1999


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NATALIE VIVIAN SCOTT:  
THE ORIGINS, PEOPLE AND TIMES OF THE  
FRENCH QUARTER RENAISSANCE  
(1920-1930)  
VOLUME I  
A Dissertation  
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University and  
Agricultural and Mechanical College  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
in  
The Department of History  
by  
John Wyeth Scott II  
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May, 1999
Dedicated to my family, -
the Scotts, Hammonds, Provostys and Phelps
One of the great pleasures in this project has been my association with Dr. Charles Shindo, the chairman of my dissertation committee, whose high competence, sincere interest, and sound judgment, particularly in reference to the direction and boundaries of my work, were crucial to the final product. I extend my grateful appreciation to Dr. Shindo and his L.S.U. colleagues on my committee, Dr. Stanley Hilton, Dr. Penelope Harper, and Dr. John Rodrigue.

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Finally, I offer credit to my wife Cyndy. She has cheerfully borne a husband’s return to the classroom, helping to make this effort fun, sharing our mutual amazement and satisfaction when exciting new facts emerged
from research. As a final solution, she enrolled as a graduate student and we shared together the highways and overnights away from home. Now, as we approach our twenty-ninth wedding anniversary, we will receive our diplomas together from L.S.U., neither of us knowing where this new direction in our lives will take us - sharing, perhaps, a portion of Natalie Vivian Scott's adventurous faith in destiny.

John W. Scott

April, 1999
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St. Peter Street paved (Historic New Orleans Collection, circa 1922). The LaBranche building at the corner of St. Peter and Royal Streets is visible, where Sherwood Anderson stayed during his early 1922 visit. At near right is Cabildo Alley (also known as Pirate’s Alley or the old Arsenal Alley) and 621 St. Peter Street, which Natalie owned during 1925. William Spratling and William Faulkner lived in the attic of the building.

Photograph of Orleans Alley (Historic New Orleans Collection, 1920). The building owned by Natalie and John McClure (626 Orleans Alley where Spratling first lived) and the next door 624 Orleans Alley (near left) where Spratling first lived with Faulkner in 1924 appear here.

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This is the interwoven story of Natalie Vivian Scott, war hero, author, adventurer and humanitarian, and the French Quarter Renaissance during the 1920s, when Natalie Scott was a vital member of the talented coterie of writers and artists whose talents prospered there, including Sherwood Anderson, William Faulkner, William Spratling, Lyle Saxon, Roark Bradford, Oliver La Farge, John Dos Passos, Hamilton Basso, Meigs Frost, among others.

This work’s premise is that the decayed, crumbling French Quarter, falling into irreversible decline, was saved during the early 1920s by an outburst of local creativity and organizational energy that inspired restoration and a unique, historically significant cultural revival. The participants included a remarkable array of artists, writers, stage performers, poets and journalists, the most famous being major products of this renaissance, but not its progenitors. This artistic and literary colony was the most significant in Southern U.S. history, and among the most important of the American twentieth century.

Natalie Scott was instrumental in each of the key forces that created and shaped the French Quarter Renaissance. After being awarded France’s highest medal, the Croix de Guerre, for her heroism during World War I,
this Southern bred and Newcomb educated war heroine returned to New Orleans and became a feature writer, social editor, and columnist for the New Orleans States. As a founder, playwright and performer with the Petit Theatre du Vieux Carré; a staff member of the Double Dealer literary magazine; close friend of Anderson, Spratling, Faulkner, La Farge, Saxon and other key figures; a pioneer in Vieux Carré renewal investments and the leading social columnist in the city, Natalie Scott serves as an ideal vehicle to document the recovery of the French Quarter, and its service as the creative incubator for an astonishing array of important young talents.
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Most of the men and women in this study are not particularly famous, and those that are, with few exceptions, appear here at an early stage of their careers before they accomplished their best work. The principle character, Natalie Scott, and the ultimate conclusion of the story are generally new and unfamiliar to most historians. Yet for those who are fascinated by those obscure, remarkable people who, though mere participants in major historical dramas, were instrumental in important sideshows of history, this study will hopefully offer rewards.

During her unusually diverse life, Natalie Scott found herself many times in such episodes, playing unique roles in the course of human events, which makes her biography decidedly difficult to write. The extreme diversity in place and circumstance makes her chronicle seem impossibly disconnected, a succeeding combination of vastly different chapters where the reader is regularly whipped from one side of the Atlantic to the other, between countries, cities, and between adventures and even wars, with a dizzying array of unique characters providing the supporting cast. There may be no succinct, compact, neatly
organized, well coordinated way to tell such a peripatetic tale, complete with the many side stories, adventures, tragedies, achievements, important moments, characters and captivating anecdotes that shout for attention. The life was far-flung, filled with events, and wildly diverse; so must the written biography be.

For this compelling reason, one decade of Natalie Scott’s life has been chosen for the subject of this book. This work offers two interwoven stories through the decade of the 1920s: the personal life and journalistic career of Natalie Scott combined with the cultural history of the New Orleans French Quarter. The premise of this work is that the decayed, crumbling French Quarter, falling into irreversible decline, was saved during the early 1920s by an outburst of local artistic creativity that inspired restoration and energized a unique, historically significant and productive cultural, artistic, and literary renaissance.

The beneficiaries, participants and products of this Vieux Carré decade included a remarkable array of accomplished artists, writers, dancers, performers, poets and journalists, whose achievements have been generally misunderstood and under-valued by some, while others have given the more famous writers who emerged from this era in the French Quarter unwarranted and undeserved credit for
the Vieux Carré’s 1920s revival. These famous figures were participants, beneficiaries and very important products of this renaissance, but they were not its progenitors.

A recent essay written by Louisiana State University English professor Lewis P. Simpson illustrates one extreme of the problem. In his review of New Orleans’ literary history, he dismisses the 1920s as though nothing noteworthy had occurred:

By the beginning of the twentieth century the local-color damnation of New Orleans was so complete that it was virtually impossible for the imagination to transcend it. The attraction of writers and artists to the Vieux Carré in the 1920s promised far more than it yielded, and the Quarter’s bid to become a southern Greenwich Village - which for a time was backed up by a few writers of genuine talent but never by a genuine congregation - ended with Lyle Saxon and Roark Bradford.¹

This rather remarkable understatement does not appreciate the broad base of achievement during this French Quarter Renaissance, - New Orleans’ stage performers and dancers in major roles on Broadway and in Paris, the first major study of historic Louisiana architecture, the crucial preservationist effort in New Orleans, the establishment of perhaps the finest amateur theater in America, artists who achieved significant national and even international reputations, arguably the finest silver designer yet produced by this country, while the Quarter inhabitants were also establishing a remarkable journalistic and
literary record: one of the very best national literary magazines of the era, a periodical that provided a remarkable number of major talents their first opportunity to publish; a gathering of some of the best journalists in the country; poets of national stature; several O. Henry Memorial Award finalists and winners; two Pulitzer Prize winners; the crucial transformation of the career of William Faulkner, who many rank as America’s best novelist of the twentieth century and who became a Nobel Prize winner.

This may not match Aeschylus, Sophocles, Plato, Socrates, and Aristophanes gathering in Athens twenty-five hundred years ago, but this was a very significant gathering of genuine talents; productive people inspiring one another and enjoying the unique habitat of North America’s most exotic city. A fair assessment is that the French Quarter experience during the 1920s was not only the most significant in southern and New Orleans history, but among the most important culturally creative phenomena of the American twentieth century.

An entirely different form of misconception has been commonly proffered by even extremely well informed students of French Quarter history, cultural historians such as W. Kenneth Holditch, who recently published an entirely accurate description of the 1920 French Quarter, citing
photographs mostly taken before 1920, but who then assumes, incorrectly, that the heart of the French Quarter was still in this awful condition when William Faulkner arrived in late 1924 and moved into William Spratling's apartment on Orleans Alley.

...the once-affluent Vieux Carré had become for the most part a slum, shunned by américains uptown who had once been made unwelcome then by the Creoles...the period photographs by Arnold Genthe, E.J. Bellocq, and Pops Whitesell reveal...all in varying states of disrepair - beautiful ghosts still enshrouded by the aura Faulkner called the "atmosphere of a bygone and more gracious age."...It was to the Quarter of those photographers that Faulkner came in November, 1924 - an appropriate gathering place for artists and writers, this once grand old city faded into a slum...²

This final conclusion is not entirely accurate. The heart of the French Quarter, including Jackson Square, St. Peter, Royal, Chartres, and Bourbon Streets, had substantially rebounded by the time of Faulkner's arrival at the end of 1924 and was certainly not a slum. The Quarter's charm, its authenticity, diversity, and the stimulating presence of the many creative people gathered there, held him in the city as they did so many other artists and writers. Faulkner's next two years in New Orleans were crucial, transforming him from an aspiring poet to a published novelist. When Faulkner arrived in November, 1924, the French Quarter Renaissance was already reaching full bloom, soon to be further enhanced by the arrival in 1925 of Franz
Blom and Oliver La Farge. Rather than creators of this Renaissance, these figures cultivated their talents amidst the intellectually inspiring atmosphere of the Quarter and were major beneficiaries and products of the revival.

Natalie Scott became a feature writer, social columnist, and social editor for the daily New Orleans 
States soon after her return from France as a decorated war hero in October, 1919. She serves well as an ideal vehicle to identify and document the New Orleans social scene, the roots and evolution of the burst of artistic and organizational energy among New Orleanians that saved the French Quarter between 1920 and 1922. She was the rare individual who was vitally involved in each of the primary elements of the Vieux Carré’s revival, simultaneously recording the week by week history of the Quarter’s resurrection in her newspaper column: the early migration into the Quarter of a handful of talented pioneers; the birth and sudden rise of the Petit Theatre du Vieux Carré; the 1921 appearance and monthly publication for five and a half years of the Double Dealer literary magazine; the remarkable success of the new Arts and Crafts Club; the early preservationist work of the Vieux Carré Society; the work of the new Quartier Club and its successors; the early French Quarter investors, when few were interested, who acquired, renovated, restored, and preserved the
architectural relics of this most historically important of southern communities. Before the arrival of any of the most well-known literary names - Sherwood Anderson, William Faulkner, Oliver La Farge, Edmund Wilson or John Dos Passos, - the Vieux Carré was alive with the intense activity of talented and productive writers, poets, painters, sculptors, and performers.

The second phase of the decade was the 1922-1925 period. The vehicle of Natalie Scott’s daily life enables the reader to meet as they arrive in the city Sherwood Anderson, William Spratling, Oliver La Farge, Franz Blom and William Faulkner. Equally significant, the narrative encompasses her friendships with the talented New Orleanians who were vital to this decade of French Quarter history: Lyle Saxon, John McClure, Mrs. Oscar Nixon, Elizabeth Werlein, Caroline Wogan Durieux, Meigs Frost, Roark Bradford, Charles Bein, Martha Robinson, Helen Pitkin Schertz, and Hilda Hammond were among the most important.

The 1922-1925 period was also definitive for another reason: the intellectual interest in the Mexican pre-Columbian world that was superimposed upon vibrant creativity already maturing in the French Quarter. The world had stood in awe in 1922 when the ancient Egyptian tomb of King Tutankhamen had been unearthed, revealing ancient treasures and a deep fascination with the
spectacular wonders of the ancient Egyptian civilization. In the same sense, the Tulane University expedition into southern Mexico brought discoveries of a brilliant Mayan civilization in the New World that pre-dated Columbus by a millennium, a new source of pride to the Mexican people and new subject of intellectual inquiry for the artists, journalists, and writers of New Orleans.

The third phase of the decade, 1926 through 1930, was one of transition for the first generation of the Vieux Carré Renaissance’s artists and writers. As a second generation began reinforcing their predecessors, important Vieux Carré figures including Lyle Saxon, Bill Spratling, Sherwood Anderson, William Faulkner, Roark Bradford, and Oliver La Farge changed their lives in significant ways as they moved into new phases of their careers. Once again, Natalie Scott’s personal life and career serves as an ideal vehicle to follow and trace these developments, as she and these friends shared in their mutual prospects, setbacks and accomplishments during this transitory period in their lives. The decade ends in 1930 with a startling transformation having occurred in the situs and direction of Natalie Scott’s life, one that would prove to be as rich, productive, and meaningful as any of her previous experiences, and with accomplishment and recognition crowning the work of numerous members of the French Quarter.
circle as the gradual evolution of talent brought a new crop of creative people to the Vieux Carré.

The literary and artistic heritage of New Orleans dates back modestly to Louisiana’s French and Spanish colonial era of the eighteenth century, a small colony composed of 14,000 people as late as 1769 (including slaves), only 3,500 people in New Orleans, overwhelmingly an illiterate and French-speaking people. The significant colonial literature of the eighteenth century included histories of New France and the Louisiana colony by François Xavier de Charlevoix and La Page du Pratz, numerous memoirs and descriptions of the colony by various colonists, and the poetry of the planter-poet Julian Poydras. Artistry was best expressed in the French plays that were being performed as early as the tenure of the Grand Marquis Vaudreuil, governor during the 1740s, and in the engineering and architectural work of Adrien de Pauger and Pierre Le Blond de Tour in designing and building the original New Orleans (the French Quarter) after 1718, then before the turn of the next century when major edifices such as St. Louis Cathedral, the Presbytère and the Cabildo were erected, all designed by Gilbert Guillemard.³

The cultural high-water marks of the antebellum period included the drawings, paintings, and prints of naturalist John James Audubon, the French poetry of Camille Thierry,
Armand Lanusse, among others, and the commercially successful journalism of J.B.D. DeBow, owner of the Commercial Review of the South, a particularly influential business, agricultural, and political periodical with limited literary offerings. The construction during the 1850s of the French Opera House, where the world's greatest opera stars performed over the next six decades, and the handsome Pontalba townhouses bordering two sides of Jackson Square, the St. Charles Hotel, and City Hall were among the many antebellum New Orleans mansions, hotels, theaters and government buildings designed by James Gallier, Senior and Junior, father and son, monuments to their architectural talents.

The earliest authors of importance were probably the Rouquette brothers, Adrien and Dominique, both prolific poets, who published their first books in Paris, where their work won substantial praise. Adrien continued publishing poetry and novels, entering the priesthood and, as Father Rouquette, wrote his idyll, La Nouvelle Atala, while his poetry won international acclaim. Briefly after 1843, a literary magazine called L'Album Littéraire, owned, edited, and written by free black men, was published, numerous of its contributors being highly praised in Paris (Camille Thierry, Victor Séjour, and P. Dalcaur), its contents including novels, poetry, short stories and
essays. Les Cenelles, the first literary anthology of literature by American blacks, contained numerous works from L'Album Littéraire. One New Orleans historian surveyed these antebellum writers this way:

...And, like the Creole authors, they were French in style, thought and feeling and they had their greatest literary success in France. A writer such as Victor Séjour had twenty-one plays presented on the Parisian stage. At one time there were three running at different theaters at the same time. In no way was there ever any question of the author's race. Racial consciousness and social consciousness appeared in the literature of colored people after the Civil War..."'

New Orleans' antebellum literary accomplishments were primarily in French and some in German. François-Xavier wrote his History of Louisiana, which was surpassed by Charles Gayarré's historical writings, usually in French, his Essai Historique sur La Louisiane (1830), then thirty years later his Histoire de la Louisiane. But he wrote in English too, histories, essays, pamphlets, plays, novels and articles. Other prominent New Orleans writers of the era included poet Dr. Alfred Mercier and novelists Armand Garreau and Charles Testut. Mercier was particularly prolific over a long career before and after the Civil War, but his works were in French. His volume of poetry, Erata (1840), and his novel L'Habitation Saint-Ybars are among the very best of Louisiana literature. The city was even then attracting outside writers, such as Walt Whitman, who
lived in the city during the late 1840s and wrote poems and articles with Louisiana backgrounds; Mark Twain came during his river pilot days; and Vincent Nolte wrote of his New Orleans' days in Fifty Years in Both Hemispheres.  

The postbellum period inaugurated what some have called a literary renaissance during the last three decades of the nineteenth century, much of it reflecting the racial and social tensions of the Reconstruction and post-Reconstruction era while also romantically reviving the antebellum world of exotic New Orleans, a subject that fascinated much of the country's readership, making New Orleans writer George Washington Cable, a social liberal whose writing was often critical of the plight of black people, a best-selling novelist along with Grace King, whose stories came to the defense of the city's way of life, her plots evoking the hardships and injustices endured during and after the war. Cable burst on the scene with his short story "'Sieur George" published in Scribner's in 1873, following it with more short stories and novels, perhaps his best being The Grandissimes, enabling him to reach the front ranks of American authors of his day.

Cable's The Creoles of Louisiana was answered directly by Grace King's Creole Families of New Orleans. Her first work, a short novel of Creole life, Monsieur Motte (1886),
was also prompted by Cable's work, and she eventually wrote thirteen books, novels and histories. She and Cable became reconciled in the early 1920s and she invited him to speak to a meeting of the Louisiana Historical Society, where his lecture received a rousing, standing ovation from New Orleanians who had condemned his work throughout his career. "I understand him now," said Miss King to a reporter for the Boston Transcript. "I would say he wrote too well about the Creoles...I'm glad that at last he got that compliment from New Orleans. He deserved it, not only a tribute to his genius, but as compensation for the way we had treated him. I am glad. He is an old man, very picturesque, very sad, with beautiful manners." 

Lafcadio Hearn graced the French Quarter for ten years after his arrival in 1877, writing for the Times-Democrat and the New Orleans Item, his journalism preserving the rhythm and diversity of French Quarter life, while Kate Chopin's work, particularly The Awakening, was a major literary achievement of the late nineteenth century. These were the best New Orleans authors before the 1920s, their works mostly published before or shortly after the turn of the century, though there were others such as Ruth McEnery Stuart, Mollie Moore Davis, Catherine Cole (Mrs. Martha R. Field), Dorothy Dix, Helen Schertz, and poets "Xariffa" (Mrs. Mary Ashley Townsend) and "Pearl Rivers" (Mrs. E. J.
Holbrook). None of these rank today among the first echelon of American literary scholarship, though they collectively established a credible literary heritage, a substantial accomplishment on the sparse landscape of southern literature.⁷

There were others, both local and visitors, who wrote in or of New Orleans. William Sidney Porter, or "O. Henry", was anonymously in New Orleans for a short time and later published short stories with New Orleans backgrounds. John Galsworth wrote a poem about the old and decaying St. Louis Hotel. Other novelists, such as Charles Tenney Jackson, Rex Beach, and Harris Dickson used the city as the settings for their books. But during the first two decades of the twentieth century, there was nothing of importance, and literary production faded as World War I approached. Those authors who did produce, were of the older generation belonging more to the nineteenth century. The early twentieth century was a quiet, sleepy period in New Orleans literary history.⁸

The literary and publishing center of the United States had shifted during the nineteenth century from Boston to New York, while Chicago had made its bid during the 1910s to join Boston and New York's ranks in literary scholarship, an upsurge led by Sherwood Anderson, Carl Sandburg, Ben Hecht and Floyd Dell, as well as two literary
magazines, the Dial and the Little Review, though New York’s dominance of publishing soon pulled the two publications into its orbit. There were talented southern writers but aspirations for a successful career usually meant being transplanted to the proximity of the publishers, Greenwich Village being the primary haunt of the established and the aspiring writers from around the country.  

During 1920, H. L. Mencken, observing the creativity emanating from Boston, New York and Chicago, and the absence of a productive literary colony in the South, wrote an article entitled “The Sahara of the Bozart” in Prejudices, Second Series which condemned the South as a literary desert, a creative eunuch which he was trying to goad into action by injuring its pride. Mencken, a southerner himself, was writing from New York where he had been publishing Smart Set for several years and had gained fame as the leading commentator and social critic on the American scene. His clear challenge to the South’s literati aroused renewed response in New Orleans, where efforts to organize stable literary periodicals had so far struggled and failed. But Mencken’s challenge cannot accurately be credited with having ignited the French Quarter revival, which was already underway and energized by other influences, transformed from idle talk to action.
by the organizers of the Petit Theatre du Vieux Carré and by a devastating cultural disaster, the destruction by fire of the grand old French Opera House, an event that seemed to toll the final collapse of the long-neglected French Quarter.¹⁰

Into this post-war New Orleans world stepped Natalie Scott on the evening of October 25, 1919. She was twenty-nine years old, Southern bred and Newcomb College educated. Natalie’s formative years from age six through thirteen occurred in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, an idyllic coastal town only an hour’s train ride from New Orleans and a favorite summer vacation spot for the city’s well-to-do. Her father, whom the family nicknamed Boss, a boisterous, good-natured, self-educated railroad construction engineer who had served the South through the Civil War, from age twelve through fifteen, under the command of General Nathan Bedford Forest. Her mother’s nickname was Muddie; a slight, gentle, literary woman, she had been a literature teacher at Silliman Female College near Baton Rouge when she met and married Boss in 1885.

Natalie, born in 1890, was preceded by two brothers, the practical Jack who followed his father into the construction and pile-driving business, and the strong, quiet and romantic Nauman, who by 1920 was practicing law
and raising a family in Alexandria, Louisiana, with his wife Sidonie. Muddie had been the great influence in Natalie’s early life, nurturing her children with classical literature and romantic poetry extolling such virtues as love, character, courage, loyalty, friendship, humor, self-reliance, romance, forgiveness, family, charity, patriotism, and sacrifice. They grew up amidst Muddie’s love of music, reading, flowers, poetry, and family gatherings with home-grown and home-cooked food.¹¹

Other attributes derived from Natalie’s childhood included her expertise as an equestrian, a passion for horseback riding that began at age five. Another was her early appreciation for theatrical productions and opera, a consequence of often making the short train ride to the city with her mother to attend the performances at the French Opera House. Natalie’s relationship with Muddie was by far the most defining and meaningful of her life, inheriting from her mother a love of all things artistic and all things humanitarian.

A major landmark in her childhood, the only moment of great distress and insecurity, was the yellow fever epidemic that swept the Gulf coast in 1897, infecting Muddie so seriously that she remained in fragile health for the balance of her life. The family moved to New Orleans during the summer of 1903 where Natalie enrolled at Newcomb
High School and earned a scholarship to Newcomb College. She graduated in 1909, a leader in a strikingly outstanding class that distinguished itself by expanding the school’s curriculum and reforming extra-curricular programs to achieve equality with Newcomb’s brother institution, Tulane University. There were students who displayed as much, or more, leadership as Natalie - Hilda Phelps and Martha Gilmore being prime examples. Hilda served as class president and student body president, the most evident innovator on campus. Martha became the first editor of the Newcomb Arcade, the school’s new quarterly magazine, and a sorority organizer.12

But Natalie took a slightly different path. She chose not to join a sorority. She did not run for office, except for minor posts, one year as class historian and another as class poet, which gave her the opportunity to write a spirited, but comical, history and poem in two successive Tulane yearbooks. Her history in the 1907 yearbook extolls the “unprecedented éclat” which marked the '09s “debut” on campus in 1905 and the “uncontested sovereignty” and “prosperous reign...surrendered” by all other classes thereafter. As for accomplishments, according to Natalie’s class history,

...they made chemical discoveries wonderful and important, they handed in mathematical quizzes undeniably perfect; they gave vent to glorious
outbursts of Spenserian songs; their history essays have served as models for all succeeding classes. In fact, they showered welcome gifts of perfect work upon the astonished and delighted professors...\textsuperscript{13}

Yet, on a far more serious note, Natalie founded and was first president of the Student Club, the purpose of which she explained in the 1909 Tulane yearbook.

...In the complicated college life there is a natural tendency to the submerging of the individual, and it is an unfortunate fact that there is a survival of only a very few. This tendency, especially the last year or so at Newcomb, has been accentuated. It is just a few girls who run things and the mass of students are unknown, as well as unacquainted. Now the duty of the college is to bring out such girls - girls who are wanting not in real fineness, but perhaps in aggressiveness...The Student Club is a place where all students meet on an equal footing, where the spirit of good-fellowship is predominant...It is a delightful rendezvous during study hours...meetings...It is the scene of the students' jollifications and parties and receptions.\textsuperscript{14}

Tulane and Newcomb were under the same organizational umbrella, Tulane being the older and larger institution. Though many extracurricular activities were done jointly, Tulane dominated. Tulane's debating societies, literary clubs, French society and other clubs were well organized. While Tulane fielded teams in football, basketball, baseball, track and cross-country, Newcomb had only class basketball teams. Tulane had a German Club, the Prom and Cotillion Club, a tennis program, the Cosmo Club where the men could play cards and meet socially in privacy, and a host of other organizations. Newcomb had none of these,
though the college did have a Dramatic Club and YMCA chapter. The school yearbook was dominated by Tulane men, their jokes, campus life and frivolities.15

The Newcomb Class of 1909 completely reversed this situation. By the time they graduated, Newcomb’s campus life matched, and probably exceeded, the Tulane program.16 During the summer of 1908, the twenty-nine members of Natalie’s class organized a strategy to overhaul the school, conducting meetings all summer to examine each problem and organize a strategy to attack it. The Scott home was the central meeting place, their gatherings hosted by Muddie, who provided refreshments and quiet support.17 They launched their reform campaign when classes began, the news from Newcomb filling the pages of the Tulane Weekly as well as receiving coverage from the local newspapers. Natalie Scott wrote all of the newspaper articles, proposing the new Newcomb Athletic Association, a new Newcomb debate program, a new literary club, a Newcomb track team, a new tennis team, a new basketball program and intramurals in crew, tennis, and track, and a Newcomb Glee Club together with a Banjo, Mandolin and Guitar Club.18

Another article, also written by Natalie, “deplored” the failure and dissolution of The Tulanian magazine several years earlier, a failure caused by lack of support, and announced that the Newcomb girls were going to correct
this situation by establishing their own new magazine, initially suggesting as its name The Newcomb Quarterly.

...(I)t was with great regret that the university saw the Tulanian breathe its last...Now the Newcomb girls had a very small share in the management of the Tulanian and so they have not really had a chance to see what they can do. There is great literary ability at Newcomb, a capacity for work and there is enthusiasm...Why cannot Newcomb publish a magazine and manage it herself? Ample material could be obtained by having the editors elected by literary competitions; and then the literary circles at Newcomb would also furnish material...we feel that on this as on every occasion where the good of their college is concerned, the Newcomb girls will say - 'We will' - and that means, they will!19

And they did.

The campus campaign culminated in a mass meeting at Newcomb in November where a large crowd of students and faculty gathered for speeches. The leaders of each class, and the faculty and school administrators, declared their endorsement and unity with the senior class. Quickly their reforms were implemented. The decision of the Newcomb girls to establish their own magazine was an embarrassment to Tulane, and negotiations led to the resurrection of The Tulanian. Natalie was named the managing editor though a Tulane student became editor-in-chief; the new eleven member editorial board included five Newcomb women. The rebirth of The Tulanian was a lasting victory achieved by the Newcomb women that continues today. The Newcomb women also gained parity in the production of the 1909 Jambalaya,
three of the six members of its board being Newcomb students. The impact upon the yearbook was obvious in its wide coverage of Newcomb affairs and campus life. Not satisfied, Natalie and her friends proceeded with their own plans for a Newcomb magazine of their own.20

The Newcomb Arcade, with Martha Gilmore as editor-in-chief, featured articles, short stories, book reviews, essays, illustrations, poetry, sonnets, art, all created by Newcomb women, together with campus and alumni news. Natalie inaugurated the first edition of the Newcomb Arcade in January, 1909, with her featured short story, "The Forest Primeval", dramatizing the eternal struggle between Man and Nature. The Arcade published its first three editions between January and June, 1909, with Natalie the most prolific contributor.21

To uplift Newcomb’s drama program, a season of English, French and German plays was inaugurated. George Bernard Shaw’s “You Never Can Tell,” Moliere’s “Les Femmes Savantes,” and their own comical adaptation of Planter’s “The Menaechin,” the last with Natalie playing one of the leading roles, were produced by the seniors before their June graduation. As a permanent memorial and standard for excellence, the class established the 1909 Prize, an annual award to be given to the student who best exemplifies the
spirit and ideals of the Classical Age and the Renaissance, to which the class of 1909 was particularly devoted.22

Natalie Scott spent the next year in Washington, D.C., living with older cousins and attending Fairmont Seminary, a finishing school where the curriculum was devoted to Greek studies. She began teaching at Newcomb High School in 1911, while also earning a masters degree in philosophy at Tulane University in 1914, her major course of study being ancient Greek literature.

Natalie and her 1909 classmate Hilda Phelps, who also taught at Newcomb High School while earning her Tulane masters degree in 1914, were instrumental in creating a new tutoring and testing program to enable marginal Newcomb High School graduates to qualify for admission to Newcomb College. When World War I broke out in August, 1914, and Germany invaded neutral Belgium, inflicting atrocities upon the innocent Belgian people, Natalie and Hilda spearheaded Belgian refugee relief efforts in the city. They organized a fundraising dinner theater, gathering a very crowded audience of the city’s elite as contributors, staged through donations at Antoine’s Restaurant in the French Quarter where the pair performed lead roles in the very successful production.23

Natalie became a leader in local Red Cross relief work for World War I refugees. Anticipating America’s eventual
entry into the conflict, she prepared herself for war work by taking Spanish, Italian and French courses to sharpen her qualifications as an interpreter. She completed the Red Cross course of study for her certification as a nurse's aide. She completed a wireless telegraphy course at Loyola University to add one more element of potentially useful skills. During Thanksgiving, 1916, as she appeared as the guest speaker at a Red Cross banquet in New Orleans, Dr. Tom Williams, a Red Cross physician from New York, observed her presentation. The following summer, only a few months after the United States declaration of war against Germany in April, 1917, Dr. Williams recommended Natalie to Dr. Alexander Lambert, the chief of Red Cross medical operations in France and Belgium, as a recruit for his new headquarters in Paris.

Meanwhile, in New Orleans, Hilda and Natalie were among the 1917 organizers of the Louisiana Women's Committee, which was ready to assume responsibility for recruiting and organizing female volunteers for the Louisiana war effort when Congress created the National Defense Council that summer. Louisiana's Governor Ruffin Pleasant appointed Hilda Phelps and Natalie president and secretary respectively of the state's Women's Committee to register and channel 400,000 women volunteers into an array of war work, ranging from Liberty Bond, food and clothing
drives, volunteer hospital service, organizing functions for soldiers in the local camps, fundraising for medical supplies, and other tasks requested by the Red Cross, the military or the state’s office of the National Defense Council.²⁴

Natalie’s statewide organizational work for the Women’s Committee was abruptly interrupted in late August, 1917, when she received Dr. Lambert’s letter requesting that she immediately join his staff as his executive secretary in Paris, France. On September 3, 1917, she boarded a train in New Orleans that took her to Washington, and then New York, where she sailed on the French vessel La Touraine to France.

Natalie Scott was the fifth person to join Dr. Lambert’s staff in the new American Red Cross headquarters in Paris, an organization that would grow to many hundreds. Her office duties included translating French wartime medical reports so these documents could be read by the American medical team in order to anticipate medical problems and appropriately organize medical operations in such fields as psychological neurosis, treatment of gas gangrene and poison gas cases, making use of new wartime technical advances developed in orthopaedic rehabilitation, prosthetical and anesthesiology advances, and medical care of the civilian population. Their office became the
requisition center for distribution of medical supplies and organizing new Red Cross operations. Soon, Natalie took over the task of organizing and maintaining all records of Dr. Lambert's office. All paper-work passed through her hands. Because of her proficiency in French, she became instrumental in handling problems and requests involving French personnel and medical operations.

Natalie's first seven months in Paris were chaotically transformed on March 21, 1918 when the Germans unleashed the first wave of their last great offensive in a determined effort to capture Paris. Bombardments of Paris during February and March served as a prelude to the sudden German advance that plunged through Allied defenses and pushed tens of thousands of homeless French refugees into Paris, where Natalie worked around the clock in the refugee centers. On April 1st, she went north from Paris on the hood of an overloaded camion that took her first to a front-line French evacuation hospital in Gisors, then a permanent assignment in Beauvais, dangerously close to the fighting, with double duties as the French hospital's interpreter and as a nurse's aide. By May, as the hospital became overcrowded with wounded soldiers, she assumed full nursing responsibilities for the balance of the war.

When the Germans escalated their campaign in May with the offensive's second wave of heavy assaults, as American
troops finally began entering the war in great numbers just in time to prevent the Allies’ final collapse, Beauvais came under heavy nightly bombardments from German air raids. When the hospital was bombed, Natalie repeatedly returned, through the busting glass and chaos, to the shattered upper floors to find patients and carry them down to the safety of the hospital’s underground basements. Finally they began keeping the patients in the basements until the bombardments finally subsided after the first week of June.²⁶

Natalie continued her nursing and translator duties, becoming the ward nurse for the American wounded in the French hospital, also doing double duty as a surgical nurse in nearby American hospitals that were overwhelmed with patients, until the war’s end. She then volunteered for duty in the American hospital in Nantes until the American wounded were finally ready for transport home during the early summer, 1919. She toured the battle fields of north France, then worked as a translator in Paris decommissioning Red Cross offices and liquidating supplies until September, 1919.

On September 6, 1919, the French government, in a special ceremony held in Paris, pursuant to the order of French Marshal Phillip Pétain, awarded Natalie Scott its highest medal for heroism, the Croix de Guerre. She
purposefully kept this high decoration a secret from her family and friends in New Orleans, hoping to surprise them when she arrived home. After a brief vacation trip through southern France and Italy, Natalie boarded ship for America in early October, 1919.\footnote{27}

Natalie’s train arrived in New Orleans on Saturday night, October 25, 1919. A large crowd of family and old friends met her at the station and turned the event into a celebration. Just as she had been front page news in New Orleans when she first left for Paris, and when news of her acts of heroism were reported by war correspondents on various occasions in May and June, 1918, Natalie’s arrival home placed her once again on the front pages of local newspapers on Sunday morning, October 26, 1919.

**Orleans Girl Home With Croix de Guerre**

*Miss Natalie Scott Honored for Bravery; Throng Welcomes Her*

Seldom has a conquering hero received the reception tendered Miss Natalie Scott, New Orleans war nurse heroine and Red Cross worker overseas for more than two years, as she arrived at the Louisville and Nashville station late Saturday night.

Her mother and father, Mr. and Mrs. Nat G. Scott, were there. They had been waiting in the station more than an hour.

Her friends, too were unwilling to miss the opportunity of being the first Orleanians to welcome the girl heroine.

They glimpsed her face as the coach passed slowly by, preparatory to stopping. Unable to restrain themselves, they started cheering.
Miss Scott herself seemed overcome with joy. She returned the greeting with a hearty, "Hello folks. Glad to see you again!"

She was attired in her uniform,...epaulets were intact, and she carried a riding whip in her hand.

On her coat, but pinned inconspicuously, she wore the Croix de Guerre. It was the expression of the French government for the valor she displayed.

"I'm glad to be back," Miss Scott said, the center of an admiring group. "It was a wonderful experience...it has taught me some things, too, that degrees in every university in the country would fail to impart."

Of her feats, Miss Scott declined to talk.28
CHAPTER TWO

THE AWAKENING OF THE VIEUX CARRÉ
(1919-1921)

Natalie became a feature journalist and social columnist for the New Orleans States during early 1920. Her entertaining Sunday morning social column usually covered most of two pages under the pseudonym “Peggy Passe Partout,” or “Peggy Who Goes Everywhere.” The format was a weekly letter to an imaginary Cynthia telling all the news, covering any and every topic or occasion, usually in a humorous, informative and upbeat manner that turned serious when subjects such as the Red Cross, the war, and European relief efforts crept in as they often did.

Engaging anecdotes about local people and events, inside news about visitors to the city, details on cultural events, plays, operas, debutante parties, weddings and Mardi Gras balls were her staple subjects. But Peggy Passe Partout’s letter was more than a gossip column. Her perceptive commentaries on politics, such as women’s suffrage and post-war politics, were usually ironic, serious points delivered with a twist of humor. She used the columns to energize, encourage and advocate local projects close to her heart, particularly French Quarter renewal, charity projects, women in business and civic
projects, the Petit Theatre du Vieux Carré productions, and artistic pursuits of all types. She reviewed plays, new books, art exhibits, concerts and operas with critical but encouraging analysis, and provided valuable publicity and support for the writers and artists working in the city, many of whom became close friends and companions, the hilarity of their parties and exploits often being reported in Natalie’s column.²

The first major test of her journalistic skills came as a hard news reporter in a celebrated murder case that dominated the front pages in New Orleans newspapers for six months, finally culminating with a controversial jury verdict on April 18, 1920. Her daily front page dramatizations of the Andrew J. Whitfield trial were Natalie’s first published articles over her byline, a month after her anonymous Peggy Passe Partout column had started on March 28th. The next year, on January 30, 1921, she began writing a second Sunday feature for the paper, this one occupying double column spaces on the front page of the second section, and always addressing a special interest subject over her byline “Natalie Vivian Scott.” Her first one, for example, examined the work of the newly created League of Women’s Voters. Next, on February 6th, she sketched the personality of American painter Howard Chandler Christy, and the happy decision of Christy and his
wife to make the French Quarter their winter home, - an opportunity Natalie used to emphasize her vision of the city’s destiny to become a national art center.¹

Natalie’s work was made more interesting by her encounters with most of the city’s best known visitors. During her first year on the job, she met and interviewed dozens of renowned people, a few examples including General John J. Pershing, Enrico Caruso, William Butler Yeats, Eamonn de Valera (Irish Sinn Fein patriot and President of the Republic of Ireland), President-elect and Mrs. Warren G. Harding, Franklin D. Roosevelt – the defeated vice-presidential candidate was on his way to Lake Charles for a duck hunt, Anne Morgan (the daughter of J. Pierpont Morgan and leader of the American Committee for Devastated France), and a long list of the many operatic and symphonic stars who performed in the city, among many other notables.²

Simultaneously, Natalie’s job introduced her to various less known or obscure figures destined for high achievement, such as George C. Marshall, who accompanied General Pershing to the city in February, 1921. Almost immediately upon her return in 1919, she formed a friendship with Harry Hopkins, who later gained fame as the primary architect of Franklin Roosevelt’s New Deal relief programs and head of the Works Progress Administration.
Hopkins was then director of the New Orleans Red Cross office and in 1920 he succeeded Natalie’s friend Leigh Carroll as the director of the Gulf Region of the Red Cross. She also worked with Hopkins’ wife in local relief campaigns on behalf of Europe’s refugee children. Jane Addams, a key personality in the Woodrow Wilson’s first term, again later in F.D.R.’s New Deal, and a Nobel Peace Prize winner in 1931, began her friendship with Natalie at the National Conference of Welfare Workers in New Orleans during April, 1920.5

New Orleans entered a historic period that coincided with Natalie’s arrival home from the war, particularly in respect to the French Quarter and the unusual people who gathered there. Natalie was one of the key personalities who must be given credit for the Vieux Carre’s transformation from squalid conditions into a spirited, even adventurous atmosphere that became the creative incubator for young writers such as William Faulkner, Oliver La Farge, Roark Bradford, Lyle Saxon, Meigs Frost, and Hamilton Basso; artists like William Spratling, Alberta Kinsey, Conrad Albrizio, Ronald Hargrave, and Weeks Hall; stage performers such as Jessie Tharp, Henry Garic, Val Winter and pianist Genevive Pitot; dancers such as Paul Swan and Marian Draper; poets like John McClure, Sam Gilmore, and Basil Thompson.
A vital factor in the French Quarter’s magnetism was a powerful sense of independence, freedom and bohemianism. Serving as a symbolic backdrop was the imposition of the national prohibition law, an attack on freedom that was flagrantly flaunted in New Orleans. An air of civil disobedience permeated the city as federal law officers enforced “with a vengeance” the new 18th amendment and the unpopular Volstead Act. The people of New Orleans, particularly the youthful generation, many returning from military duty, would not have their morals dictated to them. National prohibition took effect on January 18th, 1920. A war-time federal prohibition edict was already in place when Natalie arrived home in October, 1919, but the manner in which the citizens ignored this law was a prelude to what was ahead, as was very apparent in New Orleans on New Year’s eve. The headlines on January 1, 1920 blared, “OLD MAN JOHN BARLEYCORN BURIED IN A FLOOD OF LIQUOR,” a reference to the demise of legalized drinking. A crackdown on violators of the wartime law began as the January 18th deadline approached. “BARS, CAFES RAIDED BY U.S. AGENTS IN DRY CRUSADE” was the headline on January 14th, and the owner of the Old Absinthe House was among those arrested. Such headlines and arrests made almost daily front page appearances for the next decade.
Prohibition was just too much for the fun-loving citizenry of New Orleans, one of America’s few cities to have attempted at the turn of the century, for twenty raucous years, the European social experiment of legalizing prostitution in a designated section of the city. The resentment of prohibition, and of the government’s subsequent talk of Sunday closing laws, was deep and pervasive across all social lines. Headlines of arrests, convictions, and the battle against massive liquor smuggling through the waterways and bayous surrounding the city, adorned the daily newspapers. But enforcement failures provoked the government to send a high powered federal prohibition officer, Major R. B. Keating, to take charge of New Orleans in early 1921. Less than three months later Major Keating resigned in frustration. The next embarrassment was the disappearance from government warehouses of tens of thousands of dollars of confiscated liquor, igniting an amusing local scandal.  

Natalie reported an incident in her Sunday morning column that exemplified the prevailing contempt toward prohibition, the behavior of one masker at a Mardi Gras ball.

I have heard of diamond bracelets as favors at the balls, diamond pins, all sorts of bejeweled odds and ends, and other things of costly import. But one of the attractive maskers at the Follies enhanced her already very potent charm many fold by the tokens she
bestowed on the favored who were her partners. I glimpsed a dear little basket and in it were a number of tiny little bottles, discreetly enveloped, so that no follower of Volstead might be shocked. She whispered to me their contents. Of course, I would not tell even you, Cynthia, because it was a confidence. But I’ll wager a diamond scarf pin wouldn’t have been as welcome to the men she danced with as one of those little bottles!*

Another flavor of the times in New Orleans was the close proximity of the Mexican Revolution, which had begun in 1910. The city itself had a Central American identity, closely tied through trade and geography to the Caribbean and central American countries. By 1920, the Mexican Revolution entered its final bloody phase, with the city’s newspapers closely following developments as President Venustiano Carranza struggled desperately for the survival of his divided and crumbling five-year revolutionary regime. Throughout the ten years of bloodshed in Mexico, New Orleans had been a favorite place of exile and refuge as the various political factions fluctuated in and out of power. When Alvaro Obregón surged into power after Carranza’s death in May, 1920, over 5,000 Obregonistas vacated New Orleans to safely return to their Mexican homes. News stories were commonplace on Mexican economic recovery, recurrences of violence, visiting Mexican musicians, the Mexican oil industry, visiting officials and businessmen, colorful characters such as Pancho Villa, and features of Mexican life. Most of the local papers,
including the New Orleans States, employed a special correspondent assigned to keep current Mexican news before the public.\textsuperscript{10}

On Natalie's first day in town, she joined a new amateur theatrical group planning to establish a Little Theater in the French Quarter. On November 11th, she marched down Canal Street in a massive military parade and gave the Armistice Day speech before a Red Cross rally at the Liberty Theater to kick off a new membership drive.\textsuperscript{11} Subsequently, Natalie paid Thanksgiving visits to the home of her brother's family in Alexandria and to the Provosty home in New Roads. Her friend Hilda Phelps Hammond was pregnant with her second child, and, by Christmas, her sister in law Sidonie Provosty Scott was pregnant for a third time. It was a joyful interlude of reunion, exchanging visits, emptying her trunks, sharing gifts, souvenirs and memories.\textsuperscript{12}

The unorthodox plan to organize a new theater in the French Quarter was appealing to Natalie. The old Quarter had never been a popular haunt before the war, except for performances at the French Opera House or other special occasions. The old section was run down, overwhelmed with an assortment of foul odors, and too close to notorious Storyville. But in 1919, she was suddenly interested, reminded of her pleasant wartime and postwar experiences in
the bohemian sections of Paris, the literary stimulation, the original poetry, the intellectualism she encountered there. The architecture was more reminiscent of old French towns than anywhere she had been in America.

Natalie had performed with these theater organizers in Drama League plays before the war, talented people like Henry Garic, Jessie Tharp, Rhea Goldberg and Helen Schertz. The moving force was a remarkable and very prominent elderly lady, Mrs. J. Oscar Nixon, who was the mother of Natalie’s friend Rosalie Nixon, her compatriot in Paris with the Red Cross late in the war doing canteen work, who then worked for Anne Morgan’s refugee relief and reconstruction organization for a few months after the armistice. Rosalie had returned to the city earlier in 1919 and resumed writing her social column in the New Orleans States under the pen name Cynthia St. Charles. Natalie’s Peggy Passe Partout soon replaced Rosalie’s Cynthia St. Charles when Rosalie chose a new career: charitable fund-raising with Florence Spencer Duryea’s Near East Relief Commission and other charitable and political causes.¹³

The idea of restoring the French Quarter to promote its potential artistic and tourist appeal was not a new one nor a very successful one. Past revival efforts had fallen flat. However, the theater group’s plan was different.
Instead of waiting for the city or civic groups to clean up the Quarter, they would move into the Vieux Carré immediately and begin their performances, taking the Quarter as it was and doing their best to draw audiences from uptown neighborhoods. Within a few years, their success would not only provide the city with one of the very best amateur theaters in America, the Petit Theatre du Vieux Carré, but the new theater’s success came at a critical moment when it was needed most. Natalie’s commitment to the Petit Theatre very quickly translated into an even more compelling interest, – the resurrection from ruin of the New Orleans French Quarter and the creation in New Orleans of a bohemian refuge for intellectuals and creative people reminiscent of the Left Bank and Montmartre of Paris.

Respected artistic leaders, particularly Dr. Ellsworth Woodward of the Newcomb College Art Department, had long advocated the investment of public funds in French Quarter improvements for the purpose of making it a regional or national artistic center. But the squalor, lawlessness and semi-slumlike conditions far outweighed its assets and deterred polite society from living there. The cost to make it habitable was prohibitive. A New Orleans Item article on November 3, 1918 remarked:¹⁴
Dreams have been dreamt by local artists of converting the Pontalba building into artists’ studios, - art galleries, anything that will harbor tradition and the beauty of the old days....They are at present given over to the poorer class of foreign tenants, Italian, Greeks, Syrians, who seek shelter there because the place is like a bit of the homes in southern Europe and because the rent is cheap.

Where would the money come from to restore the Pontalba Buildings that framed the north and south side of Jackson Square, much less the funds to improve the rest of the Quarter? Two artists, Robert Grafton and Oscar Griffith, had planned to convert the old Paul Morphy house, 417 Royal Street, into an art colony of studios, but the effort failed. During January, 1919, the New Orleans Association of Commerce targeted the Pontalba buildings for making studios for artists and musicians. The Association President, Ben C. Casanas, believed the project would be good advertisement for the city. The Quarter, he thought, might even become as famous as Greenwich Village. Again, the idea failed for lack of funding. Lyle Saxon, then a part-time journalist for both the New Orleans Item and the Times-Picayune, joined the chorus with his article on the Association’s plan:

The French Quarter is now falling into decay, gracefully, it is true, but crumbling nevertheless. One by one the old mansions are destroyed; the iron work balconies, that priceless art work that cannot be duplicated today at any cost, are sold as scrap iron. During the last ten years the old Quarter has been steadily dropping to pieces...
Suppose the idea of restoring the Pontalba is carried out, what would happen?

Artists would come here every year, 'hundreds of them; their colony would be 'downtown'. On the trail of the artists would come the writers— they always do—and soon we could boast of our Place D' Armes as New York does her Washington Square, once almost a slum, now the heart of the artistic life in this country.

What about a Little Theatre in one of the Pontalba buildings? A place where drawing-room plays could be acted, and which would seat approximately 200 spectators; any one of the shops located under the apartments in the building could be made into such a theatre, and cheaply too.15

Everyone's idea was to fix up the Quarter, or at least the Pontalba, to attract artists, writers or performers to work there, not the reverse process of the artists moving in as it was, thereby inspiring the restoration.

There was much to discourage even the most enthusiastic advocates of French Quarter preservation and renewal. The eastern perimeter of the old town had bordered Storyville, the city's legalized red-light district from 1897 to 1917. Officials implemented this social experiment to remove the spreading cancer of vice and prostitution from the rest of the city and to focus the saloons, whorehouses, and gambling dens into a thirty-nine block area separated from the French Quarter by Basin Street. The idea had come from European and English techniques of isolating prostitution and controlling venereal disease more effectively, while also registering,
inspecting and taxing the brothels. Named for the city alderman who proposed the unique city ordinance, the red-light district, with its array of jazz musicians, thrived for twenty years until Mayor Martin Behrman succumbed to pressure to shut it down, which occurred virtually overnight. In its place, a disreputable honky-tonk district known as the Tango Belt remained during the 1920s.  

Survival instincts then led the illegal prostitution business to move a little closer to the river into the French Quarter, an invasion of hundreds of prostitutes plying their trade on the streets for one or two dollars, bringing with them cheap dance halls and speak-easies. This migration of lawlessness from Storyville compounded the shambles the French Quarter had become during the decades of accelerating neglect since the Civil War. 

