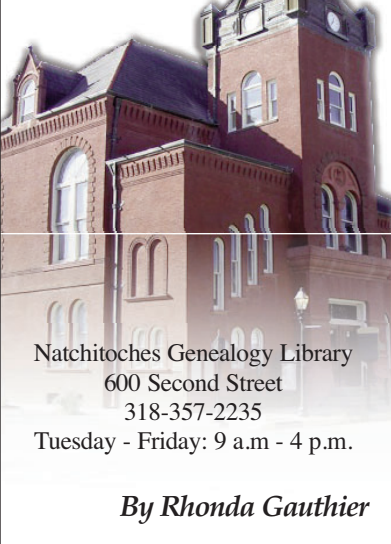


What's Your Line?



Natchitoches Genealogy Library
600 Second Street
318-357-2235
Tuesday - Friday: 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

By Rhonda Gauthier

My family didn't spend Halloween going door to door expecting treats from strangers; instead we went to Church acknowledging All Souls Day, and again on November first for All Saints Day.

Don't get me wrong! Halloween day we helped mom bake cookies and make candy apples and popcorn balls. Later on we'd watch black and white movies with Boris Karloff, vampires or werewolves.

Then my grandparents told scary stories. They grew up in an isolated area full of superstition and folklore and actually believed the frightening stories they told us.

Popo told us how in 1881 the nearby Catholic Church was robbed and burned. The thieves couldn't carry the gold bell so either they buried it in the old cemetery or threw it down the Church's well. Years later, late one night, some men went to the cemetery trying to find the bell. Two were digging and one was the lookout. In the darkness he yelled down to them that lights were coming up the hill fast.

Popo's voice got louder as he said, "The lights were coming up the hill faster and faster, closer and closer, and as they approached..." Popo slammed his walking cane down on the porch floor. We all jumped! "The lookout screamed and fell into the pit with the others! Suddenly, a team of black ghost horses with glowing eyes leaped over the hole! As their hooves touched the ground the gold church bell started ringing and glowing in the dark! The ghost horses galloped away and the bell's ringing faded in the distance."

Then there was the mal de ojo, or evil eye. The Jettatore casts curses upon people by staring at them. Popo would tell us, "The Jettatore likes to stare at little children. She will make you sick." He'd reach out and touch our curly hair saying, "Don't look at her! She will make your hair fall out; she'll make you fall down. I know her; she'll make you sick with envy."

We'd be so scared because we knew her. She was talked about and people wouldn't look directly at her for fear of being stricken ill. To ward off the power of the Jettatore's stare, people wore amulets and kept babies covered so the envy spell couldn't be cast. If a child was stricken ill, an egg was put in a glass of water under its bed. When the egg was found cooked in the water, the child was cured.

Once I asked my grandmother why the mal de ojo didn't frighten her. "My baby, your Popo's niece, she comes to visit every Sunday. When she walks through the yard gate she's surrounded by all my herbs; they counteract her stare. She knows to be mindful of your momo. Besides, she also knows I make her coffee every Sunday."

So, are these stories only folk tales? We know our Momo and Popo don't tell lies.



Doug Gitter just added these pillows and tea towels to the Clementine Hunter collection in August.

Clementine Hunter collection makes art attainable

Doug Gitter has been a passionate collector of contemporary Americana Folk art for 27 years. After losing several pieces of his collection to Hurricane Katrina he decided to make what used to be affordable art, attainable again.

"When Clementine Hunter was living you could drive to Melrose Plantation, go talk to her and buy a painting for a few dollars," said Gitter. "Nowadays the same painting might sell for several thousands of dollars."

He obtained a licensing agreement with Clementine Hunter's estate and developed The Clementine Hunter Collection. He began 10 years ago making Giclees, museum quality reproductions, of Hunter's art. Then he spent six years designing the collection's serving platters and bowls. At first he tried hand painting the ceramic serving platters but it didn't work.

"Her art speaks to you," said Gitter. "It took so long because I wanted to retain the movement. I couldn't get the collection to pop. It wasn't speaking to me. I wanted it to move people like her artwork moves me. The cotton in her paintings is so fluffy. It is a three dimensional look. I had to figure out how to capture that and make it look authentic."

He began to hand mold the ceramic pieces with raised areas creating relief. The texture of the surface mimics the paint. He took her rectangular artwork and redesigned the shape to fit a round or square bowl. He had to determine what elements needed to be retained or removed. The Clementine Hunter ceramic collection is made by hand and hand-painted. Pieces can be hung on the wall, displayed on a bookshelf or used as serving pieces. The

collection's serving platters and bowls come in 14 shapes and 14 scenes ranging from \$120-\$180.

The newest additions to the collection released in August include pillows, linen tea towels and dinnerware.

Two artisans work for two weeks to embroider one pillow. Each pillow is made of 100 percent organic cotton and filled with micro fiber. Every stitch on the pillow is done by hand making each one unique. Hunter's original paintings contain over 30 colors and artists worked tirelessly to select the right thread to match. Again, Hunter's artwork had to be resized to fit the 20-inch by 20-inch pillow. They come in four scenes including Cotton Mural, Pecan Picking, Zinnias Looking at You and A Day at Melrose Planation for \$288 a pillow.

The tea towels are silk screened and hand embroidered on 100 percent natural linen. A fine ivory cotton crochet lace finishes the bottom edge. Seven scenes are depicted on the towels including Baptism on Cane River, Cotton Picking, Zinnias Looking at You, A Day at Melrose Planation, Cotton Mural, Pecan Picking and The Wedding. Each tea towel measures 18 inches by 26 inches and sells for \$45 in an organdy reusable gift pouch.

