



FEMA



Bound By Love and Good Children

History and Archeology at Colton Middle School

by R. Christopher Goodwin & Associates, Inc.

2017



Colton School, seriously damaged by Hurricane Katrina and the subsequent flooding, is located in the Marigny, the first suburb downriver from the city of New Orleans, on a block that was originally developed in the late 1840s. The residences and a school that were originally constructed on the block were destroyed by a fire in 1873. Several homes and two schools were rebuilt on the block following the fire, and written records indicate that the block continued to change through time until it was purchased in 1929 for the construction of the Colton School.

Each phase of development left clues about people who went to school and lived on the block preserved beneath the soil. The rebuilding of the Colton School provided a rare opportunity to explore the material culture from the past and bring the written records to life showing what it may have been like to live or work over 150 years ago. This brochure and the educational display that accompanies it share what was found, and gives future generations of children an opportunity to learn about their history, culture, and the legacy of their past that can sometimes be just beneath their feet.

This brochure details FEMA's efforts at not only rebuilding a school facility for New Orleans' Marigny neighborhood, but also in preserving the history and culture of the area for the education and enlightenment of future generations. As of this writing, the work at Colton School is one of the largest archaeological excavations ever conducted in the Marigny neighborhood of New Orleans, and has produced important information on the history and development of the area.



Cover image: Excerpt from a plan by E. A. d'Hemecourt of 17 properties within Square 371 put up for public auction in 1848, depicting a house that formerly stood on the corner of Good Children Avenue (now St. Claude Avenue) and Mandeville Street. Image courtesy of the Clerk of Civil District Court, Notarial Archives Division, New Orleans.



History of the Marigny Neighborhood

New Orleans, or Nouvelle Orléans in French, was founded by colonists from France in 1718. The city was named in honor of Philippe d'Orléans, the great-uncle of King Louis XV of France. The governor of Louisiana at that time was Jean-Baptiste Le Moyne, Sieur de Bienville, who built the city as the new capital of the colony. The original city was much smaller than modern New Orleans, consisting of what we call the French Quarter today.

In the early days of the city, the king reserved land just north of the French Quarter as a common area to be used by all city residents. Later, that land was converted into a sugar plantation owned by Claude Joseph Villars Dubreuil. Dubreuil was in charge of constructing buildings for the French crown, and on part of his land he had a sawmill and a brickyard, which supplied much of the lumber and bricks used to build New Orleans.

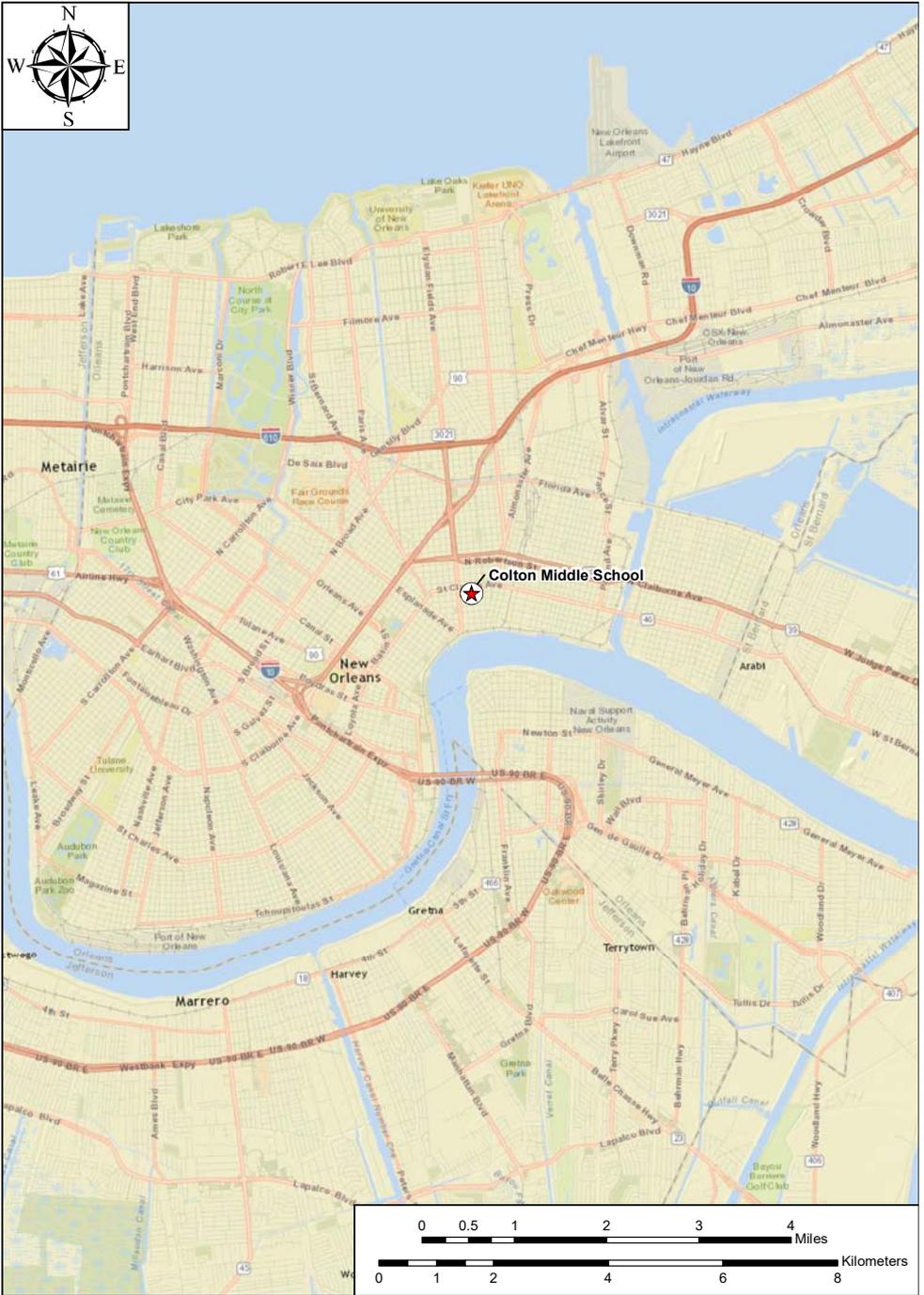
When Dubreuil died in 1757, his plantation was sold to Jacques Delachaise. At the time, France was at war with England in what is known today as the French and Indian War (1754-1763). Delachaise allowed the city to build fortifications on part of his property to help protect New Orleans from possible attack. Those fortifications included a small fort named Fort St. Charles, which was located where the Old U.S. Mint building on Esplanade Avenue



Portrait of Jean-Baptiste Le Moyne, Sieur de Bienville. Image courtesy of the Louisiana State Museum.

now stands. New Orleans was not attacked, and before the war ended France secretly ceded their Louisiana colony to their ally, Spain, to keep the territory from falling to the English.