The Quarter had undeniable assets. The faded beauty of its buildings, streets and architecture was still there, though covered in filth, while many buildings had become structurally dangerous, a fact dramatized when the dome of the grand old St. Louis Hotel collapsed under its own weight in 1915. The historic hotel was razed in 1917 and few seemed to care. The Quarter was a cheap place to live, sometimes a dozen Sicilian families residing in a single old creole mansion. There was also a powerful air of
freedom and an absence of pretension. The Quarter was a place where rules were broken, money was scarce, reputations irrelevant, and one could melt anonymously into the haphazard mixture of ethnic working class neighborhoods, often living without electricity, amidst the narrow, broken streets, some unpaved and others of ancient, loose bricks often too rough for the passage of automobiles, though adequate for milk wagons, pushcarts and mule-drawn conveyances.¹⁹

The French built the original old town early in the eighteenth century, though almost all buildings were rebuilt during the Spanish colonial period because devastating fires had destroyed much of the Quarter during the 1780s and 1790s. The Vieux Carré served as Louisiana's colonial capital for eight decades, overseeing a strange brew of Frenchmen, Haitians, Caribbeans, Germans, Belgians, free persons of color, Anglo-Americans, Acadians, Islanos and various Spanish groups, mixed with a heavy population of slaves and mulattos. The Louisiana Purchase in 1803 accelerated the flowing Anglo-American migration into the city, gradually diluting its French character during the course of the nineteenth century. These American transplants built another business district north of the Vieux Carré and sprinkled it with new residential
neighborhoods. Later, even finer residential sections were built further north along St. Charles Avenue.\(^1\)

By the turn of the twentieth century, most of the old creole families ceased to cling to their Vieux Carré homes, although a few persisted. The area was run-down, poorly kept, and lacked modern comforts and conveniences. The prominent families had moved out, replaced by new waves of European immigrants. Like immigrants in most American cities during the fifty years sandwiching the turn of the century, these new Americans settled in the inner city. The Vieux Carré received a large portion. Poor black families occupied portions of the Quarter, along with itinerant workers, the unemployed, and others seeking a cheap place to lay their heads.\(^2\)

They shared the Quarter in 1920 with a scattered handful of actors, artists and journalists. It was a bargain hunter's paradise, if one was willing to risk the uncertainty of lawlessness to shop on Royal Street where old antique furniture, vases, used jewelry, and rugs, a treasure of well-worn odds and ends, could be had for a fraction of value. There was the stench of sewage, poor plumbing and poor drainage; the accumulation of trash where once well-trimmed creole gardens and courtyards had long been abandoned and overgrown; delicate wrought iron balconies had become improvised clothes-lines; chickens,
goats, scrawny cows and old horses lived in and between the old buildings, even occupying sections of the old Pontalba buildings. Flophouses and cheap dives bordered the river front.21

The Vieux Carré, or Frenchtown as it was often called, was a rough mix where everyday human drama and deprivation was in large supply for those with the imagination to observe, absorb and perceive. Mixed with the rank odor of stale beer, rotting vegetables and manure droppings, one might also encounter more welcome aromas of brewing coffee and freshly cooked ethnic foods. But in October, 1919, upon Natalie Scott’s return to the city, the only attractions bringing outsiders to the old section were the world class performances in the French Opera House on Bourbon Street, a few of the fine old restaurants, and the opportunity for visitors to have a glimpse of the Cabildo, St. Louis Cathedral or the neglected wrought iron balconies that remained unique though threatened with extinction.22

There had been spasmatic signs and symptoms over the years of uptown New Orleanians rediscovering the value of the French Quarter. Elizabeth Werlein, the widow of music store owner Philip Werlein, had published a monograph, complete with photographs, entitled “Wrought Iron Railings of the Vieux Carré”, which focused attention on the irreplaceable losses and destruction occurring in the

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French Quarter due to neglect and apathy. Though some raised concerns, few responded by purchasing property there, and practically no one moved in.²³

Lyle Saxon, still an obscure 28 year old newspaperman in 1919, was one of the exceptions. Artist Alberta Kinsey was another. She was an Ohio schoolteacher who had come to New Orleans that summer to paint during her vacation. With Saxon’s encouragement, she found a room in the French Quarter and stayed, initially selling her paintings for two dollars apiece. Saxon also moved into the French Quarter that summer of 1919, defying the warnings of friends he would be murdered, renting a sixteen room house at 613 Royal Street for a mere $16 per month. He enjoyed gathering guests in this house, which he furnished with family heirlooms and antiques. Though Saxon had previously worked for the Baton Rouge State-Times, the New Orleans Item, the Chicago Daily News, and soon became the Picayune’s most popular writer, he was not well-known. His presence in the Quarter was of little consequence in 1919 except for the circle of friends, such as Kinsey, he persuaded to follow his example.²⁴

The first tangible sign of substantial new interest and new investment in the French Quarter by uptown New Orleanians was the establishment and modest beginnings of the Petit Theatre du Vieux Carré in October and November,
1919. The surprising decision made by the organizers to locate their new amateur playhouse in the midst of ruin, prostitution, cheap bars, and poverty-stricken neighborhoods, seemed ill-advised to all but the prophetic few. Drawing audiences, most believed, would be a major problem. The idea immediately intrigued Natalie and she joined the effort. Mrs. Nixon, Rhea Loeb Goldberg, Helen Pitkin Schertz, all of whom Natalie knew well from her pre-war days in the Drama League, were the leaders. Mrs. Nixon was an older lady, Helen Schertz less so, and Rhea was Natalie’s age.  

During late 1917 and early 1918, while Natalie was away with the Red Cross in France, their group had produced three plays performed in the homes of members, appropriately naming themselves “The Drawing Room Players.” But the organization had been defunct since two members died in the influenza epidemic that winter. Mrs. Nixon and Helen Schertz had boldly plunged into the Quarter during mid-October, 1919, and, on the second floor of the lower Pontalba building, on the corner of St. Charles and Decatur streets, found an unoccupied space, an abandoned tramp’s hotel that had finally become too filthy even for the tramps. The duo agreed to rent the place for $17 per month and the Petit Theatre du Vieux Carré was given birth.
The opening performance was scheduled for November 26, 1919, leaving them only five weeks to convert the big room into a presentable theater. The accommodations included winding stairs within the dark downstairs entry and a second upstairs room just large enough to serve as a dressing space. The ceilings were over thirteen feet high, less than ten feet above the stage the members built. There were ten windows and a doorway to a wide gallery overlooking Jackson Square and the Mississippi River, a lovely spot for audiences to enjoy during intermissions.27

An esprit d’corps enveloped the group as they scrubbed, scraped and applied new paint, using their imaginations for extra touches. They carried upstairs a large wooden wheel to hang from the ceiling, mounted with candles upon tin cake molds to serve as a home-made chandelier. Natalie’s old friend Walter Keiffer led the construction crew that built the stage, twenty-four feet wide with a proscenium opening that reduced the effective stage space to eighteen by twelve feet. As one group went to work on stage curtains, another volunteer crew painted the walls gold with life-sized green peacocks near the ceiling upon a gilded panel. Straight backed kitchen chairs were purchased for eleven dollars per dozen and painted black and gold. Candle power illuminated their
theater, achieving a shimmering, subdued atmosphere that hid the imperfections of their playhouse.28

The next trick was to convince uptown New Orleanians to come to the French Quarter to see their theatrical productions. Their collective reputations helped. Jessie Tharp, Henry Garic, Helen Schertz, Val Winter, Lionel Adams, Major Gassaway, Ben Hanley, Martha Robinson, Natalie Scott, among numerous others, were popular and well-known to local theater-goers, some of them professional caliber performers. The Sunday before Natalie’s arrival, as the worst of the filth was being washed away from inside their new theater, an afternoon house-warming to find volunteers achieved a small turn out and a few joined the work crew. Others purchased memberships. Natalie helped organize two more events on November 4th and 5th, the first a French Quarter tour, including a visit to the Petit Theatre, directed by Helen Schertz, who had been fascinated for years by the old town and knew more about it than anyone else. The second event was a luncheon at the Louisiane Restaurant followed by another Schertz-led tour.29

These promotions helped ticket sales. Accordingly, the theater altered plans to open with two (instead of one, as originally scheduled) performances on November 26th and 28th, 1919, the first being a dress rehearsal or “informal opening” reserved for the active membership. The theater
seated sixty and provided standing room for roughly thirty more. A combined crowd of almost two hundred people cheered the opening performances, two one-act plays each evening. The November debut was an acclaimed success among the uptown crowd, creating a brief stir in the Quarter. Newspaper reviews were enthusiastic and congratulatory. Energized by success, the theater group immediately began rehearsals for the December bill.

Then, in early December, this small gain for the French Quarter was overwhelmed by the shocking, devastating loss of the French Opera House. A fire alarm sounded at Toulouse and Bourbon streets just before three a.m. on December 4th, 1919. A second alarm followed five minutes later. As fire trucks rumbled through the narrow streets, more alarms awakened the sleepy inhabitants to the fact of a major emergency. Despite the fire department's fast response, the blaze totally destroyed the grossly underinsured Opera House.

Only weeks earlier, in celebration of Armistice Day on November 11th, the Opera House had reopened after a two-year hibernation during the war, creating a sensation as the brightest of New Orleans society filled the music palace to honor debutantes and enjoy the traditional operatic performance of "Aida" that marked the beginning of the social season. Lyle Saxon had described the grand
occasion on the front page of the Times-Picayune beneath a double headline which declared:

**OPENING OF OPERA BRINGS JOY AGAIN TO SOCIAL WORLD**
Brilliant Audience Present to Welcome Return of Old-Time Gayety

The social season of New Orleans opened Tuesday night like the explosion of a cork from a champagne bottle and poured over the French Opera House in a froth of tulle, jewels, flowers and ostrich-feather fans. During the war period both operatic music and a formal social season were repressed, but the accumulated expression of both activities vented itself on the gala night in one of the most brilliant displays the famous old Opera House has ever seen.

Virtually every seat in the house was occupied, from orchestra to the benches close under the roof....

The fire occurred during a typically busy opera week. Saxon had attended the performance of “Les Huguenants” on Tuesday evening, the last ever in the building. A double bill had been scheduled for Thursday, and “La Traviata” and “Carmen” for Saturday performances.

Hundreds gathered that awful night to watch as firefighters fought against the spread of flames to neighboring buildings, and as daring rescuers saved the lives of several occupants. The Toulouse street wall, sixty feet high, collapsed on one of the fire trucks as firemen ran to safety. Lyle Saxon and his neighbor Alberta Kinsey were among the onlookers. Retreating from this nightmare, the two sat down on a curb and wept openly.

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Saxon finally returned to his home only a block away and composed an epitaph published on the front page of the Times Picayune that same day. He concluded with the dramatic line, "The heart of the old French Quarter has stopped beating." The cultural and aesthetic loss to the Vieux Carré could hardly be exaggerated.34

The New Orleans Opera Association held an emergency meeting the afternoon of the tragic blaze and decided to resume the opera season that weekend in the Athenaeum of the Cosmopolitan Hotel on St. Charles Avenue, far from the Vieux Carré, even though all sets, costumes, and music had been burned. The Opera Association and Mayor Behrman joined forces to advocate construction of an auditorium for "opera, public meetings, conventions, bands, concerts, and other public purposes." No mention was made of rebuilding the Opera House at its original location or even in the French Quarter.35

The fire occurred only a week after the Petit Theatre’s opening November performance in its tiny facility. Their December performances two weeks afterward provided the Quarter with a faint, but enthusiastic pulse as another round of capacity audiences applauded their work. They expanded the format in January to three one-act plays, including Le Passant by Francois Coppee, which was entirely in French. The Petit Theatre’s selections
displayed a commitment to variety, experimentation, and originality. Martha Robinson, Natalie’s close friend and Newcomb classmate, and her brother Samuel Louis Gilmore performed in “The Land of Heart’s Desire” by William Butler Yeats in January, 1920; Natalie played one of five roles in “Two Crooks and a Lady” by Eugene Pillot during March, 1920. The full houses returned each month. Sam Gilmore also wrote the last play performed that spring, “Bagatelle.” It drew the heaviest crowds of the year and brought down the curtain on their first French Quarter season to the thunder of standing ovations and curtain calls in the tiny playhouse.36

The Petit Theatre outgrew their Pontalba quarters that first year and pondered changes to accommodate the new demands for tickets and memberships. The organization’s hard work and artistry had made a healthy impact upon the French Quarter, as Saxon duly noted in the Times-Picayune after their final performance:

It would appear that the long looked for restoration of the Vieux Carré is at hand. For the last week, the real estate transactions involving sales and exchanges in the Old Quarter have been unusually heavy....

The Little Theatre, which is occupying one of the apartments of the Pontalba buildings, has drawn the interest of the ‘uptown’ residents to the quarter and a revival of interest has been started.37
Natalie, in her Peggy Passe Partout column, which was then in its third month of publication, expressed the same sentiment in a different way, through the symbolism of a gentle old Vieux Carré inhabitant she had befriended who worked daily beside the lower Pontalba Building:

You must remember very well - who could forget? - how the once dirty walls now gleam with golden paint, as do also the gorgeous peacocks that now adorn them. You must remember the old French colored bootblack, minus one leg, who sits outside the entrance, who, if you are willing, seats you in a dilapidated old wooden chair and blacks your boots for you. He sat there long before the Little Theatre arrived.

Consider now the delicate tribute that we of the Little Theatre have received, how encouraged we must feel to see a concrete instance of the spread of culture that we are effecting. For, when we went to the Little Theatre the other day, what should we behold but the inspiring spectacle of that shabby wooden bootblack's chair beautifully golden - quite in a manner of the Little Theatre.38

In another of her Sunday columns during May, 1920, Natalie further remarked on the contrast and promise the Petit Theatre was bringing to the Quarter.

If there is any truth in the theory that ghosts walk, the ghost of the Baronesse de Pontalba must have been feeling rather blue for many years, as it wandered about and saw how dingy and dilapidated were the old buildings which were so splendid in her day.

But Wednesday night, if she was about, her ghostly heart must have leaped with delight, for gay light and brilliant decorations made radiant all one corner: it could hardly have looked prettier even in the days when her spirit walked in its lovely flesh. The occasion was the annual meeting of the Petit Theatre du Vieux Carré. Did you know they had an annual meeting? Indeed they do, ever since they had a constitution, which was about two weeks ago! There
were strings of Japanese lanterns all about the building, and the balconies were combined in a riot of color.

Inside it was as gay as outside. Haven't you ever wished for the sunshine, when the moon was shining, after the manner of Lewis Carroll's poem?...the posts were hung with lights, with all the various transparencies in front of them, so that we had our moonshine and sunlight, and every other kind of light....

There was some serious business transacted. The selection of officers, for instance. For president, there was a nomination made instantly, and carried immediately by acclamation. It was - perhaps you will have guessed - Mrs. Oscar Nixon...In other words, the same officers of last year...A clever body is the Petit Theatre....

Very ambitious are the plans for next year. There is no check in our march of progress...we're going to have a change of domicile, enlarge our quarters or move to more commodious ones, if the size of our exchequer and the scope of our ambitions can be made to harmonize!^---

* * * *

The revival of the Vieux Carré would be a product of spontaneous creativity, collaborative planning efforts and hard work. The Petit Theatre ignited new and widespread interest. The Louisiana State Museum, which had offices in the Cabildo, and the Louisiana Historical Society, led by novelist Grace King, also provided planning and work. These two organizations had already managed the restoration of a few French Quarter buildings such as the Cabildo and the Presbytère. Another much-needed ally joined their cause early in 1920.40
On February 5, Natalie Scott attended a public meeting held in the Monteleone Hotel with an assortment of French Quarter residents, downtown property owners, businessmen, “and all other persons having a real interest in seeing that proper safeguards for preservation are thrown about the French Quarter....” According to the newspaper notice of the meeting, “an analysis of the problem of caring for, advancing and cleaning up the French Quarter will be laid before the meeting.” Lyle Saxon was also there, and Walter A. Valois of 516 Bourbon Street became the acting secretary. They named themselves the Vieux Carré Society.41

The Vieux Carré Society’s objective to prepare a comprehensive restoration plan for the French Quarter took months to accomplish, and their effort quickly attracted business and political leaders who ably assumed leadership for the cause, as Natalie and Saxon, among others, receded to a supportive role. A month later a delegation of the Society’s most prominent and most influential members, led by Claude Smith and Sidney McMain of the Whitney-Central Bank, J. D. Kenney of the Monteleone Hotel, clothing merchant Louis Mercier, manufacturer J. Earl Rogers, T. P. Thompson of the Louisiana State Museum, and Grace King of the Louisiana Historical Society, met with Mayor Martin Behrman and the City Commission to discuss an early draft.
of the Society’s program. An important element of their plan was to protect from commercial development a very large portion of the Quarter that was still predominantly residential. After a public hearing was held by the Society on March 22nd to hear any opposition to this proposal, the City Commission approved the first tentative ordinance aimed at protecting Esplanade Avenue and all side streets within one hundred feet from new business development. Meanwhile, the Society was making progress toward a more complete plan for the entire Quarter.\(^42\)

Broad support mounted for the Vieux Carré Society’s campaign. Father Antoine, the new rector of the St. Louis Cathedral, became a member of the Society in May and made a well publicized endorsement:

...I have observed there is great need for a general cleansing of dwellings downtown, a need for more police service, cleaner streets, more lights and in general better sanitation in most of the homes, and in many businesses...There are historic settings in the Quartier Français that should be fully preserved.\(^43\)

The Society’s ten point plan was finally ready for formal submittal to the City Commission on May 4th, and included these objectives:

1) Better lighting throughout the Vieux Carré.

2) Repair of the worst streets and paving of all unpaved streets.

3) Replacement of broken sidewalks where dangerous to pedestrians.
4) Eliminate "for hire" automobiles or taxis from the Quarter.

5) Provide regular garbage service to the Quarter, and regular cleaning of gutters, drains, and sewers.

6) Provide police protection throughout the Quarter, and regular police patrols.

7) "Suspension of all questionable resorts", a diplomatic manner of asking the city to stop prostitution and vice.

8) Prohibit vehicles and automobiles being left overnight on sidewalks and in the narrow streets, which was aimed at the auto repair shops in the district.

9) Protection of the chiefly residential sections of the Quarter from certain types of businesses, particularly to prohibit businesses that give off offensive odors, smoke or dust, or cause street congestion by trucks, wagons, or drays. The protected residential zone was to be bound by St. Louis, Rampart, Chartres streets and Esplanade avenue.

10) Rebuild the French Opera House on its original site.\[4\]

The Society members also pledged among themselves to clean up, repair, repaint, and maintain their properties in cooperation with standards being recommended by the state museum and the historical society, the two preservation groups that were targeting certain historical places for restoration. The Society members also collectively endorsed the idea of members living at least part-time in the French Quarter. Finally, the Vieux Carré Society, acting on behalf of the property owners, accepted the job.
of advertising and acting as their agent for tourists and others interested in lodging in the French Quarter. The Society's strategy called for the Quarter's dwellings to be upgraded, advertised, then leased with careful discretion.\textsuperscript{15}

The Society became a persistent voice for the implementation of the Vieux Carré improvement program and for the Quarter's needs before city authorities. One example in June dealt with the streetlights. The lighting in the Quarter was even worse than usual due to a break in cables. The Vieux Carré Society took the matter up with the City Commission and the cables were replaced.

Commissioner Stone also informs the society that notices have been served on 25 property owners in the French Quarter to repair sidewalks...[I]n some instances dilapidated walks were actually a menace to personal safety. In most of the cases, neglected walks were in front of the property owned by foreigners.

The Vieux Carré Society will meet Monday night...\textsuperscript{16}

As the Society pushed the reforms necessary to make the Quarter a more accommodating, safer place to live, a stream of young uptown residents were moving in. Natalie reported regularly in her Peggy Passe Partout column on the Quarter's new conquests, noting in early April an array of newcomers.

The charm of the Vieux Carré is getting more potent constantly, it seems. There have long been
sporadic pioneers, who have known how to find comfort as well as atmosphere there. Then, Miss Wilkinson established her little antique shop there; Jeanne Castellanos is working busily, making her little corner of it alluring...And the very latest emigrant is Belle Lawrason, that courageous and hauntingly pretty little architect. There must be a great deal in this artistic instinct that we hear of, for it led her unerringly to the most delightful courtyard....

The Petit Theatre and the Architects’ Club have ensconced themselves in the glamor of the Pontalba buildings,...I hear Walker Ellis is showing deep interest in “For Rents” and “For Sales” nearby. It seems that our Quartier Francais will soon be as artistically characteristic of us as the Quartier Latin is of Paris!

In May, Natalie reported that:

...Lyle Saxon, who has proved the strength of his penchant for the old quarter by keeping an apartment there for many months, has now followed it further than ever, and has bought a house down there, - one of the quaintest that even Royal Street affords.... Martha Westfeldt is another who has been wrought upon by the spell....

Her next column reported that Ross Breazeale, from a Natchitoches family, had acquired and restored a “hospitable apartment on Royal Street”, one that previous Brazeale generations had once owned but had sold many years earlier. Natalie wrote in June that the search by Walker Ellis was over. He had found his new home, “a charming old house on Toulouse street,” which he and friends were painting and decorating. In another column, Natalie described the apartment of artist Weeks Hall, which had become a “favorite rendezvous of the talented literary and artistic folk of our community.”
But perhaps Natalie's most vivid account during 1920 on the improving atmosphere of the French Quarter is the piece inspired by a visit to Alberta Kinsey's studio, providing a magnetic French Quarter allure for newspaper readers.

Atmosphere is a queer thing, Cynthia.... The French Quarter, for instance. It has been here for several years, at least; yet we never went near it, unless we had guests, when we rushed them hastily and conscientiously through it, having first taken the precaution of putting the strongest scent possible on our handkerchiefs. Now we haunt it in droves, and rush poor patient Mrs. Schertz to death to learn the history of it all, crowd the Quartier Club and the Cathedral Shadow tea-room to the breaking point, and, twixt tea and sausage, we imbibe great gobs of atmosphere. What is it anyway? Each of us has a different idea, I suppose, and perhaps there are styles in atmosphere, as there are in so many other pleasant things.

As for me, it is "Alberta's" and as Mrs. Ruth McEnery Stewart's old man would say, "I ain't by myself in dat, in dat. I ain't by myself in dat!" There's a big old stone house in Toulouse St., with great, wide rounded windows, where solid, heavy green shutters swing. In the middle is the old carriage-entrance, closed likewise with solid, heavy doors of an ancient green. There's nothing pleasanter, of a Sunday evening, than to turn in to that dingy little cobble-stoned Toulouse St., push open one of those old green doors, step down just a little into the dim arched entrance, take the irresistible peep back into the court-yard where the dark shadows of the old brick walls frame a square of star-lit sky, then turn to your left and knock on the old green door in the wall at your side. It opens and you are in the cozy, hospitable retreat of Miss Alberta Kinsey, artist and delightful hostess.

It's a great big room. There's a great big table at one side, where an oil lamp with a green shade on it lights everything softly. There is a pleasant confusion of a book here and there, a vase, cups and
saucers, pictures everywhere, and a satisfying feeling of color — perhaps it’s from the red hanging with the black Chinese letters on it, perhaps from the cover of the comfortable looking divan in the corner, perhaps from the row of pottery that lines the shelf high up on the wall, nearly as high as the lofty old ceiling. Perhaps after all it’s just Miss Kinsey’s personality, so quiet, so unobtrusive, so pervasive. Anyway, there’s feeling of warmth and comfort. And you settle peacefully in a chair. There are sure to be some interesting people who come in, and there is no demand that you be clever or temperamental or anything but happy. As a matter of fact, her guests are invariably of the people who do things, and do them well. And they are clever: (with me as the happy exception!) Belle Lawrason, Fannie Craig, Sam Ziluion, Lyle Saxon are a few of the group who gather there.

It’s very satisfying to find someone quite happy in their work, as is Miss Kinsey. She lives down there in the big, comfortable old rooms and paints the most charming pictures of first one corner, then another of the old French Quarter which she loves sincerely. Tourists, or an occasional observant New Orleanian, find her pictures and carry them off delightedly, and life goes on for her, the joyful thing of doing what she wants to do. Perhaps it is not atmosphere that one finds there, but it is an atmosphere of sincerity, of the love of things artistic, of contentment, and it is a great treat to take refuge there.49

The second season of the Petit Theatre du Vieux Carré was again at the lower Pontalba playhouse, opening in November, 1920, but its seating capacity was almost tripled to over 170 by ingenious engineering, and there were many other improvements such as electronic lanterns. The season’s schedule was also enlarged, eight bills instead of six. The new stage was bigger and so were the dressing and storage areas. Natalie reported the changes:
Everything is now quietly spotless in a chaste simplicity of buff and brick colors....[T]he little auditorium is in the same tones, with brick colored urns on each side of the stage, and a few pieces of tapestry about the walls. The stage has removed itself (probably the House Committee would object to the reflexive verb!) to the other side of the room, and the tiers of seats rise one above the other with a beautiful consideration that allows even the latest comer (only too likely to be your faithful Peggy) a perfect view of the stage. A busy little ventilator plies above the windows....[O]ne charter member was heard to remark: "This is truly wonderful, and in excellent taste. Still, I can't help regretting our peacocks!"\textsuperscript{50}

By January, 1921, the Petit Theatre's membership had grown from twenty to six hundred sustaining members and one hundred active members. In order to accommodate so many, each bill after November ran for four nights. A dimming switchboard, installed in January, allowed sophisticated lighting changes. As someone recorded in the Petit Theatre scrapbook, "At the touch of a button, the house may be veiled in the sapphire moonlight of a garden in fairyland or blaze in tropic glare of the yellow sun of Egypt."\textsuperscript{51}

Natalie wrote during November, 1920, that a new organization called the Quartier Club was opening in the French Quarter, a social spot for various functions in its tea-room but particularly useful as an evening retreat for the Petit Theatre performers and members after their shows.

...the Quartier Club is a very logical development. It needed only the discernment and energy of Elizabeth Werlein to give it expression....The membership is limited to two hundred and fifty, and favors those who are, as the invitation
read, interested in the "four arts." All of us are therefore hastily unfolding all the creases of our individuality and searching anxiously for possible hidden talents that enable us to be listed among the desirables! The Club will entertain visiting artists, and will be a rendezvous for members, where they may entertain their friends cozily,...in the shadow of the Cabildo and the Cathedral....

...[O]ne of its special features will be suppers after the performances of the Petit Theatre.52

The next night was the Petit Theatre's season opening performance and also the debut of the Quartier Club. The after-theater rendezvous filled the tables in the Quartier Club to capacity. In the midst of the crowded party, Jessie Tharp stood and read aloud a humorous poem, written especially for the occasion, which inspired, according to Natalie's retelling, a series of spirited encores. The article expressed Natalie's Bohemian vision of the French Quarter:

Do you love New Orleans? Then consume away with a green and yellow melancholy of regret that you were not here for the opening of the Quartier Club, for it is of the essence. Monday night was the time and the Vieux Carré the place. Down the narrow, dim little streets, which might warrantably be expected to give passage to link-bearers and sedan-chairs, passed a line of smart cars, Pierce-Arrows rubbing wheel by wheel with old two-wheeled milk wagons and push carts, which had been trustingly left parked in the streets. A glamour of moonlight lay on the open square, on the fine long lines of the Pontalba Buildings, and the mass of the Cabildo and the slender spires of the Cathedral were silhouetted delicately against a darkly glimmering sky...Around the corner to a dimly seen, compact little house. With the dignity and distinction of other days, in its deep-rounded windows, with their iron-studded, heavy shutters, and the big rounded doorway, a wrought-iron lantern
glowing faintly over it. A flood of warm light
streamed through the doorway, a babel of laughter and
chatter and merriment - the Quartier Club!

...a typical house of the French Quarter.
Candles were everywhere, old portraits hung on the
walls...a quaint little courtyard...Old turbaned
mammies bustled about solicitously...A very modern
touch in these quaint old rooms appears in some
pictures by our "home-grown" and very gifted artist,
Fanny Craig. To the artistically unregenerate (like,
 alas, me) they are unintelligible; but somehow very
satisfying in their impressionistic freedom with lines
and color.

In both rooms, tables were crowded to the limit
of capacity...attentive mammies pass with their
delightful burdens, plates of hot "wienies", omelet on
toast, hot biscuits, steaming coffee and
chocolate...The Little Theatre had yielded up its
audience and actors; the studios, which have sprung up
everywhere in the Vieux Carré were well-represented:
Musicians, artists, actors, authors, and those who
would like to be one or all of those things, were in
evidence everywhere.

An artistic club, we were christened most
artistically in the graceful poem read by Jessie
Tharp....[I]t had an enthusiastic reception....The
poem launched us on a course of more or less impromptu
entertainment. Mrs. Kahn played the violin
delightfully with Mrs. Shertz accompanying her; Mrs.
Castellenos was pushed up to the center of the table,
where she gave a perfect imitation of a French Opera
ballet girl; Harry Loeb followed, with his puns and a
burlesque recitation. Mrs. Shertz rendered a touching
ballad concerning gum; Mr. Blood, a well-known English
actor, who was the guest of the club for the evening,
gave some finished pieces of impersonation in Scotch
and cockney dialect...Harry Loeb went to the piano and
played and everyone sang; and, finally, as though to
prove that we have a right to the French Quarter, he
played the "Marseillaise," and everyone sang it....An
evening in care-free and clever Bohemia, that
was,...the magic land is our door on St. Peter
Street!
CHAPTER THREE


The first year home in New Orleans had been filled with a breathtaking pace of activity and changes in Natalie's life. Her Peggy Passe Partout column began in February, her coverage of the Whitfield murder trial enveloped March and April, there were a series of important national conventions in New Orleans during April and May (the American Medical Association meeting being most important to her because of the array of war-time friends who attended), the culmination of the Petit Theatre's first season in May and the successful debut of its second season in November. By the end of the first year, she was able to look back upon a long list of nationally and internationally known people who were added to her list of acquaintances, and realize an array of local causes she had made her own: the Petit Theatre, French Quarter preservation and revival, rebuilding the French Opera House, Red Cross and Tulane fundraising, the women's suffrage campaign, the establishment of the League of Women Voters, and many charitable causes she had promoted with her column.
But there had been problems. The summer had been very difficult with both Muddie and Boss suddenly being hit with serious health problems. Muddie was diagnosed with cancer. Dr. Smyth applied burning radium treatments, then recommended immediate transfer to the Howard A. Kelly Hospital in Baltimore, Maryland. Compounding matters, Boss, a cigar smoker all of his life, learned he had tongue cancer. He underwent two operations, including removal of much of his tongue, and was still recuperating in mid-August when Natalie took Muddie by train to Baltimore. Speech was difficult for Boss for the balance of his life.\(^2\)

After more than six weeks in the Kelly Hospital, during early October, 1920, Natalie discussed her mother’s condition in a letter home to Martha Robinson.

We thought we would be able to leave here last Tuesday with Muddie in less pain and stronger, but still not well. But last Saturday, a sort of complication put itself upon the scene....

Muddie has to have an examination every few days now, a very disagreeable process. It seems that from our youth up, nothing agreeable is to be associated with that word. Muddie dreads them....The doctor is habitually vague as to when we leave here....

I’ll have much to say on the subject of Muddie’s illness to your ear, when I get home. Suffice it to say that there was no other trouble at all except the radium burns when she got here. Then consider that Dr. Smyth urged that she take another treatment before she left,...and she flatly refused. However, what’s the use? At any rate, it will be probably four months before those burns heal entirely, so the doctor says; but Muddie has not heard that...so don’t speak of it as it might get back to her.\(^3\)
Another three weeks passed before Muddie was well enough to bring home from Baltimore. They had been in Baltimore almost three months. Her long illness would continue, gradually worsening for the next fifteen months, until her death in early 1922.4

Though a year had passed since Natalie’s return from France, the war remained very much with her, often surfacing in her columns and her activities, such as her fund-raising efforts and publicity for the Red Cross. The gathering of the American Medical Association in New Orleans brought war memories to her doorstep, reuniting her with many of her closest medical comrades from the war, including the A.M.A. president Dr. Alexander Lambert and his wife; Dr. Tom Williams, the neurologist-psychologist she had first worked for in Paris; Dr. Gwathmey, the innovative anesthesiologist whose son was wounded several times in the war; Dr. Young, whose social medicine among French civilians she had admired while he enjoyed her feminine friendship, - they had once leisurely dined in an elegant Paris restaurant though a ferocious German bombing raid, the explosions shaking the premises as they ate, enjoying the exclusive attentions of the chef and the waiters long after the other patrons had hastily departed for the bomb shelters; Dr. Stahley, Major Clark, Dr.
Harris, Captain Yates, and many others who had shared her experiences in Paris, Gisors, Beauvais and Nantes. Having worked and socialized with these men during unique wartime circumstances, there was a strangeness to seeing them in New Orleans, away from the war, most of them accompanied by wives. There had been pleasure, too, in having Muddie and Boss meet these men she had written about in her letters.\(^5\)

The suffering she had witnessed during the war heightened Natalie's concern over post-war international politics and America's failure to participate in the League of Nations, a source of dismay and consternation as evidenced in her newspaper articles. The war and its unstable aftermath was one subject in her column where her humor was not put to use. On these topics she was straightforward and made her points with passion. The consequence of American isolation, she feared, would be another war. Aside from politics, there remained the human toll from the war. For the victims, she reminded her readers, the war was not over.\(^6\)

An early interview with English author and poet Coningsby Dawson her first month with the States brought forth the expression of some of these feelings in her column. She spent much of the afternoon with him, then attended his lecture that evening.
His lecture Monday night was beautiful in its idealism. But he proposed an inexorable question... [Y]ou couldn’t get away from it. “Are we going to make the world safe for peace?” he asked. Does the war sometimes haunt you, Cynthia, at inopportune moments? As you are about to lift a cup of tea to your lips, do you suddenly, for no reason, see an ugly gaping wound before you? On the golf course, does the stretch of pleasant green suddenly contract to dingy walls, with rows of white beds, and pain-twisted faces? Does what during the war seemed glorious seem sometimes now only horrible? It happens to all of us. Coningsby Dawson gave back the old glory of the hardly vindicated ideals, of the war, sloughed over so often now by egotism. His call was for the splendid tension of self-forgetfulness. He renewed the great exultation of the war, and gave back the power to look with pride and not shuddering on the memories of agony and supreme sacrifice. He had his own share of suffering, you know, Cynthia, though naturally he did not mention it in his lecture. He had a wound in the arm, where gas gangrene set in, and that was one of the most exquisite tortures of this civilized warfare of ours. But for himself, and those who suffered and gave with him and beyond him, he answers for the war with sublime confidence, that it was “worth while.” And he asks, as they have most right to ask, as all of us ask, whether those hard-won ideals are to be lost now by after the war political squabbles and international jealousies.

But I ruin his lecture by trying to give you an idea of it. Read one of his books...[,] add to it a pleading, forceful personality and you will have it.7

Natalie perceived men such as Dawson as isolated voices in the world’s wilderness of ordinary pursuits, the war being an unpleasant past experience now put aside as the country moved forward. The presidential election that autumn, in which she supported the loser, Democrat James Cox, boiled down in Natalie’s mind to the same “inexorable” post-war questions. Her October letter to Martha Robinson
from Baltimore, while Muddie was hospitalized, briefly addressed the subject, but with obviously strong feeling.

I am going to run up to Philadelphia for Thursday evening. It is just two hours from here, and I am going to attend a reunion of one of my old units, the American Base Hospital #34, to which I was attached after the Armistice was signed. They are going to have a dinner. There’s no use trying to repress a sigh when I think of old days, - and it’s a sigh that defies analysis.

Imagine my feelings when I discover that Lydia W. Holmes is to speak here for Cox! It almost makes me forsake my allegiance! If anything could, that would. But, dear me, I am so mightily for the League that one night I stayed awake till after three just contemplating it and its significance! I’m a temperamental politician.®

She supported Governor Cox (even if she disapproved of some of his supporters) because the Democratic Party platform endorsed the Versailles Treaty and the League of Nations, the best hope, she believed, for the purpose and consequences of World War I, and the dangers of another war, to be realized and addressed.®

In December, 1920, as her second year at home began, she wrote about a French vaudevillian who would soon be performing with his wife in New Orleans to raise French refugee relief funds. While endorsing his appearance, Natalie described a trip she had taken to a military hospital during her stay in Baltimore.

The great magician is M. Neckelson and he is going to perform his marvelous feats today at Jerusalem Temple, while his wife is to use some magic of her own...her magnificent soprano voice. They are
giving a performance under the auspices of the French colony...

You remember there was a war, Cynthia? You know, perhaps that while it was going on, some strange things happened. For instance, in front hospitals, cramped, hastily erected, within range of shelling, frequently bombarded, it was often possible to hear vaudeville songs, the latest and best that Paris afforded, or to catch strains of operatic music which were the pride of the Opera National, swelling from a rough baraque, where lay wounded soldiers. Such was the work of the Theatre des Armees. The artists of France of every class supported it; many of them gave much of their time and much of their money in this way. And the Neckelsons were among the number. That gives them quite a halo of interest in my eyes.

Their war-work is not over. A large percentage of the proceeds of their concert goes to the blind of the Allied Armies, -

...when I hear people remark jauntily that “the war is over” I think of a visit I made recently to Evergreen, a school for blind soldiers, near Baltimore. Down the long line of the boardwalk in the beautiful grounds, I met at intervals fine young fellows, tapping along hesitantly, and feeling their way as slowly as old men. They talked gaily enough, but when they thought themselves alone, their figures slumped listlessly. The memory of them makes me think that the Neckelson performance would be worth while, even if it had something less interesting to offer than the unfailing charm of wizardry and the magic of a lovely voice.\textsuperscript{10}

Social and political causes were a part of her life recorded in her weekly columns. She became a girl scout organizer, insisting on a belief that girls and women should learn outdoor skills, that they would enjoy and benefit from an athletic life. She was the moving spirit in the founding of the New Orleans Bridle Club in the spring, 1921, and won top honors in the city’s Fourth of
July Equestrian show. She was a charter member of the New Orleans League of Women Voters, which emerged from the women’s suffrage campaign to promote political participation of women and legal reforms dealing with such issues as child welfare, public health, and women’s property rights. Natalie wrote feature columns on various League projects. She was the publicity chairman of the fund-raising campaign to rebuild the French Opera House, and an organizer of the child welfare charity work of the new Junior League. She advocated such causes in her Sunday columns by an indirect, soft-sell approach, mixing humor with the seriousness of the topic, - making the cause seem the socially popular thing to do. An example during 1920 was the women’s suffrage campaign to convince the legislature to approve the 19th amendment, a subject she kept before her readers for months, providing a consistently favorable impression, while being friendly to both sides. Typically, humor was her best weapon.

"VOTES FOR WOMEN! Votes for Women!" That’s the cry that is being heard in the land just now, Cynthia. The great campaign is on and there is a great stir of work, and interest, and excitement...Isabel Devereaux is city chairman, and seems to be on her job twenty-six hours of the twenty-four, and faithful assistants are almost equally devoted. The city has been divided into regions...

...we are hearing plans of a bridge party that is not a bridge party only,...the bridge party par excellence. It is to be May 11, at 8:30 in the evening at the Country Club...one adjective in mind
above all others, and that is jolly...there is to be every sort of card game, from hearts to poker...There will be lotto...At ten-thirty there will be dancing.

The object of this party is, primarily, pleasure, and secondarily (of course) the universal lubricant - what all the world's a-seeking. The Women's Suffrage Party of Louisiana has created a great organization, and now it finds itself, as so many of our finest ideals are liable to do, with the old man of the sea handicap, the need of money. As some of its most diligent workers are among those who do the most to make the social wheels go round, they have decided, for the sake of the cause...to give one of the best parties ever...Phoebe Williams is at the head...and helping her are Mrs. Pearose, Mrs. Alex Hyman, and Mrs. Charles Buck...The telephone is jingling, and so is the cash, and the tables reserved are reaching a number of formidable proportion.12

Natalie’s commentary intensified as the suffrage battle escalated between the opposing female factions before the legislature:

...The capitol has been invaded. A feminine army is in full position. The momentous issue of suffrage is up. Never were men more pursued than our legislators, not even in Leap Year! There are States-Righters, the Federal Amendmenters, and the out-and-out antis, all at work busily. There are some delightful women in each of the parties. A susceptible Solon would certainly prolong the issue, if only to keep such excellent company in the town!

The most ardent Federal Amendmenters (if you like) from here are Isabel Devereaux, Mrs. Warren Woodville, and Eva Lyons Page,...Shreveport has some very able and delightful representatives, among whom are Mrs. Fullilove, Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Wilkinson. The latter we all remember as one of the able workers in the Council of National Defense, as president of the federation of Women’s Clubs - in fact, always a leader in some big work. There is Mrs. Williams, from Plaquemine parish, and Mrs. Henry, from Natchitoches, Mrs. Brazeale’s sister, whom many of us know very well down here...when we look at her we wonder what the caricaturists are going to do for a suffragette type
now, for she is the picture of the charmingly feminine woman, delicate looking and most attractive, and the most ardent battler for the vote!

The field is by no means clear, however: in battle array against them are drawn some very active spirits. Mrs. Pleasant is everywhere...Mrs. Celeafe Claiborne, from New Roads...whose small frame seems to house unlimited energy...and Miss Jean Gordon is in the van, of course...

Baton Rouge is the War Zone...You and I are too practical to predict when it comes to politics, of course, but something seems to tell me that the next procession to the ballot-box will not have that painfully masculine quality of other days.\textsuperscript{13}

Natalie further described the combatants in her column during late May, and her observations addressed aspects of the controversy, such as a humorous look upon the attitude of husbands, a unique perspective among newspaper accounts of the suffrage struggle. Her tactic was to present those disapproving men with a good look at themselves, while giving their wives some light-hearted ammunition to be used over the Sunday breakfast table.

There are some Burning Questions which engage us greatly. Chief among them still is woman suffrage. Up at the suffrage front, in Baton Rouge, it is especially burning, hot as to temperature, and very hot as to argument. And every day, as some of the valiant contestants return, others from here of our beauty and our eloquence (feminine gender) go up to take their places...They are dignified women, really; the contest, though violent, is quite sedate, and there are none of those hair-pulling, hat-pin-jabbing incidents, literally or figuratively speaking, which mere men would like to make us think are necessary attendants of any feminine arguments. The effort is heart-felt and strenuous, but logical and orderly, to get the right answer to the ever-present interrogation...to vote, or not to vote.
Entre nous, one of the most interesting "features of the case", as the lawyers say, is the Husband. I think that the Little Theatre expounded, in one of its plays, that there was only one genus or species or class of that being; but really there are some differentiations to be made. For instance, there is the husband of independent mind. He tells his wife that it is plainly her duty, since she started helping the cause and since things are going well at home, to run up to the storm-center and help her side. Yes, indeed, this did happen, - it is no vision of centuries hence. Then, there is the opposite extreme, the husband of day before yesterday, who thinks (or would you say "think"?) that woman's place is in the home. He is often kind-hearted; he would love to see his wife run across the Lake for a week, leaving the children with her mother, or to have her go off for a few months in the summer; but speak of Baton Rouge to him, and he thunders in St. Elmo style of oratory, "There's the modern woman for you; leaves her home and her children to go to rack and ruin, while she plunges into the filthy swirl of politics." Then there's middle man, as it were; he doesn't really care, but the fellows at the club start teasing him, and, hang it all, he doesn't want to be made a fool of, and have people laughing at him; so he veers over to the extreme position and asserts himself "like a man," and tells his wife: "Thou shalt stay at home; thou shalt not go to Baton Rouge" - and then feels very comfortable when she obeys him, with an injured air!

So it goes. And, meanwhile, the day of reckoning and decision is at hand, and we shall soon know where Louisiana stands; and cheer ourselves with the thought that, whichever way things go here, we shall yet vote, whether thanks to ourselves or another state.

But, as for those three styles in husbands, don't think that I invented them. I am not that clever. That's the work of providence, and there's a prototype for each instance!14

The Louisiana legislature failed to approve the federal amendment that summer, but other states did ratify by
September, in time for Natalie, as she predicted, to vote in the fall elections.\textsuperscript{15}

Created during December, 1920, the Louisiana League of Women Voters absorbed the Women's Suffrage Party which had finished its work, with Elizabeth Werlein named the first Louisiana president. Their state office opened in the French Quarter at Conti and Royal Streets. The organizing of the New Orleans chapter generated some controversy due to the hotly-contested election of a president (what Natalie called "healthy debate") but the first local president, Mrs. Eva Lyons Page, and other officers were finally selected. As a news reporter, Natalie was a quiet observer at each organizational stage, then her front page States article on January 30th, with large photographs of leaders Elizabeth Werlein, Eva Lyons Page and Mrs. Warren Woodville, the regional director, launched the League as a new force in the city's political and civic affairs. Her article described the organization's purposes and issues.

\textbf{WOMEN VOTERS' LEAGUE}
\textbf{GAINS IN STRENGTH}

\textbf{Citizenship Classes Will Be Formed -}
\textbf{Body to Stand Behind Questions that}
\textbf{Vitally Concern Women}

\textbf{BY NATALIE VIVIAN SCOTT}

Down in the Vieux Carre, there hangs a new and rather modest sign over one of the square, solid doors
of the dignified old stone building. "Headquarters of the Louisiana Division of the League of Women Voters." Outside, several smart-looking cars are usually lined up and from time to time the rattling street car stops its clattering progress to let out a woman who makes her way through that door...The Louisiana Division is well under way...

...The poetic old saying was "The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world," - beautiful in theory. The 1921 version, quite prosaic, runs "The hand that rocks the cradle wields the ballot." It remains to make the 1921 version beautiful in practice, - hence the National League of Women Voters, a factor in American life that is already tremendous....

"The object of the League is first to develop civic thinking among women and then to supply an organ through which thought can be put into action," says Mrs. Eva Lyons Page, city chairman....[C]lasses will be formed touching all phases of citizenship...standing committees on Child Welfare, Social Hygiene, Consumers, Women in Industry, Legal Status of Women, Election Laws, and Methods and Data Department. Among the speakers (in League classes)...Rabbi Stephen Wise, Jane Addams, Mrs. Ira Couch Wood, Professor James, Senator Morton Hull, Miss Jeanette Rankin...There are tours to places of civic and social interest, and everything, in short, that can promote the teaching of citizenship and the study of legislation among women.

The League keeps clear of party affiliations... the policy that each of its members should make the choice. 16

She depicted the League to her readers as something fun and informative to do. For example, she became a student in the League's citizenship class, reporting on topics such as the nuances of Louisiana's voting laws and procedures, mentioning fellow students and speakers in an anecdotal way, vignettes that were amusing, helping bring in vogue the idea of women being brightly informed,
presenting opinions and being involved in political affairs. Through her column, her readers were given notice of featured speakers; she brought to her readers' attention the appearances of League leaders before committees of the Louisiana Constitutional Convention and the legislature.  

Natalie ushered in the 1921 New Year by performing in a comedy, called "Game of Hearts," with Helen Schertz, Helen (Moussie) White, and Jessie Tharp, before a large dinner dance audience at the New Orleans Country Club. Natalie, Helen and Moussie played three catty society women, and Jessie Tharp was a winning bride. Natalie's Sunday column traced the evening of riotous fun that followed. The play kicked off a series of parties that began at the country club, moved to two downtown restaurants, (with drinks she called New Years Volsteads), and ended at a place called Child's followed by daybreak French Market pastry and coffee as a postscript.  

Then, during January and early February, 1921, she performed for four nights in the Petit Theatre's production of "Joint Owners in Spain." In May, she and Sam Gilmore collaborated in writing a farcical comedy entitled "What, Again," Natalie's first effort as a playwright. Lyle Saxon gave the play strong approval in his Times-Picayune review, as did the complimentary New Orleans Illustrated News.
However, Stanley Clisby Arthur, the New Orleans Item’s drama critic, was not so kind.

...the farce could easily have been retitled ‘Never Again’ and when the audience that crowded the little theatre vociferously demanded the appearance of the authors at its conclusion, the perpetrators refused to take any chances.19

The setting for their play was a private suite in New York’s Ritz Carlton, a situational comedy with four characters. Helen Schertz played the lead. The script was funny. Whether or not the critic was correct in his condemnations, he proved prophetic. The play was “never again” produced or published.20

The following month, the Petit Theater staged its first three act play, “The Importance of Being Ernest” by Oscar Wilde. Preoccupied during the fall, 1921, and early 1922 by Muddle’s illness and death, Natalie did not appear in another Petit Theatre production until May, 1923, when she and Martha Robinson both performed in “The Twelve-Pound Look” by J. W. Barrie, one of the first performances produced in the Petit Theatre’s large and modern playhouse built on the corner of Chartres and St. Peter streets beside the Cabildo. The new theater’s grand opening was in November, 1922. By that time, Natalie had been serving on the Petit Theatre’s Dramatic Committee for over a year, which surveyed scripts and selected the plays to be produced.21
Natalie was an early resident and investor in the French Quarter. As the Petit Theatre was concluding its first season in May, 1920, Natalie leased space in an Orleans Alley building behind the Cabildo to convert into a small studio apartment. Poet John McClure and his wife Grace also leased space in this tall four-story house beside the St. Louis Cathedral garden. Other artists and literary people such as Marc Antony, who excelled in woodcuts, painting, and also designed stage sets for the Petit Theatre, lived nearby. Alberta Kinsey, Walker Ellis, and Lyle Saxon were also neighbors. Others infiltrated the neighborhood. Artist Charles Bein moved into a studio above the Quartier Club during early 1921, while the Quartier Club made plans to relocate into more spacious quarters in the lower Pontalba building near the Petit Theatre. A new organization, the Arts and Crafts Club, temporarily occupied a space on St. Charles Avenue while waiting for 633 Royal Street to become available. In May, 1921, Natalie introduced her readers to this new organization, which would play a vital role in the French Quarter’s artistic history.

...June 1 will mark the coming out party of the latest debutante, the Arts and Crafts Club of New Orleans. She is quite the modern type - with a serious purpose in life...a purpose with a dual nature, artistic and practical. Artistically, she means to foster, diversify, and raise the standards of arts and crafts in New Orleans, and practically, she
means to bring the creative artist closer to his public. The plans are comprehensive, and include the luxuries of club, exhibition, and sales room, an assemblage of current literature on arts and crafts; classes in different branches, and so on. In fact, the artistic craftsman is provided with everything except ability, it seems; if only the club could find a way to provide that, I would be eligible...

The list of leaders...Mrs. P.J. Ford, Mrs. William Mason-Smith, Mr. C.A. Favrot, Mr. George Galup, and George Westfeldt. Their headquarters for the present are at 913 St. Charles street, but that's merely till they are formally introduced. The debut party and future home of the organization will be 633 Royal Street.

The Arts and Crafts Club found a different site on Royal Street during December, 1921, the old Broulatour house, 520 Royal Street, provided by William Irby, its owner, and were settled and in full swing before the end of January, 1922.

In June, 1921, only weeks after Natalie wrote her introductory words on behalf of the Arts and Crafts Club, she made her first purchase of a French Quarter building. She and Jack McClure, her neighbor who by this time was an editor for the new Double Dealer magazine as well as owner of the Olde Book Shop on Royal Street, purchased the tall Orleans Alley house where they had fashioned their apartments. Their purpose was to use the entire house as studio apartments, available inexpensively for serious artists and writers to live in the center of the Vieux Carré, with Jackson Square and the Arts and Crafts Club
only a short walk from their door. The New Orleans newspaper article that announced their acquisition made the new owners’ intentions clear.

