

# GATES PRESERVATION



## 636-642 ROYAL

### Historic Property Report

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# DESCRIPTION

Vieux Carre Commission Rating: Blue; courtyard addition: Brown

## 636-642 Royal

(634-638 St Peter)

“The Pedesclaux-Le Monnier House is one of the most important landmarks from New Orleans's Spanish Colonial period. Constructed soon after the fire of 1794, probably according to the designs of French architect Barthelemy Lafon, the building was completed in 1811 by the noted local architects Latour and Laclotte. Originally a 3-story entresol structure, this townhouse incorporates characteristics of 18th c. building traditions, such as bold stucco moldings, a horizontal emphasis balanced by strong pilaster treatment, curvilinear walls and a clear, ordered treatment of bays and openings. Although the upper level openings are original, the ground floor openings were altered first c. 1850 and then in the 20th century.”

“In the heart of New Orleans stands a large four-story brick building, that has so stood for about three-quarters of a century. Its rooms are rented to a class of persons occupying them simply for lack of activity to find better and cheaper quarters elsewhere. With its gray stucco peeling off in broad patches, it has a solemn look of gentility in rags, and stands, or, as it were, hangs, about the corner of two ancient streets, like a faded fop who pretends to be looking for employment.”

[http://www2.latech.edu/~bmagee/louisiana\\_anthology/texts/cable/cable--sieur\\_george.html](http://www2.latech.edu/~bmagee/louisiana_anthology/texts/cable/cable--sieur_george.html)

Famous photographer Harold Baquet lived at this location: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harold\\_Baquet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harold_Baquet)

The LeMonnier House is the setting for George Washington Cables's stories “Sieur Georges”. This story is about a family which is culturally blended. GWC was better known in the 19th century than he is today. He was said to be among the better friends of Mark Twain and the two of them went on a national tour, promoting their respective works, together.

[http://www2.latech.edu/~bmagee/louisiana\\_anthology/texts/cable/cable--sieur\\_george.html](http://www2.latech.edu/~bmagee/louisiana_anthology/texts/cable/cable--sieur_george.html)

This site was also once known as The Skyscraper of New Orleans, being 7 stories tall. It is said that people were afraid to walk by lest it should fall. Also, the building across St. Peter St. added a story onto their home to make it comparable to LeMonnier. The storing about the building being 7 stories tall most likely comes from a confusion within records between American floors and European floors and how they are counted.

## DOCUMENT RESEARCH

636-642 ROYAL STREET

Erected--circa 1795, 1811  
Architect--Attributed to Barthelemy Lafon, 1795  
Completed by Latour and Laclotte, 1811  
Builder--Probably Hillaire Boutte and Gurle and Guillot, 1795  
Completed by Latour and Laclotte, 1811

This building, one of the most picturesque in the Vieux Carré, is more fascinating than the stories told about it. A fairly clear record of the ownership of this property exists from the original land grant to today. This corner portion of land, measuring originally 60' on Royal Street by 120' F.M., on St. Peter Street, was granted to Francois Galard, known as Sieur de Chamilly. The New Orleans census of 1726 lists the "wife of Chamilly and five children" at this corner, where all the early maps show a pioneer type of dwelling referred to as belonging to Chamilly.

Francois Galard prospered with the years. His children married into prominent families and there are frequent references to him in the proceedings of the Superior Council. The exact date when this property passed into other hands has not been discovered. But by following the records of the adjacent lots it is possible to produce a consistent pattern of ownership on this corner. It is evident, from the peripheral records, that a portion of Chamilly's lot remained intact up to the time it was purchased by Pierre Pedesclaux in 1795.

Records state clearly that the lot was acquired by Nicolas Vebent from M. de Chamilly, though no document has been found of this actual purchase. In time, Nicolas Vebent sold to Mme. Widow Rosa Giraldon Lemelle, who, in turn, sold to Messrs. Durand Brothers and Company. The latter firm sold this corner to Jacob Cowperthwaite through Miguel Fortier, who served as their agent. Cowperthwaite was an important builder who came here from New Jersey during the Spanish period. He probably intended to develop this corner, but died shortly after acquiring it, and the executor of his estate, Jean Francois Merieult, sold it in 1795 to the prominent notary and recorder of mortgages, Pierre Pedesclaux, whose voluminous notarial acts are the cornerstone of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century records on this area. Pedesclaux began to build here on what, after the great fire of 1794, was probably a vacant lot. But his ambitions outpaced his purse.

The architect Barthelemy Lafon has been said to have designed this building. At this very time Lafon was building a dwelling for Luis Cornue adjacent to this on Royal Street, and it is possible that they were planned together. Photographs taken

while the Cornue-Pitot building was still standing show an undoubted affinity between the two dwellings. It is also a matter of record that Barthelemy Lafon lived in Pedesclaux' building at one time; for the city census of 1805 lists the address of Pedesclaux' house, adjoining that of Mayor James Pitot on Royal Street, as the residence of the architect Lafon. This leads one to surmise that Lafon was closely associated with the corner building.

It is probable that Pedesclaux' money gave out before Lafon got beyond the ground floor. Balked at proceeding further himself, Pedesclaux persuaded seventeen prominent business men to invest a thousand dollars apiece in a venture to pay off his mortgage and use the rest of the money to finish the house. Several years later the architect-builders, Gurlie and Guillot, sued subsequent owners for payment due them for work here saying, "Pierre Pedesclaux employed them as mason workmen to do diverse buildings and additions to his house at Royal and St. Peter Streets." What portion Gurlie and Guillot were engaged to do is difficult to say now, but it is evident that they were involved to some degree with this building.

How much Pedesclaux accomplished with the new money is an uncertainty today. It has long been thought that he was only able to add a story to the ground floor. But one must always bear in mind, in reading the old French records, that the ground floor was not commonly referred to as a "story", nor was it ever called the "first story." It was known as the "Rez de chaussee", and above this was the "premier etage" and then the "deuxieme etage"--which amounts to a three-story house in our parlance.

In the light of this, a careful rereading of the records leads to a somewhat different conclusion. In 1811, when the property was sold at auction, an ad mentions the "six rooms of the first and those of the second story," and a few lines later mentions the stores on the ground floor. In a transaction at the time of the sale the building was described as "of several stories with a terrace roof." The new owners contracted with the prominent architects, Latour and Laclotte to finish the project, and a review of their contract fortifies the conclusion that Lafond, working with Pedesclaux' new seventeen thousand dollars, had indeed been able to raise this building to what we call three stories today.

Any study of this structure in relation to the Cornue-Pitot house beside it, shows that the two flow together at the third floor roof line. The very strong course of moldings that once comprised a cornice, indicate that a roof had been here formerly. It has long been believed that Latour and Laclotte added the so-called third story, and that the fourth story was put on in the 1870s by Saloy. There is no documentary proof to back this up, and some considerable doubts have been cast on the skyscraper legend by this recent study. In 1870 there were many four story buildings, so another should have caused no comment.

A four-story building of such magnitude, in 1811, would have been cause for some excitement.

It is doubtful, however, if indeed Latour and Laclotte did do the fourth story at this time, that the present version is their work. Major Latour was a French emigre whose skill as an artist is widely known through his sketches of the Battle of New Orleans. Hyacinth Laclotte was probably Beaux Arts trained, and both were capable of far more distinguished work than the present fourth story. Their contract with the new owners is a lengthy document that concerns itself with the "ground floor," the "entresol," the "first floor," and the "garret." Part of the agreement was to "raise the roof existing on the house now... and build a story with walls eight inches thick, covered with a terrace...."

Throughout the house repairs and remodeling were arranged for, and it is evident that a whole new section was added to the Royal Street end. Nothing was said about the wrought iron galleries in the contract, but it is probable that the Lemonnier monograms were added to the balcony railings at this time. Mr. Samuel Wilson, Jr., writing in the New Orleans States about this building in April, 1953, says, "these ... may have been executed either by Guillaume Malus, the blacksmith who did the iron work for Latour and Laclotte's Orleans Theatre in 1810, or Jean Cauvin who did the same for the elegant house they built in 1811 for Mme. Castillon at St. Peter and Decatur."

A At any rate, in 1811, when Pedeciaux' backers forced a sale, this building was bought jointly by Dr. Yves Rene Lemonnier, a physician who came here from Remmes, France before 1803, and Francois Grandchamps, an apothecary from Santo Domingo. Grandchamps established his pharmacy in the corner shop on the ground floor with rights to occupy and/or rent the ground floor and the entresol. Dr. Lemonnier used the two upper stories. But in time the pharmacist met financial reverses, and was forced to sell his half to the doctor. After Dr. Lemonnier's death the property passed to his three daughters and a son, Yves Rene, Jr., who carried on his father's medical practice in the town. Eventually the building was purchased from the heirs by a grocer, Jean Fisse, who had his store in the former pharmacy on the corner. It was not until 1876, when Bertrand Saloy forced a sale of this property and took it from Fisse, that the building was converted into tenements. It may well have been that extensive changes were made to the top story at this time, and that is how the skyscraper legend came to be.

The building has been badly used. Some of the arched openings on the ground level have been squared off, and others have had extended shop windows simply inserted in the arches. The brick stairway in the courtyard is another addition that has not improved the building. Successive alterations, particularly on the fourth floor, have done much to spoil the original proportions. Even so,

it is one of the finest buildings in the Vieux Carre, and it remains one of the city's most distinguished landmarks.

Mr. Wilson, continuing to comment on this building in his article in the New Orleans States, says of this structure, "The Le Monnier house, though more massive than most, is typical of the houses of this period. The ground floor was occupied by shops with the living quarters above, all centering about a paved courtyard from where the stairway leads to the upper floors.