Although some French citizens of Louisiana did not want to live under Spanish rule, Louisiana continued to attract French settlers, including refugees from Acadia in Canada who later became the Cajuns of south Louisiana. Delachaise died in 1768, and over the next few decades, the former Dubreuil plantation changed ownership several times among various French families. Part of the plantation continued to be used for



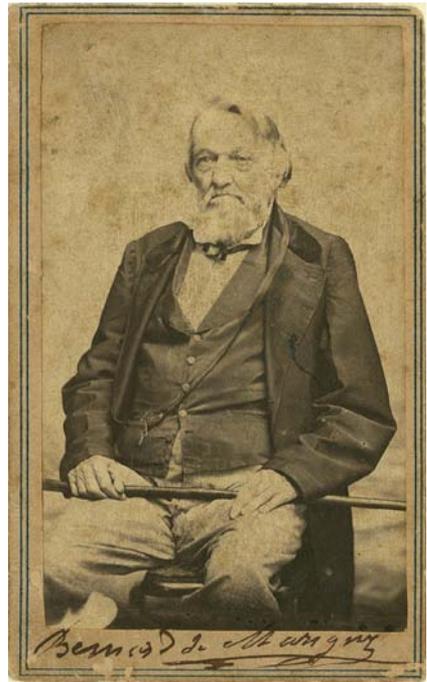
Map of New Orleans depicting the location of Colton Middle School.

fortifications, and in 1793, the Spanish finished work on a larger fort where Fort St. Charles had stood, which they renamed Fort San Carlos.

In 1798, Pierre Philippe Enguerrand de Marigny de Mandeville acquired the former Dubreuil Plantation by trading another plantation he had owned further downriver. Pierre Philippe de Marigny was one of the wealthiest men in New Orleans. When he died in 1800, he left his large estate to his teenage son, Jean-Bernard Xavier de Mandeville de Marigny. Bernard inherited a plantation that extended from the edge of the French Quarter to present day Franklin Avenue, and that encompassed almost two square miles of land. He also owned other large properties, including Fontainebleau Plantation near what is now the city of Mandeville, which was named after Bernard.

Given Bernard's young age at his father's death, his uncle sent him to London to learn the business skills needed to manage such a large estate. However, despite his education, Bernard reportedly owed his creditors nearly \$1,000,000 by the time he was twenty years old, from a combination of bad business deals and gambling debts.

In 1803, France briefly reclaimed Louisiana from Spain, and then sold the entire territory to the United States in what is called the Louisiana Purchase. Large numbers of Americans began to move to New Orleans hoping to make money from the flow of goods moving in and out of the port city. As a result, the population quickly outgrew the limits of the French Quarter.



Photograph of an elderly Bernard de Marigny, ca. 1866. Image courtesy of the Historic New Orleans Collection, Gift of Mr. G. William Nott, 1974.64.1.

Also in 1803, a revolution in Saint-Domingue (now called Haiti) on the Caribbean island of Hispaniola forced many former French colonists to relocate, and many of them migrated to New Orleans. The Saint-Domingue refugees included many gens de couleur libres or “free persons of color,” a term then used for people of African heritage who were not slaves. More than 10,000 people from Saint-Domingue arrived in New Orleans between May 1809 and the early months of 1810. To show how quickly the population of New Orleans grew during the first half of the nineteenth century, in 1810 a little over 17,000 people lived in the city, but by 1860 that number had grown to 168,675.

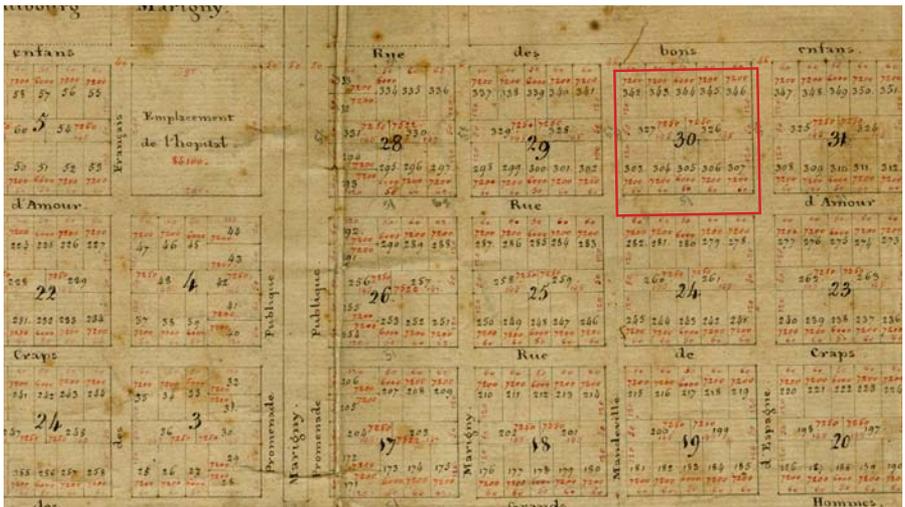


Colored print of refugees from Saint-Dominique. Image courtesy of the Louisiana State Museum.

Bernard saw the sudden population boom as an opportunity to pay off his debts. He began to divide his New Orleans plantation into many smaller lots for sale to new residents who wanted to build houses. The new neighborhood would become known as the Faubourg Marigny (faubourg is a French word meaning “suburb” or “neighborhood”). At a cost of \$300 to \$400 for a house lot, many of the new residents found property in the Faubourg Marigny easy to afford.

In addition to refugees from Saint-Domingue, large numbers of Germans settled in the Faubourg Marigny, earning the area the nicknames “Little Saxony” and “Saxonhaus.” Irish immigrants also poured into New Orleans during the mid-nineteenth century, and the city became

home to approximately 75,000 Irish settlers between 1849 and 1853. Like the earlier waves of immigrants, many chose to live in the Faubourg Marigny because of cheap housing and proximity to jobs on the riverfront.



Excerpt from the map titled ‘Plan de l’ancien Faubourg Marigny,’ 1811. Square 30 on the map, highlighted in red, represents the future location of Colton School. Image courtesy of the Historic New Orleans Collection, Gift of Mr. Jim Mills, 1985.39.



Map of the Louisiana Purchase, 1803. Image courtesy of the Louisiana State Museum.

