

ALCEE FORTIER COLLECTION

Louisiana State Museum Record Group 65

Scope and Content Note

The Alcee Fortier Collection consists of the papers and books of several generations of the family of Alcee Fortier [1856-1914], Louisiana historian and professor of Romance languages for thirty-four years at the University of Louisiana and Tulane University in New Orleans. The Fortier family collection [ca. 1832-1956] was compiled by Alcee Fortier, his ancestor, cousin, and descendants. It consists both of manuscript materials [1.75 lin. ft.] and printed items [63 items.].

The earliest materials in the collection are several plantation journals and slave records [ca. 1832-1856] compiled by Valcour Aime [1797-1867], a pioneer in sugar cultivation and refining in St. James Parish, Louisiana, and maternal grandfather of Alcee Fortier. Albert Ferry, another of Aime's grandsons and a cousin of Fortier, in 1878 published a translation of these manuscripts. This is entitled Plantation Diary of the Late Mr. Valcour Aime, Formerly Proprietor of the Plantation Known As the St. James Sugar Refinery. Situated in the Parish of St. James and Now Owned by Mr. John Burnside. The Alcee Fortier Collection includes a copy of this publication, the original manuscripts, and a bound typescript of the diaries.

Alcee Fortier's own papers are primarily a collection of lectures, scant correspondence, historical notations, and printed materials [ca. 1880-1910]. Printed items in the collection represent some of Fortier's published works. Among these are his four-volume A History of Louisiana (New York, 1904) and four pamphlets entitled Le Chateau de Chambord (New Orleans, 1884) which is the text of a lecture Fortier delivered to an Athenee Louisianais conference in 1883; Voyage en Europe en 1895 (New Orleans, 1896); Les Planteurs Sucriers de L'Ancien Regime (Paris, 1906); and Ride Through Historic New Orleans (New Orleans, 1909), an address Fortier "tendered to President Taft" at Jackson Barracks on the occasion of Taft's visit to New Orleans October 31, 1909. The collection also includes Vol. III, Pt. II, Louisiana Historical Society Publications (1904), which contains Fortier's lectures for the Centennial Celebration of the Louisiana Transfer, December, 1903; sixteen copies of the "Forward" to Fortier's encyclopedia Louisiana, Comprising Sketches of Parishes, Towns, Events... (Century, 1914); and four copies of Memorial Program: Dedicatory Exercises, Alcee Fortier Boys' High School (New Orleans, 1931), which contain the texts of several addresses recapitulating Fortier's life, works, ancestry, and prominence.

On the 100th anniversary of Fortier's birth, June 5, 1956, New Orleans States-Item columnist Charles L. "Pie" Dufour described Fortier as one of three major historians of Louisiana, along with Francois Xavier Martin and Charles Gayarre. Dufour also mentioned some salient points about Fortier's life and background:

Fortier was born at the St. James Parish plantation of his grandfather Valcour Aime, the fifth generation of Fortiers in Louisiana. His great-great grandfather Michel Fortier settled in Louisiana in 1740. Alcee was steeped in the love and lore of romanticized Louisiana history from an early age, and was a no less ardent Francophile throughout his life. His early education was with tutors; later Fortier briefly studied liberal arts at the University of Virginia from 1872-1873. He returned to New Orleans because of poor health, and later read law under the direction of Judge S.M. Berault. He taught French at Boys' High School of New Orleans and at the preparatory department of the University of Louisiana before receiving an appointment as a member of the university level faculty (later Tulane University), where he taught and wrote as professor of French and Romance languages until his death in 1914.

After Romance languages and literature, Fortier's chief interest was Louisiana history. He served as president of the Louisiana Historical Society from 1894 to 1912. In this capacity he composed a number of the lectures included in the Alcee Fortier Collection. In 1904 Fortier published his A History of Louisiana (New York: Manzi, Joyant & Co.), based largely on manuscripts which the society had assembled from European archives over the previous six decades, and which are today in the collection of the Louisiana State Museum Historical Center. Fortier also published a short history of France in 1899 and a history of Mexico in 1907. Some of his notes for these works, along with a typescript of his unfinished play "The Pythoness," are included in the manuscripts.