"The facades are well studied with a low arch base and square windows above admitting light to the entresol, an intermediate story containing storage and servants' rooms. The principal story above this was called by the French 'le premier etage', the first story. The salon is a most unusual room of oval form occupying the corner of the building and following the curved wall that is such a prominent feature of the exterior. From this room French casements open on to the curved corner balcony.

"The floor levels are emphasized by strong horizontal courses of vigorous cement plaster moldings, and the use of a strong pilaster treatment is an unusual feature of the facades. The balconies at the level of the principal story are beautifully executed and are among New Orleans' best examples of wrought ironwork.

"The stairway is another excellent feature lighted by fan windows and with an interesting arched treatment of the wall. The treads are large solid blocks of cypress as are also the newel posts, while the handrail seems to be of mahogany. The house has unfortunately suffered from successive alterations...."

Edith Long, September 26, 1964



THIS pair of pictures depicts the ins and outs of the grocery business, circa 1919. Specifically, they show the interior and exterior of the store at the corner of Royal and St. Peter streets—which was owned and operated by Joseph and Camille Cascio at that time. The photos were submitted by Miss Madeline Console of New Orleans, the Cascios' granddaughter.

Although the store, by today's standards, seems hopelessly crowded—there's hardly enough room for a waiting line at the cash register—that's simply because all available space was taken up by merchandise, rather than eye-catching displays.

Those were simple days for the grocery business. Soap was labeled "soap." It didn't bear such blarbs as "¼ cleansing cream" or "—with mint." It was just soap.

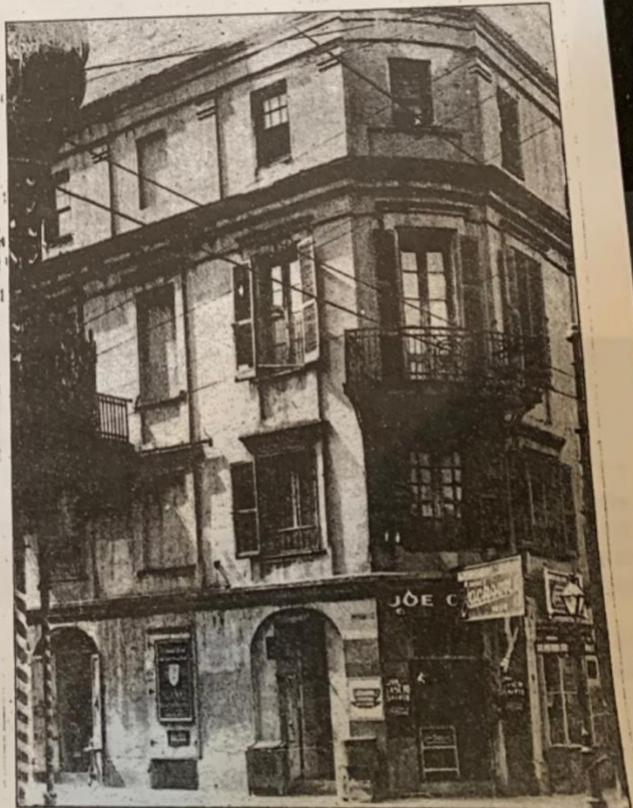
And they were inexpensive days, as well. The contributor notes that a loaf of French bread at her grandparents' store sold for five cents, and that the salt meat her grandfather was slicing in the picture cost only 20 cents a pound.

The Cascios came to America from Cefalu, Italy, in 1892. They spent 12 years in New Orleans, moved to Greenville, Miss., and returned in 1917 to stay. Cascio retired from the grocery business in 1935, six years before his death. Mrs. Cascio died in 1959.

## Pictures Out of Our Past

DIXIE, September 27, 1970

Royal & St. Peter Sts.  
42 Sg.



NOT INCLUDED  
IN MICROFILM  
PROJECT OF  
MAY 1965

NOT INCLUDED  
IN MICROFILM  
PROJECT OF  
MAY 1966

# Four floors on quagmire —

## 1811 sensation

SQUARE  
COURT, OF THE

Vieux Carre COURIER, April 16, 1965

Along the Banquette by Edith Elliott Long

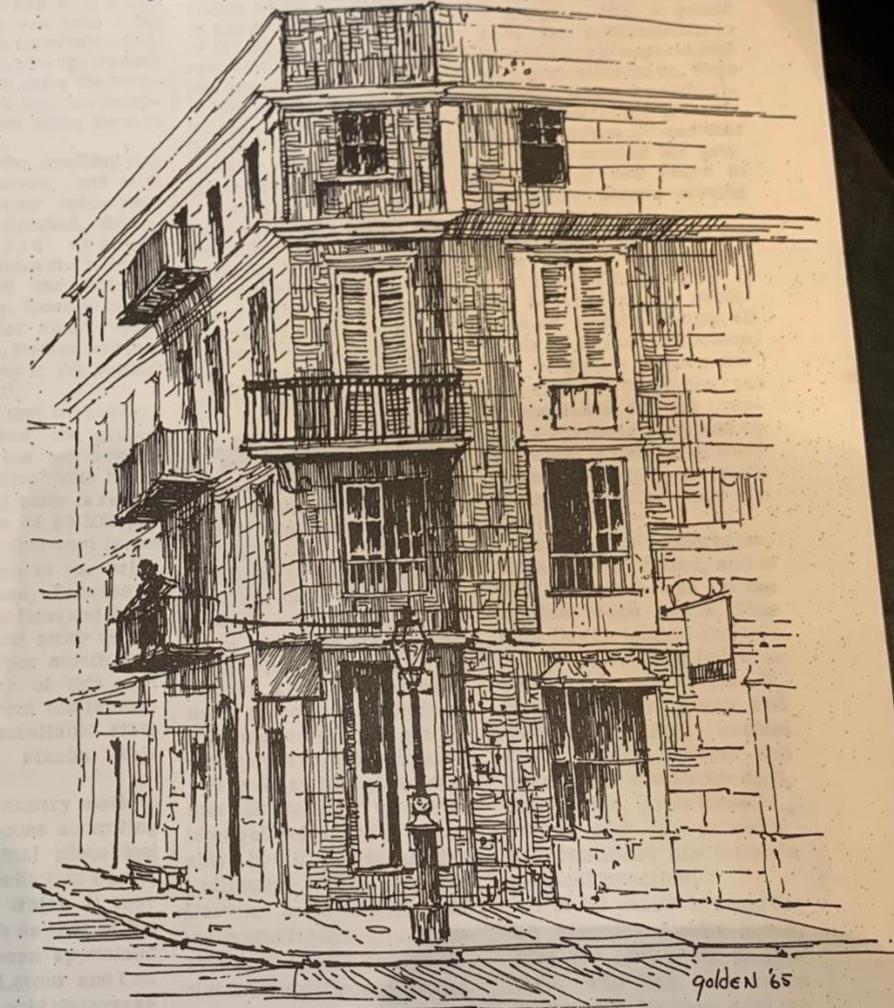
The great gray eminence at the corner of St. Peter and Royal is one of the real patriarchs of the Vieux Carre. Only three or four buildings outrank its age. None exceeds its gentle dignity and fine design.

It seems always to have looked weathered and worn. In 1873 Cable described "its grey stucco peeling off in broad patches" and said it seemed to "hang about the corner of two ancient streets, like a faded fop who pretends to be looking for employment." Undoubtedly it has always had hard usage. From the beginning this structure had its ups and downs. The miracle is that so much of its integrity survived.

It was 1795, right after the last of the great fires broke out in a neighboring courtyard, when this building was begun. The burnt-over land was purchased in that year by Pierre Pedesclaux, the popular notary, whose sometimes-chatty archives are a main source of information on early Vieux Carre dwellings.

Pedesclaux was a fabulous fellow. His name runs through duller records like a thread of crimson silk in linsey-woolsey. In his youth he was a mettlesome man who acquired enemies as rapidly as he did friends. Once he fought a harum-scarum duel on horseback with an old French cavalry officer--and won. Another time, when a plot was planned to return Louisiana to the King of Spain, Pedesclaux was listed as a dangerous man of ill repute --meaning that he was loyal to the new government of the United States.

In his latter years this hot-headed aristocrat, seeking peace and security, planned this building as a home and investment for his family. It is probable that the gifted architect, Barthelemy Lafon, as



Pedesclaux-LeMonnier House

636-642 Royal

versatile and fascinating a rascal as Pedesclaux himself, designed the building. It is known that Lafon did the Pitot House, formerly next door, at the same time. Old photographs show the two flowing together in symmetry and pattern. This affinity, and archival data, leave little doubt that Lafon designed and built them

both. Pedesclaux's money, however, gave out before he got beyond the shops on the ground floor level, the "rez-de-chaussee" as the French describe it. At this juncture he turned to friends for help. It was almost unheard of in those days, but the silver-tongued notary talked 17 of the wealthiest, hard-

headed men of the town-- bankers, planters, gentlemen all-- into investing \$1,000 apiece in a scheme to pay off the mortgage and finish the dwelling. With this new money Lafon added living quarters in the entresol and the premier etage--- finishing what we call a three story building today. At the

level can be seen a heavy cornice line, indicating there was a roof here at one time. And it is known that there was once a flat terrace on top of this building from which the Pedesclaux could enjoy the evening breezes and visit neighbors without going down to the street.

Before the dwelling was done, however, and with much interior refinement yet to be finished, the investors had second thoughts about the project, and called the turn on Pedesclaux. Unable to pay interest, let alone return the capital, Pedesclaux lost his property to the auction block in 1811.

An ad at that time clearly described the ground floor and the two stories explaining that "this house in its actual state is rented at the rate of \$2,500 per annum, but this rent is not in proportion to the value of the house, because 6 rooms of the first and those of the second story do not exceed \$90 per month, and the modicity of this rent proceeds from the incomplete and unsuitable state in which stands this property.