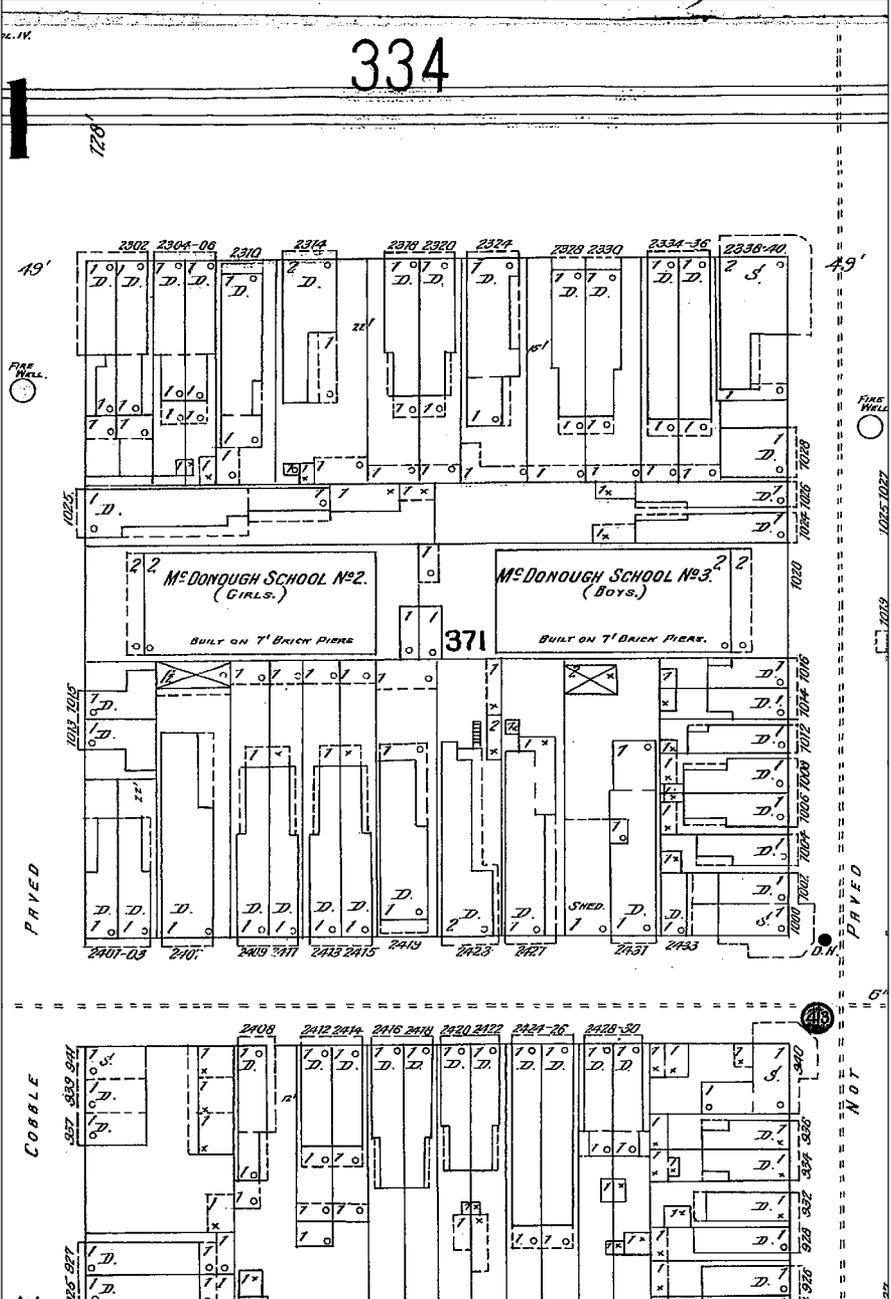


Ruins of the sugar house at Fontainebleau Plantation. Photo by Alex Demyan. Image courtesy of Louisiana State Parks.

Bernard de Marigny's Fontainebleau Plantation

In addition to his large plantation in New Orleans, Bernard de Marigny also owned Fontainebleau Plantation on the north shore of Lake Pontchartrain, near the city of Mandeville. In the 1930s, much of the land that formerly belonged to that plantation became Fontainebleau State Park, which is open to the public. Within the park are the ruins of a sugar house that Marigny had built in 1829, where juices extracted from sugar cane could be refined into sugar. Also on the grounds are the remains of several brick kilns, where Marigny manufactured bricks which he sold for building projects in New Orleans. Archaeologists working in Fontainebleau in 2011 found remains of other buildings now hidden beneath the ground, including part of what may have been Marigny's residence on the plantation.

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Development of Square 371

Since the nineteenth century, the New Orleans assessor's office has given each block in the city a number. The Charles J. Colton School is within Square 371, a square originally bound by Love Street (now Rampart Street) to the south, Mandeville Street to the west, Good Children Avenue (now St. Claude Avenue) to the north, and Spain Street to the east. That square formed part of the lakeside (northern) border of the Faubourg Marigny. Development of the neighborhood began in the blocks closest to the Mississippi River and spread towards Good Children Avenue, making Square 371 one of the last blocks in the neighborhood to have been developed and populated.

In the 1840s the New Orleans and Gulf Railroad was built on the neutral ground of Good Children Avenue, and when it was completed it brought both passenger service and commerce to the back part of the Faubourg Marigny. In 1848, Bernard de Marigny held an auction to sell 17 house lots on Square 371, including all of the parcels along Good Children Avenue. One of the lots already had a house built on it; that house was depicted on the original surveyors plan prepared for the auction, as shown in the figure to the right. All but three of the 17 lots sold in 1848, and those remaining three lots were sold in 1851.



The 1848 public auction was the largest single sale of lots in Square 371. Image courtesy of the Clerk of Civil District Court, Notarial Archives Division, New Orleans.

On the left: Sanborn Fire Insurance Company map of Square 371 from 1896, depicting McDonogh Schools No. 2 and 3, as well as the various residences that occupied the block.





De Soto School (1858–1873)

In the summer of 1857, the City of New Orleans purchased two bordering lots facing Mandeville Street in Square 371 to build a new school. On December 23, 1858, city representatives hired Nicholas Purer to build a “two-storied framed School House, elevated on brick piers, on a lot of ground situated on Mandeville Street in the Square bounded by Spain, Mandeville, Love, and Good Children Streets, in the Third District of this City.” The De Soto School opened as a lower (elementary) school for girls, and in 1864, the New Orleans City Council voted to use part of the schoolhouse to teach high school-age girls. The school was

described in 1867 as “one of the most pleasant and commodious school-houses in the city.” By that same year, the total student population numbered between 700 and 800 girls, with a branch school on a neighboring square teaching approximately 250 girls. Those students ranged from age 6 to 16 years of age. During the Civil War, after Union troops took over New Orleans in 1862, Union General Benjamin Butler mandated that all school children be taught in English, much to the displeasure of French-language speakers throughout the city and in particular within the Faubourg Marigny.