Active in reform politics in New Orleans during the late nineteenth century, Fortier also provided the city's socially prominent classes intellectual leadership in combating perceived attacks on old Louisiana society which they found in George Washington Cable's romances. Several lectures in the Alcee Fortier Collection contain Fortier's enunciation of white Louisiana society's new definition of Louisiana Creoles, one that excluded persons of Negro heritage. This use was a direct reaction to Cable's use of the word Creole to designate people of mixed blood.

Fortier's death at the relatively young age of fifty-seven was a shock to New Orleans. City newspaper articles lamented his death and recounted his works, and one journal even printed an editorial cartoon to note his passing. Notices of his death appeared in newspapers around the nation. Hundred attended his funeral at the little Loyola Church on st. Charles Avenue, where Fortier's sons and Tulane UIniversity president Dr. Robert Sharp led a list of pallbearers that included the governor and mayor,

judges, the French ambassador, professors, businessmen, and other friends. Tulane University suspended classes to allow its students and faculty to attend.

James Joseph Alcee Fortier [1890-?], Alcee's second son, kept a scrapbook [ca. 1895-1956] with numerous clippings about his father and family which begins the papers of another generation of Fortiers. An attorney and banking house president, Fortier was interested in politics and served as a state legislator from 1915-1920. In 1921 he served as a member of the Louisiana Constitutional Convention, and during the 1920s was president of the Orleans Parish School Board. In 1935, after the Depression-related failure of his Commercial Credit Company, James Fortier received an appointment as paid director and simultaneous board president of the Louisiana State Museum. He served in this capacity for seven years.

While museum director, James Fortier edited a number of museum publications included in the Fortier Collection. These include three museum annual reports [1934-1939] and eleven monographs on Louisiana subjects:

Death Mask of Napoleon: The Causes of the Rise and Fall Of Napoleon Bonaparte. New Orleans, 1936.

Huey Pierce Long. The Martyr of the Age. New Orleans, 1937.

Glamorous Louisiana Under Ten Flags. New Orleans, 1937.

General Zachary Taylor, The Louisiana President of the United States of America. New Orleans, 1937.

The Life of Judah Philip Benjamin. New Orleans, 1937.

The Story of Jean and Pierre Lafitte The Pirate-Patriots. New Orleans, 1938.

The St. Louis Cathedral and Its Neighbors. New Orleans, 1938.

Natural History in Bounteous Louisiana. 2 vols. New Orleans, 1938.

Carpet-Bag Misrule in Louisiana: The Tragedy of the Reconstruction Era Following the War Between the States. New Orleans, 1938.

The Spanish-American War of 1898: Liberty for Cuba and World Power for the United States: Louisiana's Part in the Accomplishment of the Manifest Destiny of the Nation. New Orleans, 1939.

The Martyr of the Age was a paean to Huey Long that strongly suggests the politicization of the State Museum during highly politically-charged times in Louisiana. The nine State Museum publications that followed it prominently display the portrait of

Louisiana governor Richard W. Leche with captions featuring him as "Leader in the Solution of Southern Economic Problems" (in Carpet-Bag Misrule); signing a bill appropriating funds for a Spanish-American War memorial proposed for New Orleans (in The Spanish-American War); or "An ardent sportsman, A protector of wildlife" (in Natural History of Bounteous Louisiana). After Sam H. Jones became governor of Louisiana in 1940, a change in politics in Baton Rouge resulted in a staff realignment at the State Museum which replaced James Fortier and all but one member of the Museum board.