"The necessary work to finish this house according to the original plots and the repairs which it wants, or changes which it may require such as that of the roof, have been appraised by Messrs. Latour and Laclotte, who would undertake to repair and finish said

house for the sum of \$6,000. Those repairs will add to the house 3 more rooms on every story and on the ground floor a store of 50' by 20', and then the rent will be at least \$3,000 per annum..."

Two highbidders bought in the Pedesclaux house. One was Dr. Yves Rene Le Monnier, a fashionable physician who came to New Orleans from Rennes, France, shortly before the Purchase. The other was Francois Grandchamps, an apothecary from Santo Domingo. The new owners contracted with Latour and Laclotte to finish the project. They refined the interior, added an extension on Royal, and put on the top, fourth floor giving rise to the skyscraper legend.

Local historians have long assumed that this fourth floor was added in the 1870s--but that would have been no sensation then. A fourth floor in 1811, however, soaring on a New Orleans quagmire, was something else again; it is no wonder that townspeople were agape at the boldness and dangers of such a conceit so early in the century.

It was at this time, too, that the delicate wrought-iron galleries, made probably by the blacksmiths Guillaume Malas or Jean Cauvin, were added. With the house finished, Le Monnier and Grandchamps divided their property. Grandchamps took the corner store for his pharmacy, with the right to rent or use all the ground floor shops and the rooms in the entresol. Dr. Le Monnier occupied the two top stories.

Grandchamps, in a news-

paper ad of 1811, informed the public of his background and abilities, saying he was a druggist "by a patent from the government...in 1791, having experienced that profession in St. Yago de Cuba, under the authorization of its faculty of medicine of Havana..." and that he had practiced his profession for two years in Baltimore before coming to New Orleans.

He said that he had for sale here a "general assortment of fresh drugs of the best quality, by wholesale or retail, as also all kinds of Patent Medicines, and Surgeon's instrument" and that he "will also put up medicines for the country when demanded, and by his care in executing their orders he hopes to merit the confidence of those who employ him."

Despite his enterprise, Grandchamps failed, and in 1821 the house was on the auction block again. This time Dr. Le Monnier bought the whole building for himself, and he and his family, including Mme., a son, and three daughters, settled down to live. Some ten years later the doctor died, but his son, Yves Rene Jr., stayed with the property, and continued his father's medical practice.

For 50 years this was the Le Monnier family home, then the last of the daughters, who had long since returned to France, sold the whole property to a grocer named Jean Fisse. Grandchamps' old pharmacy became a well-known grocery store that was long an institution in the Quarter.

SQUARE 42  
636-642 ROYAL STREET

Then in 1876 Fisse was squeezed out of his building, and the new owner turned it into a tenement. This was the period of which George Washington Cable wrote in his story of "Sieur George." It is probable that the fourth story was much changed at this time.

Never again was this a distinguished family dwelling. It passed from the hands of one person to another, being used as rented rooms and small apartments. Many artists, with a sure instinct for the romantic and the picturesque, have clustered here. They neither preserved, nor did they destroy the building. It has known little attempt at understanding care or loving preservation. Despite this, and its obvious alterations, the Pedesclaux-Le Monnier House is one of the finest buildings in the Vieux Carre, and it remains one of the city's most distinguished landmarks.

Nobly conceived, the Pedesclaux-Le Monnier House has more "design" than many of its neighbors. It is built of brick, covered with a sturdy coat of plaster-stucco. Building stages can be clearly read on its facades. At the top of the rez-de-chaussee is a strong course of horizontal moldings, where there was a first roof. Between the third and fourth stories is another that was formerly a cornice. Additional moldings mark the top of what was probably Latour and Laclotte's roof line. These moldings give great vigor and a sense of flow to the design.

Another unusual feature are the fine, bold, two-

story pilasters tying together the second and third stories on the Royal side. Ground floor openings are both arched and square-headed, and it is likely that fan transoms once filled in the curves. Windows in the entresol are squared. On the floor above they have been designed to look longer by means of a molded panel underneath the windows. Excellent broad, flat moldings frame all openings at the second and third levels.

The corner, where Royal meets St. Peter, is subtly rounded. And here, on the premier etage, where the most important balcony hangs beneath a true French casement window, is an elegant oval salon, with a great domed ceiling and a fine wooden cornice. This was once considered among the most beautiful rooms in New Orleans.

The wrought iron galleries, supported by curved brackets, are among the most delicate and delightful in the Quarter. Three hang under the major windows on the third floor. In the center of each is a medallion bearing the initials YLM, with filigreed circles on either side. The addition at the Royal end, put on evidently by Le Monnier and Grandchamps, is rather loosely related to the original design and seems to have a life of its own. This great house was built around a central, square courtyard paved with flagstones. A fine stairway, lighted by curious arched windows rises, from floor to floor--stark, simple, with solid cypress treads, a mahogany hand-rail, and a sturdy cypress block for newel post.

Down the years many expedient alterations have been made to this great building. Some windows have been bricked up on all levels. Square-headed, bay-windowed shop fronts

have been jammed into arched ground floor openings. A modern brick stairway is cluttering the courtyard. The fourth floor, in particular, seems out of keeping with the rest of the building, and cannot be as it was when the distinguished team of Latour and Laclotte designed it.

It is likely that two or three dwellings preceded this mansion. Earliest grant was to Sieur Francois Galard, known as Chamilly. Maps and a census show that Chamilly, his wife, and five children lived here in a hipped-roof pioneer house on the corner. It went next to Nicolas Vebent, then to Mme. Widow Rosa Giralton. In a series of swift turnovers, between fires, this corner passed to a firm in France, then to the American builder, Jacob Cowperthwaite, and at his death to Pedesclaux.

Perhaps it is well that no major restoration work has been done on this important building. At a time when commercialism is rampant in the Quarter, when great mansions are being gutted of their fine interior details, when preservation is being confused with restoration, reconstruction, and rebuilding, is the time to let this house lie fallow. It is hoped that someday, when directions have stabilized once more, scholarship, taste, and means will be available to make Pedesclaux-Le Monnier House an ample mansion once again.

SQUARE 42  
636-642 ROYAL STREET

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# HISTORIC PHOTOGRAPH



ca. 1980 HNOG



“Pat O’Brien ran a speakeasy at 638 block St. Peter street until the repeal of Prohibition, when he officially opened the bar on December 3, 1933. Years later his long tie friend Charlie Cantrell became a partner and together they purchased the building that is now home to Pat O’Brien’s Bar at 718 St Peter street. The old bar had an upright piano to entertain, but 718 St Peter allowed them to go bigger and better with two baby grand pianos ... and dueling piano entertainment was born!”

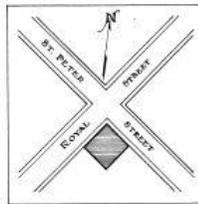


Historic New Orleans Collection Archive 1904

# HISTORIC PLANS

## FIRST SKYSCRAPER

638 ROYAL STREET  
NEW ORLEANS - LOUISIANA



SKETCH MAP  
SHOWING LOCATION

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
BRANCH OF PLANS AND DESIGN

MEASURED: NOV. 14, 1934.  
DRAWN: MARCH 14, 1935.  
MEASUREMENTS CHECKED: F. P. DUFRECHOU



DRAWINGS APPROVED:

DRAWINGS APPROVED:

ACCEPTED FOR LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

DISTRICT OFFICER:

CHIEF ARCHITECT:

DISTRICT NO. 5 - LOUISIANA AREA  
RICHARD KOCH - DISTRICT OFFICER  
614 ALBION BLDG. - NEW ORLEANS, LA.  
FIELD PARTY:  
FRANK WELLSHO - SURVEY & POSTS  
HOMER TREMNER - LEVIN BREWER JR.  
CHARLES PALLOUZE JR. - SAUNDERS

SURVEY NO.

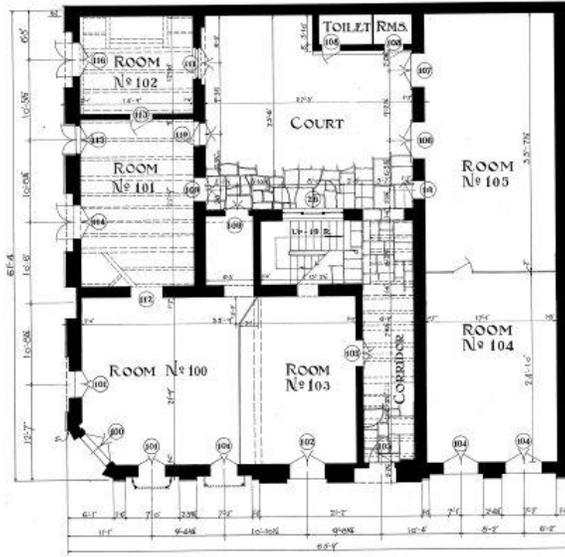
LA-21

SHEETS 1-20

INDEX NO.

