourbon St façade
Bourbon St façade
Address: 419 Carondelet Street
Historic District: CBD-1 Core Central Business District Zoning
Photograph: Perdido St façade
Address: 614-618 Gravier Street
Historic District: CBD-1 Core Central Business District Zoning
Jurisdiction: CBD-1 Core Central Business District Zoning
Photograph:
Address: 125 Saint Charles Avenue
Historic District: CBD-2 Historic Commercial & Mixed-Use Zoning
Photograph: Common St façade
Common St façade, Drone Photograph
Address: 1899 Tchoupitoulas Street
Historic District: High Intensity Mixed-Use District Zoning
Photograph:
Address: 2941 Royal Street
Historic District: Historic Marigny/Tremé/Bywater Mixed-Use District
Jurisdiction: Historic Marigny/Tremé/Bywater Mixed-Use District Zoning
Photograph:
Address: 420 Josephine Street
Historic District: Historic Urban Neighborhood Mixed-Use District Zoning
Photograph: Jackson Ave facade
Jackson Ave façade
Address: 1901 Saint Charles Avenue
Historic District:
Jurisdiction: Medium Intensity Mixed-Use District Zoning
Photograph: St. Andrew St façade
St. Andrew St façade
St. Andrew St façade
Address: 425 Celeste Street
Historic District: Riverfront (RIV) Design Overlay District, Lower Garden District
Jurisdiction: Riverfront (RIV) Design Overlay District, Lower Garden District
Zoning
Photograph:
Appendix B

Online Map with Appendix A, Ghost Signs of New Orleans addresses marked and labeled with photograph. Addresses organized and color coded to local historic district or grouped together under City Zoning. ‘Findable’ in Google searches and allows for self-led tour of existing ghost signs of New Orleans.

Google Maps public map:
https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?mid=1ZLtJ-MEuFM_Ba3J9zjTmGMsBgsjj8pC1&ll=29.94370917187064%2C-90.0968426238328&z=12

Default View:
Example of individual markers:

600 Canal St
Details from Google Maps
600 Canal St, New Orleans, LA 70130
View in Google Maps

1901 St Charles Ave
Description:
Medium Intensity Mixed-Use District Zoning
Details from Google Maps
1901 St Charles Ave, New Orleans, LA 70130
View in Google Maps
Appendix C  
Newspaper References to 130 (614) and 132 (618) Gravier Street