On left page: Archaeologists working at Colton found a number of items that may have belonged to school-aged children during the 1800s. Those included pencils carved from pieces of slate or graphite, which were natural rocks and minerals that could be used to mark paper. Archaeologists also found several inkwells, which once held ink for use with dip pens. A number of toys also were recovered, including marbles, parts of porcelain dolls, toy wagon wheels, and pieces from children’s tea sets. One particularly interesting artifact was a fragment of a small plate that was marked around the rim with the letters of the alphabet.

MONSTER CONFLAGRATION.

Six Solid Blocks Consumed.

Two Hundred Houses Burned.

**Over Half a Million Dollars of
Property Destroyed.**

**Four Hundred Persons Home-
less.**

**Desperate Work of the Fire
Department.**



The Fire of 1873

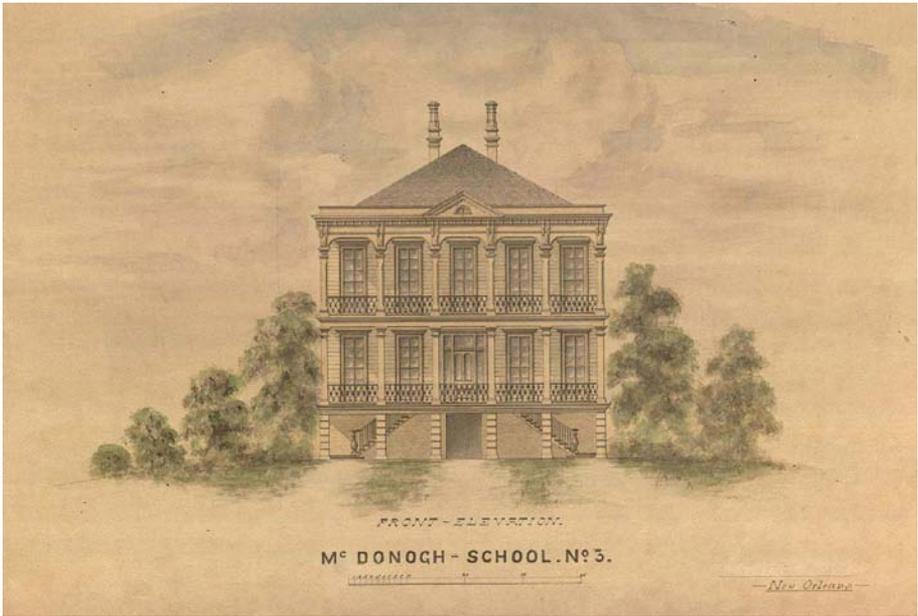
On February 27, 1873, a fire broke out in a residence facing St. Claude Avenue on Square 371. The fire quickly consumed the house and spread to the nearby buildings. Within 15 minutes, the DeSoto School was ablaze, and teachers evacuated the students. Firemen rushed to fight the blaze but lacked the necessary water reserves to extinguish the inferno. Fire fighters had no choice but to tear down the burning buildings in a desperate attempt to keep the fire contained. Finally, a river tugboat forced water into the neighborhood gutters to help combat the flames. Although this helped control the blaze, the fire continued to rage for six hours in the Faubourg Marigny, destroying six full city blocks of buildings and structures.

The Marigny fire had a major impact on the people of Square 371. In addition to destroying the De Soto School and every other building on the block, the fire left behind about 400 homeless residents and caused up to \$500,000 worth of damage (over \$9,500,000 in today's money). Despite this devastation, within seven years most landowners had rebuilt their homes. Many of the rebuilt houses in the neighborhood became rental properties occupied by middle-class families, frequently of German or Irish descent.

Fires in New Orleans

Over the years, New Orleans has fallen victim to a number of disastrous fires. Fires in 1788 and 1794 destroyed many of the original French and Spanish buildings of the city, leaving only a few surviving structures from the earlier years of the colony. After the fire of 1794, city leaders passed regulations aimed to reduce the danger of fires spreading from building to building, including a requirement that the roofs of building should be made of non-flammable materials such as slate. During the late 1800s, the city installed water lines that not only provided drinking water for residents, but also supplied fire hydrants. The fire of 1873, which destroyed six city blocks in the Faubourg Marigny, left a layer of ash and charcoal still visible to the archaeologists working at the Colton excavations. Several of the historic street maps that show where houses were located in Square 371 actually were prepared by fire insurance companies, and record details such as the building materials used to make each house, and the locations of the nearest fire hydrants.







McDonogh Schools No. 2 and 3

Less than a year after the Faubourg Marigny fire, the city of New Orleans hired James Cox to build a new school for girls on the site of the old De Soto School. To pay for the new school, the city used money from the McDonogh Fund, an educational endowment from the eccentric and wealthy landowner John McDonogh. The new school was named McDonogh School No. 2 in the benefactor's honor.

McDonogh No. 2 was a two-story schoolhouse constructed of yellow pine atop brick piers. The front of the school, which faced Mandeville Street, had a columned porch and balcony with elaborate cast iron railings. Inside, each of the twelve classrooms contained blackboards and platforms for teachers' desks. Cox's building contract specified that all wood be painted with lead paint

of plain colors with varnished interior doors. Construction was completed on May 30, 1874 at a total cost of \$13,500 (almost \$269,000 in today's money). A *New Orleans Republican* article described the appearance of the building as "neat and pleasant," with "roomy side galleries and six rooms in each story; each room averaged about twenty-nine by nineteen feet."

Following completion of McDonogh No. 2, the city again contracted with James Cox to build a school for boys directly behind the first school building, to be named McDonogh No. 3. That school faced Spain Street and was nearly identical in design to McDonogh No. 2. Construction began in July of 1874, and that school was opened by the end of that year. The cost for building McDonogh No. 3 was \$14,000.

On the left: Watercolor illustrations of McDonogh No. 2 (top) and McDonogh No. 3 (bottom). Images courtesy of the Louisiana Division of the City Archives, New Orleans Public Library.

Desegregation of New Orleans Schools

During the 1960s, public schools in New Orleans became a battleground in the Civil Rights movement. After legal slavery in the United States ended in 1865, many people, especially in the South, believed that people of different races should be kept apart. This practice, called Segregation, meant that African Americans had to attend different schools, ride in separate railroad cars, and even use different restrooms from whites. Laws requiring racial segregation were known as "Jim Crow laws."

In 1896, the U.S. Supreme Court heard the case of *Plessy v. Ferguson*, a lawsuit filed by Homer Plessy of New Orleans that challenged a Louisiana law requiring separate railcar accommodations for white and African American travelers. The court ruled to uphold the Louisiana law, so long as the accommodations for African Americans were "separate but equal."