James Fortier continued his interest in history and during the 1940s co-founded the short-lived New Orleans Academy of American History. This organization published another of the pamphlets in the Fortier Collection, entitled The Presidents of the United States. Fortier was also a member of the Louisiana Historical Society, Athenee Louisianais, L'Union Francaise Louisianais, and several other social, literary, and historical organizations.

Another of Alcee Fortier's sons was Edouard-J. Fortier [1883-1918], who was assistant professor of Romance languages and literature at Columbia University at the time of his early death at the age of thirty-six. Edouard-J. graduated from Tulane University in 1904 and then did graduate studies at John-Hopkins University while teaching French at Notre-Dame of Maryland. He was instructor of Romance languages at Yale from 1906-07, then associate professor at the University of Illinois (Urbana) from 1907-1909. In 1910 he went to Columbia where he taught and received a doctorate. He published a number of articles on Romance languages, and like his father was particularly interested in Louisiana French literature. Edouard-J.'s Les Lettres Francais en Louisiane (Quebec, 1915), of which the Collection includes several copies, is a comprehensive bibliographical study of the subject.

In 1935 Gilbert J. and Alcee J.J. Fortier contributed another effort to the family's works on Louisiana literature, a translation and typescript of The Saint-Ybars (New Orleans, 1881) by Dr. Alfred Mercier [1816-1894]. The Collection also includes several photographs, on file with the Curator of Photography, Louisiana State Museum; several genealogical charts of the Fortier family, and miscellaneous personal items.

Alcee Fortier Collection (1983.65.4-.62)

- .4 Plantation Diary Mr. Valcour Aime, 1832-1840. Record of cash expenditures for plantation supplies and family expendituresi payments to merchants and other individuals and institutions or businesses. Also, in part, agricultural journal.
1 item Ms. 57 pp. 12 3/4 x 9 1/2 bound
- .5 Plantation Diary Mr. Valcour Aime 1841-1844. Record of weather, agricultural conditions, river levels, brick-making, plantation purchases and payments to individuals.
1 item Ms. 12 3/4 x 9 1/2 bound
- .6a Plantation Memo for Valcour Aime. Memo of sugar processing operations, concerning amount of cane weighed and ground, amount of juice and bagasse extracted. Accompanied by typescript translation.
1 item Ms. 1 p. 12 1/4 x 7 7/8
- .6b Typescript of above.
1 item Ts. 1 p. 11 x 3/4
- .7 Statistical record of Valcour Aime Plantation slaves. Record of birth, mother, death, and assignments of slaves of the plantation of Valcour Aime.
1 item Ms. 14 pp. 13 1/4 x 8 7/8 bound
- .8 Plantation Journal of Valcour Aime. Agricultural record of the Aime Plantation, including crops and weather conditions.
1 item Ms. 53 pp. 14 1/2 x 9 5/8 bound
- .9 Plantation Journal of Valcour Aime, 1844-1856. Journal of payments and financial accounts 1845-1859 [57 pp.]i agricultural day book 1844-1858 [89 PP.]i compilations of weights and measures of sugar crops, sugar and molasses [42 PP.]i addresses [1 P.]i misc. inserted newsclipping ca. 1845; misc. sketches; family history, genealogy, statistics and poetry by Florent Fortier or Alcee Fortier [?] [14 pp.].
1 item Ms. 15 1/2 x 10 1/2
- .10a Letter, Baron de Pontalba, Senlis, Oise, France, to Alcee Fortier, N.O., Aug. 29, 1902, reiterating his offer of assistance in making available documents to help Fortier compile his history of Louisiana.
1 item ALS 4 pp. 7 x 4 1/2
- .10b Typescript of above.
1 item Ts 2 pp. 11 x 8 1/2