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>SOURCE</th>
<th>ADDRESS</th>
<th>TENANT</th>
<th>TEXT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1865-9-1</td>
<td>The Daily Picayune</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>Pinckard &amp; Steele</td>
<td>FOR RENT- Two fine four-story brick Stores, No. 110 and 114 Camp street. Apply to PINCKARD &amp; STEELE, No. 132 Gravier street.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1865-10-22</td>
<td>The Daily Picayune</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>Ober, Atwater &amp; Co.</td>
<td>FOR SALE- THE FINE LIGHT DRAFT SIDE Wheel steamer MILTON RELF, in good order. OBER, ATWATER &amp; CO., 130 Gravier street.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1865-10-29</td>
<td>The Daily Picayune</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>Alfred L. B. Zerega</td>
<td>FOR GALVESTON- Z LINE. To Sail on THURSDAY, Nov. 2. FOR GALVESTON- The new and fat sailing schooner. J. M. LEWIS, E. S. Trye, Master, having most of her cargo engaged will leave her wharf, Post 25, First District, as above. For freight or passage apply to ALFRED L. B. ZEREGA, 132 Gravier street. T. H. McMahon &amp; Gilbert, Agents in Galveston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1865-12-1</td>
<td>The Daily Picayune</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>Chas. H. Lee</td>
<td>BUSINESS CARDS. FINANCIAL. CHAS. H. LEE, STOCK, NOTE AND EXCHANGE Broker, 130 Gravier street.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1865-12-21</td>
<td>The Daily Picayune</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>Alfred L.B. Zerega</td>
<td>STEAMSHIPS. GALVESTON-Z LINE. To sail on THURSDAY, Dec. 21, at 5 P. M. FOR GALVESTON- The fine steamship GEN. SHERMAN, J. Pendleton, Commander will leave as above from her wharf, Post 18, First District. For freight or passage apply to ALFRED L. B. ZEREGA, Agent, 132 Gravier street. J. H. McMAHON &amp; GILBERTS, Agents in Galveston.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>Page</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Text</td>
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<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1865-12-30</td>
<td>The Times Picayune</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>Alfred L.B. Zerega</td>
<td>Steamship Departures FOR FLORIDA PORTS.- The steamship Nashua, Capt. Washburn, leaves for Pensacola and Apalachicola this morning, at 9 o'clock. Agent, Alfred L. B. Zerega, 132 Gravier street.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1866-1-20</td>
<td>Times-Picayune</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>Wilson, Patton &amp; Co.</td>
<td>Daniel A. Wilson, Jr., I. W. Patton. Formerly of Wilson, Massie &amp; Co. WILSON, PATTON &amp; CO., AGENTS FOR SALE of Leaf and Manufactured Tobacco, and General Commission Merchants, 130 Gravier street New Orleans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1868-2-19</td>
<td>The Daily Picayune</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>Orleans Railroad Company</td>
<td>ORLEANS RAILROAD COMPANY. - Subscribers to the capital stock of this company are notified elsewhere by Jules Benit, Secretary, that the second installment of $5 per share will be due and payable at the office of the company, No. 130 Gravier street, on the 24th inst.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1876-7-30</td>
<td>The Daily Picayune</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>J. J. Irby &amp; Son</td>
<td>FOR RENT- THE THREE STORY BRICK Store, No. 35 Natchez street, the Double Brick Store Nos. 138 and 140 Poydras street, and the large Warehouse corner Magazine and Julia Streets. For terms, apply to J. J. IRBY &amp; SON, 130 Gravier street.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1876-10-17</td>
<td>The Daily Picayune</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>Toby &amp; Co.</td>
<td>TO RENT- THE STORE NO. 130 GRAVIER street. For terms apply to P. N. STRONG, 49 Carondelet street.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1876-10-22</td>
<td>The Daily Picayune</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>Toby &amp; Co.</td>
<td>The celebrated Swiss appetizer, Dew of the Alps, can be had from the agents, Toby &amp; Co., 132 Gravier street.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1877-1-12</td>
<td>The Daily Picayune</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>Toby &amp; Co.</td>
<td>TO RENT- THE STORE NO. 130 GRAVIER street. For terms apply to P. N. STRONG, 49 Carondelet street.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1877-8-22</td>
<td>The Daily Picayune</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>Toby &amp; Co.</td>
<td>TO RENT- FROM FIRST OCTOBER next-store No. 5 Tchoupitoulas street, fitted up with patent elevator, etc. Also store No. 130 Gravier street. For terms apply to P. N. STRONG, 64 Carondelet street.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1878-3-3</td>
<td>The Daily Picayune</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>Store No. 130 Gravier street. Store No. 5 Tchoupitoulas street, with patent elevator, etc. For terms apply to P. N. STRONG, 49 Carondelet street.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1878-10-11</td>
<td>The Daily Picayune</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>TO RENT- FROM 1ST OCTOBER NEXT- Store Nos. 48, 45 and 47 Peters street, at present occupied by John I. Adams &amp; Co. Also, Store No. 132 Gravier street. For terms apply to P.N. STRONG, 48 Union street.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1878-12-25</td>
<td>The Daily Picayune</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>TO RENT FROM 1ST OCTOBER NEXT- Store Nos. 132 Gravier street. For terms apply to P.N. STRONG, 53 Carondelet street.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1879-2-28</td>