Over the next fifty years, the policy of "separate but equal" was enforced throughout much of the South. One example of the policy in New Orleans was the construction of two separate public beaches along Lake Pontchartrain - Pontchartrain Beach for whites, and Lincoln Beach for African Americans. Lincoln Beach opened in 1939, and during its time it hosted many of the great musicians of the era, including Fats Domino. Although much-loved by those who attended it, Lincoln Beach was never truly equal to Pontchartrain Beach - it was located much further from the center of town, and its waters frequently were polluted. Similarly, many public schools for African Americans received less funding than schools for white children, and the education that African American children received often was inadequate.

In 1951, Oliver Brown and several other African Americans filed a lawsuit calling for the desegregation of public schools in Topeka, Kansas. The case of *Brown v. Board of Education* went before the Supreme Court, and on May 17, 1954, the Court ruled that the segregation of public school systems was unconstitutional. A year later, the Supreme Court directed the nation's school boards to begin the process of desegregation "with all deliberate speed."

Initially, many lawmakers and citizen groups attempted to resist desegregation. Desegregation of the New Orleans public schools finally began on the morning of November 14, 1960, when four six-year-old African American girls began first grade in two designated elementary schools: Ruby Bridges attended William J. Frantz Elementary, while "the McDonogh 3" - Gail Etienne, Tessie Prevost, and Leona Tate - began school at McDonogh No. 19. Protesters opposed to desegregation attempted to block the girls from entering their new schools. Ruby Bridges didn't understand all that was going on around her; initially she "thought it was Mardi Gras: the barricades, all those policemen, the screaming people with their arms waving around." The desegregation of New Orleans schools drew national attention, and the famous American painter Norman Rockwell made a painting of Ruby Bridges being escorted by federal marshals into school, which he titled "The Problem We All Live With." That now-famous painting hung outside the Oval Office in the White House from July to October, 2011, in honor of Ruby Bridges and the McDonogh 3.

Public school desegregation continued at a slow pace. In May 1966, the School Superintendent announced that in September all Orleans Parish public elementary schools will be fully desegregated. On September 1, 1966, over 3,000 African American students attended integrated classes at previously all-white schools in the Orleans Parish public schools system. It may be presumed, then, that the Charles J. Colton School admitted African American seventh graders by the fall of 1966 and that the school experienced the integration of all junior high grades by September 1967.



Six-year old Ruby Bridges, 1960. Image from the New York World-Telegram and the Sun Newspaper Photograph Collection, Library of Congress.



Development of Colton School (1929-present)

By the early twentieth century, the Faubourg Marigny was in need of a new and larger school to educate the children of the neighborhood. The city bought up all of the properties within Square 371, and between 1928 and 1929, McDonogh Schools No. 2 and 3 and the surrounding residences were demolished for the construction of the Charles J. Colton Public School. Although those buildings were destroyed down to ground level, many of the building foundations were left in place, later to be uncovered by the archaeologists who worked at the site. The three-story concrete and brick school was designed under the direction of the well-known New Orleans architect Edgar A. Christy. Local residents wanted the school named after John Mc-

Donogh as a tribute to the demolished McDonogh Schools No. 2 and No. 3, and in February 1929, 500 individuals petitioned the Orleans Parish School Board to retain the McDonogh name. However, the board refused and named the new school in honor of a long-time member of the Orleans Parish School Board, Charles J. Colton (1868-1916).

The Charles J. Colton School opened as an elementary school on November 5, 1929; it was officially dedicated during a ceremony on November 26, 1929. In total, the school cost \$550,000 to construct and furnish, which is the equivalent of about \$7,600,000 today. Its design was similar to many of Christy's other building designs, which frequently featured a center entrance into

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THE TIMES-PICAYUNE, TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 1929

NEWS from HERE and THERE as TOLD THROUGH the CAMERA LENS



Children gathering at a flag-raising ceremony at Charles J. Colton School on November 4, 1929, from the November 5 edition of the Times-Picayune newspaper.

COLTON SCHOOL IS DEDICATED

1200 Persons Attend Exercises Held in New Building

(Photo on Victoria Page.)
With impressive exercises in the auditorium of the modern new building, the Charles J. Colton Public School, St. Claude avenue and Mandeville street, was formally dedicated Tuesday night. More than 1200 persons, members of the school board, public officials, private citizens and students witnessed the ceremonies.

The building is a three-story brick structure and represents an invest-

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ment of \$550,000. It has been occupied since November 1. The school has 44 classrooms, manual training and household arts department, an auditorium with a seating capacity for 1200, kindergarten quarters, executive offices, a cafeteria and a library.

"This school building is the outgrowth of the effort and vision of some of our most patriotic citizens," Judge John D. Nix of juvenile court said in dedicating the structure as a monument to the memory of Mr. Colton, who was for 12 years a member of the Orleans parish school board, and who played an important part in raising the standard of the city's public school system to its present standard.

"It is one of the most serious undertakings of my life to pay a just tribute to such a character as Charles Colton," Judge Nix continued. "Colton was honest, never selfish and always preferring others before himself."

"Charles Colton had few opportunities and no advantages, but he was an exemplary character. The attendance and teachers' retirement laws are two of the many monuments to his vision. As a member of the Orleans parish school board from 1904 until the time of his death in 1916, he did much toward raising the school system to its present standard, unexcelled by any other in the United States.

"Let us not only dedicate this building to Charles Colton but let us dedicate ourselves to the education of our children and make of this school an institution which Charles Colton would be proud to have bear his name."

Before the dedicatory address by Judge Nix, Mrs. A. J. Haas, president of the Parent-Teacher Association of the Charles J. Colton school, expressed the appreciation of the association for the new building. "It is a dream come true and we are most grateful to the school board and to others who have been instrumental in giving us this building," she said.

Brief addresses also were delivered by Nicholas Bauer, superintendent of New Orleans public schools, and Harry C. Echauburg, president of the Orleans parish school board. Judge Nix paid tribute to the efforts of both of these men in his dedicatory address. He also commended the work of Miss Emma Rogers, principal of the school.

On behalf of the Parent-Teacher Association of the Charles J. Colton school, Edward Garland, member of the school board, presented flowers to Mrs. Haas and Miss Rogers. Fred Zengle, former president of the school board, E. A. Christy, supervising architect who designed the new building and several others were introduced.

a large auditorium with a stage at the back. Along with an auditorium that could seat 1,200 individuals, the Colton School featured "fireproof" construction. The school also included 44 classrooms, a dedicated kindergarten space, administrative offices, a library, a cafeteria, an exercise room, and an area for learning household arts. Many graduating classes of the former McDonogh School No. 2 donated funds to furnish the new Colton school, as noted by a silver plaque honoring the former students in the school's hall.

