

Guide to the New Orleans and the Levees

GEN MSS 1470



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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library
P. O. Box 208330
New Haven, CT 06520-8330
(203) 432-2977
beinecke.library@yale.edu
<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

CALL NUMBER: GEN MSS 1470

CREATOR: Halverson, Karen, 1941-

TITLE: New Orleans and the Levees

DATES: 2015-2016

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 11.67 linear feet (5 boxes)

LANGUAGE: In English.

SUMMARY: Photographs of sites and portraits of people on and near levees surrounding New Orleans, Louisiana, created by Karen Halverson in spring 2015 and 2016. Images include views of buildings and ships as well as people in Orleans Parish and Jefferson Parish.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.neworleansandthelevees>

Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Beinecke Library reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.neworleansandthelevees>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please send an email with the call number, box number(s), and folder number(s) to beinecke.images@yale.edu.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box
f. folder

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Purchased from Karen Halverson on the Frederick W. and Carrie S. Beinecke Fund for Western Americana, 2016 and 2022.

Conditions Governing Access

This material is open for research.

Ownership & Copyright

The Karen Halverson, *New Orleans and the Levees*, are the physical property of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. For further information, consult the appropriate curator.

Preferred Citation

Karen Halverson, *New Orleans and the Levees*. General Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

Processing Notes

Collections are processed to a variety of levels, depending on the work necessary to make them usable, their perceived research value, the availability of staff, competing priorities, and whether or not further accruals are expected. The library attempts to provide a basic level of preservation and access for all collections, and does more extensive processing of higher priority collections as time and resources permit. These materials have been arranged and described according to national and local standards. For more information, please refer to the Beinecke Manuscript Unit Processing Manual.

Each folder in the collection contains a single inkjet print.

Karen Halverson (born 1941)

Karen Halverson is a documentary landscape photographer. Born in Syracuse, New York, Halverson received a Bachelor of Arts from Stanford University and Masters of Arts from Brandeis University and Columbia University. In 1975, she made her first photographic project, which documented the Garment District in New York City. Much of her work documents the tension between the natural and cultural landscapes of the American West. She is the author of *Downstream: Encounters with the Colorado River* (University of California Press, 2008), which retraces the route of John Wesley Powell's expeditions and explores what contemporary Americans have made of the waterway.

Description of Papers

Views of sites and portraits of people on and near levees surrounding New Orleans, Louisiana, created by Karen Halverson in spring 2015 and 2016, and printed as color inkjet prints on Canson Platine Fibre Rag Paper, 20 x 24 inches (51 x 61 centimeters). Images include views of buildings and ships as well as people in Orleans Parish except where noted in the guide. The prints are untitled with parenthetical numbers provided by Halverson to differentiate images. The collection comprises an edition numbered three of twelve.

In an artist's statement that accompanied the collection upon acquisition in 2016 of photographs she captured in spring 2015, Halverson describes the work:

For many years, much of my work as a photographer has focused on the human relationship to the landscape. Recently, I headed to New Orleans, a city with a unique and precarious relationship to its natural environment. New Orleans sits in a bowl, half of it below sea level, edged by the Mississippi River to the South, wetlands to the West, and large lakes North and East. It is a city that requires a complex system of levees and underground pumps to stay dry. Within a few days of arriving in New Orleans; I decided to photograph the levees themselves, the views they afford, and the people who make use of them.

In 1718, the French established the settlement of New Orleans along a natural levee made up of silt deposited by the Mississippi River. Ever since colonial times, man-made levees, either earthen

berms or concrete walls, have been built against the surrounding waters. But the man-made levees also prevent natural silt deposition. As a result, New Orleans is sinking while, at the same time, sea levels are rising due to climate change.

There have been dozens of hurricanes over the centuries, but Hurricane Katrina, in 2005, was epic. Eighty percent of the city was flooded. It is now well established that the design and construction of the levees were seriously flawed. Since Katrina, they have been rebuilt based on computer-generated models of potential storms.

Although the levees are meant for flood control, from early on they also served another purpose. Gentlemen and "free colored courtesans" (Thomas Ashe, *Travels in America*, 1811) gathered on them in search of fresh air. Today the levees are popular strolling places for the great mix of people who live in or visit New Orleans. From most points in the city, the levees block the view of the Mississippi River. So, a walk along the levee offers not only fresh air and a chance to mingle, but also a look at the business of the river, the huge shipping facilities and oil refineries that line the river's edge and that reflect a significant part of the New Orleans economy. This series of photographs, *New Orleans and the Levees*, is the result of my stroll along the levees during the spring of 2015.

Arrangement

Organized into two series: I. Inkjet Photographs, 2015. II. Inkjet Photographs, 2015-2016.

Collection Contents

Series I: Inkjet Photographs, 2015

Views of sites and portraits of people on and near levees surrounding New Orleans, Louisiana, created by Karen Halverson in spring 2015 and printed as color inkjet prints on Canson Platine Fibre Rag Paper, 20 x 24 inches (51 x 61 centimeters). Images include views of buildings and ships as well as people in Orleans Parish except where noted in the guide. The prints are untitled with parenthetical numbers provided by Halverson to differentiate images. The collection comprises an edition numbered three of twelve.