...For Natalie Vivian Scott, society and feature writer of the States’ staff, Newcomb alumni and war service worker, and John McClure have bought an old home at 626 Orleans alley and they intend to convert the building into studios at the first order. The property is opposite the St. Louis Cathedral, and back of the Cabildo. It was sold by John A. Brennan, through Freeman and Freeman, for $8,300.00.

Lack of studios is said by those who are in the know on that sort of thing to be one of the obstacles in the way of the art’s development in New Orleans. So the announcement brings joy to the gay little Vieux Carré and its inmates.

* * *

The Double Dealer magazine published its first issue in New Orleans in January, 1921. Natalie Scott promptly became an avid publicist for the magazine in her columns, then formally joined the staff that summer. This literary magazine eventually achieved a circulation of 18,000 subscribers across the United States and overseas while also achieving a remarkable record for editorial skill, a perceptive eye for talent, and providing for new authors a welcome opportunity to have their work published.

The primary founder was a young New Orleanian named Julius Friend, though there were two others who deserve credit for its founding and literary success, Basil Thompson and John McClure. A fourth, Natalie’s old friend
Louis Samuel Gilmore, was the magazine’s most prolific literary contributor and eventually an editor as well. But there were other key participants, Natalie Scott among them, whose collective literary and operational involvement throughout the magazine’s five and a half year life assured the Double Dealer’s success. The core of the unrecognized group, “the staff,” were Natalie Scott, Olive Boullemet Lyons, Flo Field, Marguerite Samuels, and Gideon Stanton.27

In concept, Julius Friend wanted the magazine’s editorials, prose, poetry, plays, essays, editorials and book reviews to be brazenly original, irreverently humorous, unrestrained, even shocking, always full of zest and intellectual challenge, to provide a forum for free-thinking writers and poets while throwing off the strait-jacket of old forms, strictures, and to be unbound by tradition and polite manners. The magazine did not attempt to achieve a stylish format; its bound pages were book size and no photographs ever appeared, although artwork featuring nude nymphs often adorned its covers for the first two years.28

Claiming as their motto, “Honesty is our policy”, Friend’s editorial in the first issue proclaimed their audacious mission:

...But, heigh-ho, you say, what has all this to do with The Double Dealer, this unchanging depravity
and this timorousness of human nature? Here is the answer. The Double Dealer is concerned with this human nature, the raw stuff, cleared of the myths of glamor-throwers and Utopia-weavers, casting off the spell of “all the drowsy syrups of the world.” We mean to deal double, to show the other side, to throw open the back windows stuck in their sills from disuse, smuttered over long since against even a dim beam’s penetration. To myopics we desire to indicate the hills, to visionaries the unwashed dishes...the pathos of a fop in an orphan asylum, the absurdity of an unselfish reformer. We expect to be called Radical by Tory and Reactionary by Red. But we remain only ourselves who can “deceive them both by speaking the truth,” and, as the honest soul amongst you, we ask you in the mysteries of your subterranean retorts to drain a beaker of the forbidden juice of the fruit to - THE DOUBLE DEALER...

There was a time when the fame of New Orleans was based for the most part on gin-fizzes and brothels. Now that the all-wise legislators have thrown these things on the ash-heap, there is, happily, something else which appears to be placing us apart from those drab cities of soda-fountains and Sunday laws. We refer to the spirit that is now supporting the concerts, the lectures, the art associations, the Bridle Club, Le Petit Theatre, and in the Quarter, the various clubs and coteries whose purpose it is to nourish the traditions of the old ground...we know well that part of the artistic audiences are but figures in the social world, and a great many of the dilettantes who grace the studio firesides mere tea drinkers...but, let drone and bumble bee hum, so that there be within the hive a scantling of honey.29

During the fall, 1920, when the Double Dealer was still in the planning stage, Julius Friend asked Natalie’s Orleans Alley neighbor John McClure to join the effort as co-editor. McClure declined because he was still involved with a short-lived periodical published in New Orleans called The Southerner, which lasted only six months (the
typical life-expectancy of most such ventures). McClure and his wife Grace operated a Royal Street bookstore named “The Olde Book Shoppe”, and he was also writing for an H. L. Mencken periodical. So McClure introduced Friend to Basil Thompson, who became co-editor and the magazine began publishing in January, 1921, with McClure only peripherally involved. The first issue, in which two of McClure’s poems appear, listed him as a member of the magazine’s “advisory council.” The second issue in February listed McClure as associate editor and published another of his poems. By April, 1922, McClure was the managing editor and, after Basil Thompson’s untimely passing in early 1924, became the magazine’s sole editor with Louis Gilmore and Albert Goldstein as his assistant editors.30

The founders and editors were diverse in their origins and personalities. Julius Friend was from a wealthy family, very prominent in the highest circles of New Orleans’ business and society. He was a Harvard graduate, six years younger than Natalie, good-humored, and the most determined to emphasize the rebellious, irreverent side of the Double Dealer, which he and Thompson freely expressed in their editorials those first years before McClure’s calming, more serious influence prevailed.31

Basil Thompson and John McClure were both three years younger than Natalie. Thompson was also born in New
Orleans, his father a self-made success who had led his poetic son into the life insurance business, which Thompson disliked. He was a prolific poet, published in many periodicals and in two small books of his verse; his stories and essays had appeared in various magazines. As an editor of the *Double Dealer*, sensitive to the appearance of self-promotion, he excluded his own material from its pages, except for his editorials and those pieces published under fictitious names. Charming, talented, witty, Thompson married an attractive interpretive dancer named Rebecca (Becky) Brown of Chicago; she was originally from Winitkin, Wisconsin. Becky was popular and became a favorite of Natalie’s; she performed in numerous Petit Theatre productions, operating a dance studio on St. Peter street, taught millinery and sewing courses at the Arts and Crafts Club, and opened a successful linen cloth business downstairs below the *Double Dealer* office in 1922 with Lillian Weiss Marcus, Julius’ sister. One historian, who interviewed Julius Friend and Lillian Weiss Marcus during the early 1950s, wrote that both Basil and Becky Thompson drank too much, he especially, though this could have been said of many in their circle. Becky bore him three children. The same chronicler described Thompson in this manner:
Basil knew he was like Shelley, that he would not live long; and he did everything in his power, apparently indirectly, to hasten the end... He was charming, lovable, witty, dramatic in his own way, the spark of the joint-undertaking; and The Double Dealer group fizzed and effervesced under his influence....

He died in March, 1924, after writing a series of poems about his own death, a victim of his own lifestyle, fatal pneumonia contracted during his excessive drinking. The Double Dealer coterie was shocked by his death. The magazine’s next issue was dedicated to him and was filled exclusively, cover to cover, with Thompson’s best work. Natalie rarely spoke of a death in her column, but in Thompson’s case she made an exception. She also remained close with his widow, spending time with her in New York that fall, in golf outings, charity work and the Petit Theatre. With Thompson gone, the leadership and tenor of the Double Dealer changed abruptly. Friend virtually retired from the magazine’s leadership until resuming some of his earlier tasks a year later.

The steady hand that was most responsible for the editorial genius of The Double Dealer was Jack McClure, Natalie’s neighbor and joint owner of her house on Orleans Alley. A co-editor beforehand, he took over as the chief editor after Basil Thompson’s death. McClure had been born in Oklahoma in 1893 where his father was a title lawyer in the Indian territory who “never catered to the interests
intended to exploit the Indians...he hardly made a dime.”

He described himself as “a physical weakling who somehow always got along fairly well in a world of strong men.” He and his wife Grace, who he met and married while working in the library at the University of Oklahoma, were gentle, thoughtful people. A little story about John McClure remembered by author James K. Feibleman provides an idea of McClure’s personality.

...I used to go down to the French Quarter on his night off and sit on the upstairs porch of his house and drink the eggnog his wife made and talk poetry with him...a sweet sensitive man, with a wistful wife named Grace. Their house faced the side of St. Louis Cathedral, a romantic setting which seemed somehow to fit him...Knopf brought out his first volume of poems but declined the second. I was distressed about this because although McClure was a minor poet he was a good one; and so when I went back to Greenville, Mississippi, I mentioned it to Will Percy...at the time the editor of a Yale Series of Younger Poets published by the Yale University Press.

Percy said, “I know the poems in that second volume. Most of them have appeared recently in magazines. I know them and I like them, they are excellent. Ask him to send them to me for the Yale Series. Since I know the poems I can accept the book in advance. Tell him to mail it to me...”

I was delighted. I could hardly wait to get home to McClure with the news. McClure received it with a glum expression, shaking his head.

“No,” he said simply.

“But why not?”

“It would be using influence.”

“But Jack,” I protested, “a publisher is never a machine, it’s always a man or a group of men... This
is not influence, as you call it, but a man who out of his love of poetry likes your poems and wants to publish them..."

But I could not shake him and the second volume of poems never appeared.³

The August-September issue of 1921 announced that Natalie had become a member of the small staff. But she had adopted the project from its inception, promoting the ambitious little monthly magazine in her column, and, since none of its editors and staff were full-time or paid and they needed help, she enjoyed going to the Double Dealer office on Baronne Street to join the fun and long hours of pulling each monthly issue together in presentable form, then getting it off in the mail to their very literary subscribers around the country and abroad. Natalie commented on the new magazine's virtues in her February 13, 1921 column.

The second number of that magazine which combines the varied and valued virtues of being interesting, new, truly literary, and local, has just appeared. An attractive cover, yellow, with a silhouette of a nymph pursuing a butterfly and being pursued by a satyr, heralds a content quite worth while. But you have seen it by now, I dare say. It is better than the first number, don't you think so? And that was excellent. Apropos of the cover-design, and the nymph being pursued by the satyr, one Mere Man remarked cynically, that the magazine wasn't up-to-date in that particular, that nowadays it is the nymphs who pursue the satyrs! I felt tempted to say, Fie, Fie! or something equally reproachful!³⁵

She made use of both her weekly column and her many contacts to advertise each Double Dealer issue, predicting
success from its first issue on. Even while traveling in Europe during 1922, she made personal contacts for the magazine and reported in her Sunday column, written from Europe, on the Double Dealer’s reception abroad.

As a staff member, publicist, a guarantor and investor, Natalie gave her time, enthusiasm, and her money to the cause, her financial donations finally making her one of the four largest stockholders of the small enterprise, though she realized, as did all the contributors, there was no possibility of profit. Their hope was for the magazine to give aspiring writers a chance to develop their talent by publishing their work. Aside from investing as a stockholder, she was also one of the magazine’s guarantors, a group organized by Julius Friend’s sister, Lillian Friend Marcus, who spearheaded the magazine’s business operations during most of its life. The list of guarantors was impressive, including many of the city’s most respected citizens, and Ms. Marcus wisely placed their names on the inside back cover of most issues, an assurance to creditors that the magazine was on a sound footing and debts secured.16

The young editors aimed to make the Double Dealer a national, and even international magazine, thereby featuring literary news columns from Chicago, New York, or Paris written by the Double Dealer’s “correspondents”
residing in these places. Natalie’s encouragement and free advertisement in her column promoted local sales and subscriptions. In May, she noted the merit of publishing work of local writers.

The latest issue of the Double Dealer marks another higher point in the ascending curve of its value, from the intellectual standpoint. The mere woman in me finds some other interest as well; the personal touch means something, you must admit, and it produces a thrill to find Carmelite Janvier’s name in the list of contributors for this month. She’s responsible for a poem, “The Weavers”, metrically effective, with its uneven lines, touched with the light of her idealistic philosophy, colorful. Alice Sessums Leovy is another arresting name; she contributes again one of her clever book reviews; and Louis Gilmore appears again with a poem, in that coolly detached, modernist style of his. There is lots of worth while imported material, but it is nice to recognize the value of our home products in the midst of it!37

She teased the male-dominated leadership in June for their insecurity over the magazine’s name, wondering in print whether they would succumb to their doubts and the urgent suggestions of friends to change it.

Truly, this is a world of change; but still we expected the Double Dealer to be original, and never to follow a trend,—even the interesting one of the talk about its fantastic and curiously interesting name, just as we are becoming adjusted to it and rather attached to it, I hear that they are thinking of changing it. Such a feminine thing to do, at that, changing one’s name! All very well for a mere feminine creature like me, but for a big manly magazine! Its no more than a rumor as yet: I have to hear Julius and Basil and Emil speak with authority.38

The sixth issue brought another of Natalie’s endorsements of the publication’s progress.
A passionate red marks the cover of the new Double Dealer. It is just out this week, one of the most interesting numbers yet. There is a variety of material—a weird story by Charles Finger, a sketch called Antwerp, in the crystalline style of Arthur Symons (which leaves me still puzzling as to "blood red hair", however), a Story of the Ghetto, by Leopold Kowper, translated by Lafcadio Hearn in a way that may guarantee has lost nothing of the effectiveness of the original. The poetry is good, too—better than the verse, perhaps, or it may be that I think so because I am partial to poetry. Two names were familiar, John McClure, with a graceful little verse called "With All Their Vessels," and "Bill" Percy, who has visited here as a guest of Gus Westfelt’s, you remember. He appears this time in a different vein, with a touch of what the Double Dealer has sometimes implied a preference for, "romantic pessimism." At any rate, the magazine is on its feet, - that’s evident: firmly set there, past the wobbling stage! Have I ever drawn your attention to the Book Reviews, by the way? Aside from their intrinsic merit, they often are interesting for their quotations. This time, I liked especially the one of Llewelyn Powys, embodying some haunting, melodious and very feminine verse of Edna St. Vincent Millay.

Natalie admired the strictly literary purpose of the publication, its denunciation of the monetary rewards that popular forms of writing could bring:

The last Double Dealer tantalizes me from the table, with a more than usually strange cover of Olive Leonhardt’s drawing my gaze again and again. More than is usual of a local savor this time, with a story by Herman Deutsch and one by Alice Gordon Wynn of Covington, worth while both of them; another of Sam Gilmore’s series of plays on that intriguing (I chose that word for its double entendre: understand all its connotations!) person the Empress Catherine the Great of Russia. Disconcertingly frank, but convincing they are and interesting undoubtedly. A variety of tone in the editorials, fantastic, insouciant, airily cynical, or downright iconoclastic, they are interesting, and, dear Double Dealer, their flavor is sincerely literary, not commercial.
Natalie found humorous ways to let the city know the magazine was achieving national recognition.

Who could be a hero in his own home town? One must go afar to be appreciated. We take the Double Dealer as a matter of simple course, run in its office nonchalantly and talk to its entertaining young editors, and all that sort of thing, and think nothing of it. Recognition is like good wine, it has to be imported, and luckily there is no prohibition against it so far. From California to the office of the Double Dealer came an interesting missive the other day. It seems that a gentleman in that land of poppies has hit upon the idea of preserving for his little daughter the autographs of famous people, and he has had certain forms made to receive the signatures...whereby they may later be bound into book form. He sent several of these forms to the Double Dealer office, asking for the favor of the signatures of Benjamin de Casseres, Julius Friend, and Basil Thompson.

Let’s hope they don’t raise the subscription price on the strength of it! California need not be too haughty over this, though; there are those here who do recognize the serious worth of the efforts of this group of literateurs!^1

One method of meeting the magazine’s budget was to raise money through small parties. Here is Natalie’s description of one of those early gatherings in late February, 1921:

When the Double Dealer crowd gets tired of running a magazine, they can begin a circus, seven-ring, nine-ring, any number; that’s the kind of party it was last Sunday evening. Everybody did as she and somebody else pleased, and, as it was a crowd of “originals”, their pleasures ran different ways. A card table squeezed itself into the corner, to get out of the way of a few Terpsichoreans who were doing individual interpretations of the music of an indefatigable phonograph. Over in the depths of the davenport, Fanny Campbell talked to three people at once without for a moment losing her air of pleasant
weariness; down on the floor, a group of heads formed a close circle, and here was some echo of "bones," — though the group was by no means gruesome. Shreds of talk floated out from little groups of twos and sometimes threes...and you might hear anything: "the general tenor of Schnitzler’s plays" — ; "of course, individualism is all right, in its way" — ; "now, for me a Scotch high-ball" — ; "they say they’re going to wear them shorter still next spring" — . Take your choice; something to suit any taste. There was Charlie Bein, just back from New York; Fanny Craig, with some new ideas on old furniture; Louis Gilmore, reclining on the floor, his head at rest (apparently) upon a brick. Moise Goldstein sat upon a sofa, being earnestly talked to by two attractive girls...Mrs. Marcus, just back from Cincinnati; Basil Thompson, pondering what Guy Severin would say next; Becky, here, there, and everywhere; Billy Vanderventer, too, Lyle Saxon; pretty Signa Fornovis, Anna Thompson, Cecil Wogan, Eddy Montgomery, Wheeler Woolfolk,...A touch of Carnival hang-over there was, with a queen in the handsome old chair on a raised dais, enthroned; she’d gone the present modes one better, and forgot everything to wear except her hat; but as she was mainly strings and saw dust, she got little credit...And, — I spoke of a circus, didn’t I? — if there were that kind of lemonade at a circus, — well, it would be a circus!42

The Double Dealer began in obscurity, though Basil Thompson and John McClure enjoyed modest but well-respected reputations as widely published poets and writers. In the outburst of creativity in New Orleans during 1920-22, produced by the confluence of such factors as the Petit Theatre, the stream of artistic people moving into the French Quarter, the patronage of the arts by such groups as the Quartier Club and the new Arts and Crafts Club, and the work of other organizations such as the Vieux Carré Society for French Quarter renewal and preservation, the Double
Dealer magazine was an important new addition to the city’s cultural landscape. The literati who came to the Vieux Carré after 1922 found ample opportunities to publish locally, as William Faulkner did in the Double Dealer and the Times-Picayune. The Double Dealer was read locally, but also carried the work of new authors into the literary and publishing centers of New York, Chicago and elsewhere, and therefore proved to be a vital component of the city’s appeal to outside writers. Furthermore, the magazine served as a magnetic advertisement to literateurs everywhere that New Orleans was a good place to work in a stimulating atmosphere, surrounded by other literary people.43

Decades later, Friend offered this retrospective:

The men who founded and ran the Double Dealer had recently returned from service during World War I. We did not look upon ourselves as belonging to a “lost generation.” Nothing so modest or despairing. Rather, if we had thought in such terms at all, we should likely have called ourselves “the found generation.” With cool superiority we decided we must assume the task of leading American literature towards something “new and vital”...[N]either was the Double Dealer group “Bohemian.” All of us were engaged in business; the management and editorship of the Double Dealer were theoretically extra-curricular....Basil Thompson, John McClure and I were the editors, Albert Goldstein Associate Editor and Paul Godchaux business manager....None of us, of course, had had any experience in running or editing a magazine....Yet despite this painful austerity our income from subscriptions and advertisements never met expenses. The Double Dealer was kept alive by small transfusions from friends and well wishers called “stockholders” and “guarantors.”44
Those unnamed "stockholders and guarantors," and, more pertinently, the Double Dealer's unsung staff, composed of almost all women (Gideon Stanton was the only exception), were also talented and also worked for nothing. The staff remained intact throughout the magazine's existence, providing crucial stability, continuity, camaraderie, literary judgment, and work capacity, while the editorial positions changed hands many times. Obviously, none were concerned about personal recognition. The staff (Flo Field, Gideon Stanton, Olive Boullemet Lyons, Marguerite Samuels and Natalie) labored on in obscurity, providing a back up system for one another's absences, vacations and periods of unavailability.

During his tenure as Double Dealer editor, McClure began his long career on the Times-Picayune city desk and for many years wrote "the best literary review page in any southern newspaper, 'Literature and Less'." With Thompson gone, Friend less active, and McClure heavily occupied by Picayune obligations, everyone in the Double Dealer group, editors and staff alike, shared tasks and responsibilities. The Double Dealer stopped listing the editors and staff in a hierarchical way in the front of the magazine, perhaps a quiet acknowledgment that everyone's role overlapped in the monthly drive to produce each issue.45
Among the Double Dealer editors, Jack McClure (aside from Sam Gilmore who Natalie had known since high school) was her closest friend, with whom she shared a love of poetry, literature and art. They also shared an optimism about the Quarter, as demonstrated by their joint venture in purchasing the tall house off Royal Street on Orleans Alley where, in addition to the creative people in residence, the Double Dealer, for McClure’s convenience, also had a tiny office. The two friends owned the place until 1937 when Natalie, trying to survive the financial squeeze of the Depression in Taxco, Mexico, sold her interest to McClure who was securely employed by the Times-Picayune. McClure owned the property the rest of his life.

From the beginning, obscure and aspiring writers made the Double Dealer’s casual office a gathering spot. James Feibleman was probably the youngest of the early bunch, still a teenager (Oscar Williams, Robert Penn Warren, and Hamilton Basso were also in their teens when their first contributions were published by the magazine) as he first observed those hanging around the Double Dealer office.

...the French Quarter was the temporary base of the writers who drifted down from New York and elsewhere for one reason or another: because the liquor was cheap and accessible; the living was easy, or, because the city was fast becoming known as a literary center. Basil Thompson was a very handsome

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man...very kind to young writers who were just starting...

One Saturday afternoon during the winter of 1921,...with my poems under my arm, I went down to the office of The Double Dealer...A number of writers were sitting around smoking, drinking whiskey, and talking. I was only seventeen and so I sat quietly and listened...I gathered from the conversation, everyone either was or would soon be recognized as an important man of letters.

There were some fifteen men in the room. Could there be that many literary geniuses in the English speaking world?...My suspicions grew. Still, it was a literary office and so perhaps some of them, or one...I decided to observe and try to work by elimination. If I could identify the pretenders, perhaps the genius if any would be left.

I listened to a great deal of idle talk, clever sayings...I discounted most of it.

In one corner there was a little man with a well-shaped head, a small moustache and a slightly receding chin. He sat on the floor out of preference (there was an unoccupied chair near him) and preserved his silence with the aid of his own whiskey bottle...I had the impression more of nursing than of drinking.

The general conversation turned to Shakespeare and finally to Hamlet. The little man in the corner spoke up.

"I could write a play like Hamlet if I wanted to," he said.

It was the only thing he said all afternoon.

Well, I thought to myself, maybe I don’t know which of these men is going to be a great writer, but I do know which one of them won’t. The little man I had selected for that role was William Faulkner...It was to be many years and a number of novels later before Faulkner...received a general audience, but the others present were never heard of again."
None of Faulkner's work appeared in the Double Dealer that first year; his first entry was a poem in the February, 1922 issue. Feibleman's poetry was also first published by the Double Dealer that same month. Black writers were given support. A book by NAACP writer W.E.B. Du Bois, Darkwater, received a penetrating favorable review in the June, 1922 issue, and the Double Dealer published prose written by Jean Toomer, the grandchild of Louisiana's Reconstruction era black governor P.B.S. Pinchback, in September, 1922.48

Prominent writers who appeared in the Double Dealer that first year included Benjamin de Casseres, Vincent Starrett, Alfred Kreyemborg, Lord Dunsany, Louis Untermeyer, William Alexander Percy, Hart Crane, Arthur Symons, Howard Mumford Jones, Carl Van Vechten and Oscar Williams, - not an imposing list but a very good beginning. Williams was a teenager who hitch-hiked from New York to appear, unexpectedly, at the Double Dealer office, where he made his home for weeks sleeping on a couch. But the cast improved dramatically in 1922, when additional contributors included Ernest Hemingway, Sherwood Anderson, William Faulkner, Ezra Pound, Maxwell Bodenheim, Allen Tate, Edmund Wilson, Jr., Elizabeth Coatsworth and Thornton Wilder. In his later remembrances, Julius Friend wrote:

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...Nineteen twenty two was the year when the Double Dealer reached its high tide of morale. The magazine was beginning to be mentioned favorably in the book sections of the Times and other newspapers around the country. We were drawing on a widening circle of competent writers...Its spirit was compounded of many factors - youthful enthusiasms, a belief in the importance of what we were aiming at, a large dose of optimism...sympathetic nourishment from others...That is why a little magazine is also necessarily a kind of "social club"...a gathering place for writers...It seems to me that every New Orleans figure old enough to write or dream of writing, at one time or another climbed the long two flights of stairs to the Double Dealer office...49

A break-through of sorts occurred when Sherwood Anderson, pleased with a Double Dealer review of his work written by Hart Crane for the July, 1921 issue, came striding into their office during mid-January, 1922, immediately embraced the group with his effusive friendship, then proceeded to write for the magazine’s February, March, April and June, 1922, issues. Thirty years later, Friend wrote a description of Anderson’s arrival, that first day.

...One afternoon in early 1922 Sherwood Anderson appeared and introduced himself. He was wearing a wool coat with leather buttons, a loud tie gathered in below the knot by a paste ring. He had only a velour hat and carried a blackthorn walking stick. Anderson was to remain in New Orleans four months that year. The essay "New Orleans, the Double Dealer and the Modern Movement in America", besides several prose poems in the manner of his "Mid-American Chants" mark his stay. But the Double Dealer men were indebted to him for much more than these contributions. Sherwood Anderson was in fine feather in 1922. His reputation already made by "Winesburg" had been pushed still higher by "Poor White" and the award of the Dial prize. His vitality radiated into all of us.
Anderson always had the capacity to make those with whom he came into contact feel more alive. Certainly he raised the temperature of our spirits and ambitions ever higher. This condition was mutual. He was charmed with his reception and, perhaps by consequence, with the Double Dealer coterie and with New Orleans. Never again, in my many meetings with Anderson, in his later visits to New Orleans, in Chicago and in Virginia was he quite to attain to that first rapture of 1922, that confidence that he was living at the height of his times.  

In an unpublished article, Friend also wrote that on that first day Anderson looked like “a burlesque show idea of a race horse character.” Anderson’s impression of the Double Dealer editors was preserved in his letter from New Orleans to H. L. Mencken declaring them to be “as pleasant a crowd of young blades as ever drunk bad whiskey.”

Anderson made New Orleans his winter home that year, then returned annually for the next four winters, also during the summer of 1924, after marrying his wife Elizabeth and leasing an apartment in the upper Pontalba Building on St. Peter street (only a block from Natalie’s door), and again for the summer, 1925. He continued as a frequent Double Dealer contributor. In his March, 1922, essay, entitled “New Orleans, the Double Dealer and the Modern Movement in America”, he compared his newly adopted home to Paris, New York and Chicago, and other literary centers, declaring New Orleans to be “the most cultural city I had yet found in America.” He cited multiple inspiring anecdotes: an oyster shucking contest he saw on
his first day in town, the negro laborers at work laughing and singing, the infinite variety of sights, smells, and sounds during a walk through the Vieux Carré.

...From my window, as I sit writing, I see the tangled mass of roofs of the old buildings. There are old galleries with beautiful hand-wrought railings, on which the people of the houses can walk above the street, or over which the housewife can lean in the morning to call to the vegetable man pushing his cart along the roadway below.

What colors in the old walls and doors...Yellows fade into soft greens. There is a continual shifting interplay of many colors as the sunlight washes over them.

I go to walk. It is the dusk of evening and men are coming home from work. There are mysterious passageways leading back into old patios...

There is something left in this people here that makes them like one another, that leads to constant outbursts of the spirit of play, that keeps them from being too confoundedly serious about death and the ballot and reform and other less important things in life.

...there is the fact of the "Vieux Carré" - the physical fact. The beautiful old town still exists. Just why it isn’t the winter home of every sensitive artist in America, who can raise money enough to get here, I do not know. Because its charms aren’t known, I suppose....

I want to tell them of long quiet walks to be taken on the levee in back-of-town, where old ships, retired from service, thrust their masts up into the evening sky. On the streets here the crowds have a more leisurely stride, the negro life issues a perpetual challenge to the artists, sailors from many lands come up from the water’s edge and idle on the street corners, in the evening soft voices, speaking strange tongues, come drifting up to you out of the street.
I have undertaken to write an article on the Modern Spirit and because I am in New Orleans and have been so completely charmed by life in the "Vieux Carré" I may have seemed to get off the track.

I haven't really. I stick to my pronouncement that culture means first of all the enjoyment of life, leisure and a sense of leisure...time for a play of the imagination over the facts of life...time and vitality to be serious about really serious things...joy of life in which to refresh the tired spirits.

In a civilization where the fact becomes dominant, submerging the imaginative life, you will have what is dominant in...Pittsburgh and Chicago today.

When the fact is made secondary to the desire to live, to love, and to understand life, it may be that we will have in more American cities a charm of place such as one finds in the older parts of New Orleans now.\footnote{Anderson's impact was substantial. At that moment, he was arguably the country's most popular novelist and short story writer. As he had been beckoned by the spreading literary reputation of this old southern city, his article sent an invitation to artists and writers everywhere telling them New Orleans was the place to be.}

Natalie Scott was among those in the Double Dealer office who met Sherwood Anderson that first day. On an errand for the magazine, she walked in and joined the impromptu gathering. Upon learning of Anderson's lodging in the old LaBranche building, a three-story inn with elaborate old balconies wrapping around the corner of Royal and St. Peter Streets, Natalie and McClure informed
Anderson he was their French Quarter neighbor. Anderson became a regular visitor on Orleans Alley, only a half-block from his front door. Natalie’s description of the occasion appeared in her column the following Sunday with rather bad poetry to memorialize the moment:

Wandering into the office of the Double Dealer the other day to turn in a subscription that Gus Beauregard had sent me from Washington, I found a group of editors gathered together, and there I met, — I wonder if I couldn’t parody Keats: it always amuses me, though I imagine you may find it trying:

"I met a writer in their midst,  
full beautiful, a muse’s child,  
His eyes were fine, his step was firm  
And his hair was wild.

And there I talked, ah joy betide,  
The strangest talk I ever talked,  
By the warm fireside."

Don’t upbraid me, sweet friend, nonsense springs from a light heart as readily as from an empty head, and one feels buoyant after meeting people who are not only different but interesting (one doesn’t follow ‘tother always).

But I admit it’s an informal introduction for Mr. Sherwood Anderson, author of “Winesburg, Ohio,” “Poor White,” and most recently “The Triumph of the Egg.” Mr. Sherwood Anderson, whom Mencken, of the unequivocal pen, has just pronounced in the latest issue of Smart Set, the foremost writer of fiction in America. That dictum is the conclusion of a detailed criticism of “The Triumph of the Egg,” further remarks that Mr. Anderson has no forerunners and no followers, but stands alone.

After this, my frivolity! It’s appalling. But Mr. Anderson wouldn’t mind. Someone told me of waking him at 3 in the morning and finding him cheerful! Moreover, his remarkably brown eyes are friendly, though disturbing at times. He is a fine figure of a man, with a suggestion of sturdiness, of standing
firmly, mentally as well as physically. He has been in touch with "The Double Dealer" for some time and his first visit here was to the editorial rooms. He is comfortably ensconced in Royal street now, just around the corner from the McClures, where he "drops in of an evening" not infrequently. And he has some agreeable things to say about the Quarter, which you would enjoy. He is distinctly a feather in our artistic cap - and distinctly that is the only feather-like suggestion about him!

As for the girls, my dear, perhaps this will show you. In two days he was "Sherry" to them, and now I hear it is Cheri. Quite typical.

Natalie and Anderson were good friends from the start. Anderson became a regular reader and subject of Natalie’s columns and newspaper features, a few years later declaring her, in his typically ebullient and extravagant manner, to be "the best newspaperwoman in America."

After Basil Thompson’s 1924 death, Julius Friend became less active in the magazine although he continued writing book reviews. Not surprisingly, the magazine became less mischievous. The editorial section, where Friend and Thompson had engaged in so much of their cynical humor and spirited commentary, disappeared from the magazine. Yet the literary quality of each issue continued to improve. In Friend’s opinion, "the tone of the Double Dealer had become almost sedate,” but his point of view probably reflected his sadness over Thompson’s death, which obviously undermined his enthusiasm for this enterprise. Reflecting McClure’s nature and editorial talent, the
magazine matured. The purpose became more serious with consistently high quality content. With the death of Thompson, and with Friend's reduced involvement, publishing each issue meant a much heavier workload for the small staff.⁵⁵

Historian Frances Bowen, who analyzed the career of the many authors and poets whose work graced the Double Dealer during its five and a half year life, reached a revealing conclusion. Of the two hundred and ninety-three contributors whose work was selected for publication in the Double Dealer, fifty-four were then obscure and unknown literary beginners who would subsequently gain fame and establish themselves in long careers as among the recognized men and women of letters of their generation. Of those fifty-four, forty of these then unknown authors were published by the magazine during McClure's editorship after mid-1924. Another one hundred published one or more works to be found in the Library of Congress. Sixty were listed in Who's Who in America, 1951. "Only one hundred did not sustain themselves in the field of writing." The editors and staff obviously had a good eye for raw talent and their work improved with the years. Decades later, Julius Friend summarized the remarkable record of the magazine's joint editorship this way:

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Somewhere between our ambitions and the limitations imposed by money and material we managed to publish forty-two issues over a five year period. Of discoveries afterwards acclaimed as novelists I may mention in addition to Hemingway and Faulkner the names of Thornton Wilder, Hamilton Basso, Robert Penn Warren and Henri de Monthelant. I do not know whether we can claim to be the first ever to have put these writers into print, I can only say that they came to us completely unheralded and unknown. From the "Notes on Contributors" for June 1922 one reads only: “Ernest M. Hemingway is a young American living in Paris.”

The entire staff, all part-time, were essential to maintain this steady improvement. In addition to long hours and late nights usually necessary to meet publishing deadlines and to raise money, also joining with many others in making financial contributions to pay the bills, the staff shared the work of reading their way through the massive numbers of submittals received from writers, poets, and playwrights across the country who hoped to have their work published. Julius Friend later wrote of the problems that friends helped solve.

...The Double Dealer was kept alive by small transfusions from friends and well wishers called “stockholders” and “guarantors.”

Money is not the only problem of a little magazine or a big one for that matter. Every magazine has a deadline. If by that date its editors cannot fill it with great writing it has to go to press with something less. Not that we ever lacked manuscripts after the first few issues. The word goes forth to aspiring writers like wildfire when a new outlet opens.

Large loads of poetry, verse, short stories, essays, one-act plays, and critical writing swamped their office, along
with spates of books to be reviewed. But good writing was scarce, and the magazine’s manpower was short, especially after April, 1924. The job of reading submissions and helping decide what to publish inevitably fell upon all of them, as did the task of design, layout, typing, and other such tasks. They sold advertisements and subscriptions, paid bills, ran errands, prepared the mailouts of each issue, did some of the writing, editorial recommendations among an endless variety of other duties. Lillian Friend Marcus took over the financial oversight of the magazine. Even the first year, making deadlines was such a struggle that a single issue was published during the two month period of August-September, 1921, when Natalie formally joined the staff, so that the group could catch their breath, reorganize, and prepare the October edition without a wild rush.58

After Thompson’s death, with Friend’s reduced role in the magazine, and McClure’s employment with the Times-Picayune, the Double Dealer was more short-handed just when the work load was the heaviest. The staff almost certainly, by necessity, did editing, wrote drafts of book reviews and every other task necessary to keep the magazine afloat. By 1926 their workload and other demands had become too much and time and events had moderated the enthusiasm. The magazine struggled to maintain its monthly
publishing schedule, sometimes producing an issue only once every two or three months. The final issue appeared in June, 1926, the month Natalie suffered the double tragedy in her family that would change her life. During October, she left on a long journey to Mexico, then on to Europe in 1927. Three decades later, in 1953, John McClure and Julius Friend told Frances Bowen “that lack of time on the part of the staff was the sole cause” of the magazine’s discontinuance, though Ms. Bowen chose to disregard this information as she assumed finances must have been the real reason. The magazine had enough guarantors and stockholders to make up monthly deficits for the foreseeable future. The true reason, as Friend and McClure said, was the lack of staff time, the intrusions of their individual lives brought changing priorities, culminating in its closure after June, 1926.59
CHAPTER FOUR

NATALIE SCOTT AND THE RENAISSANCE: HOME AND ABROAD
(1922-1923)

Muddie’s death occurred at home on January 23, 1922 and she was buried the same day. An old pressed flower, dry with age, and an old note scrawled in a childish print, barely legible, have survived the intervening decades in Muddie’s family album, among the poetry and souvenirs collected over her lifetime, revealing the gentle nature of her death. Scribbled unevenly on torn scrap paper, the words were “Muddie I love you Nauman,” the first intelligible words Muddie ever saw written by her grandson. Natalie put the child’s message in an envelope along with the fresh flower Muddie had held, as final keepsakes for the scrapbook, then wrote on the outside:

Nauman II’s note to his Muddie, - the last thing she saw here. Her eyes filled with light, and she whispered, “Bless my precious Little Lad.”¹

Muddie’s life ended in her upstairs bedroom instead of a hospital and, in accord with her wishes, there was no funeral home or open casket, both having always seemed morbid to her, though there was the inevitable hearse that took her body directly from Carondelet street, after a small living room funeral, to the Metairie Cemetery. She was sixty-one years old, a fact few people knew. Hilda

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Phelps Hammond wrote an obituary for local newspapers but the family decided against it. Muddie never wanted her name to appear in an obituary section (another morbid thought). In death as in life, she preferred to keep her age and her condition a private matter.²

Muddie’s illness had shadowed the trail of Natalie’s activities throughout 1921 and kept her living at home with her family most of the year. Boss’ health had improved since his two operations during mid-1920. He received a government patent during March, 1921, for a practical invention called a “drift-fender and dyke”, which he had designed for river dredging operations and erosion prevention along canal and river banks, but there had been little opportunity for the family to celebrate the accomplishment. Jack carried the full weight of managing the Scott engineering business as his father made only rare appearances at the office, though his full retirement did not come until 1924 when Jack and Ed Bres, an old Tulane classmate, formed a partnership.³

A sense of inevitability prevailed during 1921 as Muddie’s condition steadily declined. No hint of this unhappy time filtered through to Natalie’s cheerful Sunday writings. Her columns remained upbeat and full of news. The only obvious toll on her work was the long absence from the States of her feature articles. Peggy Passe Partout

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appeared every Sunday, even the morning of Muddie's death when her column reported meeting Sherwood Anderson that first occasion in the Double Dealer office, but she had written nothing else under her byline for months.\(^4\)

The Sunday after Muddie's death, her column reported the upcoming special "Women's Edition" of the States planned for Wednesday, February 1st, a fund-raising device for a local charity that would be entirely produced, written and distributed by women. Again, her column was crisp, pleasant, and informative with no sign of her grief. The "Women's Edition" would be filled with major articles on the diverse pursuits and leadership of women in New Orleans. The profits from every paper sold that day was a donation by the States to the Kingsley House and Day Nursery, a combined Trinity church and Kindergarten Association creation started at the turn of the century in a poor neighborhood to provide needy children with an education, health care, day care, a playground, recreation, and, for abandoned children and orphans, a home in a dormitory at the school. Here are Natalie's comments:

Of course you have been waiting for me to tell you more about the Woman's Edition of the States which will be on the streets Wednesday. As that day draws close the little office in which Mrs. Lucian Lyons and Pearl Jahncke and Mrs. Dufour work day in and day out fairly seems to be the most alive place in the world, while the phone is probably the busiest one in town these days. But it's the bigness of the whole thing that quite overwhelms one - the fact that twenty-five hundred women are working in Louisiana and Mississippi
to bring out this edition through their own efforts. The far-seeing merchants are letting that fact sink into their minds and the advertising that is resulting tells that they want their business put before the thousands upon thousands of readers by those twenty-five hundred women. The League of Women Voters is coming to the front and undertaking the distribution of the papers by wards, and Mrs. F. I. Williams is chairman of that gigantic task. Mrs. E. J. Bowers is in charge of the Mississippi division and the Girl Scouts are offering their services as messengers on that day.

As for the Edition itself, you probably read Mrs. Dufour’s interesting account of the stories and poems and articles that have been handed in. Fanny Heaslip Lea’s poem, Dorothy Dix’s own articles, Miss McMain’s story of her work. A story from Mrs. Bush, which promises to charm all of us. Miss Grace King’s contribution that we all shall look for with the keenest delight - what a list Cynthia, and what a feast for the devotees of literature!

The main feature and the object of this huge organizational effort was the Kingsley House. Children of working parents or absent parents were taken off the streets, placed in classrooms, and provided nutritious meals. The Kingsley House Women’s Club had earlier sponsored through the legislature a new law prohibiting child labor and convinced the city to close two nearby saloons and houses of prostitution. The children were also given industrial training in chair-caning, basket-weaving, net making, carpentry, dress making, home-making, millinery, as well as programs in civics and a summer “vacation school.” The program was run and funded by women.
This Woman's Edition of the States set a newspaper circulation record in the city, so effective was the advertising and sales effort marshalled by these women, all profits going to the Kingsley House. Even the editorship of the paper was assumed for the day by these women, local writer Dorothy Dix (Mrs. E. M. Gilmer) taking charge of the editorial page, and the city editorship by Helen Schertz. Mrs. Paul Jahncke took charge of advertising. The lead editorial offered these comments.

...it gives the most comprehensive survey that has ever been made of women's activities in this city. It tells of the clubs, literary, artistic, and philanthropic, ...it tells of what professional women are doing, and what business women are accomplishing.

And then, it reaches back into the past, and gathers up the faded ribbons of memory and romance, and ties them about the Vieux Carré. It tells the stories of the historic old houses that make New Orleans a place of pilgrimage...the belles and beaux of yesteryear, and introduces them to their jazzy sons and daughters.

Above all, perhaps, "The Women's Edition of the States" is notable because it has brought out so much home talent in its literary features. Many of the contributors are women who have already won a place in the writing world....'7

Even the city's Fair Grounds race track participated in this charity event by running the Kingsley House Handicap, with movie actresses Doris Dagmar and the Gish sisters on hand to present the winner's trophy to the winning jockey. A tribute from the Times Picayune was republished in The States. A news story the next day, unsigned but possibly
written by Natalie, described a stranger arriving in New Orleans and being surprised by the very attractive female "newsies", and his inquiry. The newsies tell him about the charitable purposes of the Kingsley House.

Three earnest tongues told him in brief the story of Kingsley House, of the countless little children cared for and made happy there; of the mothers who are relieved of a great responsibility by the kindly hand of Kingsley House reaching out in care of their children while they are at work. An intimate word picture was drawn of the beauties of the work done by the institution.

...the stranger went to his purse. The amused smile had faded. He pressed a bill into the hand of a "newsie"...."Such an institution is heaven sent. I know, for I was cared for by one when I was a boy." He took his paper and hurried away.

It was the same with thousands of Orleanians Wednesday. They opened their hearts and paid generous sums for the Women's Edition of the New Orleans States, all profits of which go to Kingsley House....Those society newsies...simply wouldn't take no for an answer. Mighty few people...were without a copy of The States Wednesday.

Out at the Fair Grounds, always a place where hands are ready to dig into pockets...the response was generous....

The Double Dealer carried an article that month by T. P. Thompson, president of the Board of Curators of the Louisiana State Museum, and the father of Basil Thompson, entitled "The Renaissance of the Vieux Carré", which included in part an imaginary guided tour through the restored French Quarter, describing the highlights of its renewal: restaurants, antique shops, cafes, and book stores.
on Royale Street; “the renovated and beautifully restored Maison Morphy” where Jeane Castellanos “has graciously proffered herself as hostess for this quaintest of hostelries, Patio Royal,” and where numerous shops had opened, including Rosalie Nixon’s new bookstore and “a French lingerie corner presided over by Madame Ida Burgueires with true Parisian grace”; John McClure’s Olde Booke Shoppe and the Arts and Crafts Club on Royal; the Green Shutter Tea Room on St. Peter; the Quartier Club and Tea Room; Pernetti’s Studio; the improved Pontalba Building with numerous shops and studios such as Odiorre’s printroom, Atelier Pontalba, Moses’ studio, and much more. Finally the writer’s walk through the Quarter reached Jackson Square, then 626 Orleans Alley (Upper St. Anthony’s Alley):

Turn now into St. Anthony’s alley alongside the Cathedral...In St. Anthony’s place is the quaint four story home of a group of regulars, — Bohemians who like the atmosphere sufficiently to pay it the tribute of residing there in the shadow of the Cathedral. Miss Scott, Mr. and Mrs. McClure and many more are now located near the ancient hermitage of Pére Antoine...."

Natalie and the McClures had filled 626 Orleans Alley with artists and writers for low rents, a means of attracting them to the Quarter, supporting their creativity, and thereby enhancing the bohemian and artistic atmosphere which the owners desired. The location was ideal,
overlooking St. Antoine’s garden, where duels were said to have been fought a century earlier behind the Cathedral. Stepping out of her front door, Jackson Square was a short walk to her right and Royal Street only three doors to her left.

The rediscovery and rebirth of the Vieux Carré had gained notice and recognition far beyond the South, as noted during 1922 in a Peggy Passe Partout column.

We are becoming food for talk in New York these days Cynthia – pick up any Sunday New York paper and you will find some mention of us somewhere...A full page article at that in the magazine supplement... "Le Vieux Carré, where eight years ago no word of English was to be heard, has been overrun by irresponsible, effervescent young art students, architects and writers. What in Paris is called the Latin quarter in New Orleans is called the French Quarter,...

..."Genuine gifts are being developed in 'Frenchtown,'....And one cannot call a quarter which attracts such men as Luis Graner and Robert W. Grafton, Lachman and Gaspard, a quarter for artists to sneeze at; nor a Little Theatre which has presented plays by Dunsany and Synge and Shaw, Ibsen and Strindberg and Wilder a Little Theatre to be laughed at; nor a book shop haunted in its day by Lafcadio Hearn and Eugene Field and O’Henry (to-day managed by a young poet, John McClure) a shop to be lightly passed by; and yet -

"The French Quarter has suffered the fate of such quarters. It has become a fad. It has become in a way fashionable."

"And going on a bit Mr. Silas Brent speaks of the visit of Dunsany to New Orleans and says--

"He was piloted through the quarter by Lyle Saxon, who lives there, who has been the sympathetic chronicler for years of that section...As they walked through the streets the Irish peer and playwright,
noting the huge locks and hinges, the gratings, the balconies,...the decay, the dim driveways and the studded doorway of the Battle Abbey, once a torture chamber, muttered to himself, 'These might be my own, my very own imaginings.'

"There are the usual tea shops, and antique shops and book shops as might be expected....

"Le Petit Theatre du Vieux Carré which recently closed its third season is not to be dismissed so lightly as pink teas and masquerades. Its home is one of the Pontalba buildings on the old Place D'Armes and its director is Oliver Hindsdell. Ronald Hargrave, portrait painter, designs its settings and Miss Lydia Brown who does children’s portraits its costumes. Mrs. Oscar Nixon is President...the 125 young men and women who make up its varying casts may receive no mention by name...they comprise the only Little Theatre in this country which can present French plays in French... starting with a capital of 29 dollars they are now opulent with more than thirty thousand to their credit, have purchased a building just off of Jackson Square, and are remodeling it for their coming season....

"There is the house of Paul Morphy, once chess champion....It has been made into studios, with a tea shop and a book shop and a lingerie shop on the ground floor and last January students drank their syrupy drip coffee under the magnolias in the courtyards so mild was the weather... Others occupy the old Brulatour house...W.R. Irby, a wealthy New Orleans banker...remodeled the Paul Morphy and the Brulatour houses out of a sentimental impulse...Mr. Irby (in company with a good many artists and writers who have bought and refurbished properties there) has come abruptly face to face with the sordid fact that the quarter is not only romantic but paying real estate....

"Mahogany and rosewood and walnut, palettes and paint tubes, typewriter and tubby pencils, violins and harps - these await you if you lift the heavy knockers on the doorways to those hidden courtyards in le Vieux Carré."

So there we are as others see us, Cynthia - write me how that article strikes you.10
Natalie made another French Quarter investment on February 24, 1922, purchasing a two story Creole-style house at 714 St. Peter Street, between Royal and Bourbon streets across from the Green Shutter, a favorite gathering spot. Built in 1829, her new acquisition featured an arched carriage entrance on the left leading to its interior courtyard and a long wrought-iron balcony across the second floor, mounted above by a single attic dormer. She promptly cleaned, renovated and repainted the place then leased space to artists and writers, leaving it to her tenants to decorate their abodes as they saw fit. Sam Gilmore, among others, became her tenant and later bought the place from her. Oliver La Farge, Natalie’s good friend and author of Laughing Boy, subsequently the Pulitzer Prize winner for literature in 1930, would be another tenant, living here from 1925 until he left New Orleans in 1929.11

Natalie had two residences, her studio in the French Quarter and the home she shared with Boss and Jack. Boss felt 4907 Carondelet was too large once Muddie was gone, so later in 1922 he purchased a house at 1913 Napoleon Avenue, angled across the avenue from Manale’s Restaurant and Oyster Bar, which had long been Jack Scott’s favorite spot to socialize evenings with his friends, including the restaurant’s amiable owner Pascale Manale. Boss acquired
the Napoleon Avenue property on September 21, 1922; they moved into the new house during September upon Natalie’s return from her 1922 European trip.12

Other than traveling in 1920 to Baltimore for Muddie’s extended cancer treatments and aside from local excursions, Natalie had taken no major journeys since her return home from the war in late October, 1919. Descriptions of the exotic vacations of other New Orleanians was a staple subject in her column, no doubt whetting her appetite for such travels. After Muddie’s death, Natalie made plans for a return to France. She organized a tour to lead nine college girls across the continent even though Europe remained a turbulent place with the French and Germans particularly at odds over war reparations and indemnity payments; French troops were poised to enter Germany’s Ruhr Valley to enforce the Versailles treaty requirements; internal dissension turned into violence within numerous European nations, particularly within unstable Germany, a country torn by opposing political extremes and financial chaos. Yet Natalie longed to return, a desire she had expressed in her October 7, 1920 letter from Baltimore to Martha and, in a casual way, in her newspaper columns over the previous two years.13

Natalie worked out an agreement to serve as tour guide under the auspices of Temple Travel Agency. She planned
the itinerary, conceived the concept of “Natalie Scott and her Nine Muses”, as she named her group, and recruited the nine college girls who would accompany her. As the summer approached, the society pages took an interest. Here are comments from the gossip pages of the May 27th edition of the New Orleans Illustrated News.

...All of which suggests that other tour I am particularly interested in - Natalie Scott and her nine “Muses” who leave for New York June 3rd, whence they sail June 10th aboard the “St. Paul.”

Fancy imbibing Europe with such a wonderful person as Natalie. Among her numerous accomplishments, she possesses the gift of the Cicerone, well informed in art treasures, operas, theatres, etc., that make up European culture. And then they will have her delightful sense of humor to carry them through any little hardships that might arise.

“A perfect woman, nobly planned
To Warm, to comfort and command.”