After World War II and by 1964, more than 75 million babies were born in the United States. New Orleans population grew by 27 percent between 1940 and 1960, part of the nation-wide baby boom following World War II. To accommodate new students, the School Board transitioned Colton from a senior high school to a junior high school (7th to 9th grades) in 1953. Colton Junior High School remained open until 2008, when the school closed due to population decline after Hurricane Katrina. However, the population of New Orleans soon rebounded, and in 2010, the federal government agreed

Article about the dedication of Charles J. Colton School from the November 27 edition of the Times-Picayune newspaper.

to provide funds for much-needed repairs so that Colton could reopen. One of the conditions for receiving federal aid was that some of the funds would be used to investigate the archaeology of the property.



Archaeology of the People of Square 371

In 2010, archaeologists working for FEMA (the Federal Emergency Management Agency) visited Colton to determine whether an archaeological site existed on the property. Because the construction of the school in 1928-1929 would have destroyed most of the archaeological remains in Square 371, the archaeologists focused their search on the south side of the school, where the school's play areas were located. When they dug several small holes in that area, they discovered pieces of plates, bottles, and other items that dated from the 1800s. FEMA then hired archaeologists from R. Christopher Goodwin & Associates, Inc. to conduct larger excavations in locations likely to have remained undisturbed. Between 2010 and 2013, those archaeologists completed five different investigations at the site, each discovering more evidence of the people who lived in Square 371 prior to 1928.



The archaeologists exposed evidence for a number of different houses that once lined North Rampart Street on the south side of Colton School, as well as some remains of houses along Spain Street on the east side of the school property. Most of those houses the archeologists exposed had been either shotgun or double-shotgun houses. The shotgun house is a type of home found in many older neighborhoods throughout New

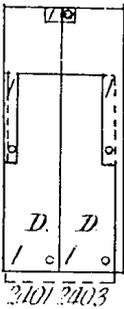


Orleans. Typically, a shotgun house is long and narrow with one bedroom in the front, another bedroom in the middle, and a kitchen in the rear. Frequently, a shotgun house also will have a front porch, and before indoor plumbing was available, it would have had an outhouse (also called privy) in the back yard. A double shotgun consists of two shotgun houses built side-by-side that share a common wall in the middle. By examining historic maps of Square 371, historians working with the archaeologists were able to determine the former street addresses of those houses, and by looking at city directories, newspapers, and other historic documents, they were able to learn some of the stories of the people who lived at those addresses.



Examples of double-shotgun (top) and single-shotgun (bottom) houses in the neighborhood surrounding Colton School.

**2401-2403 North Rampart Street
(Francois Louis, Jeanne Dinet,
and the Levy family)**



One location where archaeologists uncovered historic remains was in the southwest corner of the school property, within what once had been 2401-2403 North Rampart Street. In 1861, a Frenchman from the Lorraine region of France named Joseph Levy purchased the property on the corner of North Rampart and Mandeville streets from a woman named Jeanne Dinet. Levy built a house on that property, where he and his family were living in 1873 when the great fire that burned all of Square 371 destroyed their home. Soon after the fire, Levy built a double-shotgun house to replace the



home he had lost. The double shotgun built by Levy was addressed as 2401-2403 North Rampart Street. The Levy family lived in one side of the house, and rented out the other side for added income. The names of several individuals who rented from Levy are known, including Charles Johnson, an African American day laborer, and John Tull, a day laborer of English and Irish descent.

Archaeologists working in what would have been the back yard of 2401-2403 North Rampart Street discovered a large number of artifacts that dated from the 1830s to the 1850s. The collection included many plates, bowls, cups, and wine bottles, as well as pitchers, soup tureens, and a large platter (see collage on the right). Also recovered were animal bones (mostly cows and pigs) that showed saw marks from butchering. The archaeologists did not find much evidence for the houses that once stood on the property, and surmised that most of those remains had been destroyed when the school was built.

The archaeologists believed that the artifacts they found likely did not belong to the Levy family. First, many of the items clearly were made several decades before Joseph Levy moved his family to North Rampart Street, although it is possible that the Levys kept some older dishes that had been passed down through the family. More importantly, the Levy family was Jewish, and Jewish people often observe kosher dietary laws, which forbid eating pork.

The artifacts recovered from 2401-2403 North Rampart Street more likely belonged to the individuals who owned



A sample of some of the many dishes and bottles recovered from 2401-2403 North Rampart Street.

the property before Joseph Levy. The first owner of the property was Francois Louis, a native of Portugal who bought the parcel from Bernard de Marigny in 1833. Francois owned a café at the corner of Levee Street (presently Decatur Street) and Marigny Street, and lived in a house at the corner of Frenchman and Burgundy streets that he bought in 1839. It does not appear that Francois ever built a house on his property in Square 371, although he may have kept animals or vegetable gardens there to supply his restaurant.

When Francois Louis died in 1844, he left most of his estate to Jeanne Dinét, a free woman of color originally from Cuba. It is not certain how Louis and Dinét were related, although it is unlikely that they were married. It is possible that Dinét was Francois Louis' mistress, business partner, or daughter. Whatever their relationship, Dinét inherited the property at 2401-2403 North Rampart Street, as well as the café. There is no concrete evidence that Jeanne Dinét took over the management of the restaurant after Louis died, although it is quite possible that she did so to provide herself with a steady income. In 1861, she sold the property at 2401-2403 North Rampart Street to Joseph Levy.

The collection of artifacts recovered from 2401-2403 North Rampart Street may have been discarded on the empty lot by Francois Louis and/or Jeanne Dinét. During the nineteenth century, there was no city service for picking up garbage, and many residents simply discarded trash behind or under their

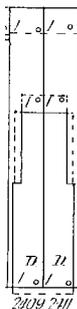


Artifacts recovered from 2401-2403 North Rampart Street: (top) Makeup mixing jars (bottom) wheels from a child's toy.



houses, or threw it into their outhouses. For Francois Louis and possibly Jeanne Dinét, they could have had additional refuse from the café, including food waste from the kitchen, as well as broken dishes from the restaurant service. It would not have been unusual for the pair to use part of their property in Square 371 as a refuse dump. The artifacts from 2401-2403 North Rampart Street also included some items that may have belonged to Jeanne Dinét herself, including a decorative hair comb, several small jars for mixing makeup, and some children's toys.

2409-2411 North Rampart Street (the cobbler's house)



The earliest house at 2409-2411 North Rampart Street was built by 1861. That house was destroyed in the 1873 fire, and replaced by a double-shotgun residence. Archival records provided little information on who owned the property; however, city directories indicate that a number of



Leather shoe scraps recovered from 2409-2411 North Rampart Street.