<td>The Daily Picayune</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>FOR RENT- OFFICES ON THE SECOND floor of No. 132 Gravier street. For terms apply to P.N. STRONG, 53 Carondelet street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1879-3-1</td>
<td>The Daily Picayune</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>130 Gravier street BRANCH, CROOKES &amp; CO. SAWMILL AND RAILWAY SUPPLY AGENT WESTERN OIL COMPANY Salesroom, 130 GRAVIER STREET New Orleans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1879-3-9</td>
<td>The Daily Picayune</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>130 Gravier Street 130 BRANCH, CROOKES &amp; CO., SAWMANUFACTURERS; Dealers in SAWMILL AND RAILWAY SUPPLIES, AGENT WESTERN OIL COMPANY. Salesroom, 130 GRAVIER STREET, New Orleans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1879-4-26</td>
<td>The Daily Picayune</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>COW PEAS- COW PEAS- Those wanting PEAS for present or future delivery, the best clay, call on JNO. T. BRODNAX, 132 Gravier street.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1879-7-12</td>
<td>The Daily Picayune</td>
<td>130/132</td>
<td>FOR RENT- FROM 1ST OCTOBER NEXT- Store No 132 Gravier street; the lower floor of Store No. 130 Gravier street; also Store No. 98 Canal street, the lower floor of which can be rented separately. Also Store, corner Gravier and Peters streets, running through to Front street. For terms apply to P.N. STRONG, 53 Carondelet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>Page</td>
<td>Advertiser</td>
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<tr>
<td>1879-10-5</td>
<td>The Daily Picayune</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>Britton &amp; Eppler</td>
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<tr>
<td>1879-12-30</td>
<td>The Times Picayune</td>
<td>132</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1880-2-2</td>
<td>The Times Picayune</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>Britton &amp; Eppler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880-3-1</td>
<td>The Times Picayune</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>Britton &amp; Eppler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880-3-18</td>
<td>The Times Picayune</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>Britton &amp; Eppler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Source</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Text</td>
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<tr>
<td>1880-6-5</td>
<td>The Times Picayune</td>
<td>132 Britton &amp; Eppler</td>
<td>[By Telegraph.] CAMDEN, Ark., June 3.- To Capt. Jack W. Blanks, No. 132 Gravier street; Six feet of water and rising fast. Will there be a through boat? D. W. CHANDLER. DELHI, June 3, 1880- To Britton &amp; Eppler, No. 132 Gravier street; The Tensas will arrive to leave for Bayou Macon on Tuesday, the 8th, at 5 P.M. L. V. COOLEY, Master.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880-12-22</td>
<td>The Daily Picayune</td>
<td>130/132</td>
<td>TO RENT- Lower floor No. 130 Gravier street. Office on second floor No. 132 Gravier street. Apply to P. N. STRONG, 77 Carondelet street.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881-9-4</td>
<td>The Daily Picayune</td>
<td>132 Lord &amp; McPeake</td>
<td>FOR SALE- A FARM OF 36 ARPENTS on the Metairie Ridge Road, 1 1/2 miles from the cemetery, well improved with orange groves. Apply to LORD &amp; MCPEAKE, 132 Gravier street, New Orleans.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Crockett's Point, Dgypt, Cut-Off, Westwood, Eureka, Mound Bayou, Couter Point, and all way landings on Bayou Macon, Upper and Lower Tensas- The steamer TENSAS. L.V. Cooley, master, Thos. Knee, clerk, will leave as above. For freight or passage apply on board, or to LORD & MCPEAKE, 122 Gravier st. BRITTON & EPPLER, 132 Gravier st.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1882-8-20</td>
<td>The Daily Picayune</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>FOR RENT- Ground floor 132 Gravier street, next to Citizen's Bank. Store 10 Magazine street. Store 12 Magazine street. These two stores may be connected or made into one store, if required. Apply to P.N. STRONG, 77 Carondelet street.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1883-1-13</td>
<td>The Daily Picayune</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>FOR RENT- Store 10 Magazine street, formerly occupied by Page &amp; Moran. Also, lot on Bienville street, suitable for a stable or other purposes. Also, from 1st October, lower floor of No. 130 Gravier street. Apply to P.N. STRONG. 77 Carondelet street.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1883-1-18</td>
<td>The Daily Picayune</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>FOR RENT- Store 10 Magazine street, formerly occupied by Page &amp; Moran. Also, lot on Bienville street, suitable for a stable or other purposes. Also, from 1st October, lower floor of No. 130 Gravier street. Apply to P.N. STRONG. 77 Carondelet street.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1883-3-16</td>
<td>The Daily Picayune</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>A. Carriere &amp; Sons REMOVAL. NOTICE- THE OFFICE OF A. CARRIERE &amp; SONS has been removed to 132 Gravier street, between St. Charles and Camp streets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1883-3-18</td>
<td>The Daily Picayune</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>M. Castillo HAVANA CIGARS- DIRECT IMPORTATION.- M. Castillo, 132 Gravier street, sole agent for &quot;La Corona&quot; cigars, has received direct from Havana complete assortment of the finest brands of this celebrated factory. To this new stock is called the special attention of all smokers and connoisseurs to whom it is commended for the finest made. The brands comprise Regalias, Selectae, Balsamicas, Esquisitas, Speciales, Princesas de la Reina, Imperiales, and the Non Plus Ultra, Regalia-Escapcionales.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1883-6-22</td>
