

GENDRON (LORRAINE P.) PAPERS
(Mss. #5004)
Inventory

Compiled by
Leslie Bourgeois

Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections
Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library
Louisiana State University Libraries
Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University

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SUMMARY

Size	1 linear foot
Geographic Locations	Louisiana
Inclusive Dates	1970-2008
Bulk Dates	1980-2008
Languages	English
Summary	The Lorraine P. Gendron Papers contain business papers, printed items and photographs related to the artwork of a Louisiana folk artist and her meetings with political figures.
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Related Collections	Gendron (Charles E.) Papers, Mss. 988, 1199
Citation	Lorraine P. Gendron Papers, Mss. #5004, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, La.
Stack Location(s)	U:312

BIOGRAPHICAL/HISTORICAL NOTE

Lorraine Petty, a Los Angeles, California, native born in 1937, moved to Des Allemands, Louisiana, at age eleven. After marrying Louis Gendron, the couple moved to Hahnville, Louisiana, and had three children. As a folk artist, or self-taught artist, Gendron began selling her work in the 1980s in order to support her family. She first started making sculptures with mud taken from the banks of the Mississippi River near her home and later expanded into other mediums, including oils, watercolors, and painted woodcuts. Her work deals principally with Louisiana themes and individuals. She has participated in fairs, festivals, exhibits and other events throughout the southeastern United States, including the 1984 World's Fair in New Orleans. In addition, her work has represented Louisiana at the White House on two occasions: a painted wooden Easter egg for the American Artists' Egg Exhibit held in conjunction with the White House Easter Egg Roll (1985) and an ornament for the White House Christmas Tree (2001). She also helped create two exhibits for the Louisiana Purchase Bicentennial: "Governor Michael Hahn: Steady Patriot" and the "1811 Destrehan Slave Revolt." Gendron's work, for which she has won numerous awards, is held in both private and museum collections. At this writing, Gendron resides in Hahnville. For additional information on and examples of her work, see her website, <http://lorraine-gendron.com/News.aspx>.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Lorraine P. Gendron Papers contain business papers, printed items and photographs related to Gendron's work as a folk artist. The business papers consist of correspondence and orders pertaining to showcasing Gendron's work at a number of museums and other exhibitors. The printed items include programs, brochures and clippings related to exhibitions of Gendron's work and her meetings with political figures. In addition, two publications Gendron illustrated with her friend Nancy Tregre Wilson are also included. Lastly, the photographs feature pieces of Gendron's work, the 2004 Washington Mardi Gras Ball, for which she provided the decorations, and Gendron's meetings with political figures.

LIST OF SERIES AND SUBSERIES

- I. Business Papers, 1970-2008, undated**
- II. Printed Items, 1980-2008, undated**
 - Subseries 1: General, 1980-2006, undated**
 - Subseries 2: Publications, 2003-2004, undated**
 - Subseries 3: Clippings, 1985-2008, undated**
- III. Photographs, 1980-2008, undated**

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS**Series I: Business Papers, 1970-2008, undated**

This series consists of correspondence and orders related to the artwork of Lorraine P. Gendron. The correspondence contains both acceptance and rejection letters for showing Gendron's work from museums, galleries and other exhibitors throughout the southeastern United States (1982-2007). Gendron also received a letter of invitation from the White House to produce a painted egg for the American Artists' Egg Exhibit held in conjunction with the White House Easter Egg Roll (1985). A copy of the thank you letter for Gendron's participation from First Lady Nancy Reagan is included (1985). Gendron also received thank you letters from elected officials for sending them pieces of her work: Governor John J. McKeithen (Sept. 28, 1970), New Orleans Mayor Ernest "Dutch" Morial (Jan. 21, 1983), and Lieutenant Governor Mitch Landrieu (Sept. 7, 2004). Two letters from Edwin Edwards are also included: a letter of recommendation (July 15, 1980) and a thank you letter for sending him a book (March 22, 1982). The order receipts indicate the pieces either bought by or donated to the St. Charles Historical Society (2003), the Historic New Orleans Collection (2007-2008) and the Louisiana State Museum (2007).