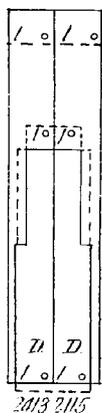
different individuals and families lived there as renters over the years. They included individuals such as Alexander N. Power, a clerk for Atlas Insurance Company; John Chevillon, a clerk at Clapp Brothers & Company, who sold cotton; Charles R. Steele, a Deputy U.S. Marshal; and George Reaud, a New Orleans police officer. Another person who lived at 2409 North Rampart Street in 1910 was Julia Reddy, a widow with four children whose occupation is listed as a “school portress.” A porter (male) or portress (female) was in charge of unlocking a building in the morning, and locking it up again in the evening. Ms. Reddy probably served as the portress for the McDonogh schools, which were located immediately behind her house.

When archaeologists excavated at 2409-2411 North Rampart Street, they recovered a large number of leather scraps that represented waste materials from making shoes, including a complete layered leather shoe heel, a fragmentary leather shoe heel, 4 pieces of stitched shoe leather, and 62 cut leather scraps. Discovered with those items

were three combs and a button made of Bakelite, an early type of plastic that was patented in 1907. Finding the Bakelite items in the same context as the leather indicated that the leather shoe parts also dated from 1907 or later.

Historians researching the property identified one shoe cobbler (a person who makes shoes for a living) named John Laiser who lived at that address in 1866; however, that was too early for the leather scraps recovered by the archaeologists. Although the historians did not identify any subsequent shoe cobbler who lived at that address during the early twentieth century, it is possible that another shoe cobbler lived there as a renter for a short period of time, perhaps only for a few months, but not long enough to appear in the city directories. Another possibility is that someone living at that address worked from home part-time as a shoemaker while also attending to other duties. One good candidate would have been Julia Reddy, who may have made shoes to supplement her income as a portress, and to help her provide for her four children.

2413-2415 North Rampart Street (the Marette and Livaudais families)

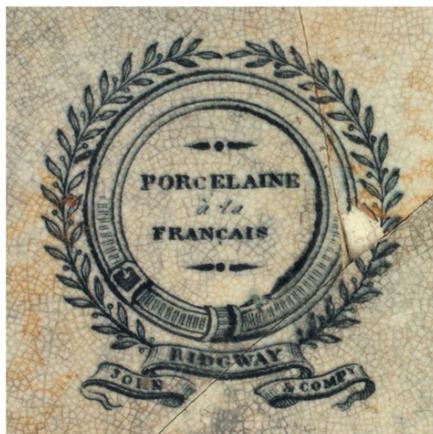


Another location where archaeologists encountered abundant remains was at 2413-2415 North Rampart Street. Among their findings was a layer of ash and charcoal that represented burning from the fire of 1873. Historians found that the property was owned in 1873 by Henry J.B. Marette, a clerk at the John

Tosso hardware store. Although Henry lost his house in the fire, he soon returned to the lot and built a double-shotgun house, similar to the house built by Joseph Levy at 2401-2403 North Rampart Street. By 1874, Marette was joined in one side of the double by his brother Victor Marette, and his recently widowed mother Emily Marette. The other side of the house was rented out for extra income. By 1880, the Marette family had moved, but continued to rent out both sides of the house. Renters who occupied one or the other side of the double included A. Mohuman, a dressmaker from Bremen, Germany; E.A. White, a cotton classer from Jamaica; John A. Brookshire, an inspector for the Customs House; and Julie Ready, an Irish widow with six children.

Archaeologists unearthed a number of artifacts immediately below the layer of ash and charcoal, and those almost certainly originally belonged to Henry Marette just before the 1873 fire. His possessions included a soup bowl with

a maker's marks that indicated it was made in England for sale in France, and a perfume or cologne bottle from the L. T. Piver Company of London and Paris. Although historians could find very little information about Henry Marette other than that he was a hardware store clerk, it is interesting that this Frenchman had several items that likely were purchased in France, showing that he maintained some connection to his ancestral country. Archaeologists also recorded a number of walls, piers, patios, and other remnants of the double-shotgun house that Henry built after the 1873 fire.



French Maker's Mark from a plate likely owned by Mr. Marette.

By 1915, the Livaudais family moved into 2413 North Rampart Street. This prominent French family included Nellie Livaudais, her son (whose name is unknown), and her young adult daughter, Laura. Following a series of legal disputes, Laura fell into poor health. As stated by her mother, Laura suffered from "a weak heart, and had been taking medicine." When Laura died after possibly mistaking a bottle of poison for



Patios and privy from the rear yard of 2413-2415 North Rampart Street.

her medication, Nellie Livaudais and her son moved from 2413 North Rampart Street, and the house remained abandoned for a number of years.

Archaeologists working in what would have been the backyard of 2413-2415 North Rampart Street exposed the brick base of a privy (outhouse) that dated from the early 1900s. The privy had been filled with many artifacts that represented the possessions of a young woman from the early twentieth century, and that almost certainly once had belonged to Laura Livaudais. In addition to several medicine bottles, the collection included many personal items that reflected Laura's interests, including artifacts related to sewing, knitting,



Items belonging to Laura Lavaudais at the bottom of the privy at 2413-2415 North Rampart Street.

and similar activities; 47 buttons, several bottles of shoe black, sewing machine oil, bone crochet hooks, bone spindles, and a bone spindle whorl. The collection also included fancy drinking glasses, toy marbles, a ring, a porcelain flower vase, dolls, figurines, and tea sets. Helping the archaeologists determine the date of the collection were two items made of Bakelite, which indicated that the artifacts were deposited no earlier than

1907. Many of the items from the privy were unbroken, and it would have been unusual for someone to discard so many perfectly good (and in some cases expensive) possessions without reason. It is believed that Nellie Livaudais could not bear to keep Laura's personal possessions after her daughter's death, and threw them into the outhouse before moving to her new home.

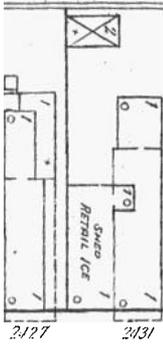


Part of a bone crochet hook carved into the image of an army officer, possibly intended to depict Napoleon Bonaparte, that likely once belonged to Laura Livaudais.



Examples of pressed glass drinking glasses recovered from the privy at 2413-2415 North Rampart Street.

2427 and 2431 North Rampart Street (the Kenner family)



In 1858 and 1867, Andreas Kerner purchased two properties within Square 371 – the first at 2431 North Rampart Street, and the second at 2427 North Rampart Street. Kerner was an ice manufacturer from Germany who later changed his name to Andrew Kenner, presumably to sound less “foreign.” Andrew Kenner had a large family, and at various times he owned several other properties on the block, some of which were lived in by his adult children, and others he used for rental properties.