The nine that constitute her party are Bessie Johnson, Edwa Stewart, Caddie Stewart, Charlotte Reily, Amelie May, Elise Roussel, Josephine LeBlanc, Blanche Broussard of Abbeville, Louisiana and Mary Janet Smith of Mobile - all bright and attractive, so that Natalie can be proud of her little tribe. They are already booked for several tea engagements. I hear Stella Little will entertain them at her beautiful English home, and Miss Nellie Farwell has extended a written invitation from across seas for a chat “over the teacups.”

Thirty-two months passed after her return to New Orleans, and two years from the start of her mother’s fatal illness before Natalie was finally able to make this journey. The coming years would make up for lost time.
from June to September, 1922, she would lead her nine “Muses” on a tour of Europe, with her reports of their exploits regularly appearing in both her Sunday column and occasional feature articles. Natalie would travel extensively each year of the decade except for 1925 and 1929. From June to December, 1923, she lived in Paris’ Latin Quarter and each week her column was written from Europe. In 1924, she remained in New Orleans for the summer with a growing and evolving coterie of French Quarter habitues, becoming particularly close to Sherwood Anderson, helping him and his new wife become immersed among the variety of her New Orleans friends, while taking on extra duties with the Double Dealer in the aftermath of Basil Thompson’s death. As other travelers were returning in September to New Orleans from their 1924 summer vacations, Natalie left for New York where she spent four months living in Greenwich Village, arriving home just in time for Christmas.

During March, April and May, 1922 as the departure date of “Nine Muses” tour of Europe approached, the rising flood waters of the Mississippi River threatened New Orleans, the water so high that vessels were ordered to move slowly “to prevent wakes from washing over levees and sandbags.” On Esplanade Avenue cobblestones one hundred feet behind the levee suddenly broke apart, spewing muddy
river water, a sand boil caused by the tremendous pressure of the water pushing its way under the city’s levee. Emergency crews were at work night and day for weeks along the Louisiana length of the river. On April 27th, the levee on the river’s east side at Poydras below the city gave way, a major crevasse breaking through and allowing the rampaging river to flood the homes and property of St. Bernard parish. This was a prelude to 1927 when the poorly engineered and inadequate levee system would allow the most disastrous flood in American history to devastate the states along the length of the Mississippi River and its tributaries, with Louisiana and Mississippi taking the worst brunt of the tragedy. In 1927 state and local public officials, fearing the flood would wash away the city, dynamited the St. Bernard levee to create a crevasse that would ease the threatening pressure, thereby flooding the sparsely populated parish in order to assure the city’s safety, not unlike the 1922 crevasse opened by nature.\footnote{15}

Natalie’s column followed the flood developments, then she wrote illustrated articles in both the \textit{States} and the \textit{New Orleans Illustrated News} on the Red Cross work among the homeless and displaced, with photographs taken while she worked as part of the Red Cross evacuation and medical care effort. She went among the black refugees and wrote of their plight.
Milly Washington spoke for hundreds. Milly, with her black straw hat, with a velvet bow, perched on top of her snowy-white tignon, her face a very shiny black, and elongated in an extraordinary way that gave her an agreeably equine expression.

"Where do you live, Milly?"

She removed her corncob, pushed the ash down with a gnarled black finger, expectorated thoughtfully, and said:

"I reckon I live hyah now."

"Where did you live before, though?"

"I live in my house. Yes’m, I own my own house."

"Yes, but where is it?"

"It’s back dere in de water." She chuckled, and shook her old head several times. "An’ war dere? I’low dey ain’t nobody know w’ere dat house is, ‘cause dey got de part of it hyah, and de part of it de yuther place."

And so it is with hundreds....

One section of Jackson Barracks swarms....[0]ne part set aside for the negroes, one part for the whites, sharing the common title, the common fate of refugees....Through the windows of the low, straight building one catches glimpses of the mothers, moving busily to and fro...coming to the door from time to time for an anxious glance at their broods. Old men sit apathetically, cramped old hands holding a cherished cane...no complaint, no repining. Their attitude is dazed, confused, quiescent, fatalistic. Many of them speak no English at all, but murmur to each other in low, limpid voices in Spanish; some in a quick, nervous French. For the most part, they are small truck farmers; most of them from St. Bernard way, some of them from “The Island.”

Flood refugees, in one tremendous moment of the river’s whim, made homeless, shelterless, the Red Cross has taken them in. From the moment that the river, gnawing at the weak spot in the levee, made its first small insinuation and came through, first with a
rush, then with a mighty crash and a roar, the Red Cross workers have been at their gigantic task of rescue. Mr. Seeley...Mr. Ben Beckman...Carroll Walmsley, and numbers of others...[and] small motor boats, barges, anything that is available. The steamer Capitol was pressed into service. On one trip it picked up over two hundred and fifty, stopping at various spots on the levee and running out a gangplank where groups were gathered, waving and calling....

Natalie’s articles described the operations of the motor-corps workers “carrying refugees, calling for clothing, taking down supplies...,” the volunteers “providing mattresses for them, getting food...clothes..., the first-aid department operations, the kitchen crews,...the mosquito bars, medicines, all other essentials....”

The children’s bath hour is one of the eventful moments of the day. There is a long double line...of washstands,...large and square, which makes them “babies’ baths.” The mothers gather and volunteer workers, a nurse in uniform, moves quietly and helpfully among them. The babies are plunged into the tubs, all ages, all sizes, squirming and wriggling, some squealing with delight, other shrieking their displeasure; mothers coaxing, scolding, cajoling...

Most of the children have the shyness of the country child in crowds, and cling together, gathered around their mothers,...One old colored man, Ishmael Bennet...is totally blind and quite alone; but all his neighbors in the camp shower him with attention...He is a patriarchal old figure, with his flowing beard and his hair touched with white, and his mahogany-colored skin still quite smooth in spite of his age....

Mr. Clem Story, who is superintendent of the public school of St. Bernard, has established his corps of teachers in a little building around the corner from the barracks, and school goes on, just as it did before the Mississippi swept into the building where these same classes were formerly held.
By late May, the flood having passed its zenith leaving thousands homeless, Natalie used her newspaper column to push and publicize the fundraising efforts:

But the canvassers do not “from their labors rest” as yet. How can they, with tiny babies in arms down at Jackson Barracks wailing and gurgling, while their mothers look dazed and bewildered about them, homes swept away, little farms submerged under a tawny mass of surging yellow water?

Mrs. Gourdain Smith, whose vision of service keeps her tirelessly at work when many stronger would have had to give up in exhaustion, is at her post again for the Red Cross. I saw her coming from the Barracks on one of the early days of the crevasse with her look of high determination and I was sure that something would happen!

It has: the work for funds goes forward, and the unfortunates who are homeless and destitute now and who have yet a drearier time to look forward to when the water subsides and they go back to the land, will be cared for as long as the funds continue, cared for in the efficient, economic way, which only a highly organized institution such as the Red Cross can achieve. Mary Buck, Mr. Seeley and the others, have evolved a great piece of mechanism there, in the course of war and disaster.¹⁹

Natalie and most of her nine muses departed New Orleans by train Saturday evening, June 3rd, bound for New York. There, the missing members of her party, along with parents and well-wishers, met her dockside to board the ship. Their itinerary included England, France, Belgium, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, with trips to battlefields, Monte Carlo, and the Passion Play at Oberammergau also planned. In New York, Natalie saw Pressy Preston, her best
friend from war-time Paris, as well as many New Orleanians
who were working there, including Belle Lawrason with an
architectural firm, Val Winter performing on stage, and
writer Lucille Rutland. She went to the theater on Tuesday
night with Dorothy Spencer (who was spending the summer in
the East) and Mary Celeste Lyons, an old friend Natalie had
nicknamed "M.C." or "Empsie" during their high school days
who was vacationing in Atlantic City.

Natalie wrote her Sunday column from Europe throughout
her 1922 travels, though Rosalie Nixon supplemented each
column with a brief addendum on local news. At the ship in
New York, Natalie, as chaperone, found herself in the midst
of mothers, aunts, cousins, boyfriends and "everyday
friends", counting tickets and answering questions as she
shepherded her charges aboard. An observer described
Natalie’s appearance as she hurried about, preoccupied.

She looked especially stunning...the wonderful
coat of black duretyune with its monstrous beaver
collar that called for cold weather and England filled
us all with envy.¹⁹

Natalie’s first published letter, mailed when they
landed in Cherbourg in late June, described an interesting
crowd of artists, sculptors, rich widows and struggling
authors among the ship’s passengers crossing the Atlantic
and the picturesque waters of France where Charlotte Reily
pulled out her brushes and painted the scenes they passed.

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Upon landing at the coastal city of Deauville, just south of the mouth of the Seine River, Natalie and one of her companions decided to try the surf despite the cold weather.

...It was terribly cold in Deauville the first day and as I had dressed myself up in appropriate white, I swathed myself in my big coat. Catty Stewart and I determined to go swimming anyway, of course, so we rented a little bath cabin, towels and the rest of the necessary paraphernalia and dressed for the bath. Catty went into shrieks of laughter over the bathrobe which is made of towelling and simply fastens around your neck by pulling a string. I have never in the world been so cold as when we started off down that hard beach! The wind was simply cutting through us and I thought I would never in the world have the courage to plunge in but finally made the break and it was glorious!

The ship entered the Seine River and they got off again at Rouen where they attended mass at the great cathedral. Later, after Paris, they made the trip to Rheims, which had been destroyed in the war, its famous cathedral reduced to skeletal remains of roofless shattered walls. Natalie was amazed at the recovery she witnessed in both the countryside and the city, then they went to fortress of Pompelle.

You would never know that this land had been fought over and looked like one of the principalities of Hades just a couple of years ago. It is perfectly marvelous to see how they have cleared it around here, the most luxuriant crops of grain I have ever seen anywhere and the shelled spots are scarce...In the little villages the people are working away tirelessly, patching up the houses, filling up the holes and getting things in order again...I can see the houses, lots of them entirely new, some patched up
with clean new parts, the old parts still showing the pockmarks of shells.

Rheims was interesting to see again. The streets are full of builders and wagons full of building material...sometimes several houses, sometimes almost a block of them, that have been rebuilt...right in the midst will be the old stark ruins. It’s very queer....The Cathedral gives an impression of more destruction more desolation...than it did the last time I was here, in comparison, probably with the rebuilding of the places all about it. We did the usual thing of going to the fortress of Pompelle. The fort itself has been left very much as it was and of course it is interesting to the girls to see the dugouts, the line of communicating trenches, the two German tanks that are left there stuck in the mud...There are still, even after all the combing of the place that tourists have done, pieces of shrapnel and other souvenirs. We slid down a dugout, went through a short one underground...we climbed over the poor dilapidated place from one end to the other.21

Fannie Craig, the artist from New Orleans who was also traveling in Europe that summer, tracked Natalie down in Paris and went with the group to Rheims and other excursions from Paris. Two other young New Orleans artists, Charlie Bein and Tommy Farrar, were also exploring Europe and they too spent much time with Natalie and her companions. Another sidetrip was to Belleau Woods, and Natalie’s published letter provided some details.

Well, continuing this on the train, we are all stretched out like weary soldiers. We had to get up this morning at a quarter of six in order to take this trip....

We have been out to Belleau Woods, which I find decidedly changed. It looks better groomed...The underbrush has grown up, the trees that are still left alive are putting out green leaves...it hasn’t the bareness or forlornness that it had before, when I was

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there...The graves that were low down on the hill before, across from the little farm house, have all been moved up higher to the official cemetery now. It is still quite impressive to round the curve up the road and see them gleaming so suddenly white against the low line of the tattered long strip of wood that covers the brow of the long, low, but quite steep hill. When I was there the last time there were a number of machine gun emplacements still left...shell holes...the ground still raw and reddish and torn up. Now most of the holes have been covered up. There are none of the more startling souvenirs such as pieces of uniform, helmets and the like which even as late as June, 1919, were still in evidence.\(^{22}\)

Natalie wrote most of her next column on the way to Rome, completed after her arrival there. They went to Nice, where they swam and enjoyed the beach, then to Monte Carlo where the girls were disappointed to be excluded from the casinos due to being underage, only Charlotte Reily and Natalie being over twenty-one and able to enter.

You should have seen us....The Prince of Monaco who was very beloved by all...had died just a few days before rather unexpectedly...the employees about the Casino were wrapped in gloom...All the tables in the great central gambling hall were filled....I was determined to play just to see how it was done. We watched roulette at one table after another until finally we caught on to a little...but very little. At last I screwed up nerve enough, Charlotte urging me on, to go up and buy some chips. The chips, little ivory things...I chose only the five franc ones and bought only four...at the same time boldly asked the old fellow dressed in dismal black who sold them to me how to play. He was very amiable and told me about roulette...The croupiers looked at me without any expression except for a young one at the end who smiled agreeably. And I put one white chip on number 24 feeling as though everyone in the hall had his eyes on me...the old croupier was calling “Sept...Vingt...Cinq--Impair et passe.”
He pushed over a pile of chips of twenty four but I didn’t notice...my agreeable croupier bowed to me and said “Madame.” I bowed back without the slightest idea of what it was about but wanted to be agreeable. Then everyone at the table grinned and he pushed the chips over towards me with his little wooden rake and I suddenly realized I had won. I was quite excited. I won several other times and came out finally with five hundred and twenty-five francs where I had put in twenty francs. I felt as though I had been on a long long trip and had been gone for ages!³³

Each time Natalie pushed her stack to twenty-four, the ivory pellet had rolled to rest in the twenty-four space. To celebrate her luck, Natalie used a portion of her winnings to treat her nine muses to dinner in a Monte Carlo restaurant. The States prepared a dramatized and amusing version of the occasion for the front page of Sunday’s second section.²⁴

They visited Genoa and Pisa. In Rome they dined at the Castello de Cesare perched on top of the Palatine hill, formerly the site of the palace of Roman emperors, where the view of the ruins, the city and the dark low mountains was spectacular. Dinner was so inexpensive due to the favorable rate of exchange, their total bill was a dollar and a half; they kept cabs all evening for less than a dollar, the drivers waiting as they wandered through the Coliseum enjoying the grandeur of the moonlight.

...at night the moonlight works a miracle with it, puts back its old splendor it seems...All the tales of it, of the gladiators who fought and died there whose bodies were thrown into the aqueduct to be thrown into the Tiber like trash, pictures of the
wicked old emperors, the wild beasts, the mob and all that I have ever read came back very clearly at night there in the moonlight and seemed very plausible.

We were speaking in whispers and were beginning to believe in ghosts. Then from somewhere in the shadows an Italian boy began to sing. He had a fine rich voice and sang so spontaneously that we could imagine that he had his head thrown back and was singing like a bird. When he finished there was a perfect storm of handclapping and then we knew for the first time how many people were in the place.  

Florence was their next stop where they stayed in the Hotel Monopole with the Piazzo e Chiesa before them.

...I am suddenly tired of jabbering. A crowd of young boys has just gone by, lounging along under the windows on the street that winds there by the Arno. If there is such a thing as black agate that's the Arno now, streaked waveringly with thin lines of light at intervals, pricked with a few reflections of stars,...light-studded where the bridges lie across it,- the Ponte Vecchio with the funny little shops that line it. And the boys are singing a thrumming little Italian air, two of them carrying the air while the others sing a "tum-tum" accompaniment. Crowds of them keep passing every now and then, and the singing is soft voiced, full toned. Otherwise the air is very quiet and the night is lovely....

Then to Venice and to Switzerland. After completing their Swiss tour through the Oberalp and Furka passes and arriving in Lucerne at night in a thunder storm, they encountered three more New Orleanians as they stepped off the train, - John Blakemore, Freddy Oechsner and Douglas Nairne, who had worked their way over as cabin boys. Similar encounters with American friends occurred through most of the trip. On August 6th they were in Oberammergau to witness the centuries old passion play, then toured the
southern part of Bavaria. They went on to Munich, Nuremberg, Holland then to England, finally sailing from Southampton on August 24th for Montreal, Canada. All along the way, Natalie dropped postcards in the mail to her nephew, nieces and god-children.27

The Southern Railway brought Natalie and Elise Roussel home to New Orleans on September 9th, a Saturday evening, as the rest of her group lingered in the north for short vacations with their families. "A hurried rush of waiting friends, a photographer making his way down to the last Pullman, and there at the last was Natalie, smiling as casually as though she had arrived from a weekend on the Gulf Coast..." Sidonie with her three children was also there to meet her. Natalie carried a gigantic handbag purchased in Germany to accommodate the great volume of inflated German marks necessary to equal a small amount of American money, and the gifts she had purchased. Sidonie and Nauman had visited Boss several times during Natalie's absence. Now Sidonie was back to help Jack and Natalie organize the move from 4907 Carondelet to the new house Boss had purchased on Napoleon Avenue.28

The New Orleans States ran a front page story that week about their trip, joking that the ten females managed to complete a trouble-free tour of post-war Europe without a man in their midst.
Ten New Orleans girls, without any elderly chaperone, with no "man in the party" to look out for and defend them, toured Europe for one glorious summer...Not once did they have a single unpleasant experience...

That’s the story brought back to New Orleans Tuesday afternoon by Miss Natalie Vivian Scott, World War heroine...and member of the staff of The New Orleans States...

“Oh, it was a lovely summer,” said Miss Scott... “We had a splendid time. Adventures? Scores of them, but the only dangerous one when we went for a swim in Genoa and for bathing suits they gave us Mother Hubbards in which we nearly drowned. Ever try to swim in one?

Natalie constructed a magnificent tour for the next year that was far more ambitious, a monumental journey that she conceived and organized through Intercollegiate Tours of Boston, again to lead a troop of energetic travelers. The 86 day adventure was planned for June 21st through September 15th, 1923. According to the plan, constructed in the midst of the international hoopla and interest in all things Egyptian resulting from the startling discovery in 1922 of King Tutankhamon’s fabulous tomb, Natalie’s group would visit Paris, Venice, Alexandria, then tour Cairo and camp out under the stars in the shadow of the Great Pyramid, visiting Gizeh and Sakkara, the unrivaled Cairo museum. Then to Jerusalem, Beirut, Tyre and Sidon, then by sea to Constantinople, Smyrna, Piraeus and Athens, where five days were planned, with road trips to Marathon, Eleusis, Plataea, Thebes and Delphi. Lloyd Steamer would
take them to Brindisi, then by train to La Cava, then the Amalfi Drive to Sorrento, visiting Pompeii, Naples then on to Rome for five days where their tour included the Catacombs, numerous early Christian churches, and the Vatican. The final highlights planned by Natalie’s grand tour were Florence, Interlaken, then back to Paris for four days on their way to London for five days, the final destination until they set sail for Montreal from Liverpool on board the S.S. Montcalm the second week of September.30

Unfortunately, Natalie’s incredible journey never occurred, the victim of political instability, particularly in Turkey and Syria, the hostilities and violence between French and Turkish forces being well publicized in the United States. Rising fears were worsened by American refugees arriving in New Orleans from troubled Syria, many the victims of atrocities including a twenty year old girl whose ear had been sliced off by terrorists. The travel agency finally decided to cancel the trip. Undeterred, Natalie decided on an alternative plan, far less ambitious because she would pay her own way, but equally interesting. She would live in the Latin Quarter of Paris for five months.

She left New Orleans in mid-June, 1923, on board the Niagara. Rosalie Nixon was again her substitute in late June and early July, signing off anonymously as “Peggy, 136
Jr.” Thereafter each Sunday column was Natalie’s report from Europe with only a short addendum on local news by Peggy, Jr. Her closest friends aboard ship were artist Fannie Craig and Heda Koch, who was one of the organizers of the Quartier Club. Many friends were already in France, including the elegant Madame Chaffraix, an outgoing Frenchwoman who spent many winters in New Orleans but whose chateau near Vichy was her home. So were Walker Ellis and his family, Helene Israel, artists Charlie Bein (and his family), Marc Antony, Tommy Farrar, and architect-artist Bill Spratling who had become a second floor tenant of Natalie’s at 626 Orleans Alley the previous September.

Once in France, her circle of friends and companions rapidly broadened. She and Fannie Craig were escorted to the Comedie Francaise by Fannie’s fiance Jacque Ventadour to see a new play, “L’Homme en Marche”, by playwright Henri Marx, whom they met backstage afterwards. Natalie sent home an article announcing Fannie’s unexpected engagement that appeared on the States front page, then later wrote a detailed account of their August wedding. She often saw Mr. Ives, the U.S. consul in Paris, and Monsieur Boucheix, the French vice-consul to New Orleans who was in Paris for a visit. She was a guest at the wedding in Antwerp of Monsieur de Waele, the former Belgian consul to New Orleans during the war with whom she had collaborated to raise
funds for Belgium refugee relief between 1914 and 1917. She wrote of the many French and American friends she encountered daily, including Sidonie Scott's uncle and aunt Judge and Mrs. O. O. Provosty who planned to remain in Europe for a year. Natalie spent a week about Paris with Bill Spratling, who was a 23-year-old architecture instructor at Tulane traveling with Dick Murrell, an architecture student; the two young men had been through France, Switzerland, Holland and Belgium doing architectural studies and sketches. Spratling and Murrell boarded ship for New Orleans on August 8th.33

In accord with the annual French ritual, the Parisians' massive July-August evacuation of Paris to the west coast and the South of France was underway, but the influx of English and American travelers filled the city's hotels, shops, restaurants and nightclubs. She described Montmartre, now quite different in atmosphere from her first written description of it during the summer, 1919, no longer so bohemian, now catering blatantly to American travelers.

One of the amusements of Montmartre, that sometimes has a bit of a sting in it, is watching the callow American youth making its expectant, unaccustomed way there. It is pathetically easy to distinguish them: They walk in with a varying dash of bravado, and are instantly an object of attention from the unfairly fair habitues of the place. Almost instantly, some alluring piece of femininity will single out one of them, go up to him, and say with
piquant hesitancy and foreign accent, "You dance-wis-me?" And almost invariably the youth in question will smile...give a slight lift to his chin, and say, with a final American grin, "Oh, we."

Montmartre, as far as the cabarets go, is certainly the American quarter of Paris. Numbers of French, too, though, enjoy the "shows" which are in the middle of this mounting street, perched on stationary wagons. There are animal shows and prize-fighting contests, lion-taming, shooting galleries, which net you embarrassing accumulations of tin pans, and undressed dolls, and other uselessnesses...One of the galleries...features a guillotine in front of the barred doors of a prison. The bullet opens the door, a prisoner marches out, lays his neck on the guillotine and the axe comes down and chops it off! Most gruesome even in miniature!

Natalie stumbled unexpectedly into circumstances where she and Fannie Craig "launched into a course of study which combines dramatics and French diction" under the direction of Monsieur Dorival of the Comedie Francaise, the only two Americans among the otherwise French class of eight which met twice per week in one of the "Green Rooms" of the Comedie, "filled with interesting pictures of former stars of the theatre, including a beautiful Renoir portrait of Sara Bernhardt...."

And in the red carpeted corridor outside, the actors pass at intervals, walking along, chatting, sometimes hurrying by, startling in costume. M. Dorival, as like as not, excuses himself to get into costume. A while later,..., a strange man comes in, in picturesque make-up, looking like a serious version of Sancho Pancha, with disordered straight red hair, rough peasant garb short-coated, muddy-booted, and startles you by coming directly up and speaking to you from a thin-lipped and forbidding mouth...you get quite limp with shock before you realize it is M. Dorival wholly transformed!
The political and economic chaos in Germany and Russia, persistent products of disastrous war and revolution, altered many European itineraries that summer. Travelers who had planned to tour parts of Germany changed their minds, particularly once random acts of terrorism escalated. One example Natalie cited was a woman who had just returned from Germany.

She was in the Ruhr district, and was close at hand when two people were killed by a bomb. The trains are searched consistently after every station for possible bombs; one is not allowed to lock the dressing-room door for fear, again of bombs, and there is a general atmosphere of unrest, to put it mildly...there are rumors that the railroads are in a greatly neglected state, and that there are frequent wrecks on them. Mrs. Koch, Heda, and Mrs. Hinderman, after a visit to their relations in Strasbourg, planned to go on into Germany, but became discouraged by the number of conflicting reports, and finally went on to Aix...36

Natalie’s friend Helene Israel, who was part of the small New Orleans colony in Paris, also encountered threatening difficulties in Germany, where her mother had been under the care of a celebrated eye specialist.

...She and Ruth, with their mother, have been living in Hamburg since leaving New Orleans many months ago...she is of the opinion, apparently, that nothing good can come out of Germany - though she herself is a patent contradiction of such a thought...Perhaps it is the grey skies and the bleak air of Hamburg that have colored her opinions...her sense of humor dwindles when the subject is broached...

"Auslander," foreigner, is an epithet of reproach, apparently, - so, at least, Helene feels,
with a number of anecdotes by way of illustration. I should write a little "Thousand and one Germany days" to include them all.

Helene had purchased a velvet dress for some three hundred thousand marks, - about fifteen dollars. A dressmaker agreed to put sleeves on it for two thousand marks. Once she did the work, the dressmaker changed the price and demanded thirty thousand marks because, she reasoned, that is what they would charge in Vienna, Paris and New York. Helene, astonished, initially refused, then proposed three thousand as a compromise. Refusing, the dressmaker summoned the law. The court appointed another dressmaker to evaluate the value of the work.

...and came in, arm-in-arm, - the "unbiased referee"! - with the plaintiff.

The plaintiff's lawyer began his speech with the statement that "these ladies" (indicating Helene and her sister) "are Auslanders," and made that the basis of his arguments. Helene's lawyer tried in vain for speech, and at last broke out furiously, as the judge and the other lawyer and the two women parleyed: "This seems more like a war between Germany and foreigners than a court of justice." Whereupon the judge was most irate. He civilly told Helene that she could carry the case to another court if she liked, but that he would advise her just to pay the thirty thousand and costs of court, as she would have no chance of winning the case, in any event...she determined to carry on the argument to another court, and is now hotly determined to see it through...Picture Helene, so slender and dainty, pugnaciously in the guttural Germany midst! "I'll play her to win," as the men say!"

The news from economically prostrate Russia, where famine was epidemic, was far more desperate than inflation
and political troubles of Germany. Natalie encountered two young men she knew from New Orleans in the Latin Quarter who had devoted two years with the American Relief Administration in Russia, both on holiday, one on his way home.

...this was their first trip back into the world. They were dazzled by it, quite. There was no getting them to talk of Russia for some time. They turned their back on it mentally. They wanted to hear news...Mardi Gras, of who was engaged and married...to eat good food and stroll the streets...to see healthy, chubby little happy children...But - you have heard lectures, read descriptions, seen pictures, perhaps, of Russia and her famine - Russia is not a thing that will leave them for quite some time. Experiences as tense and deep as those in that agonized country leave the nerves vibrating for a long while thereafter. Edward Sabine and Don Renshaw both had positions of great responsibility. The country was divided for the work of the Administration into eighteen districts, each of which was under the direction of a head. Don and Edward each had a district in charge. One hardly had the heart to shadow their holiday by making them talk of it, but they had some kodak pictures that were only too fearfully eloquent...tragically dramatic accounts of men internationally known for their talent, discovered starving in cellars...the sending of food packages to within the Arctic Circle, where it went by sleigh over long frozen miles; unspeakable things as to the heaps of those dead of starvation, of the effect of starvation on mind and morale as well as on the bodies tortured by it.

But all that is not gay reading. I should tell you rather to use all your influence to get a peep at those trunks when they arrive in New Orleans...marvelous furs? Squirrels, perfectly matched; sable as soft as down? Russian tooled leather...paisley shawls, that make one gasp over the richness of their coloring? It is just a suggestion, and I tell no tales!  

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One of the young men, Natalie noted, was returning to Russia instead of New Orleans. He had fallen in love with a Russian girl and was going back to get her. She also described the very difficult route and the high costs of a visit to Russia, and the impossibility of obtaining a passport or visa. The travel fare one way was expensive, one hundred and fifty dollars.

...Another item that interested me...the government runs the hotel and that the rate is about eight dollars a day, gold, - so one needn’t bother to go there to get the benefit of depreciated currency!

At the same time, the country is intensely interesting just now, of course; it must be quite fascinating to discover what is the everyday life of the people under the new regime, what of the experiments under way have the germ of permanency in them, and what are the perishable things that have shallow root in the newness of everything. Madeleine Marx, the French author of “Femme”, and a prominent figure in the Communist party here, spent several months in Russia recently, and has written a book about it, which is soon to appear. She is an interesting personality, with a name known half the world around....

Upon arrival in Paris, Natalie had a brief stay in the Normandy Hotel until she found lodging in a Latin Quarter pension where she felt at home among the quaint cafes, ancient churches, small but carefully stocked bookshops, environs dominated by intellectuals, writers and artists. One of the first neighbors she encountered was Virginia Withers, her old Newcomb classmate and a french professor at Richmond College who had been studying at the Sorbonne
for over a year. They were living on the same block, though Virginia's time in Paris was almost complete. She was gone by mid-August. One of Natalie's favorite haunts was the Cafe de la Rotonde, "in the Latin Quarter...more particularly in the Montparnasse regions"; the cafe, she wrote, "used to be a picturesque resort for artists. Artists haunt it still, the more successful ones!"

...even last year, there was a pleasantly ripe dinginess about it; pictures hung on the walls, a sort of exhibit by artistic patrons, the most exuberantly opinionated pictures that were quite frequently sublimely (or otherwise!) oblivious of such a thing as perspective, street scenes where the houses had the effect of a pack of cards, tables with "still life" holding its own at a desperate angle. And the artistically wise would begin by saying "very modern,"...then proceed to praise or damn, as they saw fit.

The pictures are quite conservative this year, the dinginess not in evidence at all, and there is an air of well-being about the place.

She preferred the Dome, just across the street, which "preserves more of its old characteristics, proportionately."

...Quite a favorite character at the Dome is a young Scandanavian, who is popularly called Botticelli. He cannot be more than eighteen years old, speaks little French and less English, and has a shock of soft straight black hair...large, wistful dark eyes, very shrinking in his thin, pale face. One of the diverting tales of the Cafe du Dome related that he won a prize, and got a commission to paint, but had not enough money to buy canvass and paints to fill the order. M. Clerge is another habitue who is spoken of promisingly. He has done some charming theatrical designs, which I have seen, and some very clever....
The Cafe des Deux Magots on the Boulevard St. Germain is another resort for the leisurely inclined. James Joyce, the brilliant and, some say, eccentric author of Ulysses, is a frequent visitor there, among others of greater or less note...the breadth of the boulevard before it on one side, and on the other faces the haunting picturesqueness of the old Church of St. Germain-des-Pres, one of the oldest in Paris, which breathes peace and repose...There is a garden about it, with cool trees, and green shrubs, and it seems a bit of enduring, isolated serenity, in the midst of transcien, futile bustle. It is a prospect that adds to the charm of the Deaux Magots.

Americans are to be found at all those places, - sometimes objectionable, cheaply babbling Americans, quite frequently interesting ones...I dined at a Scandanavian one recently, where a large man, with a kindly, keen face was pointed out to me as Prince Troubetskoii, - I hope accurately...The couple had a magnificent great white dog with them....

Literature and art are an aristocracy in themselves, and numbers of their lights vibrate over here, of course. Mr. Joyce and the Ezra Pounds are fixed here apparently, and various others come and go. Mr. Sinclair Lewis has been in Fontainebleu recently, and there is quite a colony of artists and literati in the "environs" of the Forest...Charlie Bein has gone with his family to Pierrefonds, which is equally tranquil...finishing numerous sketches...on this side of the water. 49

In Fontainebleu, she went horseback riding and once again enjoyed the colorful villages where artists were now heavily in evidence, and once again found evidence of the Double Dealer’s success beyond New Orleans.

Double Dealer if you have ears, prepare to have them burn now! I met a very delightful young writer in Fontainbleu the other day, a pleasant, scholarly looking young man, who leaned on his bicycle, and looked agreeably at me through his spectacles as he talked.
“You are from New Orleans?” he asked. “Ah, then you know the Double Dealer.”

“And do you know it?” I retorted, decidedly intrigued.

“Of course I know it,” with a scorn for the implication that he mightn’t, which I found particularly pleasant! “It is obviously the best thing, and the most hopeful thing the South has done; I am plainly plagiarizing Mencken and Cabell in saying so,” he added, laughingly.

“You don’t seem to esteem us highly, in general,” I accused him.

He turned serious for a moment. “The worst thing about the South is that it doesn’t appreciate what it has. What do they think of McClure, the poet? Do they know he is there?”

All very interesting. He had been introduced as “Mr. Weaver.” It developed that he was Johnny Weaver’s brother. He admitted it with a groan. “I came from New York to escape the classification,” he said, “and here I find it waiting for me!” Incidentally, he was just on his way to dinner with Mr. Sinclair Lewis."

Natalie stayed in Paris for five months, aside from a handful of side trips pursuant to invitations into the countryside, a quick excursion to Belgium, and a considerably longer tour of Spain. She was invited to the chateau of the Comtesse de Solage near Paris, who lived with the Baron and Baroness de Kainlia (her daughter and son-in-law) at La Celleraye. During her visit, the Comtesse’s granddaughter, the Comtesse d’Aramon (with her baby), with whom Natalie spent much of her time, was also there,... “a beautiful young girl, who speaks English
charmingly, plays a strong game of tennis, dresses very
smartly, and adores dancing..." Another visit was to the
Chateau de Montjoly (near Auvergne) of Madame Chaffraix,
whose St. Charles Avenue home was the social center of the
French colony in New Orleans, where she was among the
city’s leading hostesses, her activities and parties often
reported in the Peggy Passe Partout column. Natalie had
visited Madame Chaffraix’s chateau the previous summer with
her “nine muses” as they traveled near Vichy. Now she
returned a second time.

Madame Chaffraix’s Sunday and Thursday afternoons
are events which mark the week. Charming members of
the old aristocracy of the country, artists, authors,
poets, find their way there. A pretty young
girl...proves to be a poetess who can read her verses
with stirring voice...Mr. V.C. Scott-O’Connor, whose
books of travel are fascinating...A woman...proves to
be a Roumanian, Maid of Honor to the Queen...A woman
with a charmingly gracious manner is the Marquis de
Billiol, who won numerous decorations in the war...a
clever woman from Portugal...a noted General...There
is bridge, there is music, there is poetry....

Another invitation brought her to the Chateau de la
Gascherie near Nantes on a bend of the river Erdre, where
Natalie was a guest of the Comte de Savilli and his sister
Madame Poydras de la Lande, “whose husband’s ancestors
helped make history in Louisiana.”

Natalie went to Antwerp in early October where she
attended a small dinner-party hosted by Bernard Avegno, an
official (originally from New Orleans) with the Guaranty
Trust Company and vice-president of the American Club. She attended the wedding of former Belgian consul in New Orleans, Monsieur de Waele, who was by then also with the Guaranty Trust Company. After a brief interlude in Paris, she went to Spain where her travels took her to Toledo, Seville, the Alhambre, Grey Avila, Segovia and the old fortress of Alcazar. From Paris, Natalie had been in touch with artist Tommy Farrar, who was in Tangiers, Morocco painting and sketching, but she was amazed when, while exploring some little houses and courtyards in the forest of Alhambra, she miraculously stumbled upon him.

Thomas Farrar, as I live and breath, - ...the red hair, and the inimitable grin, and the red brown eyes that go with that particularly engaging personality...

So there was Thomas Farrar. With him was Thomas Gibson...the artist whose exhibit in Seattle last year won such favorable press notice...who figures so frequently in the accounts from Charlie Bein and Thomas Farrar of their work over here....

The two of them have been summering in Tangiers...They went there with the idea of spending a few weeks, but the tropic charm, the color...whatever it was of Tangiers, held them on till the elastic weeks stretched into six months. Charlie, meanwhile, had his family in France, as a safety magnet to lure him back...The other two, Tom Gibson and Tommy Farrar, stayed on....

Tommy vouchsafed me a hurried glimpse of the numerous sketches he made in Tangiers...His first exhibit was promising, of course, in New Orleans, but promises are so often slow of fulfilment, especially promises artistic. Tommy has gone ahead astoundingly....
The Alhambra held a very interesting personality at that moment, aside from the two...Monsieur Andre Lhote, who is certainly one of the very important luminaries in the world of modern French painting...was there with his wife, and with them were Monsieur and Madame Jules Supervielle. M. Supervielle is a poet and novelist of increasing reputation, whose latest novel is to begin in the course of the next few weeks in La Nouvelle Revue, which is the journal that brought out Marcel Proust...They were a delightful quartet. M. Lhote is from Bourdeaux...looks quite young, slim, of medium height, with dark hair, and sparkling dark eyes, that are forever alert, busy with thought, when they are not twinkling with amusement. He is intensely energetic....

There was an afternoon when we all went "over the hills and far away" to see the gypsies dance, ...I have a feeling that some day I shall not be able to resist telling you of that afternoon with the gypsies, but for the moment anyway, I arm myself with high resolve and give you a moment's dispensation."

Tommy Farrar remained in Europe through the winter, painting under Lhote's guidance. Once they all returned to Paris, Natalie saw much more of the Lhotes.

...They have a charming apartment over near Deufert - Rocreau, in a region of grateful tranquility, and their Thursday afternoons are quite informal, with people dropping in from three o'clock, and the fringes thereof, artists, literary people, journalists, students sure of some entertaining talk, and some quite excellent tea and cakes, as well. The best thing that such an afternoon can offer is a glimpse of some new work of the artist. He is touched with the touch of genius, beyond a doubt. He had some water-colors out the other afternoon, sketches, touched with color merely, but stunning things. None of his work is there that one could pass by - you might like it, you might - it is possible, I suppose - dislike it, but you would never be indifferent to it. His landscapes are a delight; far from being literal,...the essence of the beauty, the spirit of it. He has caught Seville and Toledo onto canvass...Incidentally, he is a great theorist, and critic, and writes for an important French periodical,
La Nouvelle Revue Francais... America has the claim on him of having one of his pictures in the museum in Chicago.⁴⁵

Another phase of her Spanish trip was her visit with William (Willie) and Milly Pemberton Jewett in their tenth century castle, Castel Nau, perched on a bare peak in the Pyrenees near Perpignan.

A turreted wall winds up the mountainside enclosing the little village of the castle, ...the battlements of the castle itself, etched most gloriously against a stormy red sky. There are vineyards...gardens,...one garden has a still pool set about with cypresses....

Gertrude Stein had been their guest numerous times before, the last time recently.

Gertrude Stein makes her home in Paris permanently, of course. I had the honor, to which I was totally unequal, of succeeding her, at an appreciable interval, as a guest in the glorious tenth century "chateau-fort" of the Jewetts...I discovered this treasure at the Chateau: A book of Gertrude Stein’s poetry...And in it, a dedication to the Jewetts, which runs thus:

"The Jewetts find themselves on Page 416, and we always find them delightful."

This is what you find on Page 416:

"We make a little dance. Willie Jewett’s dance in the tenth century chateau...."⁴⁶

The verse was the beginning of Stein’s much longer poem which Natalie found to be slightly ridiculous. She quoted four stanza’s of it, none of it making much sense, the final one, as follows, being typical of the others.
"All men are intelligent
Please beg a box
Then they all danced.
How can a little Pole be a baby
rusher."

Natalie concluded with a comment of bewildered humor.

My only remaining thought was that I was glad
that the remark was that all MEN were intelligent, for
it left me without responsibility! Mine was unequal
to the occasion!

You remember charming Mrs. Jewett as Milly
Pemberton in New Orleans. She smiles her quiet
engaging smile over it all, with a little touch of
mystery in it. Entre nous, I prefer the mystery of
the simple to the deeper mystery of the "poetry"!

The core of her circle in Paris during the fall, 1923,
included Fannie Craig Ventadour, her husband Jacque and his
family and friends, Helene Israel, Tommy Farrar, the Andre
Lhotes, the Charlie Beins, Madame Chaffraix's coterie
including her nephew Michel Lelong, who possessed a roomy
apartment in the Champs de Mars section, and with whom
Madame Chaffraix planned to reside that winter. New
Orleans friends continued to stream through the city during
the autumn, providing Natalie with much to write about,
such as Jean Castellanos, George Favrot, Homer Rankin,
Rathbone de Buys, Kitty Luzenberg, Eleanor McMain, Claire
de la Vergne among numerous others. Her activities ranged
from the golf courses, to horseback riding in the Bois, the
Opera, the Opera Comique, the Grand Guignol and other
theaters, the city's restaurants and nightlife. She was
much impressed with the beauty of a few of the city's most famous performers and dancers, particularly Raquel Meller who was just beginning to take Paris by storm and would prove to be a major Parisian personality during the 1920's. Meller's lovely profile would grace American newspapers by 1925 as the French capital's greatest stage attraction.

For a good look at evening gowns...commend me to the evening dancing places, to Ciro's or the Cafe de Paris, for the early evening perhaps, or Rector's for a later hour. Rector's is advantageous, especially if one has a table on the low balcony that surrounds the dance floor...Rector's is a mad blaze of talk, with the vivid bold splash of its daring decorations, its flash of jewels, and splendid gowns, and there is buzz, and hum, and chatter incessant, a small, elegant pandemonium. Suddenly, there is an instant when the lights go low. The next, they are on again, and there, at a table in the midst of it all, sits Raquel Meller, simply sits, and with perfect unconcern, - oh, a thrilling unconcern, she smokes a cigarette. And the audience, my dear, goes mad. Personality! Violaterra is one of the most popular of the low songs that she does. She goes about among the tables, offering little bunches of Parma violets. The same people see her sometimes night after night, and she holds them with the same charm, - an infinite variety, a subtlety, and intensity of expression. That is the way one raves over Raquel Meller in Paris.48

The Bois de Boulogne continued to be, as it was during the war, a favorite retreat for Natalie's horseback riding and nightlife.

...There is a naughtily but heartily amusing little song from the Folies-Bègere going the rounds about the Bois. Not, however, about the wholly correct but nevertheless very amusing haunts I speak of, which are the three favorite restaurants, the pre-Catalan, the Chateau de Madrid, and the Hermenonville. All three are delightful...heavily patronized, and there still linger...highly prized members of French
society, and even more frequently are there highly ornamental members of America and English rarefied social regions. The Chateau is probably the most popular for the moment...reminiscent of...the famous Chateau of the Loire, with its "Grand Stairway" and its Gothic windows...It looks onto a garden, shrouded even from the rest of the Bois, with delicate hedges, shaded with trees, bright with flowers, everything growing luxuriously...wonderfully groomed...verbenas and snap-dragons, hollyhocks...Tables are set about under the trees, and a space in the middle has been set aside for dancing.

A consoling thing for the traveling feminine public of America is that there are always quite reputable "professional dancers," one, or two, or more, and that it is considered perfectly correct, even by the most fastidious of Parisians, for women to dance with them, if there are no men of their acquaintance available for the moment. Afterwards, naturally, one slips them twenty francs or so, for the pleasure! Part of the value received is that the men in question are very presentable-looking always...There are numbers of marvelous-looking Central and South Americans in Paris...among the dancers, we have learned, and invariably they dance superbly, especially the tango. The tango, by the way, is as great a favorite as ever, and the oftener one sees it, the more one becomes convinced that it is the essence of all that is delightful in dancing, — and dancing it is even more convincing! 49

Natalie wrote of the elegant Parisian evenings, the social occasions at the Ritz, the Rue Danou, the Cercle des Interallies, the Crillon, the Grand, the Carlton, the various famous restaurants, and the beautifully gowned women in Ciro’s, the Cafe de Paris, the Opera, her favorite places in the Bois, the opportunities to swim, canoe and play golf at the Samoi Country Club along the quiet Seine, and the solitude of the ancient churches, the colorful sidewalk cafes, and "the most intimate nooks and corners of
the city, that we are wont to think of as known only to the
initiates.” She also wrote of the charity work her friend
Eleanor McMain was doing in a depressed area of the city.
Natalie saw her often and was invited to come visit these
neighborhoods. It was Eleanor McMain, more than any single
individual, who was the driving force behind the successful
charities of the Kingsley House in New Orleans.

Ne Vous impatientez pas!...don’t do the lady-like
equivalent for blessing me out, because I have not yet
told you news of the “bud of charity,” which Miss
Eleanor McMain is tending so carefully here...it is
already the bright spot to many dozens in the sordid
neighborhood where factory smoke grimes faces, and the
factory grind dims hearts too early...out near the
Ramparts...the Place des Fetes...

Nothing of the gaiety which the name suggests
greets the eye, as one appears from the Metro depths,
a tiny square, streets, dingy, poverty-stricken,
leading off from its irregular angles in any direction
that strikes their fancy,...It is in the Belleville
direction, where there is a hill almost as high as
Montmartre...The chic Parisienne is not in
evidence...These are women who work. They wear the
shapeless, all-enveloping apron, or the tight, short-
waisted dresses that seem to be like Shakespeare’s
plays, “not for an age, but for all time!” Even as
they linger, absorbed in a snatched moment of talk
with a neighbor, or with the bakery woman, ...the
heavy hand of the poverty weighs them down, always,
whether more or less consciously.

There is a wide doorway yawning suddenly beside
you, giving into a courtyard. Several little boys
stop playing, with a hoop to greet you with friendly
native courtesy, and the tiniest one claims the
prerogative of years to have the privilege of
escorting you up rickety stairs, scrubbed to
immaculate cleanliness, to ask directions from his
mother, the concierge. She guides you to the back of
the court...a high fence...a quiet sweet garden, and a
little perky, four-square house with a jauntily
irregular roof...spic and span, and inviting...a
gracious Frenchwomen, with gray hair, greets you with easy cordiality.

Miss McMain comes in, - kindness, sympathy, strength. We go immediately to the "back porch"...the most inviting park...sloping ground...it is not quite a block long...there is the chattering, a twittering, a multitudinously complex impact of small sounds, - the children have come in....

It is a fete day, for the closing of schools... Such a group. They come up to Miss McMain, crowd about her with charming confidence, shake hands with her, murmuring "Bon Jour, Mademoiselle"...running, or toddling, or skipping, or walking soberly, three or thirteen, all ages and sizes, some in dainty little dresses, some quite shabby...Lots of little boys, as old as nine or ten years, have black aprons over their trousers....

There is something poignant in their happiness: so many of the little faces are thin and drawn, so many prematurely lined.

There are swings, and rings, and bars, for exercise under the tall, quiet trees - all in use. Off to the side is a round little brick building, - the remains of the summer house where Henry Quatre used to meet one of his mistresses. The trees where Mona, and Yvonne, and Giselle, Henri and Michel, and Etienne are playing are the very ones under which they used to promenade.50

Natalie singled out one child to mention, an example of the program’s purpose.

Mona is a mere wisp of childhood, a slip of a little figure, with big, dark eyes peering alertly out of a pale pinched face, but she smiles brightly enough. Hear this of Mona: Arrangements were made for sending some of the children week-ending out of Paris...the nurse explained to her mother, and Mona was duly dispatched. Saturday afternoon, the mother came over, agitated, with a letter in childish scrawl: "Goodbye, mother, I am going to the country. Mona." No more. Mother had not understood....

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“And what worries me is that Mona was not clean,” wailed her mother.

“Then be reassured,” spoke up the French nurse. And explained. Mona, it appears, aged eleven, made her own preparations. She took off her clothes, wrapped herself in a blanket...went to the “Home,” washed her clothes, her hair, and herself, sat patiently in her blanket till her clothes dried, and then pressed them and put them on. Obviously, Mona will go farther than merely to the country in this world!

L’Accueil Social Franco-Americain,” the “Franco-American Social Settlement,” the work is called. Miss McMain is the organizer...The scope of the work is tremendous, —...everything that can go to “making better citizens,”....That part of Paris was chosen because it was there that the greatest infant mortality developed. There are now nearly eighty children in charge of the dispensary...there is a surgical clinic, a pre-natal, gynecological, dental. There are excellent nurses...doctors where they can send patients to them...free of charge.

There are arrangements made to send children to the country for fresh air and recreation...a supervised playground; in the evenings, the older boys and girls, who are working, go there, play basketball, take classes in English; the girls study sewing, the men study carpentering, if they like. There are shower baths for the children. On Sundays, there are parties for the mothers. It is a remarkably many-sided undertaking....The work of an artist in human kindness.51

Natalie enjoyed the Latin Quarter for several more weeks, finally returning home at the end of November. She had lived in the bohemian atmosphere of the New Orleans French Quarter for two years, and now in 1923 she had sampled the Latin Quarter of Paris for five months, to which she would return in 1927 for most of the year.

Similarly, the next year, Natalie left New Orleans during
September, 1924, to live in New York’s Greenwich Village for four months, experiencing life in the other great bohemian refuge of writers and artists, to which she would often return during the balance of the twenties.

Natalie occasionally wrote of quiet times she enjoyed alone in Paris, sometimes using these occasions to write her letters home. Dutifully carrying her typewriter with her because the States objected to anything written in her impossible handwriting, her newspaper reports were often written from different interesting places, including for example one from the banks of the Seine at the Samoi Country Club, others from the Bois, Montmartre, the Chateau near Nantes, the Pyrenees of Spain, and another from Eleanor McMain’s school. For one such occasion, Natalie chose a favorite spot near her lodgings in the Latin Quarter, one she had previously mentioned, to write her column.

This is written in the little garden of the old Church of St. Germain des Pres, the oldest church in Paris. There is a high iron fence about the little garden, and quiet, friendly trees...that defies the clangor and rattle of the buses and trams and motors that pass in the street beyond. There are any number of little children playing about, many of them shabby, but all of them happy, apparently. They are fascinated by the typewriter, which you insist that I use, and gather about it in still awe. One little fellow, round-faced and rosy-cheeked, earnest-eyed, about three, puts out one chubby finger daringly, touches a key, and draws back the finger instantly, appalled a his daring. They are well-mannered little tots, and friendly after a silent appeal for
permission, they sit beside me on the iron bench, so close as to touch me, and as quiet as mice. A poor old woman goes by with a basket: she is beat with age, as well as with poverty, but there is kindliness and sweetness in her innumerable wrinkles, and she reaches a shaking hand waveringly into her basket, takes out some crumbs and painfully and slowly scatters them on the grass for the friendly sparrows. There are several nurses in uniform, and some young mothers with their sewing. There is a murmur of talk, but the place is quiet: the grey walls of the church, pock-marked and crumbly with age, softened with an ordered growth of vine, seem to hush the voices somehow. It is very peaceful.

Yet I must leave it, for there is someone waiting for tea at the Ritz. If one must wait, it is certainly as interesting a spot for the purpose as can be imagined...Au revoir....