<td>The Daily Picayune</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>M. Castillo La Corona. M. Castillo, 132.. Gravier street..132 Begs to inform connoisseurs that he has received from Havana, via New York, 35,000 cigars of this celebrated brand, comprising the finest grades made by the Corona Factory; also including the famous ALFRED DE ROTHSCHILD EXTRA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1883-7-11</td>
<td>The Daily Picayune</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>FOR RENT- STORE NO 12 MAGAZINE street, now occupied by C. N. Edwards; also lower floor of No. 130 Gravier street. Apply to P.N. STRONG, 136 Gravier street, third floor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1883-8-3</td>
<td>The Daily Picayune</td>
<td>130/132</td>
<td>FOR RENT- STORE NO 12 MAGAZINE street, now occupied by C. N. Edwards; also lower floor of No. 130 Gravier street; also, the three upper floors of store 132 Gravier street.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Origin</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Details</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1884-4-20</td>
<td>The Daily Picayune</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>M. Castillo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>LA CORONA. Cigar Factory, Havana M. CASTILLO begs to inform his customers and the public in general that he has received from this world renowned Factory a complete assortment of its finest Cigars; also, a select lot of Cigarettes, made with best piccaduras, in exceedingly elegant and luxuriously illuminated packages. For public convenience they are put up in flat packages of 10 and 20 Cigarettes, and thus adapted to the pocket of the consumer. These superior Cigars and Cigarettes are for sale, wholesale at 132 Gravier street, and retail at 142 Canal and corner of Camp and Common streets. Try Corona Cigarettes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1884-8-7</td>
<td>The Daily Picayune</td>
<td>130/132</td>
<td>TO RENT FROM 1ST OCTOBER NEXT: Store No. 6 Tchoupitoulas street; Store No. 7b Gravier street. Office on 2d floor, also 3d floor 130 Gravier street. Also 2d and 3d floor store No. 132 Gravier street. P. N. STRONG. 136 Gravier street.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1884-8-19</td>
<td>The Daily Picayune</td>
<td>130/132</td>
<td>TO RENT FROM 1ST OCTOBER NEXT: Store No. 5 Tchoupitoulas street; Store No. 78 Gravier street. Office on 2d floor, also 3d floor 130 Gravier street. Also 2d and 3d floor store No. 132 Gravier street. P. N. STRONG. 136 Gravier street.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1884-10-3</td>
<td>The Daily Picayune</td>
<td>130/132</td>
<td>TO RENT FROM 1ST OCTOBER NEXT: Store No. 78 Gravier street; office on second floor, also third floor, 130 Gravier street; store 132 Gravier (the ground floor can be rented separately). P. N. STRONG, 136 Gravier street.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885-1-15</td>
<td>The Daily Picayune</td>
<td>130/132</td>
<td>TO RENT- STORE NO. 78 GRAVIER street: store No. 132 Gravier street (the ground floor and second story can be rented separately); office 130 Gravier street; lot Bienville street, 42x127 feet, between Marais and Villere streets, will be rented low for a term of years. P. N. STRONG, at Tulane Hall.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1887-8-29</td>
<td>The Daily Picayune</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>Bank of Commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>BANK OF COMMERCE Will Remove to its New Building, 130 Gravier street, About Sept. 1, 1887.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1887-9-6</td>
<td>The Daily Picayune</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>B.S. Twichell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>FOR SALE ON EASY TERMS. Four Elegant Queen Anne Cottages with all modern improvements, on Arabella st., near St. Charles avenue. Improving neighborhood, with two lines of street cars. Apply to B. S. TWICHELL, 130 Gravier.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Source</td>
<td>Page</td>
<td>Column</td>
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<tr>
<td>1887-12-14</td>
<td>The Daily Picayune</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>Bank of Commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1888-12-28</td>
<td>The Daily Picayune</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>Bank of Commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890-12-12</td>
<td>The Daily Picayune</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>W.H. Bofinger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891-3-8</td>
<td>The Daily Picayune</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>People's Homestead Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1892-2-19</td>
<td>The Daily Picayune</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>People's Homestead Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Source</td>
<td>Page</td>
<td>Company/Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1892-10-1</td>
<td>The Daily Picayune</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>American District Telegraph Messenger Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1892-12-21</td>
<td>The Daily Picayune</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>American District Telegraph Messenger Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1892-12-27</td>
<td>The Daily Picayune</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>American District Telegraph Messenger Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1893-9-1</td>