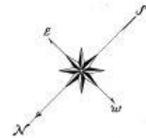
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34-NEWOR  
10-



- FIRST FLOOR PLAN -  
Scale - 1/8" = 1'-0"

*All porch walls are of brick, cemented outside and plastered inside. All rooms have cement floors except rooms No 101 & 102 which have wood floors. The floors of the corridor & court yard are of flagstones of random sizes. The dotted lines at openings No 101 indicate aluminum which are of late construction. The dotted lines in corridor & rooms No 101 & 102 indicate exposed posts. See sheet No 4 for schedule of openings.*



- GRAPHIC SCALE 5 -



Louis SARGENT JR., DEC.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
OFFICE OF NATIONAL PARKS, BUILDINGS, AND RESERVATIONS  
BRANCH OF PLANS AND DESIGN

FIRST SKYSCRAPER

NAME OF STRUCTURE

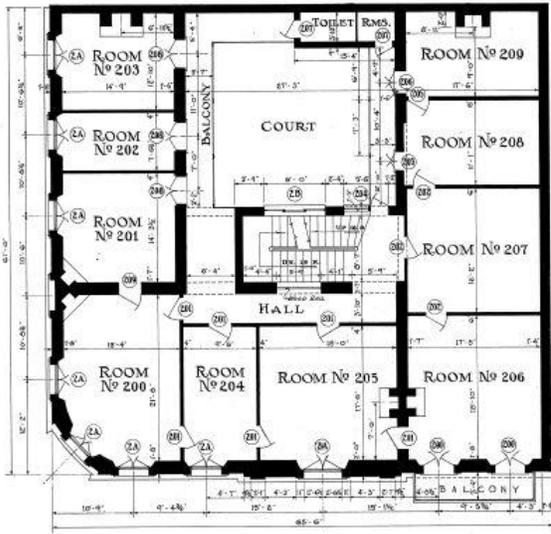
638 ROYAL STREET  
NEW ORLEANS - LOUISIANA



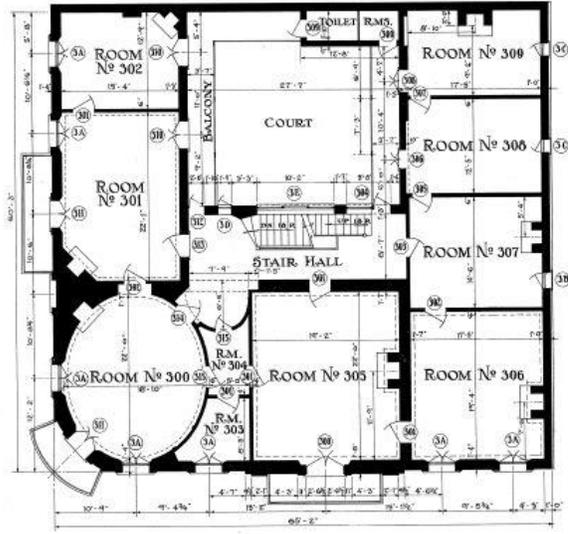
SURVEY NO.  
LA-21  
JAN. 15, 1923

HISTORIC AMERICAN  
BUILDINGS SURVEY  
SHEET 1 OF 20 SHEETS

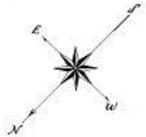
INDEX NO.



- SECOND FLOOR PLAN -  
SCALE - 1/8" = 1'-0"

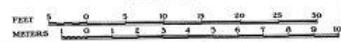


- THIRD FLOOR PLAN -  
SCALE - 1/16" = 1'-0"



All exterior & interior walls are brick, except those that are shown 4" x 6" are wood stud walls. Toilet rooms are a later addition. All rooms have wood floor & base, plastered walls & ceilings. Dotted lines in rooms 300-306, 309-301 indicates wood cornice. Openings in 200-300 originally had side lights, side lights being removed & opening bricked up, leaving door in center. Room 300 is elliptical in plan as shown. There is a dome ceiling with spring line at top of wood cornice. High point of dome is higher than 4th floor level. An intermediate floor (between 4th floor & roof) being built over dome (see 4th floor plan). See sheet 11 for schedule of openings.

- GRAPHIC SCALES -



H. E. JEPPIGNIER - DEC.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
OFFICE OF NATIONAL PARKS, BUILDINGS, AND RESERVATIONS  
BRANCH OF PLANS AND DESIGN

FIRST SKYSCRAPER

NAME OF STRUCTURE

638 ROYAL STREET  
NEW ORLEANS - LOUISIANA

SURVEY NO.  
LA 21  
DEC. 6, 1934

HISTORIC AMERICAN  
BUILDINGS SURVEY  
SHEET 2 OF 20 SHEETS

INDEX NO.



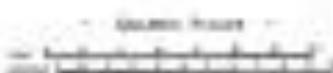
FIRST FLOOR PLAN  
1944-4-17-4



FIRST FLOOR  
1945-4-17-4



NOTES:  
1. THIS PLAN IS A REPRODUCTION OF THE ORIGINAL DRAWING.  
2. ALL DIMENSIONS ARE IN FEET AND INCHES.  
3. ALL ROOMS ARE TO BE FINISHED TO THE FINISH LINE.  
4. ALL WALLS ARE TO BE CONCRETE BLOCK.  
5. ALL FLOORS ARE TO BE CONCRETE.  
6. ALL ROOFS ARE TO BE FLAT.  
7. ALL UTILITIES ARE TO BE INSTALLED AS SHOWN.  
8. ALL MECHANICAL EQUIPMENT IS TO BE INSTALLED AS SHOWN.  
9. ALL ELECTRICAL WIRING IS TO BE INSTALLED AS SHOWN.  
10. ALL PAINTING IS TO BE DONE AS SHOWN.



DRAWING NO. 1944-4-17-4	FIRST DECKLAP	DR. RALPH JONES SAN FRANCISCO CALIFORNIA	DATE 1944	SHEET NO. 1
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N. W. ELEVATION

SCALE = 1/4" = 1'-0"



DAVID GRIBB DEL.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
 OFFICE OF NATIONAL PARKS, BUILDINGS, AND RESERVATIONS  
 BRANCH OF PLANS AND DESIGN