By December, 1923, Natalie had landed in New Orleans and was once again ensconced in the family’s Napoleon Avenue home and her French Quarter apartment.
Bill Spratling stepped into Natalie’s life during September, 1922, upon her return from her “nine muses” European tour. She leased an apartment to him at 626 Orleans Alley, having no idea that this thin, dark-haired, long-jawed young man would exert a remarkable influence upon her future, and she upon his. The two had much in common, particularly their enormous senses of humor and compelling interests in the arts, though Spratling had little appreciation for the performing arts thereby prompting Natalie to introduce him to the Petit Theatre, eventually even casting him in bit parts and enlisting his talents in such ways as designing programs.¹

Spratling was by ten years the younger, only twenty-two when they met. Having won a drawing prize at his Baltimore school at age 10, Spratling’s true calling from an early age was to be an artist, but accepted his family’s guidance into the study of architecture. He grew up in New York where his father, an Alabama native, was the founder of the Craig Colony for Epilepsy. Orphaned before age fourteen, he and his brother moved from New York to live with different uncles, Spratling to Atlanta, Georgia. At
age fifteen, he attended the excellent Art Students League in New York. When his uncle also died, Spratling was sent to his grandfather’s home four miles from Oakbowery, Alabama, where his most affectionate connection seems to have been with an elderly black man named Blind Philip, a preacher who tended to Spratling’s even more aged grandfather. He learned with pleasure, but quietly held the secret throughout his youth in fear of the man’s banishment, that Blind Philip was the illegitimate son of his grandfather, therefore Spratling’s uncle.²

He attended nearby Auburn University during the war where the faculty and just about everyone else quickly realized and utilized his artistic talents, an early sign of his entrepreneurial instincts.

I became popular by copying naked Ziegfield pin-up girls in pastels. And, little by little, by painting literally hundreds of banners for football rallies, lettering menus on the windows of restaurants for free food, cornering the market on all the artwork for the fraternities and clubs for the college annual, and lettering in Gothic script all diplomas each year, I managed to achieve quite an income for a student who received no money from home.³

As the star pupil of his principles of design class, and because there was a shortage of instructors, the faculty assigned Spratling classes to teach. The same was true in ROTC where he taught fellow students to make topographical maps.
I would draw with colored crayons on all four blackboard walls of the classroom what I called “topographical material,” which included snipers in the bushes, plus occasional nudes in the streams. With colored crayons these drawings were quite a success and my classes enjoyed their topography."

As the faculty gained confidence in him, he also taught classes in descriptive geometry, anatomy, and the history of architecture. Spratling’s first trip to Europe, during the summer of 1919 after his sophomore year with three fraternity brothers, all of them working across the Atlantic on a tramp steamer, was rather abbreviated. First to the Azores, where Spratling was introduced to sex and Pernod, then to Antwerp, where they jumped ship during repairs to go to Brussels for five days where he painted watercolors of the city and one of his companions came down with a venereal disease. They rejoined the ship, which again broke down in mid-voyage and was towed into Southampton. Then to Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, finally Boston, then back to school. Prohibition began the next year so Spratling and his college friends learned to like corn likker which they purchased in large quantities.

Prohibition was on and we consumed at the fraternity house what we called “white lightening” - corn likker which we bought by five gallon jar, sometimes extracting a few bits of barbed wire from the bottom of the bottle. A local taxi driver, a piratical type and very jolly, known as Chief Smith, would sometimes have to travel far into the back hills to supply us with the costly liquid. Money was scarce, and yet, somehow, I rarely seemed to lack for cash..."
Though two credits short of a degree, Spratling left Auburn after his senior year for a draftsman position with a Birmingham architectural firm. Left behind was a prominently displayed, handsome sculpture he had made of Auburn’s president which was still in place almost half a century later when he returned to the school as a honorary doctorate degree recipient. The Birmingham job bored him and, through his favorite Auburn professor’s favorable recommendation to Dr. N. C. Curtiss of Tulane University, he managed to land a position on Tulane’s School of Architecture faculty for the 1922 fall semester. Arriving in New Orleans during early September, nine months after Sherwood Anderson’s memorable January appearance in the Double Dealer office, he promptly met Natalie Scott who placed him in a small apartment, a second floor front, at 626 Orleans Alley, overlooking the cathedral garden, as his autobiography explains.

The owner of my apartment was Natalie Scott, a very social newspaperwoman of great charm and vast popularity. Thanks to Natalie the young professor of architecture was, in a very short time, “integrated” and in immediate contact with many people. A little later Natalie and I traveled the length and breadth of Louisiana in her old Buick to prepare our Plantation Houses of Louisiana, the writing of which caused Natalie, the gadabout, three years of suffering. This was published by the Architectural Book Publishing Company in New York in 1926.

New Orleans in the twenties was a lively and colorful new world. It presented broad horizons to a young man fresh from Auburn. The people there, many
Of the writers, Sherwood (Anderson) of course was our star performer, a sort of magnet who attracted luminaries from afar... Freddie Oechsner and Hamilton Basso, students then, also sat at Sherwood's feet. We were all very close. We saw each other every day, almost every evening. If it wasn't Lyle Saxon's house, it was at Sherwood and Elizabeth's or my own, and there would be John Dos Passos, or perhaps Carl Sandburg or Carl Van Doren or a great publisher from New York, Horace Liveright or Ben Huebsh, all people we were proud to know.6

Actually, Old Plantation Houses in Louisiana, the book he illustrated and Natalie wrote, appeared in November, 1927, and Spratling’s timing on La Farge and Blom’s arrival is off by three years as La Farge did not arrive in New Orleans until March, 1925, and Blom during February, 1925, when Tulane’s Department of Middle-American Research was created. The Spratling-La Farge-Blom friendship solidified during the fall, 1925, after La Farge and Blom’s glorious return, amid national acclaim, from their Mayan archeological discoveries in Mexico. Both Natalie and Spratling were enthralled with the pre-Columbian revelations, Spratling mostly by the magnificent designs and creative techniques of the ancient Mayan civilization.
and Natalie more by the romance of the scientific adventure on horseback to discover ancient lost cities in the wilds of southern Mexico.⁷

Natalie first mentioned Bill Spratling in her Sunday column during October, 1922, when the city was hosting General John J. Pershing and the national American Legion convention, with an array of the nation's greatest World War heroes being among the honored guests.

The town has gone mad with Legion, Legion, Legion everywhere, but nowhere madder than the French Quarter. The greatest development yet promised is the mammoth posters that I hear are going to blossom. More secrets, - I always tell you all the secrets - I saw a few of them. Mr. Spratling is doing several perfectly delightful ones, and there is, above all, one that has a feminine figure in a long cape that is most beguiling. Incidentally, truly Parisienne, and those who have seen it suggest that that model must have come recently from Paris. Mr. Hargrave has another of the posters on display, and the rumor about that is that it is a real page of Paris...they are all classics, and twenty-foot classics at that...

Does Mr. Spratling strike a strange note? Unpardonable piece of rudeness on my part, if I have not introduced Mr. Spratling ere this. He is in the architectural department at Tulane, - that is, at given moments he is. But there are very pleasant moments also when he plays host in a picturesque apartment in Orleans Alley where he lives with a friend, and performs marvels with teapots and tongues, in the role of host. He has a succession of guests, as attestation to his talents in the part, and that particular second floor front has already taken its place as one of the chosen nuclei of the Quarter.

The Legionaires will probably find their way there. The Quarter is playing host to them with some of Mr. Spratling's talent. Thursday evening, the Quartier Club is to be the scene of one of the most entertaining parties that the convention will have to

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offer...There is an attractive reception committee...
Open house and dancing.™

There were parties, receptions, a state dinner,
masquerade balls, open houses all over town and
particularly in the French Quarter for the uniformed
veterans and the array of military celebrities and heroes.
As a large contingency arrived by ship from the east coast,
a flotilla of battleships, one carrying General Pershing,
went out to meet and escort the arrival with airplanes
buzzing overhead.

Then, there's the Women's Overseas Service
League...which is in the corner of the uptown Pontalba
Building, - as a large camouflaged sign
announces...the "Hut," first and second floors, was
decorated to the last inch yesterday...the work went
forward as merrily as a party. There is to be dancing
in the Hut every afternoon from three to five, every
evening from eight to ten, with a band and all sorts
of thrills and frills...everything feminine, from the
school set to - well, till much farther along, has
promised to come and trip the light fantastic with the
men who went over the seas in the times when moonlight
at sea was a cause for regret!...parties large, small,
formal, informal, everyone in town has a guest, one,
two, three, - any number...the golf course swarms with
them; the clubs are spilling over with them...Men
appear from every state, from all corners of the
globe...™

A month later, during the Thanksgiving holidays, 1922,
Spratling again appeared in Natalie's column for the
sculpting and clay modeling classes Natalie had recruited
him to teach.

We have various things to be thankful for ...the
"old Brulatour House," as it is sometimes called, when
it is not being spoken of as the "Arts and Crafts
Club." The thing of ancient beauty has blossomed newly...it has blossumed with studios. One sees Madeline Pitot there daily, very busy in a cozy nook in the back, on the courtyard...and Mr. Albrizio, Mr. Spratling, and the other energetic and obliging and gifted (what a trinity of rare adjectives!) occupants of the Quarter are lending hands, and advise, and interest...Mr. Spratling is conducting a modeling class, and Mr. Albrizio is connected with the life class...

Mr. Irby appears at intervals and looks over it all: an artist in work himself, when he can count among his creations the Paul Morphy House and the Arts and Crafts Building as they are today, made possible by him...Light, and airy, and spacious,...the studios that are on the court-yard in the back are wonderfully commodious and full of light. Beauty can thrive there, if ever, and hence my thanksgiving...

The renaissance of the French Quarter was entering its golden age during 1922, a period that would last five productive years. As droves of artists, poets, novelists, dancers, singers, musicians and performers, continuously appeared and departed irregularly, superimposed and integrated with the more permanent residents of the Quarter, the pursuit of the arts progressively attained higher levels of achievement and quality. The versatile Paul Swan, portrait painter and exquisite dancer, was entrenched in the French Quarter and establishing his career. Novelist Lucille Rutland returned home to New Orleans during late September, 1922, relocating from New York and climbing the three flights of steps to the Double Dealer office to register her arrival; an editorial from the Double Dealer was republished in the London Mercury in
September, while another was the subject of a critique in the Manchester Guardian; Basil Thompson was honored by having his article on New Orleans and the French Quarter’s rebirth published in the November 15th edition of Nation magazine, and partially reprinted the same month on the front page of the States; poets and artists, such as epigrammist-poet Ivan Dowell, artist Will Stevens, Alberta Kinsey, among others, made John McClure’s bookshop and the Arts and Crafts Club their headquarters. Genevieve Pitot, a New Orleans native transplanted to Paris for two years where she established a high reputation across Europe as a concert pianist, returned to the French Quarter in late 1922 and, after a month, presented a December concert; dancers Elizabeth Lyons and Josephine Mostler, after studying and touring with Isadora Duncan, returned to New Orleans for performances and established classes in the Vieux Carré; Majorie Callendar was exhibiting her wood-block prints and Bertha Drennon, her portrait studies; Marc Antony exhibited his beautifully designed rugs; the Arts and Crafts Club offered voice lessons all winter by concert soloist Isabel Kline; specimens of Porter Blanchard’s hand wrought silver, Maeckklein’s handblocked textiles, along with displays of Pewabic pottery, hand-tooled leather and iron work were among the Arts and Crafts Club exhibits that fall and winter. The Quartier Club continued to conduct
its Lyceum series, presenting London literary figure Hugh Walpole as its December speaker.

...The wind of a sudden whim brought back Ivan Dowell, too, epigrammist, poet and young. Having tried a taste of our springtime, he is back to see what we have to offer in way of autumn. Reserved about his work, indefinite about his plans, he is responsive and interesting...He is to be found in Jack McClure’s Olde Booke Shop at times, or deep in one of the luxurious arm-chairs that the office of the Double Dealer affords.

...I saw Mr. Will Stevens strolling there the other day, talking to Lyle Saxon...spent the summer in North Carolina...He painted some pictures...the number that the Jack McClures had on display in their little book shop is greatly depleted by purchasers...with Alberta Kinsey since she came back from her long stay in Europe this past summer, where she roamed through Spain and studied with Lochmann, near Paris...Alberta’s exhibit will hang in the Arts and Crafts Room in the place where Marc Antony’s summer work has been hanging this last week...The Arts and Crafts is having a series of exhibits. Another feature that will be interesting this afternoon will be some laces that Mrs. Schuyten brought back with her from Europe, Belgian laces, they are,...going out among peasants, and choosing her pieces...The Green Shutter is falling in line with the exhibit idea...housing the attractive pottery which Mrs. Westfelt makes. Pottery of a different kind will constitute this exhibit. It is the work of Mrs. Nicholson,...It is a later development of the many interesting crafts carried on at the Newcomb Art School...All the shapes of Mrs. Nicholson’s pottery are hand-built by her, and the coloring has exquisite tones.11

Sherwood Anderson’s first long stay in New Orleans from January through early spring, 1922, was complemented with his return by autumn, when the Petit Theater held its November, 1922, grand opening performances in its spacious new theater at the corner of St. Peter and Chartres
streets, beside Jackson Square and around the corner from Natalie’s apartment, an occasion Natalie attended with Martha Robinson and a crowd of friends. Sherwood Anderson remained through the winter and had his portrait painted by Ronald Hargrave in his St. Peter street studio. Becky Thompson, Basil’s wife who opened her dance studio on St. Peter street that winter, played one of the lead roles in the first play performed in the Petit Theatre’s new St. Peter street playhouse, and presentations were made by Mrs. Nixon and others to dedicate the beautiful, modern theater.

Walter Keiffer, Mrs. Nixon, Mr. Barre, Harold Newman. Applause acclaimed each one as they filed on the stage, — applause of the heart as well as of the hand. It is so easy to distinguish! Walter spoke...so scornful of sentimentality, has a fund of sincere sentiment, and out of it he wove such garlands for his fellow-workers. For Mr. Newman, whose financial vision...made the achievement possible; for the architects, Armstrong and Koch,...the contractor, Mr. Lionel Favrot,...for Mrs. Nixon...the committee...; for Marc Antony, for his heroic labors to complete the scenery; for Mr. Hinsdell, whose masterly productions were a mighty incentive to the undertaking...So many have worked, so much has been accomplished, it is hard to fix or to limit the praise...Then Mr. Newman’s rich voice, with its ring of conviction, and his oracular words.

“No city can hope to thrive unless it has a soul. New Orleans has a soul. And the soul of the city is below Canal Street.”

Spratling was energized by the artistic enthusiasm, opportunity and possible financial support at hand in the city, the infectious spirit and mutual encouragement practiced within the creative French Quarter family Natalie
had ushered him into. His talent and business savvy soon advanced him to the front ranks. Despite his heavy Tulane schedule, Spratling continued teaching in the Arts and Crafts Club during his first year in the city while drawing and sketching throughout the Quarter. He decorated the Courtyard Corner, the "fetching little shop" of Madeline Pitot; he designed the invitations for the Quartier Club’s Folies du Vieux Carré, a masquerade ball on December 30th celebrating the Vieux Carré’s victorious resurgence from "the debility and decay which threatened it..." An unsigned, unusual article appeared December 17th on the States front page publicly announcing the Folies du Vieux Carré.

Down in the Vieux Carré, where there are all sorts of souls...the souls are getting ready for a flutter that will set new altitude records in that sort of aviation.

It’s the Folies du Vieux Carré...

You can hear the war-song of the precious ones almost any old evening when the moon shines on the old Place d’Armes.

It’s a lovely song.

"My Soul goes clad in gorgeous things;
Silver and rose and blue.
And at her shoulders sudden wings
Like bright flames flicker through."

That’s the kind of soul they have down there.
So at 11:30 p.m. - just half an hour before midnight in case you're not mathematically-minded - within the portals of the Quartier Club, on December the thirtieth, the Folies get under way....

But if the mysterious committee believes you have a soul that can soar above grocery bills and recipes for home-made hooch, you'll find in your mail a wonderful burnt-orange invitation that fronts you with a vivid black sketch of a lady whose figure is a bit abandoned and whose face looks like a soft-fried egg just after it spatters...


Just like that.

...Paris, you see, only has the Quatres Arts Ball, - just four little arts. We'll have seven...there's painting and sculpture and - and the tonsorial art - and - and the culinary art - and, oh of course you know.

There'll be the loveliest costumes. Ronald Hargrave and Marc Anthony and William Spratling are designing them...But there'll be dancing and grape juice to drink and all sorts of pleasant things.

When will it end? I can't say, really. All I know is that it starts half an hour before midnight....

So, if...you have a soul, here's its chance to flutter. Clad in silver and rose and blue, you know. But absolutely, it must wear something. They wouldn't let an unclad soul enter the Folies du Vieux Carré. Of course not.

The photographs taken during the happy event and displayed in the States society section the following week

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confirmed that the masquerade party (Natalie was a gypsy) was an enormous success.

Bill Spratling had charge of ten architectural courses at Tulane including drawing, graphics, clay modeling and architectural history, along with his evening cast and clay modeling classes at the Arts and Crafts Club. As the years passed and his reputation grew, he also took on part-time instruction of the city’s draftsmen and free-lance work for local architectural firms. More to his liking was the theory and artistic concepts of architecture. One biographer has defined his professional pursuits in New Orleans as being “what might be called an architectural artist....” rather than the technical process of finished architectural plans. He earned recognition among architects by writing articles for architectural magazines, illustrated with his drawings, aesthetically and technically demonstrating the cultural symmetry of architecture, combining function and locales, his studies drawn in such architecturally unique places as Italy, France, Belgium, Mexico, Natchez, Savannah, the Vieux Carré and rural Louisiana.14

Among the art lovers of New Orleans, architecture seemed only Spratling’s side line. More interesting and distinctive was the charm of his drawings and water colors of French Quarter scenes, and his superb pencil, charcoal
and ink portraits, characterized by the beauty of his graceful lines, particularly his portrayal of the female face. His facility for drawing became a great social tool for him, selectively utilized, for example enabling him to meet attractive young ladies by offering to sketch their likenesses.\textsuperscript{15}

While Natalie was living in Paris’ Latin Quarter during the summer of 1923, Spratling traveled with an architectural student, studying and sketching European architecture before having to hurry back to Tulane in August. Natalie and Spratling enjoyed time together in Paris before his departure, as she wrote in her column.

The “pleasant land of France” has very few secrets left from Bill Spratling and his traveling companion, Dick Murrell, of Bayou Goula. Mr. Murrell is a Tulane sophomore in the architectural department at Tulane, in which Bill shines as assistant professor, and the two have done a minute survey of France from one end to t’other, and have even spilled over into Switzerland, Holland, Belgium, and Spain, at one time and another. They have just recently come back from an enchanted stay in Brittany, which they made the most of from every point of approach, as architects, and artists, reveling in the rugged architecture that seems to have been inspired by the rocky crags of the coast there, and as thoroughly hearty Americans, appreciating the bliss of the surf, the long, frothy curving lines of which crash in splendidly at St. Malo and Dinard. Bill has a number of brilliant sketches which he has made of the various places they have visited, Rouen and Chartres are still glowing in his mind, and talk about them ends in incoherent splutterings, as frequently as not, which is the infallible sign of the genuineness and depth of enthusiasm. Bill goes back to New Orleans on the Niagara, leaving here August 8.\textsuperscript{16}
With Natalie and Spratling that same week were Lucille Godchaux, a New Orleans artist of a prominent New Orleans family, owners of the large Godchaux sugar business, and Marc Antony, another artist who had become the primary set designer for the Petit Theatre. Godchaux and Anthony were on separate itineraries, but their paths repeatedly crossed at theatrical workshops in Munich, Berlin and Vienna. The couple fell in love and married the next year despite the Godchaux family's objection to the union; they lived in Antony's apartment just off St. Peter Street in the tall building Natalie purchased in 1925 on the corner of St. Peter and Cabildo Alley. Spratling and William Faulkner moved into the attic of the same building during the autumn of 1925. The Antonys operated a shop called Leonardi's Studio on the building's ground floor, the headquarters of their interior decorating business.¹⁷

Spratling's first two publications appeared during the fall of 1923 in time for Christmas gift buying. The first entitled Pencil Drawings, published by Penquin Book Shop, was a combined portfolio of his work, including his European renderings that summer of old houses, doorways, cathedrals and chateaus, with forty pages of fundamental instruction on the technical aspects of drawing. The Tulane University Press published the second, Picturesque New Orleans, during November in folder form, enclosing ten
small Spratling prints of the French Quarter and featuring Lyle Saxon’s two page introduction about the Vieux Carré’s origins. This second publication also included an N.C. Curtiss map of the Quarter which highlighted major landmarks with dates of construction, along with a few of the current favorite hang-outs such as the Arts and Crafts Club and the Green Shutter. Spratling cleverly conceived these two publications as inexpensive Christmas gifts, a profitable method of marketing his art work.18

Natalie promoted Spratling’s work, publicizing his publications in her columns and occasionally publishing his drawings and portraits in the society section. Upon her return from Europe in December, 1923, she commented on ideal Christmas presents her readers should be purchasing.

Ronald Hargrave’s etchings have captured the spirit of the Quarter charmingly, and it is anguish when one has to choose, as I did, from the set of ten, instead of being able to purchase them all outright... They are the Xmas present de luxe. More easily attained financially and quite delightful are the little booklets of copies of New Orleans etchings done by Bill Spratling, with an illuminating comment by Lyle Saxon by way of preface. They are an ideal Xmas card to send to friends away, and therefore are gobbled up by the voracious shoppers of the season as rapidly as poor Grace (McClure) can get them in stock. Bill...is the driven slave of his productions now. He started getting out some small original etchings in folder form, and now is no longer visible ever. He is fastened and fixed outside his hours as assistant professor of architecture at Tulane, in the Arts and Crafts Club, in a desperate effort to keep up with his orders. Sometimes I wonder if failure is not more cheerful than success.19
The same column reported four hundred members of the Arts and Crafts Club had enrolled in classes there. These four hundred, together with students in his Tulane classes formed a solid base of purchasers for Spratling’s Christmas publications, virtually assuring the young professor a helpful profit.

* * *

The feeling was very strange for Natalie, after two successive summers spent abroad, to remain in the city during June, 1924 while seemingly everyone she knew was leaving the city for summer residences in Europe. The departures were so massive that the States devoted a portion of the society section each Sunday to a long list of addresses abroad where a reader could write their friends. But Natalie Scott remained at home, humorously mourning in her column the fact of being left behind. Actually her presence in the city was necessitated by a tragedy two months earlier.20

Basil Thompson’s death on April 7th had rocked them all. Becky Thompson’s St. Peter street studio, where she had conducted dance lessons, occasionally entertained, and resided part-time, was a block from Natalie’s door. A stunned quiescence enveloped the usually care-free neighborhood where Basil Thompson had been enormously admired and popular; the inhabitants, particularly Natalie,
Lydia Brown and Flo Field who all lived nearby, and Lillian Friend Marcus, Becky Thompson’s business partner in their linen shop, joined others in coalescing around the widow. The cause of death as inscribed in the death certificate revealed the brutal bodily consequences inflicted by Basil Thompson’s last binge with illegal alcohol. “Ptomaine poisoning, toxemia, right side pleurisy, broncho pneumonia, edema of the lungs.” He was 31 years, 9 months old. The April issue of the Double Dealer (which did not appear until mid-May), sub-titled the Basil Thompson Memorial, was filled with Thompson’s best editorials, poems and essays as well as a bibliography of his published work, all preceded by a dedication, partially quoted here.

We announce with sorrow the untimely death of Basil Thompson...one of the founders in 1921 of the Double Dealer...His death is an inestimable loss.

Primarily a poet he was interested in every phase of literary work. His editorials are perhaps better known to readers of the Double Dealer than his verse. Feeling that it was unbecoming an editor to put forward his own creations he was seldom willing to publish his poetry at all. When he did so it was usually under a pen name. The larger part of his best verse has been published in other periodicals, notably The Century Magazine, The Bookman, The National, The New Republic, The Forum, The Lyric, Contemporary Verse, Pearson’s Magazine, Smart Set, The Wave, The Poetry Review (London)...

He published in 1918, Estrays, containing selections of his poetry together with those of three other poets...In 1919 Auguries was printed...at the time of his death he had collected a volume for publication containing the best of his later poems.

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In prose aside from the editorials which appeared in the *Double Dealer*, Basil Thompson had published stories and essays in various magazines. He wrote the essay on Louisiana in the Nation’s Series “These United States” which series appeared in book form in 1923.

...The genuine personal note and the sound artistry of his best work place him securely among the authentic poets of the generation...

We speak here of Basil Thompson as editor and poet. To us who knew him as a man, his end is a personal loss. His was a fine personality and a keen sensibility. We can end this notice in no more fitting manner than by quoting the final stanza of his poem *Peace from Auguries*.

"Yea, Life spells Strife,
Passion and Pride,
Love and Desire and Dreams-
May these things never be denied
While yet there’s breath!
Oh! Not I trust,
Till Death,
Shall Striving cease
In Peace!"²¹

In the aftermath of the tragedy, the *Double Dealer* produced no May or June issues, though finally, with its limited staff during the summer, the July issue appeared. Perhaps the only occasion in the eight years of Natalie’s Peggy Passe Partout column that a local death was discussed was when the April memorial issue reached the public. She commented in the way of a publication review.

Remarkably, poignantly noteworthy is the latest issue of the *Double Dealer*, which is devoted wholly to Basil Thompson...a man sensitively meticulous as to words, poems, where an elfin imaginativeness glints through musical, lilting rhythm, shot through at times
with a Byronic melancholy, of a more than Byronic virility and sincerity. And again the awareness of life, sometimes delicious, sometimes a pain, sometimes just transcendently itself, is keen in them as a knife edge. There is brilliant promise in the work, and noteworthy achievement beside. Seldom are things certain, and never do I recommend. But this is certain – the little April volume of “The Double Dealer” richly repays attention, and I recommend it to you. There are things in it you will be grateful for.  

Sherwood Anderson spent most of the summer of 1924 in New Orleans, having obtained a Reno divorce in April (after a six month residence in Nevada) from his long estranged second wife in order to marry Elizabeth Prall, with whom he had fallen in love almost two years earlier in New York. The newlyweds visited a few months in Berkeley, California, allowing Anderson to get to know Elizabeth’s family, a scholarly group of intellectuals, a sister who taught at Mills College, her father a biblical scholar at the University of California, and a brother who taught philosophy at Harvard. Anderson, who possessed comparatively little formal education and whose ideas were a little too modern among the Pralls and their friends, looked forward to the move back to New Orleans, where Natalie promptly encountered him at the McClures’ bookshop upon his early July arrival.

In Royal street I saw Jeanne Castellanos.

“Tell me, can’t you tell me, who is the man with the interesting face that has recently come to town?”
was the poser she had for me. An artist, she was sure. Absurdly indefinite.

And not an hour later, something familiar struck me in the lilting swing of a man’s figure coming out of Jack McClure’s book-shop. And Mr. Sherwood Anderson, whose name has reached the point of general knowledge where one almost drops the “Mr.”

The last news I had had of him was of California vintage, from a student there, telling of a lecture he had given under circumstance at once flattering and amusing. It seems that he had asked, when consulted about the size of the hall, for one to seat about four hundred. When the evening of his lecture came, it was found necessary, some time before the appointed moment, to move the audience to a hall that seated seven hundred. And just as the lecturer was about to begin, his manager came to him in distress, and asked: “do you think it would be possible to deliver the lecture over again in another hall when you have finished here? So many people came from out of town who cannot find places here.”

There was a clipping from a San Francisco paper, with the embroidery of the tale.

And here, in our midst, moves Mr. Anderson once more. He is established in the French Quarter, which he found congenial when he was last here. He has taken the Danziger apartment in the upper row of the Pontalba buildings and declares the gratifying intention of locating here with a degree of permanence. He was married recently to a delightful Californian, who spent several years in New York, and of whom I had heard flattering things from friends who knew her there...She is to join Mr. Anderson shortly.

This I write with a decent effort at restraint of pride. But the South has suffered so much from a reverse fate, of having its own literary men leave when they attain a certain success, that it is a joy to find one of the most distinguished of the men of letters of the day deliberately seeking out a southern city for his home. If you have kept conscientiously abreast of your literary news, you will have heard of the hold which this author’s books have taken in foreign countries as well as in our own...he has been translated extensively in Germany, in Russia, and in
Scandinavia. So the provincialism of a touch of civic pride when I write of his locating here is one you should understand and share.23

The location of Anderson's upper level Pontalba apartment was on St. Peter street facing Jackson Square and across Chartres street beside the Petit Theatre, sharing the neighborhood with Natalie, Spratling, the McClures, the Antonys, Lyle Saxon, Ronald Hargrave (510 St. Peter), Flo Field, Alberta Kinsey, Sam Gilmore (714 St. Peter), Ross Brazeale, Becky Thompson, Harold Levy (a Pontalba building apartment), Lydia Brown, along with the almost constant gathering of locales at the Green Shutter patio, tea room and book shop (710 St. Peter).

John Dos Passos had joined the neighborhood in February, during Anderson's absence, writing his novel Manhattan Transfer from his Esplanade Avenue studio, while enjoying the camaraderie of the Quarter. His likeable nature and literary success brought Dos Passos instant local recognition. Spratling drew his portrait and Dos Passos signed it, then gave it to Natalie as a gift. He became a transient, periodic resident, his friendship with Natalie and Spratling following them to Taxco, Mexico during the thirties where he was an occasional visitor.

The painter Paul Frolich was another temporary resident, spending much of 1924 in the Vieux Carré and at "The Shadows", Weeks Hall's ante-bellum home on Bayou Teche
in New Iberia, where Natalie visited in June. Frolich’s bayou scene paintings were popular in Philadelphia, New York and New Orleans exhibits later in the year, which Natalie commented upon in her column.

...All of which reminds me that we are being brought much to the limelight, as regards Louisiana scenery, by the success which Paul Frolich’s work is meeting. He has an exhibit on at present at a well-known gallery in Philadelphia, and there have been numerous flattering criticism in the Philadelphia press...it has, of course, the advantages of the Philadelphia Academy and all of its connotations, proximity to New York, to give it light. Anyway, Paul’s work has been highly complimented... particularly favorable comment has been made of his interpretations of the Teche country.24

With so many French Quarter occupants gone abroad for the summer, 1924, including Spratling who was off to Italy and Egypt, Natalie spent much time with the Andersons, introducing them to the full circle of her uptown friends, and the many patrons of the Vieux Carré, the Petit Theatre and the Arts and Crafts Club. Easy friendships evolved with Hilda Phelps Hammond, who was writing for the *Times-Picayune*, Empsie Lyons (Marie Celeste Lyons had been Natalie’s friend since high school and a French Quarter realtor), Elizabeth Werlein (who joined Natalie and Elizabeth Anderson in August, 1925, in purchasing three properties on St. Ann street behind the Presbytere), Martha Robinson, Joel Harris Lawrence (Natalie’s New Roads riding companion who later shared an apartment with Elizabeth.
during Sherwood Anderson's three month autumn absence on a
teachure tour in 1925), and Carrie Wogan Durieux, who was in
and out of New Orleans with her son to visit her parents,
though she and her husband lived in Cuba until 1926 when
they moved to Mexico. Later that summer, Anderson gave
Natalie an inscribed copy of his popular book The Triumph
of the Egg, a memento of their friendship.

Natalie Scott -
Inscribed to express some slight appreciation for
her grand and airy help to me in knowing a little of
the Pleasure of New Orleans

Sherwood Anderson

Natalie began gathering material that summer for the
book on Louisiana plantation homes that she would write and
Spratling would illustrate, Old Plantation Houses in
Louisiana (1927). She began visiting the structures to be
included in the book, adding to her list as she traveled,
making road trips along the Mississippi River, Bayou
Lafourche and Bayou Teche, through St. Landry and Pointe
Coupee Parishes, and to Alexandria; the next year she and
Spratling would travel to every corner of the state,
sketching, writing, and enjoying the unexpected incidents
and social highlights of these journeys.

The Parishes are setting more strongly than ever
the pace of hospitality which is their reputation for
years past. Motoring through them is a diversion...
increasing in popularity, - and by steadfastly
speeding motors. Increasing, that is to say, in
proportion to the improvement of the state highways.

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The Andrew Gays are perpetual hosts, it seems. The Averys and McIlhennys are others who are in a continuous state of entertaining. Weeks Hall has his own quota of visitors at his beautiful home in New Iberia, “The Shadows”; the Williams, in Patterson...Dr. and Mrs. Myles... the Gordons... The Jeff Hardins have that beautiful place called “Oak Lawn”, on the other side of the river and it is almost impossible to pass by that long avenue of oaks...^®

The idea of the Scott-Spratling book was to establish the importance, historically, aesthetically and culturally, of Louisiana’s antebellum homes and to document, illustrate and preserve the architectural and decorative features of these buildings. There was a strong preservationist motive, urging and congratulating restorations, repairs and maintenance. A number of these great houses were already endangered, facing oblivion, when Natalie and Spratling wrote their study; some no longer exist today, one destroyed by the 1927 Mississippi River flood. But long before the book made it’s appearance three years later, Natalie’s Sunday columns provided vivid portrayals.

...One of the favorites is the plantation retreat of the Jeff Hardins, which is almost five miles above Lutcher landing, on the “other side” of the river. It is near enough to reach in spite of all that punctures, and clutches can do, even. But that’s the least of its advantages.

The place is called “Oak Alley”. It could hardly have been called anything else. I am sure it is the cause of innumerable near-wrecks, for no motorist can pass by it...for backward cranings and neck-twists....There is a stretch of open, grassy field, and in the middle of it, a line of oaks that leads from the road to the house...But such oaks! Each one is a monarch of his magnificent kind, with branches
that reach the long way across to touch those that come from the farther side, gnarled, gigantic branches...the greenish gray banners of moss hang down straight and heavy, motionless and still, except for the tapering ends, which stir lightly always. “And on my heart cathedral aisles, fall like dim dreams, or pensive smiles”, and even so this magnificent, regal alleyway of oaks. The fine old plantation house is worthy of its guard of honor. It is built on heroic lines, but with a grace of proportion...The style is southern colonial at its happiest; a massive, white frame building, with a wide porch that surrounds it on all four sides...white columns...the typical, pre-war southern plantation home, is what you decide from the road...

Alas and alack! When you drive closely in, you see that the wide doors, with their old fashioned elongated over-arches, gape into vacancy. The house is deserted. The Hardins were embarked on the work of restoring it, when the last crevasse happened, and they had to stop to fight it...

Meanwhile, they are installed very cozily and prettily in what formerly was the prison-house of the plantation, a square, quaintly squat little brick building...there is not a nail in its construction, any more than there is in that of the main house....27

Typically, this same column then describes an impromptu party that ensued while she was there, complete with water color paintings of the premises, the working up of a play with Lafitte as a central character, the sketching of scenic designs for the play, and finally a turn on the piano and “the whole company singing away in lusty harmony...No one had the vaguest idea what the temperature was!”

Her tour lead finally to Alexandria and the Scotts.

I have just done a motor tour up to Alexandria and found that thriving town in high feathers. They
are luckily located there, with a network of excellent roads leading out in numerous directions. Almost every evening, the town spills itself into motors, and off they go to some of the numerous "springs" which are accessible, where the cold, clear water, winding through sunless forests, has dug a basin for itself. And there is usually some little shelter, more or less finished, where one slips hastily into a bathing suit and then deliciously into the chill water...And afterwards a hearty dinner, which you eat under the stimulus of that icy bath.

Alexandria has a sporty nine-hole golf course and a comfortable club house, too. We can envy our neighbors at times. There are not so many places as we would like where an evening's motor trip can have such a happy destination."

Meanwhile, in the French Quarter, Natalie picked up an important long term tenant during June to occupy a front section of her 714 St. Peter street house, an important new French Quarter preservation organization.

...One of the foremost for some time past has been the new Quarter Club, which has been dubbed chummily, "The Twenty-five Cent Club"...Speculation has centered about the topic of what type of club the new one would be. This week comes the announcement of two important officers, whose peculiar eminence gives a definite turn to ideas about the Club. Miss Grace King is the Club's first president. They say her letter of acceptance... expressed earnestly her appreciation of the French Quarter and her faith in the past and the role the new club will play in sustaining its existence and its traditions. Mrs. Gilmer (Dorothy Dix) is the vice-president...The Club has leased the lower floor of the house next to the Green Shutter, 714 St. Peter street, a place charmingly typical of our France-Spanish type of architecture, with arched entrance way, fan-light windows, a stairway of graceful proportions, a pretty courtyard, sunny, and shut in with high brick walls, a fascinating place, which used to belong to the family of the De Lobels de Mahy: my opinion about it is no doubt a trifle partial!
"The Old Quarter Club" was the full name, its main purpose being preservation of old landmarks, the encouragement of artistic and literary talent, and the entertainment of visiting celebrities.30

By mid-September, 1924, Natalie's column reported news from the avalanche of summer travelers returning from their various trips. News from New York, Germany, the Rocky Mountains, Paris, Central America, North Carolina, North Africa and the far East was passed on by Peggy Passe Partout. One of those returning to the city was Bill Spratling.

Driving up Royal street Wednesday, I narrowly escaped Holcomb's fate of a motor accident, for I ground on all four of my efficient brakes as hard as I could in the surprise of seeing that enterprising young Tulane professor, Bill Spratling, standing in front of the Monteleone Hotel, and looking about him with a dazed expression. When all the offended chauffeurs had been placated, we had an interview, and I learned Bill had just stepped off the boat some three minutes previously, and was even then awaiting his baggage. He was browned to a beautiful copper hue, which seemed all the more distinguished when I realized that the suns of Athens and of Egypt, of Italy and Spain, had combined their efforts to achieve it...I had to gulp hard when I heard of his moonlight evenings on the Grand Canal, of his patterings about the Acropolis, of his meanderings in Alexandria and Cairo. The trip between Alexandria and Cairo seemed especially to have intrigued him.

"The country looks just as it must have looked two thousand years ago," he put it with characteristic terse simplicity.

He has brought back some treasures of sketches, hurried suggestions snatched in various picturesque stopping places, with most profusion in Venice, where,
in the madness of passing centuries, the old palaces keep their hauteur, brooding quietly above quiet waters...where they daily capture a transient glory, as beautiful as youth, when the open spaces about it leave the city free to a luminous bath of ambient light...

Bill saw the pianist who favored us with a visit and stupendous music last spring, Mr. Copeland. Arthur MacArthur, deep in his studies of singing, was with him, and they were installed magnificently in a palace on the Grand Canal. Indeed, and indeed, there is nothing like wandering over the face of the earth!  

Lyle Saxon was among those who had abandoned the city for the summer, but not to travel abroad to any exotic destination. His decorous manners and old worldly taste for elegant things were put aside for a new experience only two hundred miles from New Orleans, on Melrose Plantation near Natchitoches, where “Aunt” Cammie Henry was the ruling matriarch and benefactor of the arts. Saxon was an original participant in the Natchitoches Art Colony, which had been initiated in 1921 and immediately became a regular pilgrimage attracting many New Orleans’ artists to the Cane River community. Natalie had gone several times as a guest of the Brazeale family and wrote of it prolifically from its inception. Lyle Saxon had written expansively of the art colony in the Times-Picayune, bringing considerable fame to the gathering of artists; he soon adopted the historic old community, the settlement reaching back to the
earliest days of the French colonial period, as his second home.

During June, 1924, Saxon acted upon Aunt Cammie’s standing invitation to come to Melrose Plantation, stay as long as he wished, write the books he had long planned to write. He lived in a cabin called the Yucca House, beside another cabin (the African House), both structures of unique appearance, seeming more appropriate to a jungle outpost in the Dark Continent than to a southern plantation. When Saxon made the decision to accept Aunt Cammie’s invitation for a long visit, he sold his French Quarter apartment as Natalie duly reported.

Speaking of enthusiasm, the prevalent one over Lyle Saxon’s apartment has suffered a dreadful blow. The apartment merits the name in more senses than one, for it is a thing “apart” in many ways; unworthy pun! It is essentially a man’s place, in the substantial solidity of its tone, in its practical comforts, and at the same time it is furnished in the most perfect taste, with handsome old furniture assembled with an unerring feeling for harmony, eloquently individual...mysterious quality of character. And now, it is all being dispensed. Lyle is leaving for several months, has sold the house, which he brought from a condition bordering on wreckage to a place of brooding dignity and beauty, and he is disposing of the furniture.

It is a distressing thing to have happen....

Saxon was absent from June through September. When he finally reappeared, Natalie again made note.

They say that it is all nonsense about the earth’s ever opening and swallowing people...the only plausible theory to account for the utter
disappearance of Lyle Saxon. It was exploded last week, however, in the wholly agreeable fashion of having Lyle himself appear, in person...smiling, amusing...He has been in the country near Natchitoches, the guest of "Aunt Cammie Henry"...Lyle brought back a world of energy, some delicious stories, and some gems of pictures of "nigger baptazin" the like of which I have never seen. He has been living...in a cabin on Aunt Cammie’s plantation, which is of old time...treasures of negro anecdotes and songs, which I hope will appear in print...

The cabin must have been unique of its kind. The Natchitoches Art Colony, whose prowess Lyle’s capable pen has often celebrated, heard that he was due and they paid him homage in characteristic manner, they descended en masse upon his cabin, before his arrival, and decorated it with frescoes, fearful and wonderful frescoes, of mammoth size and awesome subject: elephants, lions,...Monkeys...bears... one on each panel. A sort of delirium tremens, I gather!33

Saxon moved into the Royal Street apartment abandoned by artist Lydia Brown, who left for New York until January, 1925; she moved into the Crawford house on St. Peter street upon her return. By December, 1924, Saxon was at work transforming his Cane River experience into newspaper features and literature.34

Natalie’s talented Vieux Carré friends and fellow journalists enjoyed a period of recognition and success during the autumn of 1924. Flo Field, Natalie’s co-hort on the Double Dealer staff, whose regular job was a clerk’s position for the New Orleans Board of Liquidation, previously had published short stories in various magazines. She turned to play-writing in 1924 and her first effort was preliminarily accepted for stage
production in New York. Meigs Frost, city editor and Natalie’s fellow feature writer for the New Orleans States, by far the most prolific writer for the paper, was featured repeatedly in 1924 by Collier’s magazine for his short stories. In February, 1925, the New York World honored one of his fictional pieces, called “Shackles of Service”, as the best short story of 1924, and two of his other stories were featured in Frederick O’Brien’s anthology of the best American short stories of 1924. One of these two stories, “The General and His Sweetie”, derived from Frost’s major scoop earlier in the year when he returned from Vera Cruz where he interviewed Adolfo de la Huerta, leader of the 1923-24 Mexican rebellion, the first American reporter to reach him for a story. By early 1925, three more of Frost’s short stories were in the final group considered for the O. Henry Memorial Award, all three set in Louisiana’s swamps. In July, 1924, Natalie wrote about one of Frost’s Louisiana stories.

Speaking of literary things, Meigs Frost is forging an enviable prominence, quite aside from his enviable distinction as a newspaper man. He is featured prominently in...Collier’s, given the palm of front place in the magazine...Meigs’ story has a Louisiana setting, in fact, it is Louisiana.

Perhaps he has been inspired by his new surroundings. I discovered him in the spick and span new domicile of “The Daily States”, where the city editor and his dynamics...are apart in orderly, sleek rooms, Althea Wuerpal and Cay Saunders are installed in elegant seclusion...Suddenly I remember that Meigs
must have written the story in the old place. Let’s hope all this unfamiliar newness will not upset his soaring muse!\textsuperscript{35}

In August, Frost was again on the front page of Collier’s with his story from Mexico, as noted in Peggy Passe Partout.

The front page of Collier’s is getting to be the habitual dwelling place of Meigs O. Frost, our mutual friend. Here he is again with a cracking good story, called “The General and his Sweetie”...vivid American is seasoned with Spanish slang, to harmonize with the Mexican setting - stirring scenes, where stalwart Americans are thrown in a thrilling entourage of sombreros, and senoritas, and an occasional flash of pistol fire. A rattling, crackling good story...Recognition is slow in coming, but like the renowned oysters, once started, thick and fast it comes at last”!...\textsuperscript{36}

Meanwhile, Sam Gilmore’s poems appeared regularly during 1924 in the Fugitive and The Little Review, also in an anthology, the Best Verse of the Year, by Small, Maynard, and Company, then in another volume in Oxford, England compiled by T.A.D. Strong.\textsuperscript{37}

While these literary successes were emanating from the French Quarter, international success came to one of Natalie’s neighbors, Pop Hart.

George O. Hart, “Pop” Hart, his intimates call him - the artist who resided in obscurity in New Orleans, has crashed the barriers...and has come into his own in New York and Paris.

The quiet, unassuming, friendly soul who lived in the grimy back room of an ancient lodging house within sight of St. Louis Cathedral here, is hailed today as one of America’s really great painters. His last exhibit in New York attracted world attention wherever
painting is known and appreciated. His exhibit in Paris this winter is one to which European patrons of art look forward....

The Arts and Crafts Club in October conducted a particularly successful art exhibit, its largest of the year, featuring Louisiana landscapes by Paul Frolich, paintings by Pop Hart, still lifes by Alberta Kinsey, Carrie Wogan Durieux's colorful landscapes, and Bill Spratling's renderings of Italy, including a colorful watercolor and a woodblock of gondolas on the Grand Canal. During the course of the fall, as Natalie wrote, Spratling followed Sherwood Anderson's example by studying the city's wharves for artistic subjects.

By the way, have you heard that William P. Spratling, from whose studio in Orleans Alley by the cathedral have come some splendid bits of drawing and painting both, is planning a new series of New Orleans paintings? Harbor stuff up and down the river-front with all the color and atmosphere of big ships and puffy tugs and heavy machinery and rushing labor, all softened by the river mists or touched by the Louisiana sunshine. Bill has been a keen observer of it all for some time...to do some real work on the levee.

Two weeks after his September return from Europe and Egypt, Spratling celebrated with a small party in his Orleans Alley apartment attended by Lyle Saxon, the Sherwood Andersons, and Natalie, among numerous others.

Lyle appeared at a little party in Bill Spratling's apartment. New Orleans could not have chosen a more propitious moment for putting him in an excellent humor..., for the party was the unique kind which only the French Quarter at its best can produce.
Mr. and Mrs. Sherwood Anderson were there, Mr. Henson, a Scandinavian sculptor who is forging quietly, steadily ahead; Flo Field, with the wealth of amusement that lies at the will of her clever tongue; Sam Gilmore; also Harry Loeb, Hamilton Basso, Grace McClure, Joyce Stagg; pretty, gifted Mrs. Johnson; Mr. Johnson. There was a steady flow of conversation, unstudied and amusing; the room stimulates it. Outside, there is a line of the Cathedral visible across the quiet space of the alley...inside a pleasant harmony of things chosen with discriminating taste: the bright color of a long oblong of cloth woven in Egyptian design, over the mantel; on a wall, a graceful weaving of lines which played with interesting blues...A sketch of Venice, done by the host himself, and catching the spirit of the place, with unerring ease...And then a glass in the hand! What could offer a more perfect evening?\textsuperscript{10}

The Johnsons were new to New Orleans. Natalie wrote that Mrs. Johnson was currently a favorite actress at the Petit Theatre, with substantial dramatic training in Paris, and was also a promising short story author. Furthermore, Sherwood Anderson had a new book appearing that fall, \textit{The Story Teller's Story}, and another soon to go to press.

It is surprising that he and Mrs. Anderson have been wholly undaunted by this formidable summer. Mrs. Anderson has been captivated by the work of the Marc Antonys and has planned to take an active part in it this season. They are developing an interesting interior decorating phase which has a great deal of promise. Mrs. Anderson went from the entourage of intellectuals which is her family circle...to an equally rarefied atmosphere in New York, and is of the inner circle of artistic intellectual life there....\textsuperscript{41}

Natalie left the next week for New York where she lived in Greenwich Village from the end of September until the Christmas holidays, frequenting many stage performances, often enjoying the Gamut Club; she was a

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subscriber to the Provincetown Theater Players, the Neighborhood Playhouse and the Triangle, which she explained "was a unique experimental theatre with, for habitat, a large triangular cellar, under a Chinaman's laundry, on the outskirts of Greenwich Village, and is a magnet for New York's intellectuals. It is an original, enterprising, alert organization, of undaunted open-mindedness, and it is quite fascinating...." She stayed very busy, keeping up only her exchanges of letters with family but sending nothing to the newspaper for her column. One letter to her from her father, addressed to her in care of the Stratford House at 11 East Thirty Second street, sends her some money, comments on her correspondence, and provides an indication of the source of her sense of humor.

October 27, 1924

Dear Peggy:

All your letters received and I was certainly glad to hear from you. I have not been feeling very well. That is one reason I did not write you and the other reason is that I did not know any news worth writing about as I presume you get the N.O. papers everyday.

Aunt Bell is here with us. We have had the pleasure of the Provosty family three times in 10 days. We are always glad to have them.

Hope you are having a good time.

Enclosed you will find a check for $100, which is my donation to the Orphan and Widows fund,— and you are the Orphan.
My goodness alive, every time I hear from you you are always eating. If you stay in N.Y. any length of time you will weigh about 300 lbs. Then I will place you in a museum.

Well Peggy we miss you very much as we have only two persons at home who raise cane—Jack and Mike.

I forwarded your last letter in to Sidonie today.

You do not mention Miss Preston, Col. nor Mrs. Lambert I presume you have not had time to see them yet.

Lots of love—be good, wash your face and neck every morning but do not use soap—let Olga use the floor mop.

More love from Jack, Aunt Bell and Mike.

Yours,

Boss

Many performers of the Petit Theatre du Vieux Carré were in New York and on Broadway achieving recognition in lead roles during 1924 and 1925. Jessie Tharp's performance in "The Last of the Lowries", according to the critic of the New York Morning Telegraph, "ranks with the finest performances in our commercial theaters this season"; she also played five weeks with the Theater Guild in "Masse Mensch", by Ernest Toller, where she worked with director Lee Simonson, and performed before packed audiences at the Waldorf. Walker Ellis was cast in a major role in "The Youngest" on Broadway, while Elizabeth Lyons also performed in a Broadway play until she gave up the
position because the director's demands upon her time, she felt, was excessive. Another New Orleanian, Cora Witherspoon was a performer in "Grounds for Divorce", as Natalie explained upon her return to the city.