- .11a Letter, Baron de Pontalba, Senlis, Oise, France, ca. Nov. 15, 1902, to Alcee Fortier, 1241 Esplanade Ave., N.O., addressing questions in Fortier's letter of October 28 regarding construction and costs of Cabildo incurred by the writer's ancestor.
1 item Ms. 4 pp. 8 1/4 x 5 1/4
- .11b Typescript of above.
1 item Ts. 3 pp. 11 x 8 1/2
- .11c Envelope, Pontalba to Fortier ca. Sept. 7, 1902.
1 item Ms. 3 3/4 x 4 5/8
- .11d Photostat Copy of above.
1 item photostat 3 3/4 x 4 5/8
- .12a Letter, Baron de Pontalba, Senlis, Oise, France, to Alcee Fortier, N.O., responding to Fortier's letter of September 16 and noting that he has sent to Grace King a photograph of his great grandfather Pontalba's portrait, which Fortier may use in his history. Also sending an account of his family's origin; explaining the title of Jean Joseph Delfau de Pontalba who traveled to Louisiana in 1732; and explaining what documents and information he has on Estevan Miro and Miro's wife, Pontalba's ancestor.
1 item ALS 5 pp. 10 3/8 x 8 1/8
- .12b Typescript of above.
1 item Ts. 8 pp. 11 x 8 1/2
- .13a Memoire of Paul Passy, doctor of letters at school of advanced studies in Paris, concerning Alcee Fortier's French studies during July, 1895 and his skill in French phonetics. Letterhead Le Maître Fonetique...Neuilly-St. James. June 27, 1895.
1 item ADS 1 p. 8 1/2 x 5 1/4
- .13b Typescript of above.
1 item Ts. 1 p. 11 x 8 1/2
- .13c,d. Business card of Paul Passy and copy of card.
2 items printed 2 1/4 x 3 3/4
- .14a Report by the Jury on History in the Anthropology section of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition Exhibits in St. Louis, Mo., recommending prizes to various states and individuals. 1903.
1 item Ts. 7 pp. 11 x 8 1/2
- .14b Typescript and manuscript of above.
1 item Ts. and Ms. 11 pp.

- .15 "The Pythoness," an unfinished drama of old New Orleans by Alcee Fortier. Ca. 1900.
1 item Ts. 106 pp. (duplicates) 11 x 8 1/2
- .16 Lecture on Spanish and French explorers in La. by Alcee Fortier.
1 item Ms. 23 pp. 12 1/2 x 8
- .17 Lecture on Iberville by Alcee Fortier, ca. 1895.
1 item Ms. 9 pp. 12 1/2 x 8
- .18 Lecture on La. colonization by Alcee Fortier. ca. 1900.
1 item Ms. 26 pp. 12 1/2 x 8
- .19 Lecture on La. 1732-1800 by Alcee Fortier, ca. 1900.
1 item Ms. 26 pp. 12 1/2 x 7 3/4
- .20 Lecture on Louisiana as a colony by Alcee Fortier, ca. 1900.
1 item Ts. 8 pp. 11 x 8 1/2
- .21 Lecture on 19th century La. by Alcee Fortier ca. 1900.
1 item Ms. 24 pp. 11 1/4 x 8 1/8
- .22 Lecture on Creoles of La. by Alcee Fortier ca. Dec., 1895.
1 item Ms. 27 pp. 11 3/4 x 8 1/4
- .23 Lecture on Louisiana Creole by Alcee Fortier ca. 1895.
One of two lectures given in Nashville, Tennessee on French and English literature in Louisiana. Also, 2 pp. notes on La. dialects.
2 items Ms. 25 pp. 12 1/4 x 8
- .24a Lecture in honor of President McKinley's visit by Alcee Fortier May 2, 1901.
1 item Ms. 16 pp. 8 3/4 x 6 1/4
- 24b,c,d Typescript copies of above•
3 items Ts•
- 25 Louisiana Centennial lecture by Alcee Fortier, Dec. 19, 1903, sponsored by the Louisiana Historical Society and delivered at the old Ursuline Convent. Published in Louisiana Historical Society Publications III, Pt. II (1904), 53-59.
Ms. 15 pp. 11 x 8 1/2
- .26 Lecture for centennial of La. Transfer by Alcee Fortier, Sept. 5, 1903.
1 item Ms. 9 pp. 10 7/8 x 8 1/2
- .27 Lecture on Louisiana's contribution to Southern literature by Alcee Fortier, ca. 1900.
1 item Ms. 24 pp. 12 1/4 x 7 3/4