FIRST SKYSCRAPER

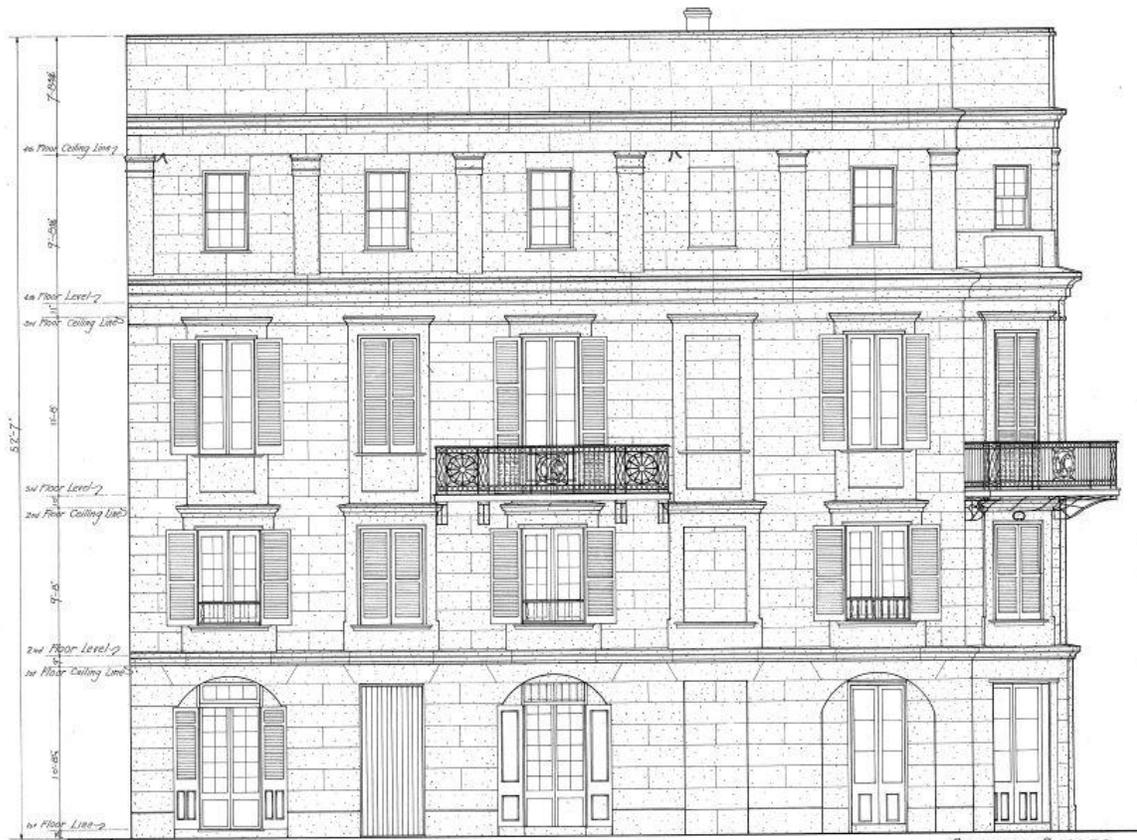
NAME OF STRUCTURE

638 ROYAL STREET  
 NEW ORLEANS - LOUISIANA

SHIPPY NO.  
**LA-21**  
 JAN. 11, 1923

HISTORIC AMERICAN  
 BUILDINGS SURVEY  
 SHEET 5 OF 20 SHEETS

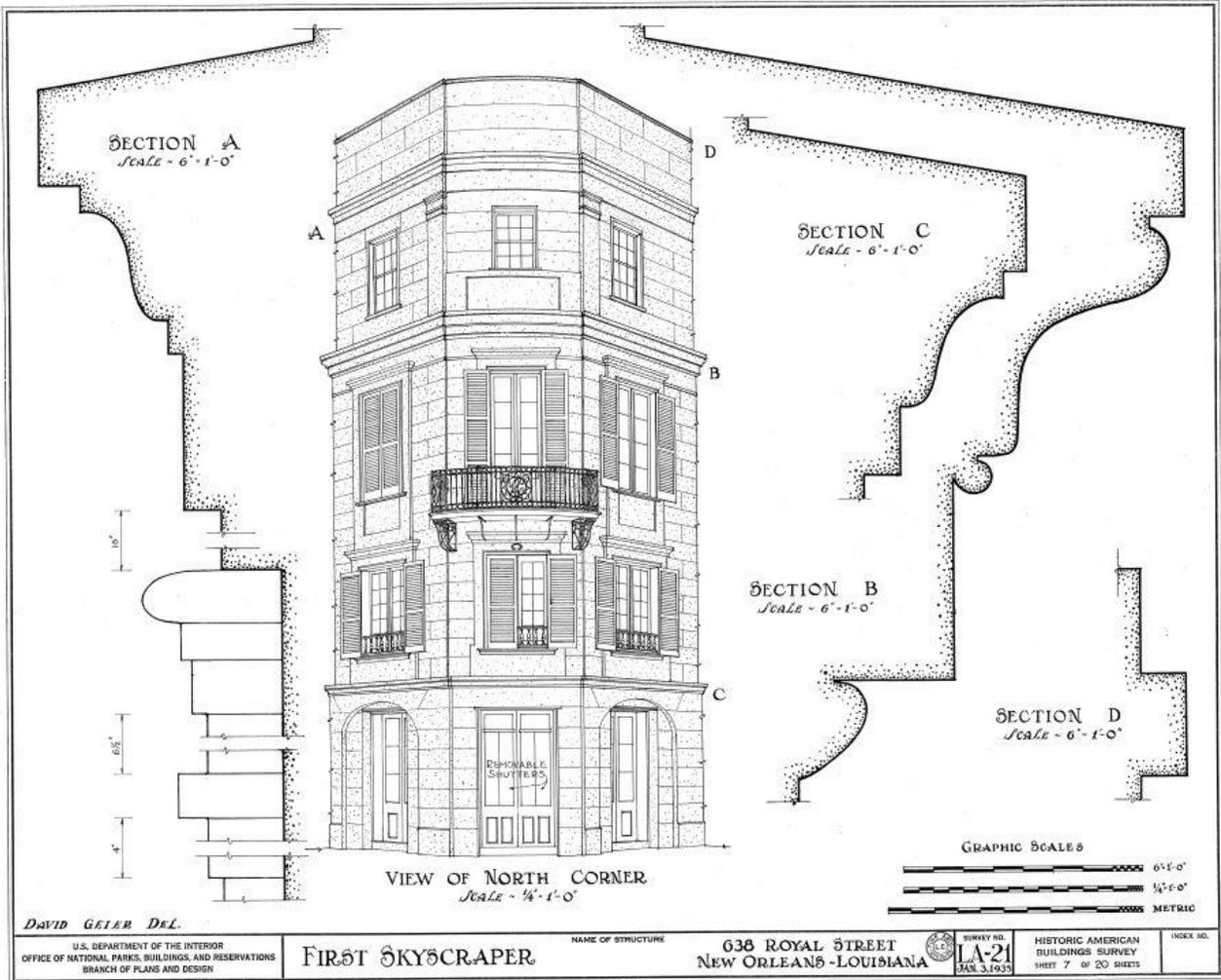
INDEX NO.

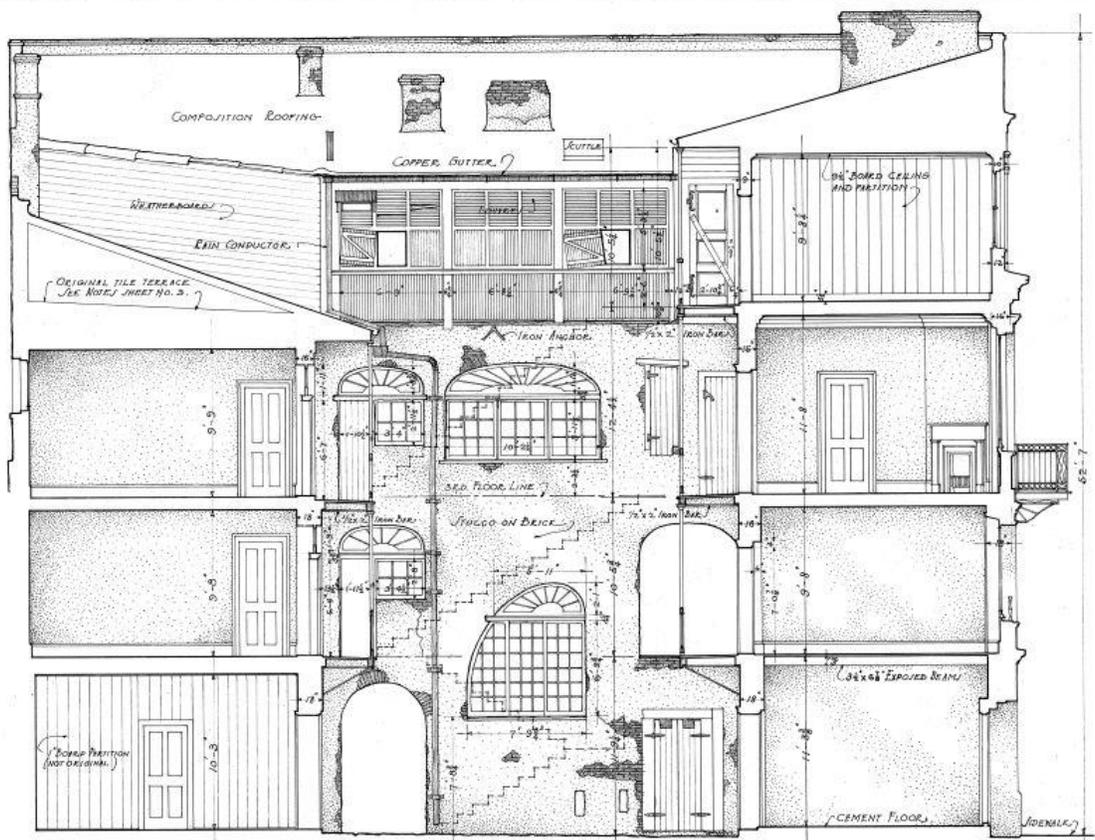


**N. E. ELEVATION**  
*Scale - 1/4" = 1'-0"*

**GRAPHIC SCALES**  
 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 FEET  
 0 1 2 3 4 METERS

<p><i>Louis SARGENT JR. - DEC.</i></p> <p>U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR          OFFICE OF NATIONAL PARKS, BUILDINGS, AND RESERVATIONS          BRANCH OF PLANS AND DESIGN</p>	<p><b>FIRST SKYSCRAPER</b></p> <p><small>NAME OF STRUCTURE</small></p>	<p><b>638 ROYAL STREET</b>  <b>NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA</b></p> <p><small>SHAW-WYSE CO.</small></p>	<p><b>LA-21</b>  <small>11-27-34</small></p>	<p><small>HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY</small></p> <p><small>SHEET 6 OF 20 SHEETS</small></p>	<p><small>INDEX NO.</small></p>
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SECTION THROUGH COURTYARD LOOKING NORTH WEST  
SCALE 1/4"=1'-0"



R.G.FOSTER, DEL.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
OFFICE OF NATIONAL PARKS, BUILDINGS, AND RESERVATIONS  
BRANCH OF PLANS AND DESIGN

NAME OF STRUCTURE

FIRST SKY/CRAPER

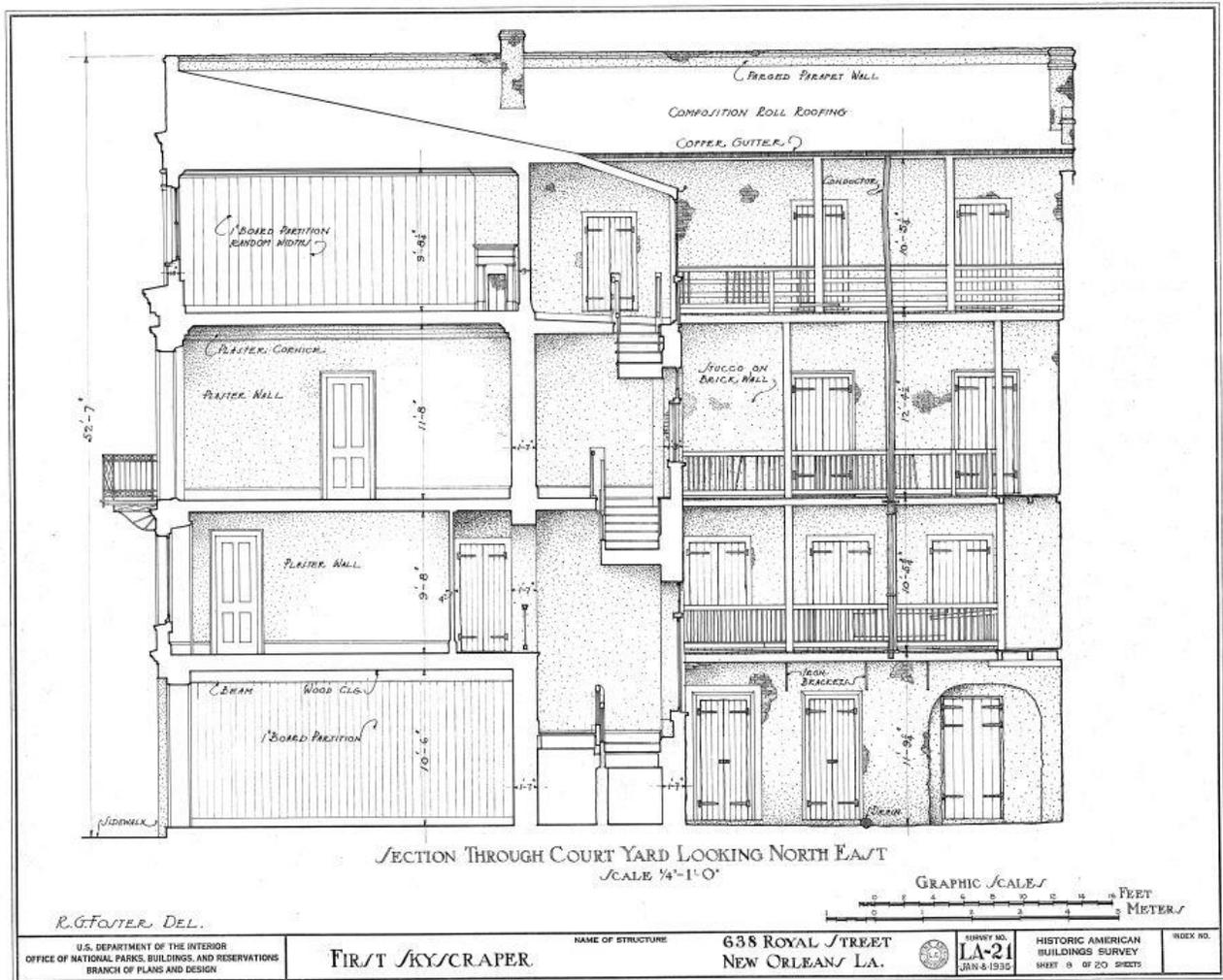
638 ROYAL STREET  
NEW ORLEANS, LA.