She has been playing second to the suavely lovely Ina Clair for some time, this year, in "Grounds for Divorce," which is having a successful run. Cora's interpretation of her role is very effective: she shows a well-groomed distinction, with a certain hardness, a metallic glitter, that is cleverly contrasted with the softly feminine allure of Ina Claire. Cora has an attractive apartment in 56th street, just off Park Avenue, where she has established herself...

Becky Thompson, Basil's widow, joined Natalie for the first few weeks of her New York stay, and Tommy Farrar, after a brief visit home in August with his Biloxi family, from two years painting in France, finally settled in New York. Weeks Hall was in New York all winter and Lydia Brown was there until January. Natalie later reported on Tommy Farrar and Charlie Bein's success in New York, the good reception to their paintings.

New York discarded its usual coldness of reception in deference to Charlie's work. The director of the New Galleries looked over his canvasses, and, presto! Charlie was invited to exhibit with them...The date is set for March 21...quite a thing to achieve with the New Galleries, for the more usual procedure is for the exhibitor to pay for the privilege of exhibiting...I so felt quite a thrill of pride....

This New York sojourn was a complete escape for Natalie. Rosalie Nixon, after a full summer at Lake
Chautauqua, New York, had again agreed to write the local news for Natalie's weekly column, but with the understanding that Natalie would send weekly letters from New York to carry the bulk of the work. Instead, once Natalie was gone, there was only deafening silence from New York. Natalie apparently reached the rebellious decision to not write a line for the paper while she was gone, completely escaping the weekly task for the first time in four years. The States and Rosalie expected her to return to New Orleans during October, another restraint she tossed aside. The progression of week to week commentaries in the column by Rosalie Nixon, in the absence of any word from Natalie, reveals her growing alarm, her sense of humor and the understanding between close friends.

... I have not forgotten my promise to keep you posted on all happenings of the Old Home Town while you flit around taking "Little Old New York" which I'm afraid will take up so much of your time and attention that you'll never find even a spare moment in which to pen a hasty note to your friends at home. However, being naturally credulous, I'll hope for the best....

N.O. States, October 5, 1924

By the way and just incidentally, where are all those letters you were going to write me from New York? Good intentions are all very well, but you know what place is paved with them, I suppose, and if you don't hurry up and write - I'll really hate to tell you where you could go. Little Orphan Annie was flattered with attentions compared to your treatment of poor me, but the old worm will turn and I'm

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wearying of asking you to write. Old timer, it is far past midnight...Good night, I must go to bed...

N.O. States, November 9, 1924

Another week has gone by and still not a word from you, but candidly speaking, I'm not surprised - only disappointed - as I fully realize that the Great White Way has an abundance to offer in the manner of excitement and attractions, and no doubt you are playing around at a fast and furious pace, hence having no time for the prosaic occupation of letter-writing.

N.O. States, November 16, 1924

Christmas shopping and debutante parties are occupying most of our time and thoughts these days, ungrateful wretch (this endearing address is applied in hopes of awakening a slight pang of conscience for not having written as much as a postcard to your faithful friend), you should make a desperate effort to appreciate my epistle.

N.O. States, December 7, 1924

The Yuletide spirit surges the air...And it won't be long before we'll be broad-casting "Merry Xmas" and "Happy New Year"...So, old top, if you have even the remotest idea of being in our midst for Christmas, you'd better snap it up a bit. "Time and tide wait for no man" - not even you, but, Peggy, I'm wearying of beseeching you to direct your steps homeward. What's the big attraction in New York? I have most grave suspicions....

N.O. States, December 14, 1924

...here's wishing you prematurely Merry Christmas and Happy New Year, and good luck to your New Year's resolutions! Will we ever see you again?

N.O. States, December 21, 1924

Better come home, Peg. There's the sheikiest of sheiks camping on my doorstep anxiously awaiting information as to your arrival. What shall I tell him?

N.O. States, December 28, 1924
Actually, Natalie arrived home a few days before Christmas, rushing about to finish shopping, wrap presents and to decorate. As the months of her absence passed and Rosalie wearied of the weekly writing task, the Sunday column steadily shortened in length until finally reduced to one-half the normal size. On January 4, 1925, Natalie was once again writing Peggy Passe Partout, sharing anecdotes and news from New York, while expressing her pleasure in being home.

Happy New Year!

"Home again, home again, riggety-jig!"...Have you ever come South after a sojourn...not merely a superficial staying in the East? The East is snappy: it is frequently kind and hospitable, and it is always in a hurry. Even when it isn't in a hurry, it always feels that it must seem so...You feel a touch of home, when a black-faced, white-coated negro porter gives three ceremonious flicks with a napkin at non-existent crumbs on your tablecloth, and asks your order with an ecstatic chuckle over the joy of serving you. And you know you are there when two little shabby pickinnies shoot coins against a wall. They pick them up at the end of the toss, calling it even. When one adds, with belated inspiration, munificently with a lavish gesture of mammoth drooping coat sleeve, much frayed -

"I had yeh by a little bit; but I leave it be...."

Dear South! Tranquilly alive, mildly buoyant, not to be rushed, seeming unhurried in its maddest moments. So from little black boys to the clubmen chatting over luncheon: there is no chance of death coming and snatching us out of a turmoil so great that we did not know that life was there. It takes a moment to be aware of being, and the South takes it deliciously.
Yes. Even I take it, who have sat in billows of
tissue paper and tangle of ribbons, from the week’s
beginning to its close, at first to prepare
frantically for Christmas, paying the penalty for
belated return....

During her stay in New York, Natalie entered the
social circle of playwright Edmund Wilson, Mississippi
novelist Stark Young, publisher Horace Liveright, author
Anita Loos, critic and writer H. L. Mencken, among a
variety of Greenwich Village inhabitants and, once back in
New Orleans, she kept pace with New York news through these
channels. Sherwood Anderson’s autumn tour across the
country had ended in New York, where his autobiography, The
Story Teller’s Story, was selling well. She was surprised
at his new book’s popularity and was gently critical,
though pleased for his success.

...in his autobiography, “The Story Teller’s
Story”, which has attained amazingly the popularity of
a best seller. I say “amazingly”, because his work
has necessarily a limited appeal: his narrative is
often too subjective, his effects too subtly limned,
to appeal to a large public. Even the clear facts
which autobiography prescribes have been subjectively
presented, passed through the mill of his artistic
convictions for emphasis, balance, perspective...

However, the news from New York. Mr. Anderson
enters in triumphal manner. The success of his
lecture tour...the number (of lectures) planned was
doubled before ever he reached New York. In New York,
he is being frankly lionized. He is scheduled for
numerous lectures: last week he spoke for Cooper
Union... The Rand School has engaged him for a series
of lectures and the auditorium has been completely
sold out each time, even to standing room. Mr.
Heubsch, the publisher, gave a luncheon for him...The
Theater Guild entertains for him this week....

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I hope this ovation will not have the effect of dislodging him from his home here. I remember the thrill of pride I had when one of the Liverights said, in New York, "New Orleans has a great literary figure now: Sherwood Anderson."\(^{46}\)

Anderson was soon back in the French Quarter. Author James Feibleman described Anderson as having been "one of the main attractions of Le Vieux Carré", whenever he took his frequent strolls.

Wherever he went, he was a spectacle. He walked with a blackthorn stick and with something of a swagger now that he had put on weight. He wore brown suits that wouldn't show the dust of the racetracks where he often spent his afternoons, fancy corduroy shirts, kerchief and finger ring, woolen socks spilling out over his shoes. All New Orleans knew Anderson - strangers would know that he was something special as he strolled down Bourbon Street.\(^{47}\)

Natalie Scott added further personal observations from her visits in the Anderson household.

His personality alone gives him a place of importance with anyone who knows him; his essential kindliness, his gentle humor, and above all, his "touching of things human" with an understanding that is deep, a sympathy that is poignant...he has a massive head and strong features, eyes of the quality that the Spaniards describe in a beautiful word of theirs which means "like velvet", soft, but wise...Add to this some whimsical characteristics such as a love of color, which he curbs through deference to general feeling enough to wear conventional garb when out in the world, but which impels him, when he is at work at home to choice of, say, a soft green flannel shirt, or a wisp of gay feather in his tie. There you have a character at once tremendously forceful and equally loveable.\(^{48}\)
An intriguing new component of the city's intellectual life was added during February, 1925. The creation at Tulane University of the Department of Middle American Research brought archeologists-anthropologists Franz Blom and Oliver La Farge to the city as leaders of expeditions of discovery into the jungles of Chiapas, Honduras, and Guatemala in search of enlightening remains of the ancient Mayans. These men immediately established for Tulane a high international reputation. By introducing them to Mexico's past, La Farge and Blom would change the lives of Natalie Scott and Bill Spratling, the ultimate consequence being their permanent move from New Orleans to Mexico, Spratling during 1929 and Natalie in April, 1930, following earlier visits beginning in 1926. Indirectly effected was Elizabeth Anderson, who, after her divorce from Sherwood and pursuant to Natalie's invitation by letter to her in California, came to Taxco during the mid-thirties and decided to make this mountain village her permanent home.49

Both men, Blom, age 31, and La Farge, 24, had been trained under famed anthropologist A.M. Tozzer of Harvard University. La Farge had completed his undergraduate work the year before, after participation in two Harvard expeditions among the Navaho and Hopi Indians of the American Southwest. In 1925, his Harvard graduate studies
were interrupted by the opportunity to join Blom at Tulane and follow him into southern Mexico. The interruption would delay his masters degree until 1929, the year before he was awarded the Pulitzer Price for his Indian based novel, *Laughing Boy*.\(^{50}\)

Blom’s start in archeology in 1919 came in an accidental manner while doing exploratory field work in Chiapas, Mexico, for an oil company, Campania Petrolera El Aguila. He found Mayan ruins, was captivated and, realizing their importance, made detailed drawings of his discoveries. Having trained in art in his native Denmark, his effective drawings gained the attention of archeologists like Sylvanus Morley of the Carnegie Institution, which lead to Blom working under Manuel Gamio at the Mayan ruins of Palenque, then for the Carnegie Institute during excavations in Guatemala. Having gained Mayan expertise through practical field work, Blom enrolled for a year of Harvard training in Mayan archeology and hieroglyphics under Tozzer where he met La Farge who was completing his undergraduate degree.

Blom offered La Farge a position with the Carnegie field program, which La Farge accepted, but delays occurred. Blom’s attention turned to a new opportunity in progress at Tulane University, which suddenly materialized in early 1925 in the form of the Department of Middle-
American Research, directed by Dr. William Gates. Blom was
chosen to lead its first field expedition. Blom sailed for
Mexico from New Orleans on February 19th with all the field
equipment. La Farge left Cambridge in early March, visited
briefly in New Orleans, where he immediately met and was
introduced to a raucous Mardi Gras by Natalie Scott. La
Farge then joined Blom on the Mexican coast at Vera Cruz.51

Natalie’s first encounter with either of these young
archeologists was on February 17th, 1925. The Mardi Gras
season was in full swing, but, putting aside the
festivities, Natalie disciplined herself to attend an
occasion at Tulane when Blom, who she had not previously
heard of, addressed the Tulane faculty on “The Mayas”, with
a color slide presentation of monuments, monoliths, graven
with figures of priests, warriors, rulers and glyphs. The
presentation included a wide range of scholarly inquiry,
such as the Mayan calendar, religion, numerical system and
astronomy. Natalie introduced Blom to her readers the
following Sunday.

I felt virtuous as I went Monday evening to
Tulane to listen to the tale of the proposed Maya
expedition, but after a few moments of the talk I
forgot my conviction of virtue and became absorbed in
the topic. Mr. Blom...heads an expedition which left
Thursday for a five month exploration of the seat of
the Mayan civilization which Tulane plans to help
reconstruct for our imagination from the results of
exploration and investigation, as the great Egyptian
civilization has been reconstructed. I have not been
wholly happy since that lecture, with envy gnawing at
my heart: how thrilling must such an expedition be, venturing bodily into unknown wilds, mentally exploring centuries as strange!...my dreams have been haunted with visions of Maya gods, Maya temples, Maya hieroglyphs. Mr. Gates leaves on Tuesday for a shorter expedition. Imagination and hopes go with both of them...

Mr. Blom turned up later in the week at Mrs. Bruns' for tea...You might picture the leader of so venturesome an expedition as a fire-eating, tempestuous sort; but you would be wrong. He is of a Viking race, of course, and blonde accordingly, but he speaks of the expedition as gently and quietly as of the cake at tea....

The week after Blom's departure, La Farge arrived for a brief stopover at Tulane, where he met Natalie who introduced him around. Mardi Gras was reaching its annual crescendo and the studious, rather innocent La Farge enjoyed a memorable social immersion, duly preserved in Natalie's Sunday column after he had gone on to Mexico.

...On the trail of the Maya have set forth several bands from Tulane, as you have noted. One of the last members of the expedition to depart was Mr. Oliver La Farge, of New York, Saunderstown, New Jersey, Harvard, and other where. He is the one of whom Mr. Blom spoke, the only other white man who will accompany him on his daring jaunt through untried wilds in Yucatan. The picture of this Mr. La Farge was rather disconcerting: twenty-three or so, Harvard graduate, with a record which included high posts on Harvard publications, class poet, place in the lightweight crew, graduate work in archeology, two expeditions to Arizona, the second time in charge, interesting discoveries, among the most important made in connection with the Navajo Indians; the ability to speak Navajo, and various other little items calculated to freeze ideas of normal human beings.

Whereupon appeared the young man in question, dark-skinned, tawny-eyed, suggesting the tale of the Pocahontas heritage of the La Farge family, but with a
comforting distinct interest in the skulls that are still flesh-clad and skeletons invested with the paraphernalia of present life, as well as in relics of Mayas. Item, an excellent rider. Item, an enthusiasm over Carnival trucks and Mardi Gras in general. Spectators of an informal contest on the Waldo lawn assert that he does an excellent handspring, and is quite gifted as to standing...on his head. Such is versatility!

At any rate, just after Carnival he took ship as blythely as he had taken the Carnival truck, and set out to join Mr. Blom. They go from Vera Cruz to Mexico City, and then they start on the journey which puts an ugly furrow of envy in my soul, unbroken months of the wilds, the "raw bush" as the phrase is, on mule-back, with native guides, rare Indian villages, unknown to white men, with all the while the thrill of the new and strange haunted by the ghosts of a rich, dead past, the thought that through the towering virgin forest, beneath the tangle of matted vines, may be the carcass of a perished city, may wait a stone which, like the Rosetti Stone, will unravel the mysteries of unknown "Glyphs". The wild joy of the adventurer with the steady purpose of the scientist to give it meaning; mind unleashed to hob-nob with the centuries - what could push to further limits life's horizons?33

After obtaining permits in Mexico City, they proceeded south from Vera Cruz by horseback. Their explorations took them on a course through San Andres Tuxtla, Catemaco Lake, then across dense tropical forests, where they expected hostile Indians, to the Pueeto Mountain range. Instead, in the San Martine Pajaba Mountains, they were well received by two friendly tribes, one speaking Nahuatl (the ancient language of the Aztecs) and the other Popoluca; then to the ruins of Piedra Labrada on the Gulf coast, then La Venta, finally entering the state of Chiapas where they studied...
Palenque, then a three day ride on their horses from El Real to the ruins of the Aqua Escondido. They studied pyramids left by the Mayans, then traveled to Tecoja, San Antonio, then back to Ocosingo, scouring, digging, mapping, drawing and analyzing ruins in each locale of the Encanto, - the Enchanted Valley rich in ruins and prehistoric legends. They went to San Cristóbal de las Casas, then entering Guatemala and journeying to Comitan, Guatemala City and other places, finally boarding ship for New Orleans in late August with a surprise for the nation.

Little news of the expedition filtered through during their six months journey; only one wire in late April and nothing more despite the best efforts of Meigs Frost to find news of them from Chiapas in July. The April news dealt with the expedition’s discoveries in the state of Tabasco, in the Tehuantepec region near the village of Cormalcalco. On the Rio Seco site, “they found enough to rank the ancient city among the greatest of the old Mayan empire...oriented plazas, pyramids, fine temples, a palace eighty meters long, vaulted chambers, nine stucco reliefs of human figures, molded stucco glyphs, and inscriptions in the Palanque style which members of the expedition have termed the finest of their kind.”

From the jungle depths of Chiapas, Blom and La Farge brought back to America a very intelligent Mayan Indian,
known as the "Wise One" to his people, unable to read or
write but who liked and trusted the two archeologists and
would spend intensive weeks with them explaining in his
Indian dialect Mayan customs, religious rituals and
beliefs, oral history and superstitions. His name was Tata
of the Yokotan tribe; he spoke a broken Spanish and his
native Yokotan dialect, which La Farge was rapidly
learning. His arrival in New Orleans brought national
attention to the Blom-La Farge expedition.

Meigs Frost wrote the States news story.

...Nearly fifty years he has lived, buried in
Chiapas, where by native shrewdness he has built
himself up a little ranch...He is skilled in his
mysterious native art of healing with herbs. He knows
the ancient lore of the Mayans on whom three centuries
of nominal Christian dominion have left few marks -
tribes that still far in the interior on misty
mountain tops worship their ancient gods...ancient in
the days when the foot of Cortez first tread the beach
at Vera Cruz and the Spanish Conquistador left his
ships blazing behind him and led his mutinous men on
foot over the giant rampart of the Orimba Range...

"We're going to find a quiet apartment somewhere
here in New Orleans and hole up there for a few
weeks," said Franz Blom. "We've got serious work to
do with Tata...the full story of the Mayan tribal lore
in his own native tongue, in which Oliver La Farge is
becoming swiftly very proficient...to relax his native
reticence...will be a peep-hole through which the eye
of modern scientific investigation can see into what
has been a wall of solid shrouded darkness and
mystery...

"They're a wonderful race, the Mayans," says
Oliver La Farge. "They have a distinct Asiatic tinge
in their psychology...there is a distinct resemblance
between the language of the Ute Indians of North
America and the language of the Aztec Indians of

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Mexico. About the Mayans we have no such definite data. Their language is a series of tribal dialects that bear no resemblance to any other language I have encountered...It is an amazing point to find out that in this Yokotan dialect the word for Father is "Pop"...

Both Franz Blom and Oliver La Farge summarized the results of their Tulane expedition as:

Discovery, study and collection of data on twenty-four new buried cities...

Discovery of the tomb of a prehistoric Mayan king with magnificent carvings and hieroglyphics in it.

Discovery and photographing of 73 great Mayan carved monuments, hitherto unknown.

Discovery of thirty-two hitherto unknown Mayan inscriptions, many of them including dates vital in compiling the history of this vanquished civilization.

Filling in of many wide and puzzling gaps hitherto existing in Mayan records...what we have done is intensely valuable toward reconstructing ancient Mayan history and civilization.

The apartment they found was provided by Natalie Scott at 714 St. Peter street, which became La Farge's home in the city. Natalie was present for their arrival and press conference, together with an array of Tulane administrators, Mexican diplomats, U.S. immigration officials, and news services including officials of the Harcol Film Company who filmed Tata's arrival for the Pathe News Services, and others. Blom and La Farge wore their stained, worn jungle outfits, with bright scarlet sashes - the tribal scarves of the Bachajon tribe of Maya Indians - about their waist. La Farge was quickly integrated within...
the French Quarter community as Sam Gilmore also had his studio in 714 St. Peter street. The Old Quarter Club also made its headquarters in this building, with Natalie and Spratling only a block away. Franz Blom found an apartment on Audubon street near Tulane, but soon moved in with La Farge, eventually moving to the Pontalba building on St. Ann street.56

Natalie recorded her own impressions the following Sunday.

Two browned young men in broad-brimmed hats appeared in several posts in New Orleans on Thursday...Franz Blom and Mr. Oliver La Farge of the Tulane expedition returned from its six full months of strenuous travel and valuable discovery. There is a romantic exhilaration in looking at the little square trunks they carried...the triangular pennant of Tulane's olive and blue through twelve hundred miles of scientific promise and fulfillment. Politically... international friendships formed and understandings reached; scientifically, the touch with elusive mystery of a rich past - the twenty-two hitherto unreported ruins, the sixty-odd carved monuments, the linguistic list of six Indian languages...proofs, apparently, of several great contemporaneous centers of culture within the old Mayan empire, which existed (as this expedition brought for the first time to my knowledge!) about 000-400 A.D.;... data which gives a cross-section of the life of Tzeltal Indians, who are descendants of the ancient Mayans;... proof that the Mayan area extended 100 miles further west than was previously known. There is a collection of modern Indian arts and crafts which is to be exhibited at Tulane, and which offers jars and vases you would love, and "huipiis" of the most glorious colors and weaves. But you and I may note with equal enthusiasm that much of the trip was done on horseback, in the heart-lifting benediction of great altitudes. Even fatigue is a delight under those conditions. Haven't we ranged the Rockies together, got lost above timber-line, ridden twenty-six hours on a stretch with a ten-
minute stop; there is something delicious in the impersonal brutality of nature in the raw. Its oblivion of your very existence makes it seem a wild Nirvanah in which you fling yourself with a shuddering joy. What a long splendid fling those two have had. An infinitesimal whiff of it can give one the taste, can it not?

Natalie befriended Tata during his stay of several weeks in New Orleans, treating him with the deference due a guest of the nation. She even invited Tata, with La Farge and Blom, to dinner at the Napoleon avenue home she shared with her father and brother, where the Scotts' good natured housekeeper-cook, Pearl, regularly accommodated Natalie's tendency of bringing the odd and the flamboyant ones of the French Quarter home for dinner. Boss and Jack had read of Tata in the newspaper and were acutely uneasy about their roles as co-hosts for the very dark-skinned visitor, both being good humored about most things but conservative in accord with the social mores of the time. Referring to their Chiapan visitor as "Prince" Tata because Natalie was making such a fuss over him, they were skeptical of both the occasion and their honored guest.

Prince Tata sat at their table, enjoyed his meal, and had a thoroughly good time, entertained by Natalie's efforts to go beyond his broken Spanish to learn words of his dialect. Jack was appalled by all he witnessed: the strangely attired, backward native of the Chiapan jungle violated every tenet of delicate etiquette and eating

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habits that had always been sacred at Muddie’s dining
table. Natalie, of course, was oblivious. As Jack’s
smoldering reaction approached explosive levels, as Pearl
rushed in and out to hurry the meal along, and as Natalie’s
happy enthusiasm matched Jack’s suppressed rage, thereby
prolonging the evening, Boss alone could appreciate the
hilarity of Natalie’s innocence in bringing to this table
such an extreme example of her propensities; Prince Tata
was the ultimate endurance test for his son’s most
sensitive prejudices. Jack’s sparkling blue eyes, so quick
ordinarily to reflect humor and good will, managed to meet
the challenge, revealing none of his mortification to his
sister or the guests. Afterward, when he shared the tale
of Natalie and Prince Tata with friends and family, the
response of rousing laughter made him see the situation in
a different light, and brought more retellings with ever
more embellishments and exaggerations, a favorite tale
repeated over many Provosty-Scott clan gatherings.  

Bill Spratling was absent during the excitement of the
expedition’s brilliant return, though he may have met La
Farge the previous March. Spratling was off in Italy with
William Faulkner, who had become his French Quarter
apartment mate during November, 1924. Spratling, like
Natalie, was enthralled with the pre-Columbian discoveries.
Once back in the city, he joined Natalie at Franz Blom’s October lectures.

Spratling, La Farge and Blom, the three Tulane professors, became inseparable companions the next four years. Spratling’s interest in pre-Columbian art evolved over the coming years to a level of profound expertise. Once permanently in Mexico during the 1930s, Spratling’s entrepreneurial spirit and insatiable search for artifacts would gather over his lifetime perhaps the finest private collection anywhere of pre-Columbian art. Natalie would attain high expertise of Indian anthropology, exploring much of Southwest Mexico by horseback, her skill in foreign languages achieving functional proficiency in numerous Indian dialects, enabling her to undertake alone and to guide long anthropological expeditions. As their friendships deepened, Natalie labeled the dark-skinned La Farge with the affable nickname “Inky”, one that stuck for a lifetime.

The pre-Columbian discoveries in Mexico intellectually absorbed Natalie and Spratling, their imaginations soaring at the possibilities as they read and learned directly from these young explorers all they could on the subject. To Natalie and Bill Spratling, southern Mexico was another Egypt, another King Tut’s tomb, the antiquity of the mysterious ancients, a vast sophisticated civilization pre-
existing by a millennium the advent of Columbus and Cortez, all at their doorstep here in the New World. Spratling and Natalie planned to take their first trip to Mexico during the summer of 1926.
Natalie with brothers Jack (left) and Nauman. Bay St. Louis (Circa 1897)
Natalie, age 11. Newspaper clipping. Bay St. Louis (1902)
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Class of 1909 basketball team, Newcomb College. Hilda Phelps holding the ball. Natalie, second row on far left in light jersey, played center (circa 1908)
Portrait of Natalie Scott (circa 1912)
Natalie's parents "Boss" and Muddie". Nathanial and Martha Scott
Natalie in stage costume (circa 1916)
Natalie Vivian Scott wearing her French Croix de Guerre
MISS NATALIE SCOTT,
Winner of "Horse Show" first honors.

Natalie, City Equestrian Champion (1921)
Mrs. Oscar Nixon was the guest of honor last week at a supper given by the active members of the Petit Theatre du Vieux Carre, of which she is president. The supper was given on the occasion of the award to Mrs. Nixon of the Times-Picayune loving-cup in recognition of her work in connection with the Little Theatre.
"Newsies". Some of the volunteers who sold the fundraising "Women's Edition" of the New Orleans States (1922)
Unpaved St. Peter Street near its intersection with Royal Street. The LaBranche building is on the corner. (Historic New Orleans Collection, circa 1920)
St. Peter Street paved (Historic New Orleans Collection, circa 1922). The LaBranche building at the corner of St. Peter and Royal Streets is visible, where Sherwood Anderson stayed during his early 1922 visit. At near right is Cabildo Alley (also known as Pirate's Alley or the old Arsenal Alley) and 621 St. Peter Street, which Natalie owned during 1925. William Spratling and William Faulkner lived in the attic of the building.
Photograph of Orleans Alley (Historic New Orleans Collection, 1920). The building owned by Natalie and John McClure (626 Orleans Alley where Spratling first lived) and the next door 624 Orleans Alley (near left) where Spratling first lived with Faulkner in 1924 appear here.
NATALIE VIVIAN SCOTT:
THE ORIGINS, PEOPLE AND TIMES OF THE
FRENCH QUARTER RENAISSANCE
(1920-1930)

VOLUME II

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
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in partial fulfillment of the
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in

The Department of History

by

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CHAPTER SIX

WILLIAM FAULKNER, OLD PLANTATION HOUSES, AND
FRENCH QUARTER RESTORATIONS (1924-1925)

An unknown and obscure William Faulkner, then viewing himself as a poet, moved into Spratling's apartment during November, 1924, while Natalie was off in New York for her three month stay. Spratling explained in his memoirs.

...There was a young man named Bill Faulkner who had come down to visit the Andersons, was tolerated briefly as a house guest by Sherwood, and then shipped over to live at my house.

As it happened, the young Faulkner had once taken a job at the Doubleday Doran Book Shop in New York to help out with sales during a Christmas rush. The store was in the charge of Elizabeth Prall, the sister of David Prall, head of philosophy at Harvard. Bill formed an attachment for "Miss Elizabeth." Elizabeth, a little later, became acquainted with another young writer, Sherwood Anderson, who had enjoyed coming into the store to casually identify himself with his own books. He asked Elizabeth to marry him (ed: He was 47 and she was 40 when they married), and from there they moved to New Orleans. Bill Faulkner wrote to Miss Elizabeth from Mississippi and thereby got himself invited to visit New Orleans.

Bill was a strange young man who had yet to publish anything of great importance. The Marble Faun had come out, and he perhaps had more in common with Sherwood than most of us.

At first, Sherwood wasn't particularly attracted to this young "squirt" from Mississippi. A few days after he arrived, he suggested that, "Bill Spratling, down the street, has a room." Whereupon Faulkner came to live with me.

As I have remarked, Sherwood Anderson was the Grand Old Man of the literati in New Orleans at that
time. Living within a few doors of each other, we all became very close neighbors.¹

Before Faulkner's arrival in 1924, Spratling had moved from the Natalie Scott-John McClure house (626 Orleans Alley) next door to 624 Orleans Alley, where he gained the luxury of more space, ample room for both he and Faulkner to live and work. Natalie met Faulkner upon her return from New York, seeing much of him as she and Spratling collaborated throughout 1925 on their Old Plantation Houses in Louisiana. Spratling and Natalie drove the back roads of every section of the state in Natalie's old Buick to find and examine antebellum structures, many dating back to the French and Spanish colonial periods, some well-maintained and others abandoned to deterioration and dilapidation. Spratling sketched while Natalie made notes, conducted interviews, researched history and wrote descriptions of each place. Martha Robinson was an additional companion who went with her on these explorations of Louisiana, numerous Peggy Passe Partout columns being written as they journeyed to interesting places, visited with friends, and bounced through various adventures on the dirt and gravel roads and the ferries that then crossed and threaded through Louisiana's swamps, waterways and woodlands.²

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The book eventually covered seventy-four structures; Spratling illustrated one-half of them. They stayed in the homes of friends and relatives as they traveled. The Shadows on the Teche, home of Weeks Hall in New Iberia, was one favorite headquarters; the Scotts in Alexandria, the Provostys in New Roads, and Aunt Cammie Henry on Melrose Plantation were others. The heaviest burden of work was on Natalie, whose task was to write the book, which she organized by eight sections of the state: the east bank of the Mississippi; St. Francisville and the “Florida Parishes”; the west bank of the Mississippi; along Bayou Lafourche; Houma and beyond; the Teche country; in and about Natchitoches, and New Orleans and its vicinity. Most of the research, traveling and ground work, including substantial writing, occurred during 1925; more trips, research and writing in 1926; the final drafts and editing were finally finished during 1927, in time to be published and out in stores for Christmas shoppers. As Spratling observed in his memoirs, Natalie’s writing of the book caused her “three years of suffering”, tying her to her typewriter, but their adventures on the road were great fun, many of these occasions preserved in her newspaper accounts.3

With the addition of Faulkner to the St. Peter street neighborhood, the 1925-1926 period was arguably the
highpoint of the Vieux Carré renaissance. Roark Bradford, who wrote numerous award winning short stories and novels during the 1920's, most dealing with black culture, was working with John McClure, Lyle Saxon, and Hamilton Basso (who would also make his mark as a novelist) at the Times-Picayune; Meigs Frost and Natalie Scott were featured writers for the States. John Dos Passos had made the French Quarter his second home for book-writing, an occasional resident and visitor for the rest of the decade, and, of course, Sherwood Anderson was their undisputed leader.

Here in the French Quarter during 1925 and 1926, first while residing with Spratling in 624 Orleans Alley until July, 1925, then in the attic apartment at the corner of St. Peter and Cabildo Alley, Faulkner was transformed from a poet to a prose writer, enabling him to emerge from obscurity to recognition and success, writing his novels Soldiers Pay and Mosquitoes while also publishing a stream of essays, poems, short stories, and French Quarter sketches in the Double Dealer and the Times-Picayune. The Double Dealer introduced the unknown Faulkner this way in its January-February, 1925 issue:

William Faulkner is a native of Oxford, Mississippi. Although in his twenties he has served in a wide variety of capacities. He has worked in turn as clerk in a bookstore, postmaster and dishwasher. During the war he was with the British
Air Force and made a brilliant record. He was severely wounded. To date his literary interest has been chiefly in poetry. He has lately published "The Marble Faun" a book of poems and is about to publish another "The Greening Bough." The rubbish about the "British Air Force", "a brilliant record", and "severe wounds" were pure lies told by Faulkner apparently to enhance his standing among his accomplished friends; he attempted to validate the false story with a false limp. In time, his accomplishments would allow these falsehoods to be pushed aside, written off as literary and imaginative idiosyncrasies, another transformation he managed to accomplish during his years rooming with Spratling in the French Quarter. Anderson for one was "extremely upset to learn that Faulkner had lied to him about his war service."5

The work environment and living arrangements were equally stimulating to the multi-talented Spratling, whose productivity at least matched Faulkner's during 1925-26. In March, 1925, Spratling's water colors caused a stir at the New Orleans Art Association's annual exhibit at the Delgado Museum, sharing attention with Ellsworth Woodward, long respected nationally as the city's finest painter. Art critic Lois Dwight Lyman was particularly impressed with several of Spratling's paintings.

William P. Spratling of New Orleans has probably contributed the most original picture in the whole collection. It is a water color, "St. Peter Street in
the Morning," and is painted in a delightfully bold manner; the unflinching way in which Mr. Spratling has grasped the essentials and left the petty details to take care for themselves is more than refreshing after seeing the manner in which artists will sometimes try to crowd the whole French Quarter, as it were, onto a few square feet of canvas.

The painting of the wrought iron balconies of the Vieux Carre is an especially heart-breaking affair, at least it has been made so by a few of the interpreters of the old quarter, but Mr. Spratling goes at it in a most blithesome manner, and emerges victorious.®

Other New Orleans artists' work singled out for favorable analysis were Alberta Kinsey's "An Old Court Yard," the landscapes by Newcomb College painting instructor Will Stevens, C. W. Hutson's pastels, a portrait by Lydia Brown, the oil paintings of Adolph Kronengold, the water colors by Ellsworth Woodward. Louise Lyons Heustis, of New York, "one of the best portrait painters in the country," was also complimented.7 However, Spratling's work was singled out as exceptional.

Also during March, as the Blom-La Farge expedition was just getting underway, the Junior League of New Orleans, after its first year in existence as a charitable organization composed of young society women, held its first "Revue", an elaborate fund raising event held at the Jerusalem Temple under the direction of George Miles of New York. Natalie, a charter member of the organization, was the lead performer. The Revue was a variety show built around two one-act plays, and Natalie performed the major
role in both plays. Anita Loos, the New York author who wrote *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, and a friend of Natalie’s during her 1924 residence there, arrived in the French Quarter for several weeks in mid-March, 1925, joining Sherwood and Elizabeth Anderson at the Revue to watch Natalie perform. Natalie wrote of Anita Loos several times during her New Orleans visit.

...She is perhaps even more slight than Marie Celeste Lyons, whom she rather resembles, with her great dark eyes, and the boyish cut of her straight dark hair, that is bewitching with a face so wholly feminine and appealing...New York gave me her acquaintance as a special favor: Mrs. John Emerson, known in the literary world as Anita Loos. The scenarios which she writes in connection with her distinguished husband, Mr. John Emerson, president of the Actors’ Equity, are perhaps as well known as any in America. And she shines in other literary realms as well. Her latest creation is appearing in Harper’s, beginning with this month....

Mr. Emerson will come soon to join Mrs. Emerson here. They are great friends of the Sherwood Andersons’, and Mr. Anderson’s accounts of New Orleans have lured them here to see for themselves.

In the same column, Natalie mentioned her plans to make a trip across Lake Ponchartrain to Mandeville, a “wild scheme”, she said, to discover whether the rumors of its current early spring beauty and tranquility are true. The next week’s column revealed that Sherwood Anderson also made the trip across the Lake with a number of guests aboard a vessel Anderson chartered. The occasion inspired William Faulkner, according to literary scholars, to write
his unusual early novel *Mosquitoes*, its lively dialogue cynically treating the mix of artists and society figures in the French Quarter of the 1920s, the art patrons portrayed as virtual sycophants, using their money to step briefly, partly due to curiosity and partly because artists were in vogue, from their gorgeous homes into the bohemian world of the true artist, who the novel exalts.

The novel borrows the name "Julius Friend," the *Double Dealer* editor, for one of the characters, and features a rather absurd, comedic figure, a writer obviously based on Sherwood Anderson, as the central character, who overcomes every obstacle in the novel with a drink of whiskey while blathering strong views about the importance to society of the true artist. There are clear implications of homosexuality, though neither Friend or Anderson was homosexual, an insinuation perhaps displeasing to Anderson when the novel appeared in late 1926 and which may have further aggravated the Faulkner-Anderson friendship.

The novel has an early scene in a New Orleans restaurant where the Anderson-character holds forth with clever, very funny dialogue among friends, then introduces the reader to a cast of characters, including the moody sculptor (the pure artist), the wealthy patroness of the arts (who invites everyone for what becomes a disastrous weekend trip across Lake Ponchartrain on her yacht), the
lithe-bodied daughter, the troubled but artistic son, the rather simple minded beauty and her rough boy friend, the incompetent crew, and other literary/artistic types and drinking companions. The craft becomes marooned; the Anderson-character and his cohorts' love of drink undermines the patroness' vision of a stimulating weekend among literary and artistic figures; once marooned, there are efforts to reach shore, ridiculous searches for the missing sculptor (believed to be drowned), and other side ventures, all with the annoyance of pesky mosquitoes as a backdrop.⁹

The interest of Faulkner and Anderson scholars in Anderson’s yacht party across Lake Ponchartrain is an effort to better understand the satire of Mosquitoes and Faulkner’s early years in New Orleans.

Out of these bits and pieces of a literary career and his personal experiences in New Orleans and Europe, Faulkner in one respect reinvented himself, or else achieved what he always knew he would become, a writer. Mosquitoes, then, was a jumping-off place – for after that novel, he moved into his characteristic “Faulknerian” mode, those novels and stories of the South that reflected Oxford and its surroundings, but that also displayed a broad sense of Southern history and a shrewd assessment of its society...

Every aspect of Mosquitoes radiates out from Faulkner himself, just on the cusp of finding himself: his difficulties with women; his dislike of parasitic pretenders; his ridicule of Sherwood Anderson’s sentimental views of life; his own sense of the artist as conveyed by his portrait of the sculptor Gordon; the recurring gender ambiguities; the curiosity about
outsiders and even criminals...deep suspicions of the very thing the novel is about - how the artist may survive on a ship of fools...¹⁰

Frederick Karl, author of William Faulkner: American Writer, wrote that Faulkner “revealed personal experiences, during his stay in New Orleans, amidst an array of literary and fake-literary, deceptive, and laid-back people....Under conditions of some isolation, each individual will reveal what he or she really is.”

...Dawson Fairchild stands, in many ways, for Sherwood Anderson, who had helped Faulkner when the latter came to New Orleans. Patricia Robyn’s boyish, lean, breathless figure recalls Estelle Oldham, Faulkner’s great love ten years earlier; and, also, Helen Baird, a doomed young woman to whom he was strangely attracted. The “Semitic man” seems based on Julius Friend.¹¹

Of course, Faulkner sees himself as Gordon, the true artist who seeks to isolate himself, “...in his cunning, silence, and withdrawal - all Joycean qualities - enters into the depth of his own talents.”

There has been a minor historical question among Faulkner and Anderson scholars and French Quarter historians over the details of the Anderson yacht party. Who was on the vessel? Was there friction among the guests? Was there a storm and mosquitoes? Was the yacht marooned? When did it occur? Interested historians have differed on answers to all these questions.¹²
Half a century later, French Quarter historian W. Kenneth Holditch concluded from a 1974 interview with Marc Antony that the people on the Anderson’s yacht cruise were Faulkner, Marc and Lucille Antony, Spratling, Lyle Saxon, Sherwood Anderson, “and other ‘Creoles’…” In 1967, in his autobiography, Spratling also tried to recall who was aboard the vessel that day.

Once Sherwood had some visitors from New York, whom he wanted to do proud. Having just had an advance from his publisher, he rented a boat for a trip across Lake Ponchartrain to Covington. Besides our own gang, there was Ben Hecht, Carl Van Doren and - perhaps - Carl Sandburg. It was a great crowd and a great idea. But the day was dismal. Later it began to drizzle. The other side of the lake was swarming with mosquitoes. We came back late that evening, after a day of restrained tempers. But Faulkner had gathered material for his novel, Mosquitoes. The book was about the play between the personalities on the boat: the guys who got their noses out of joint and the guys who didn’t. I had a fine time and so did Bill. Some of us got tight. I’m afraid the great ones from New York were simply bored stiff…In Mosquitoes, I believe I also figured as one of the characters."

Elizabeth Anderson also offered her version in her 1969 memoir:

Around that time, Sherwood discovered that he had a little extra money from the sale of Dark Laughter…Anita Loos was still working away on Gentlemen Prefer Blondes, so Sherwood wanted to entertain her by hiring a yacht for a brief excursion on Lake Ponchartrain…She apologized prettily, but said she would not be able to make it…

But the party was set to go and it did. Ham Basso came, with a giddy young girl. Bill Faulkner, Bill Spratling, Lillian Marcus Friend, and Marc and
Lucille Antony were all on board, as were several girls Sherwood had casually asked along...

The first thing we found was bad weather, neither wet enough to storm and rage dramatically nor dry enough...¹⁴

Mrs. Anderson wrote so badly of Ms. Friend, even declaring, "I did not get along particularly well with her....", that it is doubtful Ms. Friend would have been invited to spend two days with Mrs. Anderson in the close quarters of the vessel.

None of the versions or remembrances place Natalie on board the yacht, though she may have been. She had already written she was going to Mandeville across Lake Ponchartrain, then, the next week, after the trip, she gave an accounting of both Mandeville, as well as Anderson’s guests and their activities on the weekend of March 15, 1925, apparently the only contemporaneous report available.

The Sherwood Andersons engineered a weekend party into the deeps of the Tchefuncta’s quiet sanctuary. The “Josephine” housed the group, which consisted of Virginia Parker, the Marc Antonys, Mrs. Kahn, Bill Faulkner, Bill Spratling, Sam Gilmore and Hamilton Basso. Everything from aquatic sports to high literary pursuits, and wood-lore, was in order on the party. They are for the most part a literary or artistically inclined assemblage; but the muses have their hardy moments, evidently: the party went swimming in the middle of the lake, last Saturday and Sunday, with Spartan indifference to the chill winds which were using it for a playground at that time. Jaunty perch in the deeps of the Tchefuncta paid penalty for their daring in coming near the hooks that were dangling for their undoing, from decrepit old wharves, or from fallen logs. Smartly plied oars cut
the water and shot a light skiff skimming along its surface; crawfish banks and flowering trees paid tribute. And all the while, the weather lent the benediction of cool, keen, clear weather.\textsuperscript{15}

Natalie’s column, on the day she wrote of the Lake Ponchartrain outing, featured a large, beautifully drawn Spratling portrait of Louise Koppel, who worked with Natalie at the \textit{States} and in the Petit Theatre productions; Natalie published the portrait to further advertise and promote Spratling’s talent.

Here is Miss Louise Koppel....She plays the leading role in the Little Theatre play to be given this week, “You and I”. The sketch is the work of Mr. W. P. Spratling, one of the professors of architecture at Tulane. Mr. Spratling’s sketches have been appearing in Architecture, The Forum, and a number of other important architectural journals, but none could be more fortunate in subject than the accompanying one.\textsuperscript{16}

Spratling’s recollections were correct that New York friends were in town during the period of the Anderson-Faulkner yacht trip. Anita Loos was in the Vieux Carré, her husband arriving near the end of March, and so was Carl Sandburg, who Natalie discussed in her next column.

Another recent arrival is Mr. John Emerson of New York, president of the Actors’ Equity, writer, dramatist, who has come to join Mrs. Emerson,...under her former name, by which she is equally known, Anita Loos. Mr. Emerson is tall, good-looking, seeming a keen man of the world...Mr. Emerson was going to talk to the Round Table Club...an autocratic telegram which called the Emersons back to New York. Their latest play, “The Fall of Eve”, will have its premiere in Atlantic City the second week in April....
Carl Sandberg, the iron-voiced modern, will be another distinguished visitor of the week. He is due to arrive Wednesday or Thursday, so the rumors in the Vieux Carré announce. Sandburg visited for a week, along with others of Anderson’s New York crowd.

There are a number of interesting people who gather in the apartment which the Andersons occupy in the Pontalba building. Last week, for instance, there dropped in to tea the Horace Liverights, of New York and national publishing fame; Mr. Carl Sandberg, and Mr. Van Doren of Century. There was a gathering of celebrities, was it not? I should include Sam Gilmore and Bill Spratling in the number. I saw Sam Gilmore dining with Mr. Van Doren in a restaurant the next evening. They have an acquaintance dating from New York....

Anderson, who had spent much of the prior six months touring the country on lecture tour, presented a lecture in New Orleans on April 23 entitled “America, A Storehouse of Vitality.” Natalie wrote of the event several times as the date approached.

...He is one of the American authors who gives a dignity and worth to American life and thought and feeling: one reads “Main Street” and “Babbitt’ and feels a wave of scorn and distaste for one’s flaccid countrymen - so runs my unworthy opinion!....

The title of the lecture stirs my attention. Mr. Anderson is not one of the apologists for America, nor is he one who thinks that the “American soul” has not progressed beyond the embryonic stage...Its soul is born, is living, needs expression, has its own individuality...gives voice to a distinctive American spirit. Most of our American writers treat us objectively, and really, we are not most alluring objectively. We have the gaucherie of youth and a permeating Anglo-Saxon self-consciousness besides. We are much nicer “from the inside looking out”...His
(Anderson’s) characters are...essentially American. Foreigners have recognized the distinctiveness, the national individuality which he expresses...His works are having a great vogue, particularly in Scandinavia and in Germany, and even Bolshevik Russia has taken time to translate them.\textsuperscript{19}

Then, her review appeared on April 26th.

Sherwood Anderson’s lecture was both amusing and stimulating...there was, besides, the play of a keen, sympathetic intelligence directed on the America of today which Mr. Anderson sees in the culmination of a definite phase which demands unremitting action, prodigies of driving physical activity and resourcefulness to whip the vastness and wildness of a gigantic untamed land into a cohesive unity....Now the physical necessities have been met, and the mental and emotional wants must be dealt with, if the tremendous vitality of the nation is to have a sane balance... presented delightfully in strong American phrases, with sympathy, and humor, and forthright sincerity.\textsuperscript{20}

Several exuberant parties marked April and early May.

A spirited new cafe named the Red Cockatoo opened on St. Peter street, absorbing the crowd of the old Sucking Calf, which dated back to Jean Lafitte’s time but was being taken in by the Petit Theatre renovations.

...a moaning, lilting, joyous jazz made its way out from the broad doors that were flanked on either side by two red cockatoos,...sounds of much laughter. Inside, Kingsley Black, and the Dupuys (Ester and Marie Elise), Ethel Halsey, Elinor McCarty, Becky Thompson, Anna Wogan, Carrie Durieux, Moussie White, and some dozen besides, were dancing away madly, to the sobbingly joyous music....Others were busy with brushes, painting impromptu frescoes on the wall, some with subtle meaning - “The God-given Golitre” was one strange phrase....A ship in full sail careening over a maiden’s bobbed hair, numerous initials, several dancing nymphs, wild cartoons, making a madly assorted ensemble. Double-arched iron doors in the back wall give out onto a cool courtyard filled with crowded tables, where a banana tree reigns in the
The crowd was very gay, and the music crashed happily on into the midnight hours to an echoing tune of laughter and merriment from the dancers. Wherefor, one is assured that the Tuesday and Fridays of the Red Cockatoo will live long and prosper.27

Then the Arts and Crafts Club held their annual Belles Arts ball, a very elaborately decorated masquerade affair for the full membership.

...a gorgeously fantastic throng...The artistic bent of the members was in brilliant evidence, for the costumes showed real originality...Olive Leonhardt had done wonders with a gorgeous Spanish shawl, draped dashingingly off one shoulder, a crownless Spanish hat of flaming red sat low on her blonde hair...An entrancing member of the ballet group was Martha Robinson...Carrie Durieux was stunning in sinuous silver, with headdress to match, and Virginia Parker...richly embroidered... Alberta Kinsey was a delightfully cunning representation of an old-fashioned girl...Katherine Hook had one of the cleverest costumes...a perfect representation of a French doll...Bill Spratling, as a dashing Arab, bearded and turbaned and short-coated, won much applause...Hamilton Basso, an alluring clown...Freddie Oeschner and dozens of others...Mr. Johnson, an Apache in a red sweater, was master of ceremonies, and there were stunts and dancing, and refreshments, and hilarity....

A third party was held at the Red Cockatoo following the closing performance of "Pygmalion" at the Petit Theatre, Natalie and Spratling being among the crowded audience, a confluence of uptown and French Quarter friends, which poured from the playhouse into the adjacent café.

...the active members enjoy nothing more than adding a dash of play for lagniappe to any venture, most particularly at the close of any week of production. Last week was no exception, and ten minutes after the curtain was down on the last act of

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"Pygmalion," there was a blare of music from the Red Cockatoo nearby; rose-colored lights, very deeply rose-colored, flooded the place...The tables, long, short, narrow, broad,...were crowded with guests; dancing, impromptu songs, long-distance repartee, were the order of the moment. The whole cast was assembled...Marian Draper came dashingly out, saucily entrancing in a jazz girl dance that won loud bursts of applause...22

Marian Draper became a successful Broadway dancer.

This was a time of heightened success and productivity for Natalie's local circle of friends, including those not so well known. Flo Field began a popular local radio show. Natalie periodically updated the progressing careers of Tommy Farrar, by then back in Paris with his artistic efforts devoted to stage and costume design, a new direction he began in New York, and Charlie Bein, who had returned to New Orleans following his successful art exhibits in New York, Cleveland and elsewhere, with his profitable work including Southern landscapes as well as decorative and sophisticated wall panels and screens.

Tommy Farrar's letters...are postmarked Paris....He went over under the direction of Norman Bel-Geddes, which in itself warrants sufficient enthusiasm... eminence supreme in Tommy's chosen line of stage scenery and costuming. Mr. Bel-Geddes is producing in Paris Manuel d'Acosta's "Jeanne d'Arc," at the request of M. Gemier...Eva LaGalliene will be the only one in the cast who is not French. Tommy will be on the other side until the end of June probably. Meanwhile, he is installed in his old quarters, familiar and dear to a number of New Orleanians, at 589 Rue Jacob, the Hotel Danube...Tommy's engagement by Bel-Geddes is
distinction: New York bristles with ambitious and talented young men who have gone years without such recognition.

Charlie Bein has come home. The success which the exhibits at New Galleries met with so signally has been followed up with a series of others, notably an exhibit in Cleveland, which was hailed with goodly praise by those whose word has weight in artistic circles. Orders have come in as fast as Charlie can fill them, faster even. He has been offered commissions for decorative panels....