Purchased from Karen Halverson on the Frederick W. and Carrie S. Beinecke Fund for Western Americana, 2016.

Series I arranged by the creator.

b. 1 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled</i> (6604) 1	2015
b. 1 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled</i> (5319) 2	2015
b. 1 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled</i> (5596) 3	2015
b. 1 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled</i> (5860) 4	2015
b. 1 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled</i> (5512) 5	2015
b. 1 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled</i> (6338) 6 Photograph of a site in Jefferson Parish	2015
b. 1 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled</i> (5874) 7	2015
b. 1 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled</i> (5826) 8	2015
b. 1 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled</i> (6029) 9	2015
b. 1 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled</i> (5885) 10	2015
b. 1 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled</i> (6040) 11	2015
b. 1 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled</i> (6460) 12	2015
b. 1 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled</i> (5181) 13	2015
b. 1 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled</i> (6547) 14	2015

b.1 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled (5867)</i> 15	2015
b.1 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled (5853)</i> 16	2015
b.1 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled (5570)</i> 17	2015
b.1 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled (6286)</i> 18 Photograph of a site in Jefferson Parish	2015
b.1 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled (6517)</i> 19	2015
b.1 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled (6688)</i> 20	2015

Series II: Inkjet Photographs, 2015–2016

Views of sites and portraits of people on and near levees surrounding New Orleans, Louisiana, created by Karen Halverson in spring 2015 and 2016, and printed as color inkjet prints on Canson Platine Fibre Rag Paper, 20 x 24 inches (51 x 61 centimeters). Images include views of buildings and ships as well as people in Orleans Parish.

The prints are untitled with parenthetical numbers provided by Halverson to differentiate images. The collection comprises an edition numbered three of twelve.

Purchased from Karen Halverson on the Frederick W. and Carrie S. Beinecke Fund for Western Americana, 2022.

Series II arranged by the creator.

b. 2 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled</i> (7410) 21	2016
b. 2 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled</i> (7824) 22	2016
b. 2 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled</i> (7631) 23	2016
b. 2 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled</i> (7578) 24	2016
b. 2 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled</i> (5402) 25	2015
b. 2 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled</i> (8102) 26	2016
b. 2 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled</i> (6577) 27	2015
b. 2 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled</i> (5991) 28	2016
b. 2 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled</i> (5247) 29	2015
b. 2 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled</i> (5498) 30	2015
b. 3 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled</i> (5468) 31	2015
b. 3 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled</i> (5928) 32	2015
b. 3 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled</i> (8452) 33	2016
b. 3 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled</i> (7539) 34	2016
b. 3 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled</i> (5433) 35	2015

b. 3 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled (5459)</i> 36	2015
b. 3 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled (8357)</i> 37	2016
b. 3 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled (5826)</i> 38	2015
b. 3 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled (8403)</i> 39	2016
b. 3 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled (8423)</i> 40	2016
b. 3 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled (7327)</i> 41	2016
b. 3 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled (5197)</i> 42	2015
b. 3 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled (7462)</i> 43	2016
b. 3 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled (8563)</i> 44	2016
b. 4 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled (8361)</i> 45	2016
b. 4 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled (7971)</i> 46	2016
b. 4 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled (5801)</i> 47	2015
b. 4 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled (5209)</i> 48	2015
b. 4 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled (7267)</i> 49	2016
b. 4 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled (8455)</i> 50	2016
b. 4 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled (5885)</i> 51	2015
b. 4 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled (6913)</i> 52	2016
b. 4 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled (8387)</i> 53	2016
b. 4 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled (6233)</i> 54	2015
b. 4 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled (7694)</i> 55	2016

b. 4 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled</i> (8042) 56	2016
b. 4 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled</i> (8088) 57	2016
b. 4 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled</i> (6259) 58	2015
b. 5 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled</i> (5831) 59	2015
b. 5 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled</i> (7514) 60	2016
b. 5 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled</i> (8476) 61	2016
b. 5 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled</i> (6365) 62	2015
b. 5 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled</i> (7139) 63	2016
b. 5 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled</i> (7181) 64	2016
b. 5 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled</i> (7165) 65	2016
b. 5 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled</i> (6979) 66	2015
b. 5 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled</i> (7373) 67	2016
b. 5 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled</i> (6924) 68	2016
b. 5 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled</i> (5378) 69	2015
b. 5 (Oversize), f. <i>Untitled</i> (8086) 70	2016

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Subjects

Levees -- Louisiana -- Jefferson Parish --
Pictorial works
Levees -- Louisiana -- New Orleans -- Pictorial
works
Levees -- Louisiana -- Orleans Parish -- Pictorial
works

Geographic Names

Jefferson Parish (La.) -- Pictorial works
Jefferson Parish (La.) -- Portraits
Louisiana -- Pictorial works
New Orleans (La.) -- Pictorial works
New Orleans (La.) -- Portraits
Orleans Parish (La.) -- Pictorial works
Orleans Parish (La.) -- Portraits

Genres / Formats

Inkjet prints
Photographs

Names

Halverson, Karen, 1941-

Acquired From

Halverson, Karen, 1941- , bookseller