SHEET NO.  
LA-21  
NOV 18 1934

HISTORIC AMERICAN  
BUILDINGS SURVEY  
SHEET 25 OF 20 SHEETS

INDEX NO.



R.G.FOSTER DEL.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
OFFICE OF NATIONAL PARKS, BUILDINGS, AND RESERVATIONS  
BRANCH OF PLANS AND DESIGN

FIRST SKYSCRAPER

NAME OF STRUCTURE

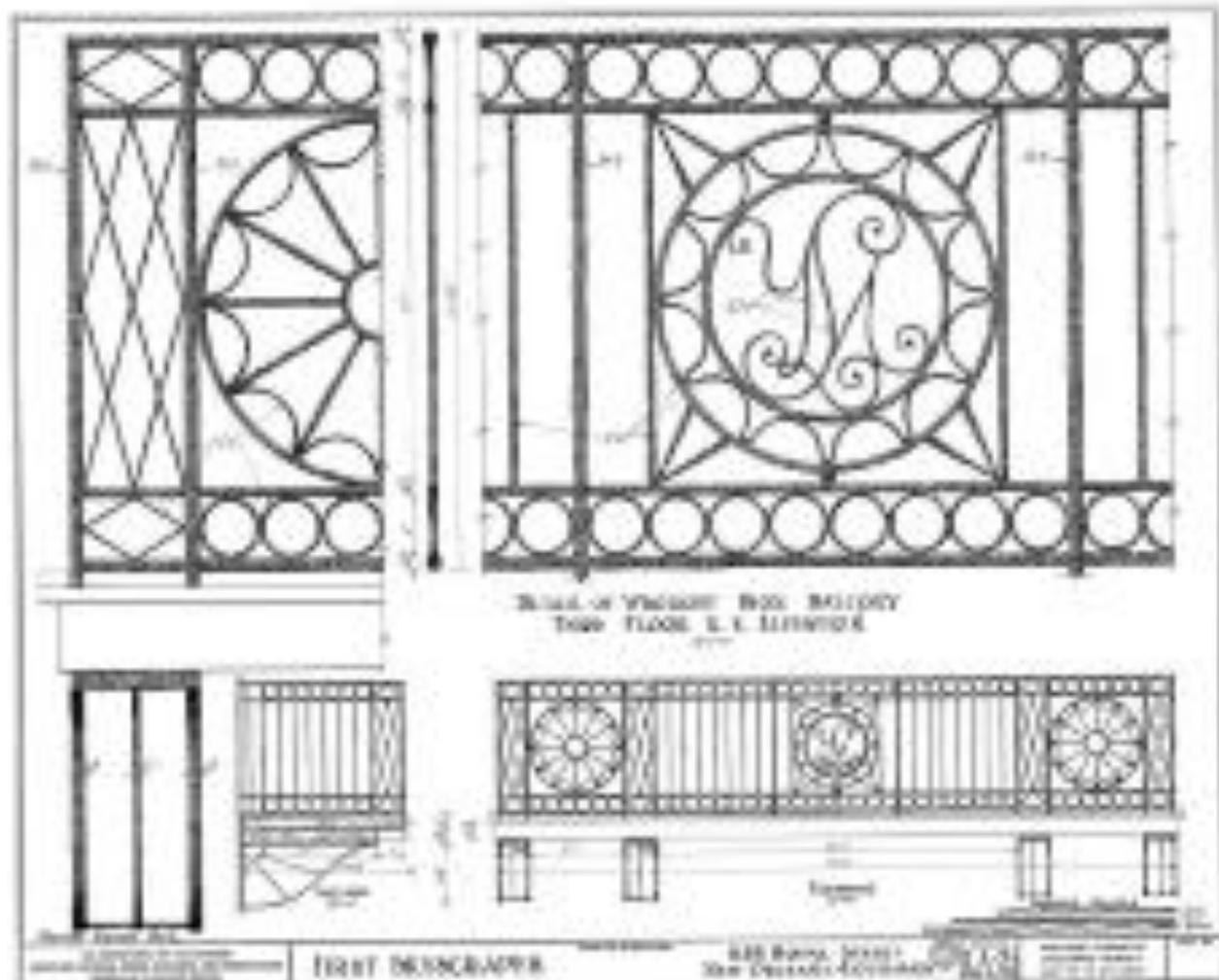
638 ROYAL STREET  
NEW ORLEANS LA.



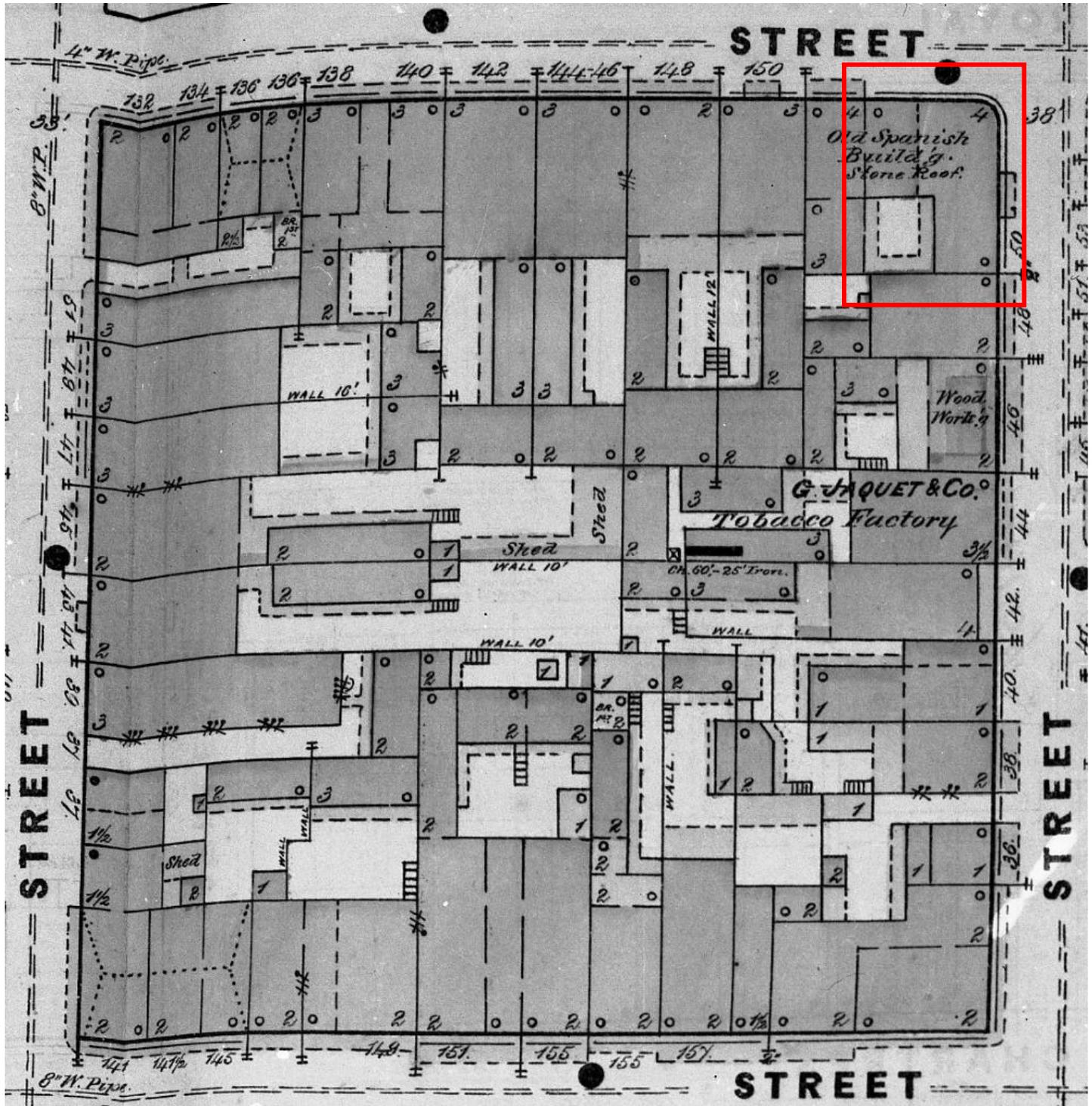
11987 NO.  
LA-21  
JAN 6 1930

HISTORIC AMERICAN  
BUILDINGS SURVEY  
SHEET 6 OF 20 SHEETS

INDEX NO.



# SANBORN INSURANCE MAPS



Sanborn's Insurance Maps 1876



# NEWSPAPER SOURCES

BY FITZPATRICK, BRENNAN & CO.

Contents of Mr. Chas. Roche's Book Store, **638 Royal St.,** near **St. Peter**

**AT AUCTION, CONTINUATION SALE TO-DAY 11 A. M. AND 7 P.M.**

NEW AND SECOND-HAND BOOKS IN FRENCH AND ENGLISH; LAW, DOCTORS AND School Books, Novels, Poetry and Works by well-known authors.