During mid-May, Frederick O'Brien, author of White Shadows of the South Seas, spent a week with the Sherwood Andersons, Natalie relating in her column many of the tales this world traveler told her while “sitting easily in the big, bright, airy room in the Pontalba Building, where many interesting personalities have been, since the Andersons established their magnetic menage there.” The Andersons gave a party for O’Brien, which included Virginia Parker and Arthur Nagle, a New York artist who was the stepson of sculptor Gaston Lachaise and who married Parker six months later. Natalie also described a lunch later in the week at Galatoire’s with O’Brien, the Andersons, Mrs. Gilmer (Dorothy Dix) and her sister and sister-in-law. Spratling and N.C. Curtis also had their architectural publisher in town the same week, whom Natalie got to know. She gave a speech at Tulane’s annual fundraising banquet while also becoming interested the same week, while visiting nearby
French Quarter renovations, in the down-trodden neglected condition of the beautiful old "courtyard of the Two Sisters", at 613 Royal street, which she purchased in July, 1925.\textsuperscript{24}

Natalie introduced her readers in July to an entertaining new friend of Russian royal heritage who had fallen upon more humble times. To her readers, he was Count de Witte and his hard luck stories became not infrequent Peggy Passe Partout features.

Robbers are no respecters of Russians or royalty. I hear it told that Count de Witte was held up in the open streets the other evening...quite late. The count's proper name and title is beyond the most ambitious Anglo-Saxon tongue; the title, at least is prince, and the name proceeds to take liberties with the alphabet which no language but the Russian would dare attempt. After some time in America, he found it simpler to take the lesser title and simpler name....Those the robbers could not take from him...he had little money on him at the time, and smiled engagingly at the robbers, who took the little that he had with him, and were enraged at the slight quantity thereof.

"So that," says the count in telling of it, with his slight lisp and foreign accent, "I thought they would hit me on the head, because they were so cross of that."

We are rather isolated as a whole from the wave of Russians, which the revolutions sent spreading over all parts of the world in one of the greatest cataclysms of history. Their upper classes, who were among the most cultural, intelligent, and talented...have been scattered in the farthest limits of the earth. It is stupendous. Count de Witte is one of the very few that have come our way.

He was a guest at the A.S. Whites' not long ago, at one of their inimitable Sunday night suppers...one of the most amusing parties of the springtime....
Whether it was the beauty of the girls genus American, or...simply the thrill of the Russian music itself, the count danced. When the Russian music struck up, he was hailed, at first protesting, to the center of the circling guests; the music was too much, and in a moment, he was heart and soul and astonishingly nimble body, in the midst of the maddest, most typical, thrilling Russian dance. His audience was enchanted, and applauding and urged him on; his enthusiasm did likewise, till his occidentally correct evening dress rebelled at one knee against the oriental dance, and caution compelled him to give over! It was a memorable dance, at that. A moment later, the Volga boat song rang out and the count’s voice with it, with lusty ardor. In appearance, he is not typically Russian, but that song, that dance, fixed him indelibly as Russian wholly and indisputably in the minds of those who were lucky enough to see it.25

During their first year of marriage, Sherwood and Elizabeth Anderson had become comfortably absorbed and integrated among New Orleanians well beyond the artistic crowd, while also managing to pass the humid New Orleans summer with leisurely side trips. Their presence in 1924 and 1925 was pleasant for Natalie, since the city emptied each summer with the tide of outgoing vacationers. Natalie occasionally made note of their peaceful summer activities.

The Sherwood Andersons plan to spend the whole summer here. They take its torrid ways more calmly than many who are native to it, and enjoy the summer amusements even more. Their latest discovery is river-boats, and they are filled with glee thereat. Mr. Anderson has already adventured to Natchez, and, when I saw them Thursday, they were in the quiver of uncertainty as to a trip to Baton Rouge by that same quaint method of travel. The trip, it seems, hinged on gasoline, for if gasoline went they couldn’t...due to some steamship regulation as to carrying passengers and gasoline simultaneously....I saw them lunching at the Green Shutter with Marie Celeste Lyons (ed: Natalie’s close friend Empsie Lyons), who went into
gales of laughter continuously, it seemed, over Mr. Anderson's tales and comments.26

During June, 1925, Natalie and Martha Robinson took off on a long road trip together, mixing business with pleasure, as Natalie conducted her research of plantation homes, while the duo enjoyed the pleasure of investigating new Louisiana places, and overnight stays with old friends in out of the way communities. For Martha, it was a vacation, free of children, on the open road with Natalie: past Houma, sugar cane fields and a sugar house to Southdown Plantation, owned by the Pipes family, "with its broad porch, turret-like at each end...," where they found children, dogs and bicycles before the adults, then enjoyed "marvelous milk, from Southdown's noted dairy, and cakes from Southdown's noted cook."

...On from Southdown, past Ellendale,...the quaint, church-like turrets of the McCullum place; through the "swamp road," and on to Morgan City, where the ferry takes you over the broad sweep of "Berwick Bay." On to the Teche Country, where the Teche itself is laid in a jagged line of smooth silver...It is level, it seems, with the land where it lies; it takes with it a cortege of trees, oaks, that reach branches far out over it, dripping gray moss towards it...there is Oak Lawn...the Teche lies just beyond....

On through Jeannerette, and Patterson, with the brick-pink of the Williams everywhere in evidence...through Franklin, patrician, well-to-do; it has a park-like neutral ground, green, tree studded, the length of its main street...and New Iberia, smart, progressive....

The "Shadows of The Teche," the home of Weeks Hall, which is known the country wide inadequately in
the film, "The White Rose,"...had fallen into the decay...Weeks Hall is an artist, however, and the place held for him all the promise and possibilities which canvass and colors might present:...now it holds you perpetually spellbound with its beauty...There is a sharp slope back of the house, with the Teche quiet at the base of it; gigantic oaks are set there, and cover it wholly with their foliage....

There is St. Martinville, quaint and sleepy, sleeping by the sleeping bayou,...the street sound the soft staccato of Creole French. There is Grand Couteau, with the quaint old cemetery, its monastery, and its mile-long avenue of trees...the convent gleaming white beyond its colorful garden..."Mother Lynch!" And talk at once of Mother van Rodenstein, and Mother Monrose...all names familiar with those who have memories of the Sacred Heart Convent...

There is Lafayette, where the Nickersons keep lavish open house, and greet you with stores of pecans, and refreshing drinks....

...Opelousas, with its courthouse, and its fine war monument, and its fountain....

There are worlds of friends...in evidence in New Iberia. The Pharrs dispense hospitality in the manner that is famous...Mr. Porteus Burke, who inherits the talent of the raconteur...Perry Burke, his nephew...the Archie Campbells,...the "Judge"...Alphonse Hitter, a storehouse of accurate information....

Two weeks later she and Spratling were off on a drive to St. Francisville, where they stumbled upon a party for Regina Lester, who was to be married the next week.

Life at "Waverly," the Jack Lesters' home, is full of excitement of its own. Imagine finding a brand new calf to welcome you after an absence of a few days. The diversified thrills of chickens, of hunting dogs, of Jersey cows, and fresh vegetables, can constitute an exciting life....

The St. Francisville country has close ties with us...the home of "Mrs. Pipes' sister," the next, Dr.
Leak’s house...Mrs. Burthe’s house, far back up on a hill...Butlers, and Lawrasons and Barrows....

The country seems wholly strange, no part of Louisiana. The town of St. Francisville is chiefly two long streets, winding along a high sand ledge, between deep ravines that are riotous with flowering vines... fascinating houses, small for the most part, but frequently showing a trace of fine architectural tradition. The roads all about it dive down, mount up, precipitously, with red gullies, or calm streams far below, where a blue heron stands elegantly statuesque....

Spratling and Faulkner left for Europe the first week of July, a trip made with little advance planning except for Spratling’s destination of the island of Majorca for two weeks, then Spain and probably Paris. With so much work to be done on their book, he did not tell Natalie of this trip until they were off on their St. Francisville excursion. Natalie passed on this piece of social news this way.

Various rendezvous have been made within my hearing with Bill Spratling....He mildly mentions his latest plan of leaving for Europe within the next week. He will sketch on the island of Majorca for two weeks or so, then he will spend two or three weeks in Spain, and from there run up for a week or so in Paris, where he expects to meet a number of friends. From there he will sail for New York in the early fall, in time to return for the architecture classes which he conducts at Tulane.

There are two artists whom New Orleans knows that are already in Majorca, whom Bill plans to meet there. They are Conrad Albrizio, the architect who occupied an apartment in Orleans alley for some time, and who was in the office of Rathbone DeBuys...and Ronald Hargrave whose etchings of the French Quarter are among the best interpretations of its charm which have yet been rendered. Mr. Albrizio has been studying
painting with Italian masters since his departure about two years ago.²⁹

More details surfaced in Natalie’s column of July 12th, 1925, which appeared after Faulkner and Spratling had left on their voyage.

Artistic circles are sorely depleted by the last week. Bill Spratling the artist, and Bill Faulkner, poet and novelist, left together on the S.S. "West Avis" for Genoa, and will be gone for several weeks. Bill Faulkner has just recently finished a new novel, and has had a number of poems published, which have been well received. His newspaper sketches are very good reading, too. The house at 624 Orleans Alley has been the scene of their artistic achievements - Mr. Spratling’s have already been chronicled,...That particular building seems to exert a magnetism for artists: Mr. Hilton Smyth is occupying Bill Spratling’s apartment during his absence, and is in a fair way of finishing his own last novel...Bill Spratling and Bill Faulkner plan to travel in Italy, in Spain, and in France in the course of the next few weeks.³⁰

Finally, during August, Natalie received a postcard from Faulkner informing her they had safely arrived in Italy and that their first destination was Rapallo.

...in Italy, where lakes are beautiful, set in the midst of abruptly rising mountains, with a white city hugging the shores of the lake, and etching graceful spires against the sky line, little white houses caught in all the crevices on the mountain-side...It is there that Bill Spratling and Bill Faulkner went, immediately after landing on the other side. Their voyage, by the way, was longer than expected by several days. They sailed from here, to land in Genoa, you remember. Bill Faulkner’s card, written in his fastidiously perfect, small characters, tells the reason of their choice: they went to see Ezra Pound. Teasingly, he makes no comment on that interesting literary figure after having found him...he has bought a knapsack - baggage “pour le sport,” as he writes – and plans to walk from Genoa to
Paris. Bill Spratling, however, more limited in time, is going directly on by more usual means of travel, to Spain, where he intends to visit the cities in the northern part, rather a hasty glimpse, before he goes on to Paris, and thence to New York and home. Bill is a chronic traveler; this is his third or fourth successive summer trip abroad, and he speaks always as though he contemplated an endless succession of them yet to come. Isn’t it nice to be so cavalier with Fate?31

Coincidentally, Faulkner’s postcard arrived in New Orleans the same week that Franz Blom and Oliver La Farge returned from their Tulane expedition, with Prince Tata accompanying them to the fascination of a nation. The same column also made further mention of her amusing White Russian friend, Count de Witte.

For rapid departures, that of Vasilievitch de Witte, Prince Dalgorouky Narishkine, was equal to any...Vasilievitch had engaged passage on the S.S. Cariton, which touches in Spain and lands in Italy, his destination. It was not expected to leave until Saturday morning....The departing count had planned every moment of his time carefully up to the hour of sailing Saturday morning. Whereupon, at Thursday noon, the ship coyly changed its state and decided to leave on Friday instead. Figures nous. He travels like a European, with much luggage, two trunks, suit case and so on ad inf. But close your mind’s eye to the vision of that rush.32

Sherwood Anderson’s new book Dark Laughter, appeared in September, the book, dealing with black culture, that he had wanted to write since arriving in New Orleans. Natalie kept track of the New York reviews and found them to “range in tone from approval to enthusiasm.” She bought the book
and took it with her to read on a plantation outing in late September with Bill Spratling.

It is before me now, and promises my Sunday afternoon's entertainment, the idea being that an artistic friend and I shall sally forth, he with sketching pad and I with my book, shall drive to the neighborhood of a bayou we approve and there I shall read ignoring him, while he wanders sketching, ignoring me.

In the next paragraph, she added:

Which reminds me promptly that Bill Spratling returned Thursday evening, with achievements concrete and not so - some strikingly good sketches which he made in Europe, chiefly in Italy and Spain, but some done in France. You will see a goodly number of them soon appearing in various journals, some architectural, some otherwise.

The last number of Architectural Journal was devoted largely to New Orleans...all due to Mr. Nathanial Curtis and to Bill Spratling. There were drawings of Bill's featuring the iron-work and catching cleverly the significant appeal of it, the delicacy of its tracery, the interest of its designs. Mr. Curtis' article has to do with the Garden District of New Orleans. The Garden District has not had its due, for interest has a way of concentrating on the French Quarter, because of its age, its historical interest, and the touch of foreign spirit it introduces. But the Garden District offers features as beautiful, and as interesting in its own way, with architecture typical of its time and feeling, and Mr. Curtis presents it compellingly....

As Spratling returned, Sherwood Anderson was preparing to leave in early October on an extended cross-country lecture tour, leaving Elizabeth in New Orleans where she was working with the Antonys in their decorating shop on St. Peter and living temporarily with Natalie's close friend...
and horseback riding companion from New Roads, Joel Harris Lawrence. Elizabeth would journey to rendezvous with Sherwood at various points of the trip, including Cincinnati and New York, living meanwhile in New Orleans.

The French Quarter will soon require a bulletin all its own. It bubbles with news always...Mrs. Sherwood Anderson has had to abandon the idea of having her own home there because the number of Mr. Anderson’s lecture dates has swelled so prodigiously that it leaves him little time comparatively for his “home base.” She has leased an adorable little cottage in the 800 block in Bourbon street for the coming year and will soon be established there. Joel Lawrence plans to spend the winter with her there. One of its most fascinating features, according to both of them, is the bathroom, which is established very importantly in its own little house directly in the center of the courtyard.34

Meanwhile Natalie had purchased what she then called the Courtyard of the Two Sisters, made some improvements and began leasing apartments and also leased space for a tea-room or patio restaurant. Her friend Lillian Lewis, who had lived the previous year in Hollywood, California with Joel Lawrence working in the movie industry, was one of the new occupants, along with others.

Lillian Lewis has taken a commodious apartment in the place known as the Courtyard of the Two Sisters, which an enthusiastic real estate man describes as the “most beautiful courtyard in the French Quarter.” And I, who am partial, will not dispute it! Anyway, Lillian’s good taste is sure to make any apartment beautiful, for that matter, and her personality is sure to make it popular, so the courtyard in question will surely be frequented.

To make assurance doubly, or trebly sure, in that respect, comes the news that Mrs. W. B. Gregory is
launching a new undertaking in another part of the same place. She has leased the ground floor wing and is planning elaborate things there. A tea-room, that will be at the same time something of a catering establishment, taking orders for cakes and other delicacies, will be one of the features...She is devoting especial attention to putting on display individual work of Newcomb and Tulane students...For another feature, she has consignments from some big specialty houses in the East who have no agents here...The same may apply to the plans she has for the tea room, which include some delightful and characteristic novelties in the way of entertainment, as well as in the way of food....

Natalie was amazed at the number and nature of the business ideas Mrs. Gregory had for this new Royal street property. Mrs. Gregory came forward with more plans for her tearoom as a major church convention was coming to town.

...She is going to preface its opening by having a few friends in for tea at the Courtyard of the Two Sisters, in honor of one of the visiting delegates.... It will be a delight to see the old place go back to its proper character of hospitality and entertainment....

If tea-rooms had boots this particular one of Mrs. Gregory would be wearing seven-leaguers,...It has already evolved to the point of being a restaurant as well, with dinners served every evening in the big room in front, and probably out in the courtyard as well. One feature which has a great attraction is the promise of some pretty Newcomb girls who are being costumed...as waitresses....The courtyard is already being invaded by the forerunners of the convention and daily little knots of two, three, four, on up....It is to be running full blast when the Convention gets under way.

Natalie had purchased the property in a run-down condition, renovated a facelift, and now, only two months later, the property was blessed by reliable and imaginative tenants
who had restored the Court of Two Sisters on a popular profitable basis.

Natalie’s purchase of 621 St. Peter street during April also proved successful. This tall building formed the corner of St. Peter and Cabildo Alley. Mark and Lucille Antony lived here and their shop was on the ground floor. Spratling loved the rooftop view from the attic, so he converted the space into an apartment, which he and Faulkner moved into; Spratling occupied this rooftop studio until 1929. Natalie tripled her investment when she resold the building less than a year later, investing her profits in other property as well as the stock market.37

A party at Lillian Lewis’ Royal street apartment (on the Court of Two Sisters property) was held the night before Sherwood Anderson’s October, 1925 departure on his lecture tour, with the Andersons, Franz Blom, Meigs Frost, Natalie and Spratling among the guests. Oliver La Farge had left in mid September for New York and Saunderstown, Rhode Island, to be among family, then to Harvard for several months of archeology work before he would return to New Orleans.

...Sherwood Anderson left the next morning, to start on his long range lecture tour, which veers from Texas, all through the south and on up into a honey-combing of New England. He will be gone for two months and a half probably, and his strong, genial, kindly personality will be very much missed here the while....
For once, we are ahead of the East and the North, for Sherwood lectured here first of all. The Arts and Crafts club had its opening last Sunday afternoon and featured for the event a lecture by Mr. Anderson. The audience spilled out well into the court-yard when the hour came -....But it was well worth while standing on one foot and then the other for the whole time...the humorous voice of Mr. Anderson, and his personality added much to the words...a most felicitous beginning for the Club's work for the year.

One note which Mr. Anderson struck met a most particularly enthusiastic response...his comment on a French Quarter, his rating of it, in its present architectural condition, unique in America, as equal in value even commercially, to any other asset we may possess. The remarks happened to be very timely, for two days later...there was a meeting at the Louisiane Restaurant, of property-holders, business men and others interested in the French Quarter...Mrs. George Westfeldt has with her an interesting document....It was a translation of a Danish statute, made for her, by Mr. Blom. It is a law providing no ancient building shall be destroyed or changed architecturally without Government sanction. There are provisions for the preservation of such buildings or the restoration of them along three different lines: some the Government buys outright and restores...some the owners may restore, but the Government gives the assistance of funds and of the Government architect, whose duty it is to insure that the character of the building will not be changed; and with some the owner does all the repairs, but subject always to the approval of the government architect...we are hoping that a similar feeling may inspire some legal action here!38

Another lecture, this time on October 12th by Franz Blom at Tulane on his Mayan expedition, attracted a diverse audience, mainly faculty but also a handful of others including Natalie and Spratling. Natalie devoted a substantial section of her next week's column to the content.
The triumph of mind over matter was instanced once again last Monday evening when Franz Blom lectured at Gibson Hall, giving a resume of the six months’ Tulane expedition into Mexico...The tale was told very calmly, dispassionately, sometimes humorously, by the explorer, but it is a thrilling tale even calmly told...stirring to the imagination. To us who walk asphalt city ways, how exciting to think of twelve thousand miles through jungle, often trackless, in ever the atmosphere of uncertainty as to wild animals and peoples sometimes wilder! Such thoughts race through one’s mind, even while the less personal demand is made to appreciate the significance of some strangely carved face, cut by hands that have fallen to dust many hundreds of years ago. Isn’t it curious, too, to look at glyphs, little bars and circles, curiously contrived, and think that out of the night of ages dead a voice comes through that strange medium trying to speak to us? There was a goodly audience, Mrs. Parks and Virginia were there, Carrie Durieux, Charlie Bien, Bill Spratling, Mr. Beer (ed: head of Tulane’s Howard Library), Mrs. Ole Olsen, and numerous of others besides the Faculty....

The new department has created general interest. There are daily visitors to the exhibit which is on display on the top floor of the Tulane Science Building....

In the midst of so much involvement with important issues and large questions, Natalie’s column kept its light touch, including another chapter on the tribulations of Count de Witte, her erstwhile Russian comrade who had gone to Europe in late August.

A late phone call brought the voice of Count de Witte, blithe and cheery till I thought there must be some mistake in the account I heard that he had been robbed. But no, the account was all too true, and the robbery was responsible for his unexpectedly early return. He is a cheery soul and appeared not at all downcast, as he related the details the next time I saw him. It happened this way:
Arrived in Genoa, he took a cab with his belongings, and gave to the driver his card, with the address of cousins whom he intended visiting scribbled on it. They reached the address duly and found that the relatives in question were away temporarily as guests of the Queen in another city, and the house was in charge of a caretaker. So that the count went to call on another cousin, lunched with him and then went back to stay in the first house where he had left his belongings. The caretaker, an old family servant, was surprised to see him.

"But why did you send for your things, then, if you were coming back?" she asked.

It was then his turn to be astonished.

In brief, the villainous driver had taken his card back to the house, pretended it was sent by Count de Witte as surety for his things, and then had vanished, with everything, passport included! The papers exclaimed and protested; the police searched; but all in vain. So the Count, after a brief visit to his cousin, and another to his sister, who lives in Monte Carlo, came home again, and will be here for another three months at least, when he will be off for another, and, let us hope, more fortunate visit to his family.⁴⁰

An indication that Sherwood Anderson’s residence in New Orleans might not be permanent appeared in Natalie’s column of August 8, 1925, in which she was discussing steps needed to preserve the historical architecture of the Vieux Carré.

A committee of the kind in view is one of the dearest wishes of Sherwood Anderson in regard to New Orleans. He is away, in Virginia at present...this project plan will be a joy to him. Mrs. Anderson returned this week, and is tirelessly busy with her work in the Leonardi Studios already.⁴¹

In a subsequent column there was a hint of uncertainty in Natalie’s update of Anderson’s crowded traveling lecture
schedule when Elizabeth Anderson went to visit with him in
Cincinnati during late November.

Mrs. Anderson, by the way, has left this week to join Sherwood Anderson in Cincinnati for a short while. He has been busy for the past month lecturing and has appeared in an incredibly crowded schedule which ranged from Texas to New York, and all over the New England states. Clippings from New York papers proclaim his progress as a triumph and acclaim his successes. New Orleans, his adopted home for the moment, gleans its bit of glory from his full measure....

Natalie, Elizabeth Anderson, and Elizabeth Werlein had in concert purchased three side-by-side properties on August 26, 1925 on St. Ann street and Royal street behind the Presbytere. But the Andersons' soon changed their intentions for the property; Elizabeth Anderson sold the St. Ann street building to Empsie Lyons, who probably brokered all three transactions, on April 19, 1926, for precisely the same price as the August, 1925, purchase price. In September, 1926, Empsie Lyons resold the structure to Elizabeth Werlein, who restored the building (630 St. Ann Street) and lived there until her death in 1946.

Meanwhile, Bill Spratling had renovated the new attic apartment in the St. Peter street and Cabildo Alley building. Bill Faulkner moved in with him upon Faulkner's belated return from Europe.

Recognition of Mr. Spratling has transcended our city limits long since, of course, and it continues to
expand. I wrote you a short while ago of the interesting article which came out in the Journal of the American Institute of Architecture. Bill, as he is called when he dispenses the hospitality of his apartment with an easy efficiency which puts many hostesses to shame, has an article on Savannah that is very interesting, too, in the latest issue of the Architectural Forum and also the Southern Architect and Building News, which is fronted this month and will be fronted for several months to come, with cover designs by him.

Meanwhile...he has achieved just as creditably in a heavier medium, namely, his new apartment. He follows the new artistic trend of refusing to appear artistic in any mode of his life – that is, like Stevenson’s child of the verse, “at least as far as he is able.” So he insists on the title of apartment and refuses the name of “attic” or “studio”. Actually it is both...he took the neglected, unnoticed attic, above the Leonardi Studios in St. Peter street, got on the telephone, and in three days walls were up, bath in, gas, electricity! What a miracle to one who has struggled for weeks to get a door cut!

The place is charming, the angle of the roof cutting down to low walls into which are set transom-like openings, numerous, treated in simple decorative designs with the turns of narrow wooden molding, which is part of the French Quarter treasure. The windows look out over delightful vistas of interesting roof shapes, out over the Cathedral, out into the dome of the Cabildo. The beam of the eaves is set with pieces of pottery and bits of statuary, which offer various bright colors, as do the pieces of tapestry which Italy, Egypt, Greece and France have variously offered. It is very roomy and there are tables and shelves of books, big comfortable chairs, and off in an angle, conveniently, a big work table. It is a charming place for tea, and quite worth the four flights of steps one climbs to get to it."

Here Faulkner would write *Mosquitoes* and Spratling would conceive, organize and illustrate *Sherwood Anderson and Other Famous Creoles*, with Faulkner writing the introduction in a prosaic caricature of Anderson’s style.\(^4\)
By the end of 1925, Natalie had visited between seventy-five and a hundred plantation homes, most of those accompanied by Spratling. Old Plantation Houses in Louisiana, according to a Lyle Saxon column in October, 1925, was scheduled for publication in the spring, 1926, although Saxon's information was probably not entirely accurate. Spratling's practice was to time such publications for the Christmas buying season. Furthermore, after the Franz Blom-Oliver La Farge expedition and October lectures, both Natalie and Spratling planned trips to see Mexico for themselves. An October-November, 1926, publication date was the most likely plan.46

Though the book's original concept was probably anticipated by Spratling to be a vehicle for his illustrations, the opposite result was true of the final product. As demonstrated by sections of Natalie's letters from Europe during the World War, as well as her columns about the French Quarter, Europe and other places, she possessed a talent for descriptive prose reflecting an incisive depth of knowledge of architectural history and design, site analysis, style of decor, decorative terminology, and landscaping, as well as keen appreciation for conceptual beauty and good taste. Either the decision was made to illustrate only the major structures, relying
Natalie surprised Spratling by her remarkably thorough and comprehensive approach to the project, including in the book many more structures than he anticipated.

Natalie meant for the project to include a complete collection of the significant structures from each section of the state, analyzing the breadth of variations, the current condition, the distinctive character and value, historical background and anecdotes, and the apparent future of each house. By this approach, the book encouraged preservation efforts and focused attention on the instances of neglect, of decay, of restoration, and the danger of historical, cultural and architectural loss if steps were not promptly taken to save certain structures, much the same cause as was being fought to save various French Quarter structures. One Spratling biographer, Taylor Littleton, offered this analysis and evaluation of the book.

The book may originally have been projected as more comprehensive in its illustrations than it turned out to be, for although all of the seventy-five houses are discussed, some more than others, only thirty-four house drawings were printed. What Saxon called Scott’s “sprightly style and sure approach” are consistently evident in her informative pictorial descriptions of the factual and anecdotal history of each house, its garden environs, its most distinctive architectural details, and its current state of repair—sometimes sadly declining. The drawings are not consistently of the finest quality among Spratling’s work as an architectural artist, and some
of the heavier pencil lines do not reproduce well, with the dark surrounding foliage in the black and white reproductions sometimes obscuring the house structure itself. But a few show a given house in an impressive perspective, such as “Woodlawn” and “Oakley” and there is occasionally a fine line of clear column and ornamentation detail, such as that of “Belle Grove.”

All of the illustrations, however, suggest a certain gloomy elegance, which to a mind less sympathetic and romantic than Miss Scott’s, could even be construed as “somber and dead-looking,” as Edmund Wilson described his first view of “The Shadows” at New Iberia--one of the finest of all the old Louisiana homes--on a windy March day in 1926, a few months after Spratling had drawn it: the “Great gray skull of a plantation house against the gray stormy sky and the gray waters of the Teche, stripped of its columns and unpainted.” But by the time the book was published, those columns had been rebuilt and shone white under a fresh coat of paint, and the text praised the restoration efforts of the owner, Weeks Hall, as well as those of several New Orleans architects whose work in that direction was helping salvage a portion of multi-cultural history important to the country.

To Saxon, the whole book could be seen as part of the preservationist movement in which “Mr. Spratling and Miss Scott are tremendously interested,” and to N. C. Curtiss, who furnished a brief preface, the volume was important for its “sincerity” and the truthful impressions it conveyed of an historic and highly distinctive group of buildings in an early state of decay; it was “the first real book on Louisiana Architecture.”

Natalie was deep into the writing of Old Plantation Houses during the first half of 1926, simultaneously writing her column for the States and doing her staff work for the Double Dealer. She persevered through the distractions of Mardi Gras, the return of Oliver La Farge to the apartment at 714 St. Peter street, the return of
William Faulkner to New Orleans and Spratling’s new attic apartment, at 621 St. Peter, the return of Sherwood Anderson from his lecture tour, and the extended visits to the city of John Dos Passos and Edmund Wilson, among others, all of which had a multitude of social implications irresistible to Natalie and pertinent to her newspaper responsibilities. 48

Natalie’s writing of the book was interrupted, and the publishing of Old Plantation Houses in Louisiana was delayed for a year, until the fall, 1927, because of the double tragedy which struck Natalie’s family during June, 1926.
CHAPTER SEVEN

TRAGEDY, MEXICO, AND SPRATLING AND FAULKNER'S LITTLE BOOK (1926)

The heavy, handsome four drawered bureau stood in the front bedroom of the high-roofed, broad-porched cottage style home of Sidonie and Nauman Scott at 1144 Barrister street in Alexandria, the house they had built in 1915 during the second year of Nauman’s law practice in Alexandria. The house, particularly the floor plan, looked a lot like the Bay St. Louis home Nauman and Natalie had lived in as children. Muddie had suggested the model, sending him a photo of the old place, with some of her remembrances written on the back, when he was planning the construction.¹

The master bedroom, at the front left side of the house opening onto the main hallway near the front door, was glorious in its features. Two sets of french doors adjoined the bedroom to a bright office and nursery, served by five windows and a private outside entrance, and to a comfortable bathroom, its outstanding feature being the most delightful shower in Alexandria, a soothing luxury Nauman loved - hundreds of firm lines of needled water shot from the plumbing on three sides in addition to the generous flow from the shower head, thereby spraying the
body from all directions. Two high windows, the bed between them, rose from the floor of the bedroom, looking out upon the front porch where two heavy wooden rocking chairs were set at ease before the front garden and the wide side yard, a lovely place for quiet conversations beneath the evening stars. The rocking chairs had been Nauman and Sidonie’s gifts to one another when they moved into the house. The master bedroom had a handsome fireplace and mantle surrounded by bookshelves with a sitting area before it. Beside the bed was the handsome, finely finished, mahogany bureau with four drawers.

In almost twelve years of marriage, five children had been born, the oldest and the youngest were boys, the middle three were girls. The oldest Nauman II, would have his tenth birthday on June 15th, 1926, the planned gift from his father being a model 12, twenty gauge Winchester pump shotgun. The youngest was Bino, born in October, 1925, then less than eight months old. The second child, Be’, born in 1917 during the war and Natalie’s god child, was almost eight. The third child, Martha Adele, named for Muddie and nicknamed M’Adele, was not yet five. The fourth was Natalie, named for her aunt and three years old, usually called Natié.

Nauman had been in law practice for twelve years with the older Louis Hakenjos, who was nearing retirement, but
two other partners had been added, Ledoux Provosty, Sidonie's younger brother, and Camden Staples, Mr. Hakenyos' brother-in-law. Their clients included local magnate Joe Bentley, the Guaranty Bank, various oil and gas clients, land companies, and numerous local businesses. One client, Parish Fuller, who was in the timber business, retained Nauman Scott after observing him represent an opposing party in a lawsuit. Fuller lost the suit to Nauman's client and retained him afterward.

When the war ended before he was sent to France, Nauman remained in the Army Reserve retaining his war time army commission and receiving a peacetime promotion to first lieutenant. Professionally, he devoted himself to his law practice, avoiding any other business opportunities that might divide his time. Despite Nauman's successful legal career, his fondest hope was to retire early to a country home he hoped to build south of Alexandria in the picturesque area around Rosalie Plantation.  

Nauman Scott was a romantic, in this respect much like his sister Natalie, a product of the strong influence of his mother. His avocation was reading, particularly history and poetry. He grew up exploring Bay St. Louis on horseback, providing his son Nauman a horse because his own childhood memories were so pleasant. Though not serious about hunting or fishing, he preferred hunting. His easy
disposition was mild-mannered, not gregarious, an occasional drinker who enjoyed games of bridge and canasta. He once was provoked by a personal transgression to challenge a local judge to duel but the matter was peacefully resolved with a handshake. No other evidence of personal animosities exist. He had one secretary for the twelve years of his Alexandria law practice, Mrs. Emile G. Turregano.

Nauman’s routine each morning was to walk the fourteen blocks from his Barrister street home on the outskirts of town, crossing the railroad tracks, to his downtown office in the Guaranty Bank building. For social occasions, he enjoyed a white suit, his hat a straw katie, often with a bow-tie. His kids learned to swim by being thrown into the large pool at the new nine-hole golf club, a converted plantation home a few miles from town, then floating around kicking their feet while hanging onto an innertube held by their father. Nauman’s family was his life and his only real ambition, his plan being to educate his children in the best schools of America and England. A devout Episcopalian, the only substantial conflict with his wife Sidonie had been his discomfort with Catholic Church requirements that his children be raised Catholic, and his mother-in-law’s insistence they be educated in Catholic
schools. After his death, Sidonie moved Nauman II to the public grammar school as a belated concession.¹

Nauman had been troubled for years by a death premonition so serious that he invested heavily in double indemnity insurance, a precaution that would prove providential when financial conditions became desperate during the Depression years. The depth of his premonition, and his familial concerns, were expressed in a 1924 sealed letter to his wife held in his safe deposit box in case of his death.²

On June 14, 1926, after a weekend with the Provosty family in New Roads and a three hour evening drive back to Alexandria, the automobile was unpacked, including removal of the .38 caliber revolver Nauman carried in the automobile on long road trips. He put the loaded pistol on top of folded soft clothing in the top drawer of the heavy, darkly finished mahogany bureau beside the bed. There was a brief visit from neighbors as they unpacked, the visit extending for awhile after the children were asleep, finally leaving Nauman and Sidonie to retire for the evening. By 11:15, Sidonie was in bed chatting with Nauman. The Alexandria newspaper reported in the morning what happened next.

Mr. Scott sat on a chair by the side of the bed to remove his clothing, and had just reached for his
nightclothes, which were in the drawer. He was conversing with Mrs. Scott all the while, and she relates that simultaneously with the dropping of his heavy bunch of keys into the drawer the pistol exploded, sending the fatal shot through the front of the drawer and into his body.

...The muzzle of the gun was directly against the front of the drawer, making a clean hole upon entering, but splintering the outer surface of the wood....

Help was immediately summoned, and in a few minutes three physicians had charge of the case, but it was soon found that the wound was fatal, and death ensued in about forty-five minutes. 7

Dr. King Rand tried to save Nauman, but he went into shock and died quickly. The news went out through the neighborhood, bringing shocked friends to the home; one child who awoke was taken for the night to the nearby Franklin White residence. Ledoux Provosty lived across the street and was there with the doctors as they tried to save Nauman. He took charge of family matters, placing calls to the Scott residence in New Orleans and his family in New Roads. A telephone call awakened Jack Scott on Napoleon Avenue, who finally managed to reach Natalie in Galveston by long distance phone during the middle of the night. She left immediately for Alexandria while it was agreed Jack would remain in New Orleans with Boss. The New Orleans States’ Tuesday evening headline read “Mr. Scott Is Accidentally Killed,” repeating much of the information from the Alexandria Town Talk, but adding:
Miss Scott was visiting in Galveston when she heard of the death of her brother. She left Galveston for Alexandria early Tuesday. The father, N.G. Scott, is ill at his home on Napoleon Avenue, and friends and relatives feared the shock of the news would aggravate his condition.

Nauman Scott died just before midnight on Monday, June 14th. His son, Nauman II, was awakened the next morning, his tenth birthday, early around 6 a.m. by adults, and told of his father’s death. Almost three quarters of a century later, the moment remained in turmoil.

I was overwhelmed when my father died. I didn’t understand at all. I was sleeping when they came and woke me up. I don’t remember who it was, but the house was just packed with people. It must have been about six o’clock in the morning and he had been dead for probably six hours. I don’t know which side of twelve o’clock he died, but he died on the 14th. When they got me it was an awful long time and there was a lot of people in there. A lot of people came from all over. They had time to dress and get themselves there....

They told me I had to dress. Of course my mother didn’t do it. She was absolutely out. Mom took us all to New Orleans for the funeral....

There was a Masonic funeral held in the living room of the Alexandria home that first day, the coffin draped with an American flag. Natalie and the family boarded the train that took the body to New Orleans for the funeral on Tuesday and the burial in the family plot in Metairie Cemetery.

Boss never recovered from the shock of his son’s death. Nauman Jr. recalls the family staying in New
Orleans in his grandfather’s home, and a family friend, Angela Alexander, taking the children back to Alexandria by train while his mother remained in New Orleans. Ms. Alexander told them in route that Boss, their grandfather, had also died. Though it seemed to Nauman, Jr., recalling the chronology after the passage of seventy-one years, that the trip back to Alexandria was only a day or so after his father’s New Orleans funeral, actually almost three weeks had passed. Boss died on July 6, 1926 from heart complications. The last three weeks were the saddest of his life. They were also the saddest of Natalie’s life.\textsuperscript{11}

Distraught over Nauman’s death, she and Jack struggled to bring comfort to Boss and Sidonie, and to care for the five children. Then after three weeks, Boss died and there was another funeral and burial. Ordinarily, her father’s death at age 77 would have been far less painful and in the natural course of things. But in the aftermath of her brother’s death, it was a cruel blow. Natalie’s uptown and French Quarter friends tried to help. She kept some of their letters. Lyle Saxon wrote on Friday, three days after news became known:

\begin{quote}
My Dear Natalie:

I’ve been trying to get you on the telephone, but exchange reports that “the line is out of order,” - so I take that you had the line plugged in order to avoid the thousand and one calls you must be getting.
\end{quote}
Poor old child! I’ve been thinking about you constantly. And I’ve been wanting to talk to you. Not about what has happened, because there’s nothing I can say that would not be futile. But just to talk to you.

I wonder if you’d like to slip down to St. Peter Street Sunday morning and eat breakfast with Bill (Spratling) and me? Just the three of us, in my apartment, with Nubian Louis making an omelet or something....

However, if you don’t feel like coming yet, or if there is any reason why it is impossible, just don’t bother to answer this. In this case, “silence means dissent.” I do hope your father is not too broken to pieces about Nauman’s death...I find myself hoping that he is like my grandfather - with sort of a veil between himself and the world - something that keeps the suffering away from him.

My love to you, and to Sidonie.

Always your friend.

(signed) Lyle Saxon

Another from Flo Field:

My dear Natalie -

I cannot tell you how distressed I am for you - in your sorrow - It seems to me the stronger the heart - the stronger the blows it must bear - The love of all your friends pours so fully to you and yet -

"Words are so weak-
When love hath been so strong
Let Silence speak:

"Life is a little while and
love is so long;
a time to sow and reap
and after harvest - a long
time to sleep -
But words are weak-"....
Count de Witte, the Russian friend she loved to tease in her column, was with his family in Europe but wrote moving letters after Nauman Scott’s death, then another after Boss’ death, the first signed “Bill” and the second as “Willy”.

My dearest Natalie-

The news of the decease of your dear father has filled my heart with the deepest regret. The City loses in him an ornament of the old days, his circle of friends a devoted and good heart, and the family an excellent father, and you dear Natalie have to bewail the loss of these qualities combined...May Providence comfort you for the bitter loss with which, in its wise decree, it has been pleased to afflict you. I beg you at the same time to believe me when I say, that in all cases whether in joy or sorrow, in good or evil fortune, no one can take a more sincere interest in your fate than I do. My heart goes out to you - if a trip would do you good - my home is always open to you...you will love my dear aunt Princess Eugenie...We are now poor but, Natalie, our heart does never change and you always will feel at home...

May God be with you dear - poor Natalie.

Your ever affectionate friend.

Willie

W.S. de Witte'

Natalie and Jack had lost both parents and their brother, all within four years. The impact would change the course of Natalie’s life; her connections with New Orleans were drastically altered, a severing process influenced by other compelling factors that would lead by 1930 to a new life in Mexico. In the aftermath of the
double tragedy, additional complications added to the hardship. Nauman’s life insurer, due to the double indemnity accidental death provisions, was obliged to investigate. Had there been a suicide? There were many questions and interviews, in part due to the unusual sealed letter Nauman Scott had written to Sidonie in March, 1924, discovered after his death in his safe deposit box. Highly personal, the letter was remarkable. The first paragraph added fuel to the investigative fire:

March 16, 1924

My dearest little Mush,

As I entertain certain convictions and wishes and desires above all things to safeguard the future for you and my little folks in the event that in this “realm of chance” I “may untimely meet an end”, I have made the following memorandum of those things which I wish and which I think should be done by you, feeling that they will by you be given some measure of respect, even though I then be, except in the memory of those who may love me, as if I had never been.

The letter’s first section dealt with his recommendations for use of the insurance proceeds, proposing she “invest in safe securities, such as Homestead stock..., approved municipal bonds, first mortgages...”, recommending certain friends as her financial advisers; the investment proposals proved prophetic when the stock market crashed three years later. At this point, he added:

If you have the means, I want you to travel to those places abroad where, amid scenes of beauty and romance, we used to dream of spending enchanted hours
together on our second honeymoon, and try to think of me then as being with you in the flesh as I will always be in spirit. Keep the joy and beauty of life that my children will know you as I have known you, as "a star ashine to guide me", and a blessing to mankind; as one pure, sweet, beautiful, and holy as the angels, where there is no room but for love, admiration, and respect. My dearest wish is that my little girls, with your example before them, will emulate you, and then I will have no fear for them or, through them, for the "honor of the family"....

The second part of the letter asked that his portion of "any estate which 'Boss' may leave, I expect and desire shall be returned to Natalie and Jack...."

It may be that I shall 'shuffle off this mortal soil' before the call comes to Boss and if so, I know that you will remember the hard life which he has had, what he has done so cheerfully for me, and what few pleasures have been his reward. I know that I can depend on you to give him what I would like to give, and that he will have in you the loving care as if you were his own child, not only for his own sake, but for the sake of him who asks it. Also I need not ask that you will do what you can for Natalie and Jack, to help them out when they need it, and ask them for my and Muddie's sake to reunite the family more closely than it has been for these last few years, before it is too late.

Other sections dealt with his detailed recommendations for the education of his children, his request that they wait until age 25 to marry, and other concerns for their upbringing and moral standards. There were many quite clear references to his anticipation of an early death, unique enough to bring more questions.

And now little Mush, I need not say in bringing this to an end, that to you and Muddie I owe what the best of life has brought me. And if my end be early, as indeed for many years it has seemed that it would be, let it be some pleasure for you to know that,
could I change it for a new start somehow, that I
would not change it one iota for fear that you might
not find a place in it...for like the sun to Manfred,
you have been the “source of light and life”. There
can be no true heaven for me until you too have passed
“beyond the veil” to join me in that “awesome
place”....

And do not grieve for me...But consider that a
million years have passed, and a million more are yet
to come,...My little span of life is not an atom in
eternity and our separation is not for long. I have
largely through you tasted the joys of life, and I
have not lived to know the sorrows of later years, nor
felt the care and anxieties of increasing age, nor the
bitterness of disillusionment. I go, perhaps, in the
full tide of life...you can always think of me in my
best years....I want you to think of me as I have
been, at my best, when “life and love are fair”. And
in the garden among the flowers, and on those
moonlight nights we used so much to admire, you will
feel my spirit, if there be in truth another world,
hovering near the loveliest presence outside Paradise.

And now, my dearest Treasure, for indeed the last
time, I wish for you a life of unstinted happiness,
which should be the lot of one such as you, and be
assured always that if the soul be eternal and love
can be immortal, in Realms above I wait for you
forever more.15

The physical evidence defied any conclusion of
suicide. The hole in the bureau drawer, obviously from the
inside out, was compelling evidence; the nature of the
fatal wound and the route of the bullet, as detailed in the
death certificate, ruled out suicide. No unusual behavior
or events preceded the accident. If one was to commit
suicide, the gun would not be fired at such an angle into
the body and there would be powder evidence; furthermore, a
suicide would choose a better occasion for self-destruction
than in the presence of his wife on the eve of his son's birthday. Furthermore, the letter confirmed an irrefutable fact: Nauman Scott deeply loved his wife and family, and cherished the blessings of his life. In short, he was a very happy, successful man.¹⁶

When the last interview had been conducted by the insurance investigator, Sidonie Scott stepped out the back door of her home and sat on the steps, exhausted by the trying events. Her son Nauman approached and sat quietly beside her, then handed her a note he had written, which read, "My father was a great man." She kept the note with her husband's letters in a desk drawer, always available to re-read, for the balance of her life. The insurance company, satisfied the death was an accidental tragedy, paid the proceeds of the insurance policy without any dispute.¹⁷

The second complication was the legal process involved in Boss' estate, which Natalie and Jack knew could not amount to much. Natalie and Jack each received one-third the proceeds of a ten thousand dollar life insurance policy. Otherwise, the sale of the house, then payment of the mortgage and other indebtedness, balanced the modest estate, and, after a two year administration, paid nothing more to Jack and Natalie.¹⁸
Natalie did not go to Mexico the summer of 1926. Instead, she traveled back and forth between New Orleans and Alexandria, joining Ledoux Provosty in helping Sidonie with her children and the household, while also working to finish *Old Plantation Houses in Louisiana*. True to form, she resumed writing *Peggy Passe Partout* before the end of July. Bill Spratling delayed his departure but left by ship for Mexico the last Friday in June. He returned for a short business trip to New York in August.19

In New Orleans, Natalie found relief in a busy schedule. She resumed writing her column, spent much time in Hilda Hammond’s busy household, and enjoyed the French Quarter friends who had not left for the summer, including Oliver La Farge and Franz Blom, who were rooming on St. Peter street together. Subsequently, Blom secured his Pontalba apartment, then Keith Temple, the *Times-Picayune*’s young political cartoonist, became La Farge’s roommate. Natalie took brief excursions to the Gulf coast with the Hammonds, who leased a small house there; she joined Lyle Saxon, Will Stevens and Charlie Bein at the Natchitoches Art Colony, and she attended Oliver La Farge’s lecture, sponsored by the Orleans Club, on July 17th at Tulane. Carrie Durieux was in New Orleans with her husband Pierre and her son Charlie during July and August, staying with
her parents in their renovated home on Bourbon street. They were leaving Cuba and going to Mexico City in August for a couple of months, then making Monterrey, Mexico their new home. The two planned for Natalie to visit once they were settled.  

Nothing was done to produce another issue of the Double Dealer, the work on the last issue, which proved to be the last issue, had been finished before Nauman’s death in June. H. L. Mencken, publisher, author and the nation’s best known social commentator on the foibles and nature of the American scene, was concerned enough about the Double Dealer’s demise to visit the city in October to try to revive it. John McClure hosted a party on his behalf at his 626 Orleans Alley home. But the magazine was not resurrected. Other literary visitors to the city that month included Kenneth Roberts of the Saturday Evening Post, who Natalie socialized with in the French Quarter, and H. C. Forbes, the nationally syndicated financial columnist, who she met during a Pass Christian week end on the coast. She also continued her advocacy of Le Petit Opera Louisianais, an effort to preserve the opera tradition in New Orleans. Spratling escorted her to see the opera in early June before Nauman Scott’s accident, and she was very pleased with the quality, a “cleverly varied program, alternating light and heavy opera, with a touch of
the opera ballet.” The opera’s fall premiere in October included six operas performed in the old Dauphine Theater beginning with “La Boheme” and “La Navarraise”, an occasion she strongly publicized.21

Amidst all the autumn activity, there was a disquieting note for the French Quarter. Lyle Saxon, eager to move from journalism to fiction writing, ended his association with the Times-Picayune in order to relocate in Greenwich Village nearer to national book publishers. He left in mid-October, 1926, as Natalie reported.

Farewells have been ringing all too steadily of late. They have toned all the talk with Lyle Saxon of late, and came to a climax last Monday evening, when that able ex-journalist stepped on the train to New York. Newspaper work is to know him no more for the present, for he has become absorbed in the task of finishing his book. His friends and the yet wider group which numbers those who know his work applaud his decision to devote his time exclusively to this task for the immediate future, particularly when we learn that the title to the book is “Plantation People.” Mr. Saxon's story, “Cane River,” was of such arresting excellence, from every point of literary and psychological view, that it seems that more must inevitably be forthcoming from a source so rich....

Local approval has been supplemented by substantial appreciation from points of greater perspective; it develops that “Cane River” is being considered by the O. Henry prize committee, as among the chosen few in line for the first and second prizes annually awarded by them for short stories of greatest worth appearing during the year, and is to appear in their published collection of these stories.22

Natalie left by ship for Tampico, Mexico, just as Saxon was leaving by train for New York. Among the final
notes she left behind for inclusion in her coming columns was Bill Spratling’s new plan for a publication. Since their collaborative book, Old Plantation Houses in Louisiana, was delayed in the aftermath of Nauman Scott’s death until the 1927 Christmas season, Spratling came up with a project he could do that autumn, an idea derived “as a parody on Miguel Covarrubias’ The Prince of Wales and Other Famous Americans, which had just appeared.” News of Spratling’s little book was reported in Natalie’s column in November while she was in Mexico.

Bill Spratling is working on a series of caricatures to be called “Sherwood Anderson and other Eminent Creoles” of which there is to be on sale a limited edition of two hundred copies at the Pelican shop. Meigs O. Frost, Charley Bein, Virginia Parker Nolte, Flo Fields, Helen Pitkin Schertz, and some score of others being those about to be handed down to posterity. John McClure is included, too, I think, as well as Dan Whitney.”

Natalie would write more on the subject upon her return.

Natalie followed the same path Spratling had followed that summer on his way to Mexico City. The first stop was Tampico, where she explored the town and countryside, and sent a birthday post card to her niece Be’ Scott in Alexandria, where she had been visiting shortly before her Mexican departure. The postcard photograph depicted “Calle Bajo Mercado,” the street through the lower market place. She wrote a description for her nine year old god-child to enjoy:
...It has a great many wares to buy and even more smells which do not wait to be bought, but comes crowding thick and fast. Do you see anything there you would like to buy?...Some of these women - they are really Indian - keep charcoal fires going all the time in the street and cook quite dirty tortillas...sometimes they pile grubby looking bits of meat on it! There are pretty little baskets, and pottery jars and those you would like. What do you think of the men’s hats? This is all in Tampico, which means “place of many dogs” in a old Indian language. Lots of kisses and love. Natalie.²⁴

The next stop was Vera Cruz, and from there she took the train up through the mountains to Mexico City, the same train Spratling had taken four months earlier. Bill Spratling, in his autobiography, described this phase of his 1926 trip this way.