<td>The Daily Picayune</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>Bernard McCloskey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1894-3-23</td>
<td>The Daily Item</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>John T. Michel, Esq.</td>
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<td>1898-1-16</td>
<td>The Daily Picayune</td>
<td>614</td>
<td>IN sums to suit, on city real estate. R. J. Le Gardear, notary public, 614 Gravier st.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1899-3-28</td>
<td>The Daily Picayune</td>
<td>614</td>
<td>EDISON'S Latest Wonder! THE CONCERT PHONOGRAP, now on exhibition at the Phonographic Department of the National Automatic Fire Alarm Co.'s Phonographic Parlor, No. 614 Gravier Street, in charge of Mr. E. H. Kaufmann, the traveling representative of the Edison Phonograph. The Public Are Cordially Invited to Call. This machine is the PERFECTION OF TONE and CLEARNESS OF REPRODUCTION, and it is far superior to any imitation the market sold at double the price. The Edison Concert Phonograph is Sold for $125 Complete. This machine reproduces LOUD ENOUGH to be heard in the farthest corner of OUR LARGEST THEATERS. Free to all. Don't forget the address, No. 614 Gravier Street.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1899-8-27</td>
<td>The Daily Picayune</td>
<td>614</td>
<td>$2000.00 Edison Records PRIZE COMPETITION To stimulate an active and critical interest in Edison Phonograph Records, $2,000.00 is offered in prizes for the best descriptions of these Records. Particulars and entry blanks can be had FREE from the NATIONAL AUTOMATIC FIRE ALARM COMPANY OF LA. Phonograph Department, Edison Building, 614 Gravier Street.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901-08-11</td>
<td>The Times-Picayune</td>
<td>614</td>
<td>We are now direct and exclusive Factory Agents for Regina Music Boxes and quote factory prices. Write or call for booklet, National Automatic Fire Alarm Co., of LA.,</td>
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<td>Date</td>
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<td>Company of Louisiana</td>
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<td>1902-01-04</td>
<td>The Times-Picayune</td>
<td>614</td>
<td>National Automatic Fire Alarm Company of Louisiana</td>
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<td>1903-11-24</td>
<td>The New Orleans Item</td>
<td>614</td>
<td>National Automatic Fire Alarm Company of Louisiana</td>
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<td>1904-12-18</td>
<td>The New Orleans Item</td>
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<td>National Automatic Fire Alarm Company of Louisiana</td>
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<td>1905-12-21</td>
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<td>1907-09-22</td>
<td>The New Orleans Item</td>
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<td>National Automatic Fire Alarm Company of Louisiana</td>
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<td>1907-09-25</td>
<td>The New Orleans Item</td>
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<td>National Automatic Fire Alarm Company of Louisiana</td>
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<tr>
<td>1913-06-22</td>
<td>The Daily Picayune</td>
<td>614</td>
<td>COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES FOR RENT BY ROBERT G. GUERARD 614 GRAVIER. Four-story building; sprinkler system throughout. ROBERT G. GUERARD, 220 ST. CHARLES, COR. GRAVIER. PHONE M. 750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914-04-18</td>
<td>The Times-Picayune</td>
<td>614</td>
<td>Sugar Planters, Attention FLAT RAILROAD CARS 36-IN. GAUGE, 24-IN. WHEELS. STATED PARTICULARS QUICK BY WIRE OR PHONE. H. KOKOSKY 614 Gravier Street Main 780</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918-03-31</td>
<td>The New Orleans Item</td>
<td>614</td>
<td>SEXTANT SOLD DEALER FOR $50 QUICKLY BRINGS $250 Mexican Sea Captain Discovers Instrument in Gravier Street Window Soon After It Had Been Disposed of For a Pittance- Reduction in Manufacture Has Brought Great Scarcity Here and in England. &quot;Will you give me $50 for this?&quot; A Mexican walked into the scientific instrument shop of Kokosky and Co. at 614 Gravier, Saturday, and laid a bundle on the counter. Unwrapped, &quot;this&quot; proved to be a nautical sextant in good condition. Without comment, H. Kokosky, owner, paid over the $50 and took this receipt. He examined the sextant, polished it up a bit, and placed it in his window. Thirty minutes passed. Entered a captain of a merchant steamer plying between Mexico and New Orleans. &quot;I just saw that sextant in your window,&quot; said he. &quot;Let me look at it.&quot; He looked at it a minute. &quot;How much?&quot; said he. &quot;Two hundred and fifty dollars,&quot; said Mr. Kokosky. &quot;Glad to get it.&quot; said the Mexican sea captain. And with $250 in gold piled on the counter, he departed, clutching his treasure. No messenger boy delivered that purchase.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918-11-03</td>
<td>The Times-Picayune</td>
<td>614</td>
<td>20 ROD AND CHAIN MEN WITH PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE. SALARY FROM $90.00 UP. 10 INSTRUMENT MEN WITH PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE. SALARY FROM $135.00 UP. FOR WORK IN NEW ORLEANS. APPLY, KOKOSKY &amp; CO., 614 Gravier St.</td>
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<td>Date</td>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Company</td>
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<td>1920-01-26</td>
<td>The New Orleans Item</td>
<td>614</td>
<td>Kokosky &amp; Co.</td>
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<td>1920-03-26</td>
<td>The Times-Picayune</td>
<td>614</td>
<td>Kokosky &amp; Co.</td>
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<td>1920-04-05</td>
<td>New Orleans States</td>
<td>614</td>
<td>Kokosky &amp; Co.</td>