NO LIMIT. TERMS—CASH.

FITZPATRICK, BRENNAN & CO.,  
Auctioneers, Office 340 Camp street.

BY SAM H. STERN.

Times-Picayune June 1, 1904

AMUSEMENTS.

**GRAND GLOVE CONTEST**

—AT THE—

**OLYMPIC CLUB,**

**638 ROYAL STREET.**

On Tuesday, May 19,

**FOR A PURSE OF \$3000.**

—BETWEEN—

**ANDY BOWEN,**

THE LOUISIANA TORNADO,

—AND—

**BILLY MYER,**

THE STREATOR CYCLONE.

General Admission..... \$3 00  
Boxes (containing six seats)..... 25 00  
Single Seats in Boxes..... 5 00  
Tickets for sale at Lamoth's, under St. Charles Hotel.      may12-1w

— GRAND —

Times-Picayune May 13, 1891

and three packs of playing cards.

**Injured by the Machinery.**

A white girl, named Rosa Minter, aged 14 years, on Friday evening last had her foot severely injured by being caught in the belt at the Crescent Jute Factory, where she is employed. She was conveyed to her home, **642 Royal** street, where she was attended to by Dr. Charles Seeman.

Times-Picayune April 24, 1887

**ATHLETIC.**

**The Olympic Club Making Extensive Improvements—A New Military Company.**

The Olympic Club on **Royal** street, near Montegut, in the Third district, is making extensive changes and improvements in their quarters. They have purchased the building No. **638**, and at the last meeting of the governing committee a special building committee was appointed to make the repairs and improvements. On the committee are Messrs. Joseph Spori, J. T. Seaward, Chas. Noel, B. Holscher and John Booth. Since then the necessary contracts have been made and all work will be completed by the 3d of May, in time for the celebration of the club's anniversary on May 6. The partitions in the parlors will be removed and arches substituted converting the three rooms in one large parlor. Another room will be built by the gymnasium, which will contain the lockers and be used as a dressing-room. The billiard room up stairs will be lengthened, another room erected in the second story, the balconies widened and a two-story bathroom constructed. The walls will all be covered with the richest paper and the floors covered with the finest grade of moquette carpet. New chandeliers will be placed in parlors and reading-rooms, electric bells placed in all the departments, and the fittings generally made handsome and inviting. New furniture is to be put in the rooms, the building repainted and the yard laid with patent pavement.

Another move in the Olympic Club has been toward the organization of a military company, to be composed of Olympic members. A committee on military has been appointed, and report that the prospects of a first class company are very good. The committee in charge is: Judge Anthony Sambola, Captain John Coos and Captain John Booth.

Times-Picayune March 13, 1890

**Well Located Four-Story  
Brick Stores and Dwellings**

**636, 638 and 640 ROYAL,**  
S. E. Corner of St. Peter St.

**An Investment of Merit and Promise**

BY MASON & KERNACHAN, W. A. KERNACHAN

Times-Picayune May 13, 1900

town 708.

**PHILADELPHIA HAT CLEANERS.**

**60 ROYAL STREET.**

Hats cleaned and blocked at lowest prices.  
11-1-17

All makes of Tricotees bought, sold and

Times-Picayune November 16, 1916

# HISTORIC CHAIN OF TITLE

636-642 Royal St. (634 - 638 St. Peter St.)

Square: 42 Lot Number: 18475

Last Update: Monday, November 2nd 1981

Saturday, July 20th 1996

Record Source: Newspaper

Page: 17

Record Type: sale

Price: \$500000.00

Authority: Times-Picayune (Newspaper)

Authority Date: Not Given

From: Cahn Wolfson

Michelle Cahn Wolfson To: Whitney Beth Cahn Sandra Mathews Cahn Cory Rabin Cahn Whitney Beth Cahn Sandra Mathews Cahn Cory Rabin Cahn

Brief Description: Royal St. 636-38-40 and St. Peter 634-38.

Wednesday, May 5th 1976

Record Source: COB

Volume: 734

Page: 435

Record Type: sale

Price: \$355000.00

Authority: Irving Novick (Notary)

Authority Date: Not Given

From: Pluma Trahant To: Jules L. Cahn Michele Cahn

Mike E. Cahn

Brief Description: Lot measures 64' 6" 5''' actual (64' 7" 7''' title) front on Royal St., same width in rear, by depth b.e.p.l. and front on St. Peter St. of 61' 2" actual (60' 9" title). Survey by Gilbert, Kelly and Couturie, April 22, 1976.

Monday, December 15th 1958

Record Source: COB

Volume: 623

Page: 427

Record Type: [sale?]

Authority: Arthur J. O'Keefe Jr. (Notary)

Authority Date: Not Given

From: Richard A. Saba

To: Pluma Trahant

Wednesday, March 29th 1950

Record Source: COB

Volume: 570

Page: 233

Court#: 287895  
Record Type: succession  
Authority: Civil District Court (Court)  
Authority Date: Not Given  
From: Joseph Saba  
To: Richard A. Saba

Tuesday, July 6th 1937  
Record Source: COB  
Volume: 493  
Page: 476  
CDC#: 222247  
Record Type: succession  
Authority: Civil District Court (Court)  
Authority Date: Not Given  
From: Farida David  
To: Joseph Saba

Brief Description: Inherited.  
Friday, June 3rd 1904  
Record Source: COB  
Volume: 198  
Page: 535  
Record Type: [sale?]  
Authority: Felix J. Dreyfous (Notary)  
Authority Date: Not Given  
From: Alfred D. Danziger To: Joseph Saba

Wednesday, May 11th 1892  
Record Source: COB  
Volume: 145  
Page: 78  
CDC#: 32620  
Record Type: [sale?]  
Authority: Civil District Court (Court)  
Authority Date: Not Given  
From: Bertrand Saloy  
To: Alfred D. Danziger

Brief Description: Old Municipal No. 156 Royal Street. Note: Bertrand Saloy was said to have added the fourth story to this building and to have converted it into "tenements." It was of this period of ownership and use that Cable's "Sieur George" was written.

Tuesday, December 12th 1876  
Record Source: COB  
Volume: 107  
Page: 919

Court#: 43592

Record Type: sheriff's sale

Authority: 4th District Court (Court)

Authority Date: Not Given

From: Jean Fisse To: Bertrand Saloy

Brief Description: From suit of Bertrand Saloy vs. Jean Fisse. Mr. Fisse occupied the first floor corner shop as a grocery store for many years.

Monday, February 13th 1860

Record Source: Original Act

Volume: 75

Page: 37

Record Type: [sale?]

Authority: Octave de Armas (Notary)

Authority Date: Monday, February 13th 1860

From: Marie Aimee Le Monnier

To: Jean Fisse

Wednesday, October 11th 1848

Record Source: Unknown

Record Type: power of attorney

Authority: J. Agaisse (Notary)

Authority Date: Not Given

Agent/Single Party Act/Other: Marie Aimee Le Monnier Petit

Charles J. Carron

Brief Description: Power of Attorney granted to Charles J. Carron of New Orleans by Mme. Marie Aimee Le Monnier Petit of Rennes, France.

Thursday, March 28th 1839

Record Source: Original Act

Volume: 10

Page: 126

Record Type: [sale?]

Authority: A. Ducatel (Notary)

Authority Date: Thursday, March 28th 1839

From: Dr. Yves Rene Le Monnier Anne Celeste Genvieve Le Monnier

Aimee St. Martin

Dr. Yves Le Monnier

To: Marie Aimee Le Monnier

Brief Description: Part interest

Tuesday, June 19th 1838

Record Source: Original Act

Volume: 8

Page: 201

Record Type: [sale?]

Authority: A. Ducatel (Notary)  
Authority Date: Tuesday, June 19th 1838  
From: Marie Amire Le Monnier  
To: Dr. Yves Rene Le Monnier Anne Celeste Genvieve Le Monnier Marie Anne Le Monnier

Brief Description: Part interest.  
Saturday, May 5th 1838  
Record Source: Unknown  
Record Type: succession  
Authority: A. Ducatel (Notary)  
Authority Date: Not Given  
From: Dr. Yves Le Monnier  
To: Dr. Yves Rene Le Monnier Marie Aimee Le Monnier  
Anne Celeste Genvieve Le Monnier  
Marie Amire Le Monnier McCready

Brief Description: Inherited.  
Wednesday, March 7th 1838  
Record Source: Original Act  
Page: 93  
Record Type: inventory  
Authority: A. Ducatel (Notary)  
Authority Date: Wednesday, March 7th 1838  
Agent/Single Party Act/Other: Dr. Yves Rene Le Monnier

Brief Description: Inventory of the property of Yves Rene Le Monnier. "A certain property situated at the corner of Royal and St. Peter Street, measuring 57' front on St. Peter Street, together with the three story brick house, kitchen and all other dependencies..."  
Thursday, April 30th 1835  
Record Source: Unknown  
Record Type: succession  
Authority Date: Not Given  
Agent/Single Party Act/Other: Le Monnier

Brief Description: Family meeting of Le Monniers.  
Wednesday, June 13th 1832  
Record Source: Court  
Record Type: judgment  
Authority: Parish Court (Court)  
Authority Date: Not Given  
Agent/Single Party Act/Other: Rene Le Monnier  
Marie Aimee Le Monnier

Brief Description: Rene Le Monnier appointed tutor for the minor child Miss Marie Aimee Le Monnier.  
Tuesday, May 1st 1821

Record Source: Unknown  
Record Type: auction sale  
Authority: H. Lavergne (Notary)  
Authority Date: Not Given  
From: Francois Grandchamps  
To: Dr. Yves Le Monnier

Brief Description: Half interest.