Arranged chronologically.

Series II: Printed Items and Graphic Materials, 1980-2008, undated**Subseries 1: General, 1980-2006, undated**

This subseries consists of printed items related to the artwork of Lorraine P. Gendron. The programs, brochures, and catalogs (1982-2007) relate to exhibitions, festivals and other events featuring Gendron's work, including Easter at the White House (1985) and Washington Mardi Gras (2004). Other items of interest include research materials on the "Governor Michael Hahn: Steady Patriot" and "1811 Destrehan Slave Revolt" exhibits produced by Gendron, as well as the St. Charles Heritage Trace brochure featuring both exhibits (2003). Other available materials include "About the Artist" biographical information sheets on Gendron used at events (undated), a pamphlet from Gendron's gallery (undated), and postcards featuring her work (undated).

Arranged chronologically.

Subseries 2: Publications, 2003-2004

This subseries consists of two publications written by Nancy Tregre Wilson and illustrated by Lorraine P. Gendron. Both a draft and completed copy of *The Cajun Nativity* (2003) contain an illustrated cover, story, recipes and glossary, with the complete version signed by Wilson. *Super King Olivia and the Mardi Gras Ball* depicts the 2004

Washington Mardi Gras Ball and its king, William A. Oliver, in the form of a fairy tale. It includes both illustrations and pictures of the actual event with captions and copies of signatures from attendees. It is also signed by both Wilson and Gendron.

Arranged chronologically.

Subseries 3: Clippings, 1985-2008, undated

This subseries consists of newspaper and magazine clippings related to the life and work of Lorraine P. Gendron. Profiles of Gendron include information on the origins of her art career, the style of her work, and her success (Apr. 4, 1985; Summer 1994, Mar. 28, 1996). Another article on her personal life focuses on her marriage to Louis Gendron (Jan./Feb. 2004). Several articles feature Gendron's exhibits on "Governor Michael Hahn: Steady Patriot" (2002-2004) and the "1811 Destrehan Slave Revolt" (2003-2005). Other articles focus on Gendron meeting political figures because of her work, including First Lady Laura Bush at the White House (Jan. 12, 2002), New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin (June 4, 2003), and Louisiana First Lady Supriya Jindal (Aug. 17, 2008). In addition, articles discussing Gendron's egg painted for the White House Easter Egg Roll (Mar. 17, 1985) and other career honors are also available (1998-2002, undated).

Arranged chronologically.

Series III: Photographs, 1980-2008, undated

This series contains photographs of Gendron's work, the 2004 Washington Mardi Gras Ball, and meetings of Gendron with political figures because of her work. Examples of Gendron's work depicting Louisiana scenes and themes include *New Orleans Nuttie Jass Band* (1982), *The Saints Go Marching In* White House Easter Egg (1985), *Angels Eating Watermelon* (2000), the murals from Gendron's home (ca. Jan. 2008), and the exhibits on Michael Hahn (2003) and the 1811 Destrehan Slave Revolt (2005-2008). Other works depict Louisiana figures: the paper dolls of Governor Edwin Edwards (1980) and New Orleans Mayor Ernest "Dutch" Morial (1983) and a painting of the Neville Brothers (ca. Jan. 2008). Photographs from Washington Mardi Gras include Gendron's decorations, party scenes, gifts, the King, Queen, debutantes and notable attendees, including Governor Kathleen Babineaux Blanco, Senator John Breaux, Representatives Billy Tauzin, David Vitter, Bobby Jindal, and Lindy Boggs (2004). Gendron also took photographs with Senator Mary Landrieu, Lieutenant Governor Mitch Landrieu, and New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin. (2004). Other photographs of interest include Gendron and Nancy T. Wilson meeting with First Lady Laura Bush at the White House (Dec. 2001) and Gendron meeting Louisiana First Lady Supriya Jindal at the Governor's Mansion along with her Governor Bobby Jindal doll and other works (2008).

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