- .28 Lecture on Louisiana's contribution to U.S. history by Alcee Fortier, addressed to President Taft, 1909.
1 item Ms. 15 pp. 8 1/2 x 7
- .29a Lecture on physicians in Louisiana history by Alcee Fortier, 1905.
1 item Ms. 36 pp. 8 1/2 x 7
- .29a-e. Typescript and four copies of above.
4 items Ts. 11 x 8 1/2
- .30 Address for opening of New Orleans branch library by Alcee Fortier, Nov. 25, 1907.
1 item Ms. 12
- .31 Lecture. "A speech to the Congress of Scholars ("The Present Problems in the fields of Romance Literatures").
4 items. ms. 39pp.
- .32 Lecture. "University of Wisconsin Lectures on Contemporary French".
1 item. ms. 4pp.
- .33 Lecture. "Important Places in Paris".
1 item. ms. 4pp.
- .34 Copies of Original Manuscripts of above 3 lectures.
1 item. ts. 28pp.
- .35 Lecture. "Le Quatorze Juillet".
1 item. ms. 12pp.
- .36 Lecture. "George Sand".
1 item. ms. 16pp.
1 item. ms. 18pp.
- .37 Lecture. "Victor Hugo as a Poet".
1 item. ms. 15pp.
- .38 Lecture. "Accomplishment of France On French".
1 item. ms. 16pp.
- .39 Lecture. The Teaching of History in the South.
1 item. ms. 18pp.
- .40 Lecture. "The development of French teaching in the U. S."
1 item. ms. 25pp.
- .41 Memoire. "Resume of 2 reports: Teaching of French in Louisiana". Ca. 1900.
1 item. ms. 13pp.
- .42 Notes. George Washington.
1 item. ms. 3p
- .43 Notes. "Louis XI, Louis XIV, Louis XV, French Revolution".
3 items. ms. 9pp.
- .44 Notes. [Trip to Paris ?].
1 item. ms. 18pp.
- .45 Notes and Documents-Pierre Laussat, Ca. 1900.
2 items. ms. 20pp.

- 1 item. ms.
- .47 Notes on History of Mexico, 1579-1900. 1 item. 17pp.
- .48 Notes on Mexican Declaration of Independence and Constitution, 1813-14. 1 item. ms. 2pp.
- .49 Misc. Notes on La. history. 6 Items. ms. 18pp.
- .50 Miscellaneous Notes. 7 items. ms. 29pp.
- .51 Notes. Three Louisiana Dramas. 1 item. ms. 5pp.
- .52 Notes. "Hamilton's Mobile". 1 item. ms. 7pp.
- .53 Notes. 19th Century France. 1 item. ms. 14pp.
- .54 Notes. Jeanne d'Arc. 1 item. ms. 5pp.
- .55 Notes. French Medieval and Louisiana Literature. 2 items. ms. 5pp.
- .56 Correspondence. Geo. King Logan to James J. A. Fortier. May, 1941. 1 item. ts. 16pp.
- .57a Scrapbook. James J. A. Fortier. 1 item. 59 pcs.
- .57b Xerographic Copies. James J. A. Fortier. Scrapbook.
- .58a Sceapbook parts. James J. A. Fortier. 1 item. 21 pes.
- .58b Xerographic Copies. James J. A. Fortier. Scrapbook.
- .59, .60 Miscellaneous Personal Items. 2 items.
- .61a Transcript/Translation. "The Saint-Ybars" 1 item. ts. pp. 1-130pp.
- .61b Ibid. 1 item. ts. pp.131-274.
- .62 Genealogical Charts. Fortier family. 1 item. 43pp.