Tuesday, March 21st 1820

Record Source: Original Act

Volume: 19

Page: 130

Record Type: registration

Authority: M. de Armas (Notary)

Authority Date: Tuesday, March 21st 1820

Agent/Single Party Act/Other: Francois Grandchamps Dr. Yves Le Monnier

Brief Description: Registration of papers by Francois Grandchamps. "The undersigned Joseph Guillot, arbiter named by Mr. Yves Le Monnier on one part, and Joseph Pilie arbiter named by Mr. Francois Grandchamps on the other part; certify having transported ourselves at their request, into the undivided house, of which they are proprietors, situated at the corner of Royal and St. Peter streets, for the purpose of dividing the tenancy of said house; which we have executed in the following manner: Mr. Francois Grandchamps shall occupy for his half all the entresol story, the large store of his Pharmacy, the Royal Street store and its rear as far as Mr. Le Monnier's cellar, a store (room) at the back of the courtyard beyond Mr. Le Monnier's cellar, a small store (room) under the stairway and a chamber on the third story, which shall be the first one to the right in ascending the stairway, with the condition that the said chamber shall be intended solely to lodge Mr. Grandchamps's clerk, and that he shall be permitted to have a servant go up there once a day in order to make the said chamber. Mr. Yves Le Monnier shall occupy for his half the two upper stories, (with the exception of the chamber intended for Mr. Grandchamps's clerk) the two small stores in St. Peter Street, the cellar which he occupies beyond the Royal Street store and a small store (room) under the old stairway of the entresol. Well understood that each one shall have the right to occupy or to rent for his own particular account and to his own profit, the stores or apartments which have fallen to him in the above division... "

Monday, December 30th 1811

Record Source: Court

Court#: 2984

Record Type: [sale?]

Authority: City Court (Court)

Authority Date: Not Given

Agent/Single Party Act/Other: Francois Grandchamps Gurlie and Guillot Dr. Yves Le Monnier

Brief Description: City Court 1st. Series 2984, Gurlie and Guillot vs. Francois Grandchamps and Yves Le Monnier. "To the Honorable Moreau Lislet, Judge of the City Court. Humbly beseecheth Gurlie and Guillot residing in town. Saying that Pierre Pedesclaux employed them as mason workmen to do diverse buildings and additions to his house situated at Royal and St. Peter streets for which work done to said house... your suppliants have... furnished their own hand labor and all the necessary time to finish the said work, and for

the price thereof there remains due them according to their account reached amicably with the said Pedesclaux, the sum of fifteen hundred dollars... although a more considerable sum was due them, amounting to the sum of around two thousand nine hundred dollars, but that your suppliants reduced it to the said sum on the promise that the said Pedesclaux then made to them, to pay it at once... Your suppliants say moreover that the said Pedesclaux, the 6 February of the year 1806, sold the said house in agreement... to several stock holders and his creditors for the purpose of reselling or of renting the said house in order to pay the creditors from the proceeds thereof."

Tuesday, May 7th 1811

Record Source: Original Act

Page: 211

Record Type: building contract

Authority: Narcisse Broutin (Notary)

Authority Date: Tuesday, May 7th 1811

Agent/Single Party Act/Other: Francois Grandchamps

Dr. Yves Le Monnier

Arsene le Carriere Latour

Hyacinth Laclotte

Brief Description: Building contract between Yves Le Monnier, Francois Grandchamps and Arsene Le Carriere Latour, Hyacinth Laclotte. Agreement to finish house begun by Pierre Pedesclaux. Other transactions: N. Broutin, May 24, 1811, 0/141; N. Broutin, November 13, 1811, 0/469.

Thursday, May 2nd 1811

Record Source: Original Act

Page: 111

Record Type: [sale?]

Authority: Narcisse Broutin (Notary)

Authority Date: Thursday, May 2nd 1811

From: Pierre Pedesclaux

To: Francois Grandchamps Dr. Yves Le Monnier

Brief Description: Recorded: May 2, 1812. Described as "of several stories with a terrace roof."

Thursday, February 6th 1806

Record Source: Original Act

Page: 56

Record Type: agreement

Authority: Narcisse Broutin (Notary)

Authority Date: Thursday, February 6th 1806

From: John McDonogh Samuel Winter Thomas Urquhart David Urquhart Michel Fortier Joseph Tricou Antoine Carraby Joseph McNeil William Donaldson Bartholome Bosque Pierre Carraby Jean Baptiste Labatut Thomas L. Herman Hillaire Boutte Beverly Chew Richard Relf James Sterrett Francois Livaudais  
To: Pierre Pedesclaux

Brief Description: Loan contract for \$17,000 between Pierre Pedesclaux and a group of business men who invested in his plan to cancel the Pedesclaux mortgage, of \$14,000, held by the Widow Delord Sarpy and Messrs. Starrett and Le Blanc, and provide \$3,000 to finish his house, which at this time was of only one story,

at the corner of Royal and St. Peter streets. The following put up \$1,000 each: John McDonogh, Smauel Winter and Thomas L. Herman, Hillaire Boutte, Beverly Chew and Richard Relf, William Donaldson, Pierre and Antoine Carraby, James Sterrett, Michel Fortier, Francois Livaudais, Thomas and David Urquhart, Jean Baptiste Labatut and Joseph Tricou.

Thursday, January 1st 1795

Record Source: Unknown

Record Type: [sale?]

Authority: 14th Judicial District

Authority Date: Not Given

From: Jacob Cowperthwaite

To: Pierre Pedesclaux

Brief Description: Jacob Cowperthwaite was an American from New Jersey who was a prominent builder in New Orleans during the Spanish period.

Thursday, July 14th 1791

Record Source: Original Act

Volume: 1

Page: 357

Record Type: sale

Price: \$1500.00<Pesos

Authority: Carlos Ximenes (Notary)

Authority Date: Thursday, July 14th 1791

From: Messrs. Durand Brothers and Company

To: Jacob Cowperthwaite

Brief Description: "Miguel Fortier, merchant, acting on power of attorney granted him by Messrs. Durand Brothers and Company, of Cabo, France, dated October 25, 1790, sells in their name to Santiago Cowperthwaite a lot situated at the corner of Royal and St. Peter streets, 60' front on Royal and 'the depth to be found' on St. Peter Street, bounded by houses of Luis Cornue and Juan Bautista Orzo. The house was acquired from Rosa Giralton, act passed before same Notary [no date] and they sell it mortgage free at a price of 1,500 pesos cash."

Saturday, January 1st 1791

Record Source: Unknown

Record Type: [sale?]

Authority: Carlos Ximenes (Notary)

Authority Date: Not Given

From: Rosa Giralton Rosa Giralton To: Messrs. Durand Brothers and Company Messrs. Durand Brothers and Company

Brief Description: Note: Reference for this statement comes from the previous act which was found in Volume I of Ximenes. His earlier acts are not available in the New Orleans Notarial Archives. Moreover, all references to neighboring ownership of this period, found in the properties on either side of this lot, also authenticate this statement.

Friday, January 1st 1790

Record Source: Unknown

Record Type: [sale?]  
Authority: 14th Judicial District  
Authority Date: Not Given  
From: Nicolas Vebent To: Rosa Giralton Lemelle

Brief Description: [Note: A gap exists here during which it is possible to surmise fairly accurately the ownership, based on records of neighboring properties which were originally a part of this lot.] Note: Sometime around 1790 the Widow Lemelle acquired this property.

Monday, January 28th 1782

Record Source: Original Act

Volume: 5

Page: 106

Record Type: [sale?]

Authority: L. Mazange (Notary)

Authority Date: Monday, January 28th 1782

From: Nicolas Vebent To: Juan Bautista Orso

Brief Description: This concerns Lot No. 18473 which at this time undoubtedly belonged to the original plot. "A house built on a lot situated on St. Peter Street, 36' 6" front by 60' of depth... which lot is bounded by houses owned by the Trudeau heirs on one side and by the vendor on the other. Mr. Vebent has this house built and acquired the lot from M. de Chamilie [Chantilly?]."

Monday, September 12th 1774

Record Source: Original Act

Volume: 5

Page: 178

Record Type: [sale?]

Authority: Jean Baptiste Garic (Notary)

Authority Date: Monday, September 12th 1774

From: Pedro Joseph Favrot To: Mariana Oregon David

Brief Description: This concerns Lot No. 18477, the Royal Street neighbor of this lot under consideration. "A house... situated on Royal Street, built on a lot 60' in front by 120' deep, bounded on one side by lot owned by Nicolas Vebent and on the other by lot owned by Francisco Langlot... "

Friday, January 1st 1773

Record Source: Unknown

Record Type: [sale?]

Authority: 14th Judicial District

Authority Date: Not Given

From: de Chamilie

To: Nicolas Vebent

Brief Description: Note: Reference fo this is found in L. Mazange, 5/106, dated January 28, 1782. "Mr. Vebent had this house built and acquired the lot form M. de Chamilie [Chantilly?]."

Monday, January 1st 1731

Record Source: Map

Record Type: [land grant and/or sale and/or succession]

Authority: Gonichon Map (Map)

Authority Date: Not Given

Agent/Single Party Act/Other: Chamilly

Brief Description: The map lists "Sieur Chamilly" at lot No. 69.

Thursday, January 1st 1728

Record Source: Map

Record Type: [land grant and/or sale and/or succession]

Authority: Broutin Map (Map)

Authority Date: Not Given

Agent/Single Party Act/Other: Chamilly

Brief Description: The map lists "Sieur Chamilly" at lot No. 78.

Thursday, January 1st 1722

Record Source: Map

Record Type: [land grant and/or sale and/or succession]

Authority: de la Tour Map (Map)

Authority Date: Not Given

Agent/Single Party Act/Other: Francois Galard

Brief Description: Lists Francois Galard, called Chamilly, at Lot No. 68. Marginal note: "Good, it is still the same in 1732."