At the time, ice manufacturing was a relatively young industry. Ice was important for many reasons, but particularly before refrigeration for cooling the interiors of “ice boxes” used to keep food cold and reduce spoilage. Before a process was invented for making ice, large blocks of ice had to be harvested from as far north as Canada and shipped south in insulated containers designed to keep the ice from melting too quickly. In 1851, Dr. John Gorrie of Florida patented a machine that could freeze water into ice, and soon afterwards ice manufacturing became a profitable business for people like Andrew Kenner.

Although he did not own his own ice business, Kenner probably was a partner in a business owned by another individual. He constructed two ice sheds on his property at 2427 North Rampart Street where ice was stored awaiting sale. Unfortunately, both of Kenner’s properties at 2427 and 2431 North Rampart Street were destroyed by the 1873 fire. By the end of the decade, Kenner rebuilt on both lots, constructing a one-story shotgun house with a side porch at 2427 North Rampart Street and a one-story shotgun house with a two-story shed at 2431 North Rampart Street. Even with those two houses and several other properties, space was tight for the Kenner family – census records indicate that eleven members of the family lived in the house at 2431 North Rampart Street in 1880.

Although Andrew Kenner died in 1897, both properties remained in his family for many years at various times occupied by Andrew’s widow Mary, several of their adult children and their families,



Trash deposit at 2427 North Rampart Street.

and renters. One of Andrew and Mary's sons, Anthony Kenner, continued in the ice business, while other family members (including sons-in-law) included a carpenter, a baker, a railroad laborer, and a newspaper worker. By 1910, the Kenner family sold 2431 North Rampart Street to Robert James Cambias, a cotton packer who moved in with his wife Harriet and five other family members. The Kenners still owned 2427 North Rampart Street in 1928 when it was bought by the City of New Orleans to build Colton Elementary School. That same year, Robert Cambias sold 2431 North Rampart Street for the same reason.

Archeologists working at 2427 North Rampart Street uncovered some of the foundation piers belonging to the shot-

gun house that Andrew Kenner built after the 1873 fire. Below that level, they discovered a trash deposit from before the fire that contained a number of pieces of scrap wood and metal straps. Both the wood and the straps may have been pieces of crates that Kenner used to pack blocks of ice for shipping to his customers. Archeologists also found other items that once may have belonged to the Kenner family, including a hand crank for a grinder (possibly used for grinding meat or coffee), part of a grandfather clock, and a leather shoe.

At 2431 North Rampart Street, archeologists exposed the remains of two privies (an earlier one made of wood, and a later one made of brick), the base of a cistern (which supported an above-ground tank used to collect



An archaeologist excavates the circular base of a cistern at 2431 North Rampart Street.

and store rainwater), a patio paved with bricks, and parts of the house foundations. They also recovered many artifacts across the property, including broken dishes, bottles, tobacco pipes, buttons, and toys. Some of those artifacts came from deposits that dated from before the 1873 fire, and some from after the fire. Archaeologists found that the dining room dishes from before the 1873 fire often were imported from Europe and were decorated with colorful designs, while later dishes tended to be types made in the United States and either

were undecorated or had less elaborate decorations. The same trend has been identified at other archaeological sites around New Orleans. In the years after the Civil War, many Americans, especially in the South, were no longer able to afford more expensive items imported from overseas, and instead bought from potteries in the United States. Of particular importance were several large potteries in East Liverpool, Ohio, which dominated the American market during the late nineteenth century.



Fragments of two ceramic dishes recovered from 2431 North Rampart Street. The piece on the left, dated from before the 1873 fire, is part of a platter with elaborate decoration intended to imitate expensive Chinese porcelain. The piece on the right, dated from after the 1873 fire, is part of a saucer and has no decoration.



Ceramic tobacco pipes recovered from 2431 North Rampart Street.



Closing

The work at Colton Junior High School between 2010 and 2013 represents the largest archaeological investigation ever completed in the Faubourg Marigny, and one of the largest in all of New Orleans. By combining information gathered from the excavations with the results of archival research, the archaeologists were able to shed light on the lives of some of the early residents of that neighborhood. Those residents came from many different backgrounds. Some, like Jeanne Dinet, were recent immigrants from other countries, while others, like the Livaudais family, had lived in Louisiana for generations. Some, like Francois Louis and Andrew Kenner, were successful businessmen, while others, like Julia Reddy, probably struggled to make ends meet.

Important finds from the work at Colton included items that could be associated with their original owners, such as the personal possessions of Laura Livaudais. Many other artifacts recovered from Colton belonged to people who will never be identified; however, those items help us to understand what it was like to live in New Orleans over 100 years ago. Some artifacts, such as inkwells, pencils, porcelain dolls, and marbles, no doubt were owned by children who attended one of the early schools within Square 371. Other items, such as combs, toothbrushes, buttons, and dining room vessels, represent objects of everyday life and provide tangible evidence of the historic residents of the Marigny neighborhood.



Unusual porcelain figurine of three babies sleeping in a sea shell, once owned by Laura Livaudais of 2413 North Rampart Street.

What is Archaeology?

Archaeology is a branch of scientific study that examines how people lived in the past, while a person who uses the methods of archaeology to study past peoples is called an **Archaeologist**. To learn about people from the past, archaeologists search for archaeological **sites**, which are places where people long ago once lived or worked. Sites may be thousands of years old, such as prehistoric camps where early Native American ancestors may have once hunted and fished, or more recent sites such as the one at Colton, which represented the remains of a neighborhood that was built about 150 years ago.

To be considered an archaeological site, a location must contain artifacts or features. An **artifact** is anything small that was made or used by a human, such as an arrowhead, a clay pot, or a glass bottle. A **feature** typically is larger than an artifact and represents the remnants of something built by humans, such as buildings or Indian mounds. At Colton, archaeologists uncovered features such as privies (outhouses), cisterns, and the remains of houses. They also recovered artifacts such as pieces of plates, bowls, cups, bottles, and other items used by the people who once lived there.

Often, artifacts and features are located beneath the ground surface, and archaeologists have to dig in order to find them. At Colton, all of the houses on the block were torn down in the 1920s, and any remnants of those houses left behind were covered over when the school was built. Archaeologists carefully dug down to find and study the remains of those earlier houses (features) and the items that the people who lived in those houses left behind (artifacts).

It takes years of study and training to learn how to do archaeological work the right way. The archaeologists who worked at Colton all went to college to study archaeology, and also attended a field school. A **field school** is an extra class, usually taken during the summer, where college professors teach students how to do archaeology properly by excavating at an archaeological site. Proper training is important, because digging an archaeological site the wrong way can destroy it forever.





FEMA

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