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<td>1922-08-04</td>
<td>New Orleans States</td>
<td>614</td>
<td>Kokosky &amp; Co.</td>
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<td>1923-03-18</td>
<td>The Times-Picayune</td>
<td>614</td>
<td>Kokosky and bond was set at $1000 and $500 respectively for each case. BY C. A. TESSIER &amp; SON JUDICIAL ADVERTISEMENT In the Matter of Herman Kokosky, Bankrupt No 2638 in Bankruptcy All the Stock in Trade, Consisting of Architect's, Engineer's, Etc., Supplies and Equipment, Fixtures, Furniture and Other Moveable Property of the Above Named Herman Kokosky On the Premises, 614 Gravier St., Between Camp and St. Charles Sts., at Auction, Wednesday, March 28, 1923, at 10:30 A. M. BY C. A. TESSIER &amp; SON Auctioneers Office 134 Carondelet Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924-10-28</td>
<td>The Times-Picayune</td>
<td>614/618</td>
<td>Several leases of Tulane Educational Fund properties were recorded yesterday. The building at 618 Gravier street was rented for nine years to J. P. Stern with $27,000 the consideration. The same tenant obtained possession of 614 Gravier street for five years, with $12,000 involved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926-06-20</td>
<td>The Times-Picayune</td>
<td>614</td>
<td>Ryan's Dad MOTHER, You Tell Him! Now that the kiddies have supplied you with Ties and the like you should complete your good will outfit by getting a WASHCRAFT NO SHRINKEE LINEN SUIT SALE PRICE $12 Values Up to $22 RYAN'S &quot;just Around the Corner&quot; 614 GRAVIER STREET</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927-09-29</td>
<td>The Times-Picayune</td>
<td>614</td>
<td>Norman Realty Co. REDUCED rent, 4929 S. Miro. Modern, up-to-date apartment. Consisting of living room, dining room, three bedrooms, tile bath and shower. $60 per month. Apply Norman Realty Co. 614 Gravier Street, Main 3418.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929-01-04</td>
<td>The New Orleans Item</td>
<td>614</td>
<td>Liberty Homestead NOTICE! Due to the Fire Early Friday Morning We Are Now Temporarily LOCATED AT 614 GRAVIER ST. (Next Door to Our Old Location) No Interruption in Business LIBERTY HOMESTEAD LOUIS RABOuin. President CURTIS F. SCOTT. Sec.-Treas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929-01-06</td>
<td>The Item-Tribune</td>
<td>614</td>
<td>Liberty Homestead &quot;A BEACON LIGHT TO AID IN BUILDING A HOME&quot; LIBERTY HOMESTEAD INCORPORATED NOVEMBER 19, 1885 NO INTERRUPTION IN BUSINESS Due to water damages caused during the fire early Friday We Are Temporarily Located at 614 GRAVIER STREET (Next door to our regular office)</td>
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<td>Date</td>
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<tr>
<td>1929-01-13</td>
<td>The Times-Picayune</td>
<td>614</td>
<td>Yes--- you can own your own home! LIBERTY HOMESTEAD 614 Gravier St. RAm 2767</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929-02-24</td>
<td>The Times-Picayune</td>
<td>614</td>
<td>IN BUSINESS 43 YEARS LIBERTY HOMESTEAD 614 Gravier St. RAm 2767 LOUIS E. RABOUI, Pres. CURTIS F. SCOTT, Sec. Treas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935-07-24</td>
<td>The New Orleans Item</td>
<td>614</td>
<td>'Smith The Sign Man' HOMER W. SMITH, &quot;Smith the Sign Man,&quot; has opened temporary offices at 614 Gravier street, following the fire which interrupted business activities in the building at Camp and Gravier streets yesterday. Mr. Smith is prepared to take care of all customers at his present location, the telephone number of which is Raymond 2938.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1935-07-31</td>
<td>The New Orleans Item</td>
<td>614</td>
<td>Smith The Sign Man Temporary Office, 614 Gravier St. RAm 2938</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937-11-15</td>
<td>The New Orleans Item</td>
<td>614</td>
<td>THE COP AND THE KITTY- A Black kitten, which stood not upon the order of its going, but simply went places right now, is at liberty today because Patrolman Nicholas Weber took the trouble to rescue it from slow starvation in the locked and empty building at 614 Gravier street. All morning passers-by had heard unhappy kitten noises in the structure. Finally Patrolman Weber found a key to the place, unlocked it, and coaxed the kitten into freedom.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1937-11-21</td>
<td>The Sunday Item-Tribune</td>
<td>614</td>
<td>Cop and cats, rather one cop and one kitten, got their names in the paper last week. The kitten, black and malnourished, was living a hungry, lonesome life in a vacant office at 614 Gravier street until Misses Celia Lanoux and Almeda Otto, of the Guaranty Savings and Homestead association next door, fed it meat through a barred rear window. Shoeshine colored boy Ivy Williams says the kitten had been imprisoned for a week- that he had fed it milk. But Traffic Patrolman Nicholas Weber unlocked the door and let it out.</td>
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</table>
| 1939-09-26 | The Times-Picayune      | 614           | 4-STORY BUILDING LEASED BY OFFICE EQUIPMENT FIRM Extensive Remodeling Will Be Started on Gravier Structure Lease of the four-story building at 614 Gravier street for five years by the Office Equipment Bureau,
Inc., was reported Monday by Latter & Blum, In., represented by M. E. Polson. The building, owned by the Tulane Educational Fund, will be extensively improved and modernized, with both the owners and the lessee participating in the expense. A modern store front with black glass base and a tiled entrance will be installed and the exterior modernized. The contract for the work has been let to R. H. Sharp & Company for completion by November 1. The quarters will give the office equipment concern more than triple its present space, according to A. W. Herrmann, president.

