

Bethinking of Old Orleans

C.W.Lattin County Historian

Vol. XVIII

6-6-96

No. 23

HOLT PHOTO EXHIBIT



During the Albion Strawberry Festival, June 7 and 8, an exhibit of photographs by Fred Holt (1900-1988) will be on display in the Social Room of the Pullman Memorial Universalist Church. This has been entitled One Man's Work 1925-1940 and is a representative collection of people, places, events and scenery as seen through the camera lens of Fred Holt, a local semi-professional photographer. Coupled with this exhibit will be a slide presentation of 80 photos under the same title on Friday evening, June 7 at 7:30 p.m. in the Pullman Church. This program will have an emphasis on Fred's aesthetic work including portraits and scenery. It is thanks to Dr. Jim Orr that these pictures have been reproduced in slide form and enlargements made for viewing.

With this article are two portraits taken from old negatives. These were labeled by Fred in the index of the negative album as "Wilma canoe-reading 1925", the other photo: "Lillian Sargent on fence 1925". This scanty bit of information is all I know about either of these people. However, there is really much more to be gleaned by simply looking at these pictures and enjoying their beauty. You may think "So what! They are just pictures of people". I suppose we might say the same of Whistler's Mother, entitled "Arrangement in Grey and Black" or Leonardo DaVinci's "Mona Lisa". But in great art there is deeper meaning than what's on the surface. These portraits capture more than a teenage girl on a fence and a young woman reading in a canoe. Although dated somewhat in their attire, these pictures are of a timeless beauty. They are among my favorites of Fred's work.

Speaking of attire, let me direct your attention to Lillian's picture. I dare say she was groomed and dressed in a most fashionable manner at the time, no doubt the envy of other girls her age. Everything is so "Twenties" about her. The cotton or linen striped dress is almost baggy in appearance. Note her stockings and those wonderful shoes she's wearing. The straps are the kind however, you needed a button hook for. Note too, her string of beads, a typical accessory of the roaring twenties. And of course, the bobbed hair was so stylish for women in that era. Yes, it's just a girl sitting on a fence, but there is indeed, a far deeper beauty here. Perhaps it's her eternal smile, not unlike the Mona Lisa.

"Wilma" too, evokes a mood of classic beauty in this simplistic setting. Her bathing cap, like a cloche hat, and swimsuit gives her the appearance of a "flapper". I believe this photo was taken somewhere on Oak Orchard River near Lake Ontario. I'm sure James Abbott McNeill Whistler would have approved.

Indeed, these pictures show that Fred Holt was a photographer who did more than just snap a shot. Somehow, in much of his work, he was able to go deeper than the surface, achieving a poetic statement of substance we can appreciate seven



decades later.

In concurrence with the Holt exhibit of photos, the Orleans County Quilt Guild will also be having an exhibit of their work during the Albion Strawberry Festival at the Pullman Memorial Church.