When designing the dinnerware collection he used partial relief to make them durable but included texture to retain movement. "We didn't want the customer to knock off a hand or a foot while eating a salad." Since each piece is hand painted no two sets are the same. The set of four 14-ounce mugs sell for \$152. The set of four, 10-inch dinner plates sell for \$168. The dinnerware depicts four scenes including Cotton



Dinnerware is new to the collection. The mug and plate sets are sold separately and come with four matching scenes. They can be purchased individually to mix and match.



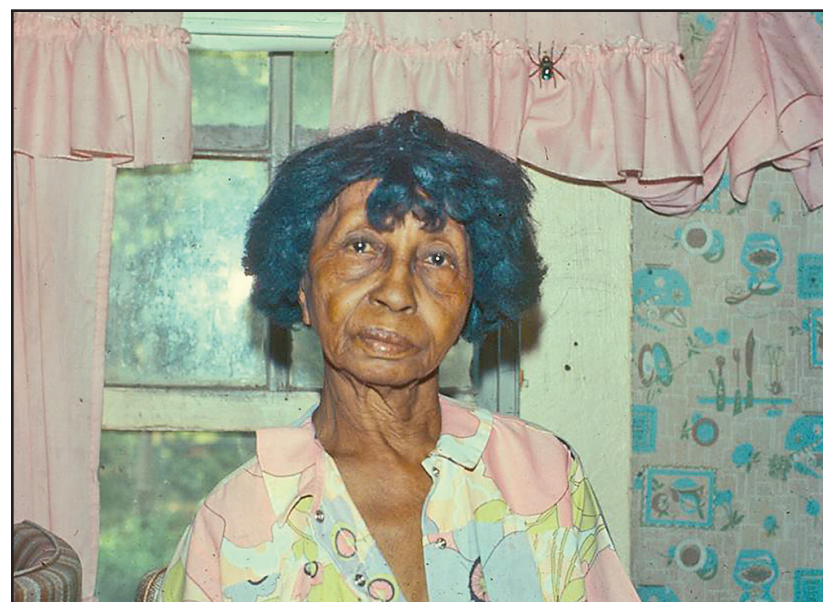
The collection's serving platters and bowls were released in 2013, with six more added in 2014. The ceramic pieces are hand-molded and hand-painted. No two are alike.

Picking, Pecan Picking, A Day at Melrose Plantation and The Cotton Mural.

A portion of the proceeds from sales of the Clementine Hunter Collection goes to the preservation and interpretation of the Clementine Hunter House at Melrose Plantation. Work on the house will begin once a historic structures report is completed. The house's interpretation involves a plan to use the rooms to point out aspects of Hunter's life. The most important room is the back room where she painted when she wasn't outdoors.

The collection can be found at Plantation Treasures, the Melrose Plantation gift shop, Natchitoches Pecans at Little Eva Plantation in Cloutierville and online at gittergallery.com.

"Customers love the stuff," said Susan Vallee of Natchitoches Pecans. "People come in and buy one or two things and always come back and buy more. Clementine Hunter was actually born at this planation when it was Hidden Hills before it was Little Eva. I give everyone that comes in a Clementine



A portion of the proceeds from sales of the Clementine Hunter Collection will go to the preservation and interpretation of the Clementine Hunter House at Melrose Plantation. The planation wants to recreate what the house looked like when Hunter occupied it. They are searching for information about the wallpaper in this photo.

Hunter history lesson. Being in the pecan business we sell more of the cotton and pecan picking pieces."

"The collection is reaching the local clientele," said Tina Rachel of Plantation Treasures. "These people don't have the resources to obtain the originals but can

come by and buy a piece that is reasonably priced. They tell me that they have always wanted one but could never afford it. I'll have avid collectors come in to add these to their collections as well. The handwork and the artistry is very detailed and no two pieces are alike."

HALLOWEEN HAUNTS AND HAPPENINGS

The City of Natchitoches and Natchitoches Main Street Program will sponsor Witch Way to Main Street, a safe and free trick-or-treating event Saturday, Oct. 31 from 3-7 p.m. at the Events Center. The carnival themed event will allow children ages 12 and younger to trick-or-treat at booths featuring games and candy. The event will feature face painting, Sparky the Fire Dog, a Haunted House, tours of the "Haunted" Natchitoches Parish Library Bookmobile, laser tag, inflatables and more. Children must be in costume and accompanied by an adult to participate. Candy and prizes will be distributed on a first-come, first-serve basis. NPD officers will be on duty to ensure children's safety. For information call 352-2746.

The Natchitoches Parish Library will hold Trick-or-Treating all day in the library Saturday, Oct. 31. Anyone in costume can stop by the circulation desk and receive a Halloween goodie. Circle K will present reading time at 10 a.m. Kids can sit and read Halloween books with NSU Circle K members. The Haunted Bookmobile will be on Front Street during the City of Natchitoches' Witch Way to Main Street from 5-7 p.m. For information or to RSVP for events call 357-3280

The Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame and Northwest Louisiana History Museum is participating in the "Witch Way on Main Street" Saturday, Oct.

31. The museum will not charge admission from 3-7 p.m. Candy will be distributed on a first come first serve bases. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

First United Methodist Church will host a Halloween Tailgate Saturday, Oct. 31 at 6 p.m. in the church parking lot. This event is free and open to the public. The event will include pick ups, tents, lawn chairs, tailgating games, candy and hot dogs. After dark there will be a showing of "Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown" and "Hocus Pocus" on a big screen on the side of the church. In case of rain the event will be moved to the FUMC gym. FUMC youth group will hand out fair



Have a happy and safe Halloween.

trade chocolate with informational pieces about fair trade items. To learn about the chocolates visit <http://equalexchange-coop/about>. For information call Lynda Hammett at 357-8296 or Lynda@fumcna.org.