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Source</th>
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<th>Office of Equipment Bureau, Inc.</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1939-09-26</td>
<td>The New Orleans Item</td>
<td>614</td>
<td></td>
<td>List More Than 40 Transfers Real Estate Volume Makes Good Showing Latter &amp; Blum, Inc., leased the four-story building at 614 Gravier for five years to the Office of Equipment Bureau, Inc., the Realtors were represented by M. E. Polson. A. W. Herrmann, president of the equipment company states that they will completely modernize the plant and thereby secure more than triple their present space. R. H. Sharp &amp; Company have contracted for the improvement work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939-09-26</td>
<td>New Orleans States</td>
<td>614</td>
<td></td>
<td>GRAVIER BUILDING TAKEN ON LEASE Office Equipment Bureau Going to Larger Quarters; Other Deals The Office Equipment Bureau, Inc., has taken a five-year lease on the four-story building at 614 Gravier street. Latter &amp; Blum, Inc., reports that the transaction was handled through its representative, M. E. Polson. The building is owned by the Tulane Educational Fund. It will be extensively modernized and improved before the Office Equipment Bureau moves from its present location at 620 Commercial Place. A. W. Herrmann, president of the Office Equipment Bureau, said the new quarters will give the concern more than triple its present space. The contract for renovation of the building has been given to R. H. Sharp &amp; Company for completion November 1.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1939-11-28 | The Times-Picayune       | 614      |                                  | Congratulations to THE OFFICE EQUIPMENT BUREAU, Inc. 614 GRAVIER ST. On the opening today of their new and larger quarters, made necessary by their rapid growth. We take pride in the part we have played in serving New Orleans business through them. [photo] New Quarters at 614 Gravier St. TELEPHONE RAYMOND 1662 [photo] The public is invited to visit the new home of the Office Equipment Bureau, Inc., occupying the entire 4 floors of
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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>1948-03-22</td>
<td>New Orleans States</td>
<td>Office Equipment Bureau, Inc.</td>
<td>City Hall. March 12, 1948. BY COMMISSIONER McCLOSKEY AT THE REQUEST OF COMMISSIONER OTT: BE IT MOVED BY THE COMMISSION COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW ORLEANS That the Commissioner of Public Finance be and he is hereby authorized and directed to pay to OFFICE EQUIPMENT BUREAU. 614 Gravier Street, the sum of $507.00, covering the emergency purchase of six (6) 5-Drawer Steel Files- Letter Size- With Lock- No. 1050 L- Gray Finish, at a cost of $84.50 each, for use by the Real Estate Ownership Survey Department, chargeable to Code No. 99-5-79. The above motion was read in full, and the roll was called on the adoption of same and resulted as follows: Yeas: Hotard, McCloskey, Morrison- 3. Nays: 0. Absent: Earhart, Ott- 2. And the motion was adopted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948-05-15</td>
<td>The Times-Picayune</td>
<td>Office Equipment Bureau, Inc.</td>
<td>VISIBLE RECORDS for STOCK SALES PRODUCTION LEDGER CREDIT INVENTORY ALL ACTIVE BUSINESS RECORDS Victor Visible Records provide more effective executive control… faster, more accurate posting… quicker reference. Phone or write for demonstration. OFFICE EQUIPMENT BUREAU 614 Gravier St. RA 7269 New Orleans 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952-05-20</td>
<td>The Times-Picayune</td>
<td>Office Equipment Bureau, Inc.</td>
<td>SALE office furniture New Discontinued Items and Slightly Damaged at exceptional discounts as high as 50% OFFICE EQUIPMENT BUREAU (A. W. HERRMANN) 614 Gravier Street RA 7269 New Orleans 12, La.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957-07-18</td>
<td>New Orleans States</td>
<td>Office Equipment, Inc.</td>
<td>Removal Sale SAVE UP TO 50% OFFICE FURNITURE DESKS-CHAIRS (Wood and Steel) FILES (We will move about September 1st to our air-conditioned showrooms at 523 Gravier St.) OFFICE EQUIPMENT, INC. 614 GRAVIER ST. New Orleans 12 RA 7269</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Averill Chemical Paint Co. Paint Sample Card, Distributed by Seeley & Stevens, New York, C.1890.


Campanella, Richard, “Fiery catalysts; Devastating fires can spark shrewd revitalization” in Preservation in Print (Preservation Resource Center, New Orleans, June 2019).


Cenas, Hilary Breton. Notarial Records, Record of Sale, June 15, 1842, William C. Micon, assignee of estate of John Richardson to Paul Tulane, Lots 2 & 3., Notarial Archives of the City of New Orleans.

Chemistry of Paints, Harrison Brothers & Co., Philadelphia, 1890.


Declaration of Title Change by Subdivision attached to 2013 Act of Sale, Purchase of 614 Gravier Street by Choupique Holdings LLC, Notarial Archives of the City of New Orleans.


Edwards’ Annual Directory to the Inhabitants, Institutions, Incorporated Companies, Manufacturing Establishments, Business, Business Firms, etc., etc. in the City of New Orleans and Suburbs for 1870., (Southern Publishing Co., St. Louis Missouri, 1870).


Gardner’s New Orleans Directory for 1861, (Charles Gardner, New Orleans Louisiana, 1861)


*Night In New Orleans*, Published By J. Scordill, New Orleans, Copyright 1911, Rice-Mitchell Pub. Co., Image Courtesy Loyola University New Orleans Special Collections And Archives.


*Nuggets of Wisdom from an Old House Painter* (National Lead Company, New York, 1899).


Ogden, Francis B., “City Of New Orleans” Map, January 8, 1829, Courtesy The Historic New Orleans Collection.


The Painter, Gilder, And Varnisher’s Companion: Containing Rules And Regulations In Everything Relating To The Arts Of Painting, Gilding, Varnishing, Glass-Staining, Graining, Marbling, Sign-Writing, Gilding On Glass, And Coach Painting And Varnishing; Tests For The Detection Of Adulterations In Oils, Colors, Etc. And A Statement Of The Diseases To Which Painters Are Peculiarly Liable, With The Simplest And Best Remedies, (Henry Carey Baird Industrial Publisher, Philadelphia PA, 1875).


Soards’ New Orleans City Directory, For 1890. (L. Soards, New Orleans, 1890).


“Street Name & Number Changes.” New Orleans Public Library Louisiana Division/City Archives, website, http://nutrias.org/~nopl/house2/nochanges.htm

The Story of Brick (American Face Brick Association, Chicago, 1922).


BIOGRAPHY

Anne-Marie Zarrelli received her undergraduate degree from The University of Chicago, College of Anthropology, concentrating in archaeology.

Her father was a cement mason and Anne-Marie spent her childhood happily arm-deep mixing concrete and mortar.

He really would have loved the subject of this paper.

Photo Credit Charles P. Zarrelli, 1982