In 1926 came my first opportunity to explore the world of Mexico. I went there influenced by Franz Blom, who, with Oliver La Farge, headed up the Middle American Research Department at Tulane. Franz knew Mexico like the palm of his hand. He had written the two-volume *Tribes and Temples*, and his later work in Mayan archeology made him very famous. I had a contract to do articles for *Architectural Forum*, which were based on my pencil drawings of the Colonial architecture of Mexico. I boarded the boat at New Orleans and proceeded via Tampico to Vera Cruz and from there up to the capital on Her Majesty’s Special, a sort of choo-choo train which took all day. You left Vera Cruz at seven in the morning and you arrived at dark at Mexico City. I traveled in the parlor car, which was half a car at the end of the train with what they called Observation in the other half.

The train had climbed all morning from the steaming jungles of Vera Cruz, up past Orizaba. Later at a small station called Apizaco, on the plains of Apam, the fields of maguey dustily stretching into the distance, one passenger boarded the train. He attracted my attention because he wore a bowler hat, puttees over striped britches, carried a briefcase,
and wore a monocle. He came into the parlor car and we shortly struck up a conversation. My French was very poor and his English was almost non-existent. At the time I spoke not twenty words of Spanish, but we got along famously. I was informed that his name was René d’Harnoncourt and that he was then collecting antiques, Colonial furniture and so forth for a man named Sinclair. As a steady job, René at the time was working for the old Sonora News Company, selling antiques for Fred Davis. René then was the first of many remarkable friends that I was to meet in Mexico. Our friendship has continued over these now more than forty years.

Franz Blom had provided me with half a dozen cards. One to a man named Diego Rivera, another was to Frances Toor, and there was a wonderful old newspaper editor of the Excelsior named Rafael Helidoro Volle. Through Volle I met Dr. Atl, and Orozco and architects such as Obregon Santacilia, and a young Indian from Oaxaca named Rufino Tamayo, all people who now have their niches in the world of art.

Dr. Atl, even then one of Mexico’s legendary figures, invited me for lunch at the Convento de la Merced...I came away with his six-volume work on the convents and churches of Mexico, which I used for a series of articles in the Journal of the American Institute of Architects.

...people told me that Atl, with his sparkling grey eyes, wispy white beard and bald head, looked exactly the same when he had exhibitions of his paintings in 1910. Atl was also the author of books on the gold standard, on volcanology, a great illustrated book on the Paricutín, a two-volume edition of the popular arts of Mexico, and a series of four volumes of Cuentos de Todos Colores....

Among other people doing things in Mexico at that time, there was Ed Weston and Carlton Beals, author of several early but still great books on Mexico. Weston was living in sin with very lovely Tina Modotti, who, like Weston, was one of the great photographers of that period.25
Natalie wrote her own impressions of this initial journey from Vera Cruz to the capital city.

The trip up from the coast defies superlatives, - a climb in twelve hours from sea level to ten thousand feet; mad vegetation most of the way, with flowers weird and brilliant beyond the dreams of futurist artists. There are deep gulches, hair-raising sheer drops, thread-like bridges over dizzy space, and always the natives....

White haciendas, flat-roofed, with deep colonnaded galleries...Natives in bright colors, and picturesque poses, swinging along smoothly with water-jars, or lumped on the back of a tiny donkey, with sacks they are hardly distinguishable from, or perched between huge tin milk-cans.

And banana plantations, and red-berried coffee plants,...Such bougainvillea...morning glory color a heavenly blue, and pink geraniums that climb all over a soft-toned brick wall; lantana and oleander, nasturtiums, and millions of yellow flowers. Those are all along the way to the city....

Mexico City is in the midst of a fantastic landscape. When the conquerors came, it was in the middle of a lake, but that was drained. Now it sits on an eminence,...as level as a lake, from which mountains rise on every side. And strange mountains, Popocatepetl, stately cone with a thorn in its side, and Ixtaccihuatl, the Sleeping Lady, a long irregular ridge covered with white, - they melt in a haze sometimes till they seem dark blue paper silhouettes...peaks of freakish shape, and when there is no haze they seem close and formidable and even grotesque....

Train lines from the city lead out to sun-bathed suburbs. San Angel...Coyoacan...high up on the fence of a gray mountain in the gray crumbling quaint old monastery of the Diserto de los Leones.  

Natalie arrived in Mexico with the same cards and names from Franz Blom and Spratling, plus she knew a number of ex-Louisianians who resided or had business interests in
Mexico. Natalie also became very good friends with René d’Harnoncourt, Frances Toor, and Fred Davis during her two months in Mexico, having no language barrier since Natalie was proficient in both French and Spanish. As she had done from Europe, Natalie periodically sent home letters that appeared in her column, discussing her activities and the personalities she encountered in the Mexican capital.27

Natalie’s visit occurred in the midst of the Mexican government’s political and military oppression of the Catholic Church, which the Revolutionary government condemned as exploitive of the peasants and the enemy of the revolution. The oppression provoked a pro-longed, very violent religious war. The Catholic peasants of the countryside, particularly in western Mexico, formed their own armies to fight for the Church and the freedom of worship. The bloody Cristero Rebellion had already started when Natalie arrived; horrors such as wholesale executions committed by the government’s forces provoked escalating bloodshed. The internal war was officially settled by 1930 but lingered sporadically through the 1930's as the suppression continued. Murders and executions of Catholic faithful and clergy in 1926 escalated the confrontation, provoking an outraged encyclical pronouncement from Pope Pius condemning the anti-Catholicism provisions of the 1917 Mexican Constitution and calling upon all Catholics and all
nations to protest the violent outrages. Meanwhile, as violence reigned in the western countryside, conditions were more quiet and under control in Mexico City, as Natalie wrote in the column she sent home for her readers.

Perhaps you would like to hear about the wedding of Miss Sullivan...niece of the Baroness von Schroeder. It has been the outstanding event in the life of the capital for the past week. How sad it is that romance and sentiment should have their golden wheels clogged by dull affairs of church and state as in this case. The wedding was to be in the church and everything was planned accordingly, but as the clergy have not yet complied with the regulations laid down by the state, the minister could not officiate in the church and the wedding had to be removed to the house.

...Among the wedding guests...was Cecilia Slack Estes, whose beauty is reaping here the tributes habitual to it...Emily Slack Slade is back from Alexandria...She lives at twenty-four hours distance from the capital in a section blessed by nature but as yet rather scantily noted by sophisticated and commercial men, Michoacán. As she is only recently married and has moreover a host of resources within herself, and the blessing of a sense of humor and a keenly observant mind, she relishes her new home and gets great joy of riding horseback through virgin forest, of noting the curious ways of the natives, purchasing and possessing the wares which they make with untutored, but very sure sense of color and design....

Cecilia has a charming little home in one of the choicest residential sections...having wonders produced from a kitchen which has a tiled stove, with apertures for charcoal which must be kept lively by adding bits of fat pine and blowing it with a gay-colored fan....

Wallace Westfeldt is in Lorimba, which is a mountain town nestled high up on the bosom of the mountain of that name...snowily crowned...It really is a magnificent peak, and dominates the landscape for miles around. Wallace has become skilled in the lore
of Mexican topography and pronunciation of Mexican Indian names....

There are glowing memories of Mrs. Pierre Durieux, who spent several months here....

A very interesting and prominent sojourner is the Count Rene d'Harnoncourt, as he is generally known, although, in the manner of such ancient Austrian families as his, he is endowed with seven given names, and many more than that of last names...He met Bill Spratling and the Durieuxs on their respective visits...The probability is that he will spend a few days in New Orleans sometime before Christmas...bound for Virginia...the attainments of the count, who speaks all of the normal languages, such as French, English, Spanish, German, and Italian and is besides perfectly at home in various other linguistic contortions.²³

Natalie wrote two feature articles for the New Orleans States, the first, a two page essay entitled "The Crucible of Insolubles", presented a serious analysis of the cultural contradictions and challenges facing Mexico, and why this beautiful country was such a strange riddle to Americans and all foreigners. From her own experiences abroad, she had never encountered a country so difficult to gain a sense of its fundamental character and nature, as in Spain, Italy, or France, finding instead that, "as days go by, you are more and more bewildered, lost, and puzzled, and more and more helplessly you wonder, 'Where is Mexico?'"

A beautiful land, a land of contradictions, of isolation, of fantastic landscapes, land of old cultures and primitive simplicities, of alien juxtapositions that never merge: a land of graft, and stoicism, of native artistic expression perennially
native; and gentleness, and soft voices and casual killings of old traditions, and foreigners forever foreign - of hundreds of elements that meet and never mingle.

It is a proteus of lands....

"Tell me," you say to the first American you meet, "the truth about the religious question...."

And there are versions so varied from each succeeding American, Spaniard, German, Englishmen, Mexican, Indians, human, that you question. And so with every other question.

"Read 'The Plumed Serpent' of D. H. Lawrence, - Mexico through frightened eyes....Read Carlton Beals, - Mexico through partial eyes...and you see a wholly different land."

She cited the diverse opinions of those who predicted another revolution and those that were equally confident of peaceful elections. Those who remembered the pre-Revolutionary regime, "there was money, and prosperity and stability in Mexico", and their opposites, "Yes, for foreigners and favorites of the regime, but the workmen's wages meant slow starvation." As to the present government, one would approvingly speak of "increasing wages, its organized labor, its tremendous increase in the number of schools, its land reforms. And against that are marshalled tales of made-over-night fortunes of high officials, of moral corruption, of gambling debts paid with public lands."

Then the essay cites the charges of vast wealth "poured out of the country through ecclesiastical channels,
and of the vast proportion of land and wealth that remained in its power even with laws...against it. In communities of want and poverty rise magnificent convents and churches." Natalie traveled to Tepozatlan, admiring its magnificent cathedral, and Cholula, "a town of some ten thousand where there are three hundred and sixty-five churches, and Puebla, also rich with churches." But she observed:

Not a priest is in any of them now...But the churches are open, and always there are candles burning. Two Sundays ago in the evening, I went to the great shrine of Guadeloupe. It was dusk outside, dusk as well inside, but a dusk starry with the swelling yellow points of candles. The church was filled, almost entirely with Indians in their shapeless, faded and colorless garments; filled, too, with the sweet monotony of their prayers, which were led by one and then another of them. Before the altar, in the immense votive frames, candles were massed thickly, a great cluster of steady yellow flames, and in the center burned red tapers.

Many among the closely crowded kneeling figures held candles, which etched out an earnest face here and there. The light was caught in burnished points in the dim vaulted heights of the cathedral...on the dim white Carrara marble of the shrine...There was a matchless, moving beauty in the scene. Women moved on their knees painfully on the cold flooring towards the altar. One man prayed with his arms held out in the sign of the cross, a ragged old man with a lined face and patient eyes."

She cited the example of Cuernavaca, "sweet little town rambling in gray 'dobe walls, and flat-roofed houses, and riotous gardens, over the end of a tongue of land that juts
out as a promontory in a valley cupped deep into the mountains...."

At one end is a high, gray old church. At one corner is a large, beautiful old chapel, its stone carvings worn by time, which has stained exquisitely its ancient russets and golden tans. It is an unforgettable experience to stand in the door of that chapel, as the moon rises in the early evening, and to hear the chanted prayers from its dim interior.

Then there crashes the acrid comment: "It is all hocus-pocus to the Indians"....So there comes the cry for their enlightenment: the opulence of the churches against their poverty and ignorance.

But as to the enforcement of the program,...that girls of gentle breeding and sheltered lives were committed to remain for weeks on end in one common room with men and women of the most hardened criminal classes because of having distributed pamphlets exhorting the devout to hold together...that two boys, one of whom was only sixteen, were shot...for the same offense.32

Yes, she contended, these political problems "are not the root of the mystery of Mexico," only an outgrowth. She wrote of the many "infused elements", such as the foreigners who spend their lives there, but do not consider Mexico to be their home. "Rarely do they seem to love the land."

Americans of good mentality and education are content to remain in Mexico for years with a degree of Spanish, sufficient only to give orders, ungrammatically enough, to servants, - not because they are incapable of learning Spanish, but because they are not interested.33

She gave the example of Frances Toor, "an American woman of cleverness and enterprise," who was publishing an
interesting magazine, "Mexican Folkways," yet cultured, well-educated foreigners in Mexico were unaware of its existence.

And among the native Mexicans themselves, Indian or American, there were inexplicable barriers, "dialects remain distinct for generations and show no sign of merging."

You may ride on horseback from Mexico City a few hours and find Indians who speak no Spanish, and at your next stop you will find a dialect yet different from theirs."

She found profound contradictions in the city itself, so "resplendent, with wide avenues, with buildings of colonial architecture...a park that would be an ornament to any capital in the world, graced with magnificent trees...waterways...with fountains and bridle paths and the bristling eminence of Chapultepec Castle, haughty on a rocky height...tremendous plazas, bustling with life, it has train-cars and busses, taxis, and private cars of the most expensive make...the Alameda...As sophisticated a setting as you can find in America, or even in Europe."

And, on feast-days - which are many, - all along the Alameda there spring up "puestos," little Indian booths, and Indians squat on their haunches, or on the ground, selling wares as native as could be found in the mountains or forests. And their costumes are a thing distinctive. The women wear full-skirted, full-bloused dresses, often of some deep color, lavender, or rose, or blue, and always shawls...a most useful article. A deft flick of the hands, and it is holding the ubiquitous, serious baby, or a basket of oranges,
or even a water-jar, leaving the two hands of the wearer free!

The men wear, over nondescript blouses and trousers, serapes, big and rectangular in shape.

There are strange figures to see in front of marble opera houses...there is always this subjective disquiet in Mexico. In the sweet peace of Cuernavaca...the soft-voiced maids are called by such names as Trinida, Nativida, and Geronima,...one realizes that the picturesque ruins on the outskirts are the ruins of the sugar-houses pulled down by the Zapatistas...the country is often so lovely, so colorful, so fantastic, and picturesque, that all else fades into sheer enjoyment. And in its quiet suburbs, its beautiful old monasteries, its gardens, the illusion of peace and beauty prevails.35

Natalie did not unravel Mexico's contradictions or find where lay its focal place of unity. But she met Diego Rivera and saw his frescoes, reminding her of the peasantry she had seen in the churches as well as the splendor of the city, and felt that she came closest there, on this first trip to Mexico, to finding answers for her questions.

A country of such beauty, such richness, such treasures of tradition, of art, and architecture, and yet without a soul, without an identity? One of the world's great painters is in it and of it. Diego Rivera. He is working there now, and his frescoes cover the inner walls of one of the state buildings in Mexico. It is a building that is handsome but uninteresting architecturally, and the high, too shallow arches of its inner facade do not show his work to advantage; but even so, the power of those stark, compelling figures, modelled so slightly and so surely, the rhythm and movement, and majesty, the mighty simplicity of composition, make an unforgettable impact on the imagination.

There is a mighty force behind them. It would be pleasant to think that those gigantic conceptions of brotherhood and progress and mutual helpfulness, the
soul of Mexico was expressing itself: the feeling of a
great artist certainly, but that the unrelated alien
elements that have been Mexico till now are fused and
speaking there seems almost too much hope. 36

During December, 1926, the States covered a full page
of the paper with two amusing feature stories, side by
side, one written by Meigs Frost in Honduras, the other by
Natalie in Mexico, with portraits by Spratling of Frost and
Natalie at the top of the page with this caption:

Meigs O. Frost and Miss Natalie Vivian Scott, 
brilliant members of The States editorial staff, from
drawings by Prof. William Spratling, New Orleans
artist...Mr. Frost dips into Honduras and Miss Scott
into Mexico for fascinating stories today. 37

Natalie tells the story of one day she spent in
Mexico, a comedy of errors that taught a small lesson about
the nature of Mexicans, a different view of their
apparently slow-paced backwardness, which, upon reflection,
also displayed a wisdom in their philosophy of life. She
arranged for a seat in a “luxurious seven-passenger touring
car” for the modest sum of four pesos to go to Cuernavaca
one morning. She was to be picked up early at her hotel at
a quarter to seven sharp and was told to be ready. By
seven-thirty she became discouraged that the car was not
coming, “which amazed the hotel clerk...he assured me that
the car would surely come soon, a ‘momentito,’...how little
he showed me by measuring an infinitesimal space between
his thumb and forefinger placed beside a most encouraging smile."

At eight, the announcement of the car shattered a sudden lethargy...a practical joke to which I suddenly saw the point. Even the 7-passenger car seemed part of it. It was a valiant veteran. There were seven passengers in it already, and much baggage...after doing acrobatics over a gay-colored "canasta" which exuded unfamiliar vegetables, I found myself wedged in the back seat....

Everyone was Mexican. And calmly voluble. We rattled off, - tongues and vehicle. The sunny drive through the Coyoacan suburb was beautiful, then up into the mountains went the road where she looked down upon Xochimilco, "...Venice after Pierre Loti - a tiny village, with a rusty-pink, mouldering church, many Indians, and intricate clean swaths of canals that are cut between fields of flowers...little flat bottomed, flat ended boats gaily decorated with flowers...are poled smoothly along by Indians..." Then they reached the road to Cuernavaca.

It is said of this road that it was built by Cortez and his men. This is the one historical fact which I do not for a moment question...I am convinced it has not been touched since.

It is built of tiny little cobblestones...and the car...does not miss a cobble...each cobble is a lump. I had thought that we were firmly wedged in...an illusion. The way we bounced was amazing, as to frequency, consistency and height.

The Mexicans were remarkable. They talked steadily on...incredible to note this conversational smoothness continuing undisturbed and untroubled when physically we were all so extremely staccato!
The lady on my left with a child in (at intervals between bounces) her lap and the collapsible fat gentleman beside her were engaged in a discussion of the church question....

And there was beauty...Popocatépetl bounced up and down on the horizon...every turn of the winding road offered new vistas...we mounted yet higher than the near eight thousand feet of Mexico City....

And just then, the car stopped. There was a sinking sensation on one side....I remembered my misgivings as to the tires when first I saw them.

Our chauffeur looked pained...incredulous. He waited a moment, as though fate might have a change of heart...He looked at the tire - the right front one - and shook his head, as one contemplating an unexpected calamity of nature, - "an act of God," I think they call it in the Law.

All the Mexicans piled out. They all looked at the tire in this same hurt, puzzled way, shaking their heads.

Then the chauffeur turned to them, with a gesture of the hands eloquently helpless; he had no tools. Another Act of God! And all shook their heads...commiseration over this added calamity.

Then the men - who had all paid their four pesos for the trip - put their shoulders to the wheel, literally, and to other parts of the aged car's anatomy, and heaved high, while the chauffeur put a stone under. Again, and again, and the car was jacked up on stones....

But the tire was as firm as ever.

So we scattered to the road side, and sat on dirt walls,...and waited.

Many minutes passed, but no cars. We waited....

The church question took its course...all smiled or talked quietly. And waited.
A car came, and went by.

Another car. This one a contemporary of ours....The chauffeur leaped out. Ours went to meet him. The two conferred, like generals. Ours pointed out the surprising calamity that had befallen us. Both went and looked at it long and earnestly....The newcomer came to a decision, and acted instantly; he went and got his tools. More contemplation, trial. The lug-wrench would not fit. Another consultation, very earnest, with the result that our chauffeur took the S-wrench that most nearly fit our lugs, and went to the front of the car, where he put it on the bumper and began hammering on it with another S-wrench, with a view to making it fit. At intervals, he stopped to try it. After many such trials, he succeeded.

He tried it on the first lug. And off it came. The watching passengers exalted admiration. He tried another lug. It would not yield.

"El Maldito! he exclaimed, reproachfully.

Then he hammered some more, and tried again. Still it stuck.

"El Maldito." he breathed sorrowfully, and tried another lug, which yielded. Then he tried the stubborn one again, and again without success.

"El Maldito," said one looking at the lug, and smiling, as one does at the familiar pranks of a spoiled favorite child.

This process continued...hammering on the S-wrench...onslaughts on the lugs, some of which came off...between each success, the chauffeur made another try at "El Maldito," and each time the passengers smiling shook their heads at his efforts, and murmured, indulgently, "El Maldito," - as to say to the chauffeurs, "There's no use, he is too clever for you. You might as well give up."

And I looked. And I wondered. My own reactions were American enough. I was cold. I had exhausted the aesthetic possibilities of that spot which was by no means the most interesting on the road....
Here Natalie reached the point of her story, - one of the cultural differences between Americans and Mexicans. “Imagine a group of American men who had paid their fare, and had a puncture and found the chauffeur had no tools, and were delayed indefinitely on the road.” She found herself hoping that at least one of the Mexicans would become angry, or swear, or at least become impatient. Briefly, one man gazed at the mounting sun, frowned while looking at the car, began tapping his foot impatiently. Natalie’s hope mounted but, suddenly, his face cleared, he shook his head, smilingly said, “El Malo es de perder patiencia.” (The trouble is, if one loses patience). “They all nodded smiling agreement.”

El Maldito justified the belief of his admirers and never did yield, but we got around him by strategy, lifting the tire over the valve, and eventually the tire was changed...we went on our way, which was rough as ever....Our ancient vehicle held together, surprisingly. The road descended.

Then Cuernavaca...an immense valley...terraced slopes...quiet trees, the long, still pools of the Borda Gardens,...precipitous little streets, the centuries-steeped pyramid...the fantastic old city hall perched on a cliff to look over to the mountains, its sunlight, and the tranquility, and always everywhere the brilliant flowers....

After two months in Mexico, Natalie’s ship brought her home to New Orleans on December 7, 1926.41

Natalie’s first column back in New Orleans promoted Spratling’s latest project, his clever collaboration with
William Faulkner, Sherwood Anderson and Other Famous Creoles. Her approach was calculated to heighten interest in the little book.

A social barometer has been among the missing and needed inventions. At last we have one, limited in its application, but very valuable, it is a sure test of the literary quality of any gathering, and it is the latest achievement of our brilliant greens and yellows, cheerily, prominently, in various book stores, and its title allures: "Sherwood Anderson and Other Famous Creoles." The apology to Covarrubias due after such a title, harking as it does to "the Prince of Wales and Other Famous Americans," is duly given. The paraphrase, as you will admit, is delightful.

It is a book of caricature, and very clever caricature, with a neatly turned introduction in Sherwood Anderson’s own style, done by Bill Faulkner. Dr. Dinwiddie is encircled in one page over his name and an alphabet of his degrees. Sherwood’s own massive head looks out of the front page, with characteristic expression. There is Flo Field, rescuing stray cats in the middle of Royal street. Oliver La Farge is sprawling at great lengths of legs and ease of posture in another. Charlie Bein’s dome like forehead is marvelously portrayed. Virginia Parker, Carrie Durieux, Fanny Craig Ventadour, are ornamentally portrayed; Mrs. Nixon beams upon the world before a Little Theater curtain; Freddy Oechsner wields a journalistic pencil in the midst of art, murder and music; Miss Grace King is indicated, rather than portrayed, in composite manner. Weeks Hall as Baron Teche, with his plantation background; Sam Gilmore with ease and a poem; Helen Schertz and her harp; Genevieve Pitot and her piano; Elizabeth Werlein as queen of the movies; Lyle Saxon, Emmet Kennedy, Dan Whitney, Meigs Frost, are some others of the celebrities portrayed; Lillian Marcus, Marion Draper, Keith Temple, Jack McClure, Conrad Albrizio, Mr. Whitesell, Mr. Odoirne, Mr. Woodward, the Marc Antonys, succeed each other in the clever pages. There is an interesting medallion of Mr. Curtis, as irrigator of the Sahara of the Bozart; Franz Blom gazes joyously at Indians and palm trees; Alberta Kinsey, Moise Goldstein, Mr. Kirk, Harold Levy — with a baton in his hand; it is amazing how many
personalities are caught into that slender and deliciously amusing volume, that concludes with an amusing caricature of the author and the artist. It is really a delight.\textsuperscript{42}

Before the book was out in bookshops, and during Natalie’s absence in Mexico, speculation during November heightened over who had been included in Spratling’s little Who’s Who of the city. The speculation led to more talk, gossip, notoriety and anticipation. Natalie’s November column had added a bit of fuel to the fire.

Do you know my dear, what they’re all speculating about in New Orleans these days? It all goes back a bit. Back to Covarrubias, that fascinating young genius of a Mexican cartoonist who came up to New York from Mexico City a few years ago and took the metropolis by storm with those uncannily clever satirical cartoons of his. Just after the Prince of Wales finished his famous American visit, Covarrubias published a volume of cartoons called “The Prince of Wales and Other Famous Americans.”

Everybody who was anybody was in that book. There were more hearts burning and jealousies in New York on the part of those who were left out of it than there were when the roster of Ward McAllister’s first “Four Hundred” was published. And those who were in it affected to be bored – but oh! how proud they were.

Now New Orleans is going to have the same sort of thing. The book will be out in time for Christmas gifts. The cartoons are being drawn by William Philip Spratling, that charming young genius who has been on the faculty of Tulane...but whose really artistic work has been done in his studio under the roof at 621 St. Peter street...And everybody is wondering who is going to be who in this new New Orleans Who’s Who.\textsuperscript{43}

The book was extremely clever, but it was the merchandizing that was most ingenious. The take-off from
the successful Covarrubias model was complimentary to New Orleans, placing the city on a par with the nation's greatest metropolis. The publication capitalized enormously on Sherwood Anderson's fame, a national figure, thereby enhancing the status of all those included in its pages as the significant ones in Anderson's circle, sharing his socially and artistically rarefied air. The first edition, which disappeared within a week, was followed by an immediate second edition of one hundred and fifty.

Sherwood Anderson would normally have enjoyed the little volume more than anyone, but the general consensus of interested literary scholars is that he was not pleased, and did not find funny either his buffoon-like portrayal nor the Faulkner parody of his writing style. The timing was bad, coming on the heels of Ernest Hemingway's *The Torrents of Spring*, a book length mean-spirited parody of Anderson's writing which trivialized both his technique and the substance of his work, seeming to inspire numerous others among his New York peers to denigrate him, particularly his style and social commentary in *Dark Laughter*. Yet he was not really a bad sport about it, according to Spratling's recollection, written forty years later. Anderson's reaction was not extreme or lasting according to Elizabeth Anderson and biographer Kim Townsend. Here is Spratling's version.
In 1926 Faulkner and I, as a sort of private joke, published a book called *Sherwood Anderson and Other Famous Creoles*. The title was a parody on Miguel Covarrubias' *The Prince of Wales and Other Famous Americans*... Faulkner did the editing and we paid old man Pfaff to print us four hundred copies, which we proceeded to unload on our friends at a dollar and a half a copy.

Sherwood said he didn't think it was very funny, though he did not get really angry, as he had at Hemingway's *The Torrents of Spring*. But we sold the entire edition in a week and they tell me that now this is a collector's item and rare indeed....

As a sample of Bill's lack of respect for Yankee culture, the drawing of Oliver La Farge was simply entitled "Oliver La Farge, from Harvard, a Kind of School Near Boston." For the drawing of the president of Tulane, he simply added after the name all the degrees he could think of.

But his foreword was, to my mind, a more subtle and sweeter parody on Anderson's writing style than was *The Torrents of Spring*, where Hemingway permitted himself to sneer at Sherwood, a friend who had helped him to find a publisher. Faulkner's analysis was warm and delicate, as was his nature.45

According to Elizabeth Anderson's book, also written over forty years later, the Andersons were not in New Orleans during the fall, 1926, as they were renovating a house in Troutdale, Virginia, then visited New York during December before sailing from there to Paris. Yet, earlier in the book she has them in New Orleans when *Sherwood Anderson and Other Famous Creoles* was published. Her recollection of her husband's reaction is probably more accurate than the book's occasionally unclear chronology.
But it was too leisurely a life for anyone to long remain angry with anyone. Even Sherwood was not upset when Bill Spratling drew a number of caricatures of all the people in the Quarter and Bill Faulkner wrote an introduction for it that was a parody of Sherwood’s style. They published the little book as Sherwood Anderson and Other Famous Creoles and brought it to Sherwood. He looked at it and stated flatly, “It isn’t funny.”

Some of the biographers of Sherwood have made a great deal of that incident, saying that he never spoke to Bill Faulkner again because he had been so grievously wounded by the parody. Actually, Sherwood had forgotten all about it in a short time, and no one was radically affected by it in any way. Sherwood and Bill remained friendly...they wrote each other from time to time after that.46

By the time Spratling and Elizabeth wrote their respective memoirs, both had been living in Taxco, Mexico, as close friends, for four decades; forty-five years had passed since the little book’s publication.

Kim Townsend, Anderson’s biographer, wrote that Anderson was unfriendly toward Faulkner by April, 1926, after Faulkner’s return from Europe, perhaps because of Faulkner’s lying about his war record, misleading Anderson from the time they met. Anderson had urged his publisher during the early summer, 1925, to publish Faulkner’s first novel, Soldiers Pay, and the publisher, Horace Liveright, while Faulkner was in Europe with Spratling, agreed to do so. Afterwards, still during Faulkner’s absence, Anderson learned of Faulkner’s untruths about his fictitious war record.
Compounding matters, Faulkner also wrote a less than glowing newspaper book review of Anderson’s *A Story Teller’s Story* early in 1926. Though Anderson’s novel *Dark Laughter* became a best seller, his reputation, not the quality of the book, made it so. He was aware that fellow authors had not thought well of it. His literary reputation was damaged in the aftermath and his writing suffered. In March, 1926, armed with plans drawn by Bill Spratling, he and Elizabeth had gone to his new property in Troutdale, Virginia to build a new house. In December, 1926, the Andersons boarded a ship in New York for Paris. Ironically, the New Orleans phase of his life was ending when Spratling and Faulkner published the book of caricatures.⁴⁷

Undoubtedly, Spratling and Faulkner meant well, to leave their famous friend, and the city, with a clever memento of this memorable period of their lives. And they richly succeeded. Natalie was the subject of one of the forty-two cartoons in the small book, which measured roughly five by seven inches in size and fifty pages in length. The final page of the first edition volumes all had the following printed declaration, with the number of each volume hand written on the blank space.

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Another one hundred and fifty were printed in January, a second edition, and quickly sold, bringing the total to four hundred. Aside from an interesting memento, Spratling and Faulkner created a collector’s item, the value enhanced by the numbering of the first edition but principally because of Anderson’s fame and Faulkner’s later success. Faulkner apparently wrote most of the captions and also wrote the preface. The dedication is “To All the Artful and Crafty Ones of the French Quarter.” Natalie is the sixth caricature; she is depicted on horseback, looking back over her shoulder in her riding attire, jumping a hurdle that appears to be the Court of Two Sisters building on Royal street, which she had profitably resold a few months before. The caption read “Peggy Passe Partout Takes a Hurdle.”

Aside from memorializing the caricatured people, the book provided glimpses of life within their French Quarter social circle, many of the cartoons involving inside jokes and settings. The Frontispiece is entitled “The Locale”, a Spratling drawing of the St. Peter street-Cabildo Alley-Orleans Alley neighborhood. To orient the reader, St.
Louis Cathedral is identified, as is Leonardi Studios and
the direction of Le Petit Theatre du Vieux Carré. We are
given a rooftop view, the tall building on the left is one
Natalie owned, 621 St. Peter street, where an “artist”,
obviously Spratling, is climbing out onto the roof of his
attic apartment while the “writer”, Faulkner, leans out of
the attic window. Just below Faulkner is the apartment
designated “Decorator”, the Lucille and Marc Antony
residence; Marc Antony is drawn in the window studying a
set of plans. Beyond 621 St. Peter street, Spratling drew
the roof of 626 and 624 Orleans Alley, both being places
Spratling had previously lived. At 626 Orleans Alley, the
building owned by Natalie and John McClure, his drawing
designates “Literature and Less”, the name of John
McClure’s highly respected literary column in the Times-
Picayune, indicating John and Grace McClure were living
there. Next door, at 624 Orleans Alley, where he and
Faulkner had lived until July, 1925, the drawing indicates
“painter here (C.A.A.)”, the initials of Conrad Albrizio,
who had returned from Italy in 1926. Down below on the
floor of the alley, Spratling drew Flo Field guiding a
group of tourists through the historic neighborhood, as she
typically did. Also in the alley appears artist Alberta
Kinsey at work before her easel. Spratling’s pride in the
bohemian ambiance, the array of talented and creative
neighbors, and the historically unique setting of their locale is further emphasized by two additional notations, indicating "more artists, writers, etc. on Jackson Square" and "also on Royal street".

The cartoon of Anderson portrays him in dandyish attire, his cane at his feet, with his oversize head, paunchy body, and disheveled hair, all exaggerated while he sits in his overstuffed chair, one of his books laying nearby. The self-caricature of Spratling and Faulkner in their apartment is revealing, demonstrating Spratling's propensity for a natty, well-groomed appearance, Faulkner's retiring informality with jugs of whisky beneath his chair, and, on the wall, behind them, the Daisy pump BB gun they enjoyed shooting from their fourth story perch to sting passersby far below. Here is Spratling's commentary.

The last drawing in the book, a portrait of WS and WF, contains important symbols. Under the writer's chair (WF) the bottles speak for themselves. The BB gun on the wall was important and useful on rainy days and against boredom. The scene here drawn is my attic apartment and from those windows high over St. Peter Street we could nip people on the street, silently and with ease, usually in the buttocks. On the wall was a list of points for hits on various types. For example a negro nun rated a very high score. Rarity value. I think most victims were more intrigued than resentful. At any rate this was before the epoch of race-agitation and had nothing to do with such.

Unmentioned by Spratling and others was another feature of the apartment. In the bathroom, Spratling used his talents
to draw a very attractive nude female on the shower wall with the hot and cold shower knobs serving as her breasts, so that whenever the water was turned on and off, the woman’s breasts were given a twist, — another important device against boredom.51

The humor of the little book was gentle and warm as to everyone included, particularly Sherwood Anderson who was the centerpiece of the book as he had been of their literary and artistic coterie since 1922. As much as anything, the book was to honor him and the good times in New Orleans during his residence there, when the entire neighborhood really was one happy family, as Spratling remembered and wrote of it in 1966, the year before his death.

There were casual parties with wonderful conversation and with plenty of grand, or later to be grand, people. Ben Huebsch would be down from New York to visit his writer Sherwood Anderson, and Horace Liveright and Carl Van Doren and Carl Sandburg and John Dos Passos and many others were there from time to time and there was constant stimulation of ideas. Roark Bradford worked the city desk of the Times-Picayune along with poet John McClure, and Oliver La Farge was with Franz Blom in archeology at Tulane while he shared cooking expenses with me and Faulkner and told us with glee of his most recent discoveries of the glories of sex, something new in this life of Oliver at that time. Our wonderful Lyle Saxon would arrive at his house in the quarter from slaving at the Picayune until midnight and one could always find there a dozen or so writers and painters or musicians and actresses or caricaturists and a pitcher of absinthe and good conversation.
Tellers of stories, like Natalie Scott and our dear Flo Fields, were at their best there and Bill Faulkner and Sherwood Anderson would like as not be off on an interminable chapter in the life of a legendary person named Al Jackson, which was sheer nonsense... The absinthe helped us to swallow their continuing anecdotes about the life of Al Jackson. These kept up from party to party, just humbug. But, after all, both Sherwood and Bill were, I suppose, congenital leg-pullers...."
CHAPTER EIGHT
THE THIRD PHASE: EUROPE AND THE TRANSITIONAL YEARS
(1927-1930)

The years 1927 through 1930 were transitional years for Natalie and the central characters of the French Quarter renaissance. In an effort to take their careers to a national or international level, many of these young men and women followed Lyle Saxon’s example: They went to New York. In the evolution of the Vieux Carré colony, their generation would gradually be replaced by another crop of very fine artists, with a sprinkling of the old names, most of them, though still quite young in the ordinary sense of chronology, becoming the seasoned veterans of the new generation.

Charlie Bein was providing the leadership of the Arts and Crafts Club by 1930.1 When the Arts League held its annual exhibit in November, 1928, Natalie’s friend Weeks Hall was cited for the exhibition’s best work; the other prominent works and artists were Clarence Millet’s Jackson Square scenes, Harry Nolan’s portraits and his “Negro studies on the Teche”, George Pearce’s wood-cut “Pickaninnies” and his mural water-colors, with other cited works being by John Plattner, George Castelden, Fred McCaleb, Albert Clapp, Henry Costello, and oil painter Forest Hopkins. Almost all were new names, though Gideon 315

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Stanton and Pop Hart, who was then living in New York, were also in the exhibit. The success of Paul Swan, who had been very prominent during the early twenties in New Orleans as a portrait painter, sculptor and interpretive dancer, had reached international proportions, though he returned periodically to New Orleans for dance performances and art exhibits. Swan had gone to New York and Paris, and, as Natalie reported in her column, was succeeding brilliantly.

Have you any late news of Paul Swan? He is in New York...a studio at 130 W. 56th street, which he calls the "School of the Aesthetic Ideal" and which he is conducting with a good measure of success...received some clippings of his Paris career....From the "Paris Soir," by Andre Foy, there was, "Our eyes have had the great artistic pleasure of contemplating the pure and noble lines of the dancer, Paul Swan. His body has an elegance of proportions extraordinary, and the beautiful designs that he describes in space by means of movements well studied is a spectacle truly very beautiful." Le Theatre et Comoedia Illustre said... "The beauty of his movements, the grace and sincerity of his attitudes, the mobility of his face, makes this dancer the most curious and captivating artist of our epoch." And so on, at length from a number of important French journals. This Paris success was an excellent preface to his New York career, which is going forward steadily... "Le Petit Bleu" of Paris...speaks of him as a "priest of rhythm." Actually, there is something of religious devotion in his attitude toward art, and that together with his remarkable beauty of physique and of face, is the fundamental of his success.

Natalie was also in New York in November 1928, as were Lyle Saxon, Hamilton Basso and Bill Faulkner. Oliver La Farge, who led Tulane's fourth expedition into the Mayan
lands of Guatemala in early 1927, was surprisingly
terminated by Tulane in September 1928, while working on a
Tulane project at Harvard, but he retained his French
Quarter residence through the spring, 1929, then moved to
New York. Tommy Farrar was well-established in New York as
a scene and costume designer. Bill Spratling was still in
New Orleans in early November, 1928, but had resigned his
Tulane faculty position the preceding May, then spent a
third summer in Mexico, this time on the art faculty of the
National University in Mexico City. By mid-November, 1928,
he joined his many New Orleans friends in New York to
fulfill a Theater Guild contract to render fifty portraits
of the Guild’s star stage performers. Sherwood Anderson
was in and out of New York in late 1928, but living near
Troutdale, Virginia, operating a small newspaper and print
shop.4

Each retained their New Orleans connections as
occasional residents, and several, including Natalie, Saxon
and Basso, returned to reside in New Orleans, though by
mid-1930 Natalie was living in Taxco, Mexico. Bill
Spratling was the first and Natalie was the second American
to reside there, where Spratling revived the local silver
industry and achieved an international reputation for his
silver designs. Taxco was changed remarkably,
commercially, socially and artistically, by their presence

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and by those who followed them to this remote picturesque village.

Meigs Frost continued to write for the New Orleans States and wrote his first book in 1929; John McClure continued his long career with the Times-Picayune. However, Roark Bradford resigned as night editor in 1926 to begin writing delightful short stories and novels about black life, then becoming the O. Henry Prize winner for his short story “Child of God” and a Pulitzer Prize co-winner in 1930 for the play “The Green Pastures,” an adaptation of his book of stories, Ol’ Man Adam an’ His Chillun. Franz Blom continued his leadership of Tulane’s Middle-America Studies Department, making startling new Mayan finds at Uxmal in the Yucatan peninsula during 1930. Another Pulitzer Prize winner in 1930 was Oliver La Farge’s novel Laughing Boy, which he wrote in New Orleans during late 1928 and early 1929.5

For Natalie’s oldest and dearest uptown friends in New Orleans, the period was transitory primarily because their children were growing up and their lives changing accordingly. Hilda Phelps Hammond, who had been writing for the Times-Picayune and local magazines irregularly during the 1920's, organized a children’s section of the Pelican Book store and published children’s stories. In 1930, she won a national award for a children’s play based
on Jean Lafitte. Then, beginning in 1932, appalled by the corrupt politics and heavy handed autocracy of Governor/Senator Huey P. Long (he was governor and senator-elect simultaneously for over a year), she organized the Woman’s Committee of Louisiana to oppose Long, instigating controversial Senate investigations and challenges of the fraudulent 1932 U.S. Senate elections in the state. Her nationally published book *Let Freedom Ring* was part of her challenge of the Long regime.

Martha Robinson and Elizabeth Werlein led the preservation movement in the French Quarter, the Garden District and uptown New Orleans for the rest of their lives, Werlein living on St. Ann street where she, Natalie and Elizabeth Anderson had purchased property in 1925. Martha Robinson was a leader in the Women’s Brigade movement of the 1940s that swept a corrupt city government out of office, and was the first serious female candidate for the city council. In a lighter vein, inspired by Natalie’s long horseback ride from Brownsville to Taxco in 1934, Martha Robinson and Sidonie Scott drove a car more than thirteen hundred miles from Louisiana to Taxco, Mexico in 1937 to finally accept Natalie’s long standing invitation to come down for a nice long visit.

Caroline Durieux moved from Monterrey to Mexico City in 1930, her artistic reputation in Mexico well-established.
by then, and allowed Natalie, as Taxco’s hostess and promoter, to convert an adobe hut with a lovely view into a summer house for her there. Pierre and Carrie Durieux, with their son Charlie, returned to Louisiana in 1936 where she joined the art faculty at Louisiana State University.®

The chronology of this transitional period, beginning in 1926, eventually led Natalie to her permanent Mexican home. At the time of her October to December, 1926, visit to Mexico, the Petit Theatre announced, and the New Orleans States featured in its lead editorial, a new program to “encourage or develop” New Orleans’ dramatists. They organized a national play-writing contest with substantial cash prizes.

...This (Petit Theatre) movement, that has meant so much to the artistic life of New Orleans, began with a membership of twenty; and presented its first play in a small upper chamber in one of the Pontalba buildings. It now has over three thousand members, and owns its own large building, with auditorium, offices, reception salon, courtyard, and even a kitchen for the dispensing of Creole coffee...one of the most beautiful architectural and artistic achievements in New Orleans.

There is possibly no community playhouse in the United States that can equal it...Though there are more than a thousand non-professional theaters....

But heretofore, our Little Theatre has done little to encourage or develop native dramatists,...it became the fixed policy to present only those plays that had first been produced elsewhere...this policy will keep New Orleans a provincial town, without literary initiative....

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Something of all this must have been discerned by Mr. Charles H. Behre...who recently offered three prizes for the best one act plays submitted by January 1st. The contest is open to all writers in this country. And our Little Theatre will suspend its rule against manuscript plays for the occasion of producing the three winning plays some time during the spring....

The contest was advertised through Little Theater programs across the country. Natalie returned to New Orleans from Mexico in December, 1926, without giving the contest another thought, although she did publish a reminder to her readers in her last column of the year, December 26th.

Manuscripts have been entered in surprising number in the Little Theater’s contest for the best one-act play. The competition ends with this month, I believe. Mr. Behre, you remember, offered a prize of three hundred dollars for the best one-act play, and later the prize-winner is to be presented at the Little Theater. The encouragement of original play-writing was one of the initial interests of the organization; but it has not gone on in that as in other lines. The competition is a forward step with which we are all very pleased.

At the last minute, after she and Jack returned from their Christmas visit in New Roads with the Provosty-Scott family, and after encountering several comments from friends asking whether she had submitted a play, she decided to give it a try. Disappearing for four days onto her porch on Napoleon Avenue, and putting aside ongoing efforts to finish Old Plantation Houses in Louisiana, she wrote “Grand Zombi”, a romantic tragedy in one act based on
the nineteenth century, semi-legendary Voodoo Queen of New Orleans, Marie Leveau. Her creation was submitted on New Year’s eve, then promptly forgotten as she returned to Old Plantation Houses, her newspaper work, and the holiday social events.  

New Orleans was busy when Natalie returned from Mexico. She and Spratling were visited by René d’Harnoncourt, their interesting new friend in Mexico, who was on his way to Virginia for the holidays. D’Harnoncourt was a very large young Austrian, standing six feet six inches tall and over two hundred pounds, a genial, aristocratic conversationalist who had gained considerable knowledge about Mexican native handicrafts and pre-Columbian antiques while trying to make a living in Mexico. He had quit college in Europe in 1924 when the Czech government had seized his family’s assets, arriving in Mexico with eleven dollars. His art training had helped him go to work for a Mexican cigarette company making posters and advertisements. By late 1926, he was working for Frederick Davis’ Sonora News Company, a Mexico City store that dealt in Mexican folk crafts, curios, and paintings as one aspect of its operations. Both Davis and d’Harnoncourt would prove to be important, valuable friends as their careers were also in transition, about to blossom with the growing American interest in the passionate art of
Mexican painters and the country's pre-Columbian history. Almost twenty-five years later, D'Harnoncourt would become director of the New York Museum of Modern Art.\textsuperscript{10}

Much happened during the first two months after Natalie's return from Mexico. She wrote in December of Oliver La Farge's successes in fiction writing, his stories based upon Indian topics and characters. He was published by Scribner's several times in 1926, and his stories appeared in \textit{Dial} during January and February, 1927. On January 16\textsuperscript{th}, because of another impending Mayan expedition, Natalie again wrote of La Farge.

Pick up the January "Dial", if you want to make a substantial addition to your mental list of short stories worth remembering. You will take all the more pleasure in it by noting the author's name....

Mr. La Farge's archeological knowledge and experiences have enriched the story...."North is Black" is the title....the story of an Indian, told in the first person....The dialect is picturesque in its graphic terseness and in an occasional crude force of metaphor....

Mr. La Farge, however,...lingers not to pursue his literary success, nor even to enjoy the comfort of his snug apartment in the French Quarter. He is "off to the wilds again" at the end of the month, leaving for Guatemala on a expedition of several months....\textsuperscript{11}

La Farge's expedition left on January 25\textsuperscript{th}, 1927 and, as Natalie described, a substantial number of his French Quarter friends gathered to see him off.

Last Saturday at the Julia Street dock, there was a crowd gathered to speed them on their way, - pretty
Bill Spratling was also there that day, and attracted by Esther Dupuy, a popular society girl who was also a dancer and very active in Petit Theatre productions. He approached her and asked if he could draw her portrait. While the loading of the ship proceeded, Spratling consumed the time drawing his lovely, dark-haired subject and getting to know her. The occasion marked the beginning of a romance between the two that lasted two years, ultimately terminated by the distances between New Orleans and Taxco, Mexico.¹³

As Natalie’s column in the New Orleans States had often been written in foreign lands, as she moved through interesting places, so it was again in 1927. In the aftermath of her brother and father’s deaths the previous summer, and her concerns for Sidonie and the children in Alexandria, she proposed during Christmas the one thing she believed would simultaneously raise everyone’s spirits: travel abroad. She planned with Sidonie a summer touring France and England, with the children accompanying them to Paris then being deposited in the American camp in Etretat,
France, thereby leaving Sidonie free to roam without care or worry. Mrs. Provosty, Sidonie’s mother, liked the idea so much that she and Sidonie’s youngest sister Dickie, who was Nauman II’s age, were also invited to come. They would sail for Europe in May.

The travel plans were suddenly altered in late February when Natalie learned from a friend about an inexpensive steamship voyage leaving immediately from New Orleans for Spain, the vessel owned by a new Spanish company, Compania Transatlantica. Her final draft of *Old Plantation Houses* was just completed, ready for Spratling to turn over to the publisher. Free to go, she immediately bought the ticket, packed, informed Sidonie, left a “flip note” for her editor (who she could not find), then sailed away that night. She also left her Peggy Passe Partout column for the next Sunday, March 6th, 1927, all typed and ready for publication, and notes for the rest of March. Natalie’s first report home was sent from Spain, giving her readers a more complete explanation.

These boats are subsidized by the government, so that they can give exceptional service at low prices. For instance, on our boat coming over, there were three kinds of wine for luncheon and dinner, included in the fare, and for dinner there was also included champagne. Figurez vous. Also, there was quite marvelous food...a really splendid orchestra, and the officials had all sorts of parties planned....A favorite “fiesta” was the Spanish “verbera”....
It was really amazing what a bid the Spanish people are making for American travel....The New York papers have written it up....They do not advertise well, and I found out about the boat only by accident.\textsuperscript{14}

In Spain, her itinerary took her to Cádiz, Gibraltar, Málaga, Cartagena, Valencia, Seville, Palma on the island of Majorca, and Barcelona. She traveled on to Aliento, then flying to the north African city of Oran, to Fez, back to Oran, Algiers, Tunis, then across the Gulf of Tunis to Sicily, Naples, Trieste, then Vienna. Natalie had gone up in an airplane before in New Orleans, but this was her first trip to make a city to city connection by air. She celebrated most of Holy week in Seville, then Easter weekend in Palma before exploring the Majorcin countryside.

Seville for Holy Week is as crowded as New Orleans for Carnival. In fact, many people make their reservations at least a year in advance....We had a great time here on Holy Thursday, for it is the custom for all the women to get out their black lace mantillas and high combs, and it is enough to send any masculine heart into terrific flutters to see those black eyes under those mantillas. I was so jealous. By the way, I wore one on the boat, and Vidal Cuadras, when I went by into the dining room, sprang to his feet, kissed my hand, and exclaimed dramatically, “if Goya were living, he would paint you.” That is real technique, no?\textsuperscript{15}

Vidal Cuadras was one of a number of prominent Spaniards who boarded at Cádiz, all owners of the steamship company who wished to observe operations during the cruise to Barcelona.
In Palma, I saw the Good Friday service which is carried out in a strictly local manner. Palma is supposed to have received the permission, so I was told, from the Pope who was a Majorcin by birth.

The Spanish people took me to see some of the old palaces here...the old Palazzo Sollerich, all in one period in furnishing, very austere, and the Palazzo de Vivot. I met the families in both. The Vivot palace is very richly furnished, handsome brocaded, a long vista of salons, fine pictures, a library that is famous with rare old books, all the way up to the ceiling all around it...the Contessa is a homely soul and has any number of homely daughters. Very nice and affable, though, and the Conte is not at all bad looking. They spent their time trying to get the girls to speak English to me but all in vain.¹⁶

Natalie sent one of her many postcards to the Scott children from the hills of Majorca where she mixed quietly among the agricultural people. This time the photograph she sent was of a smiling child in a two-wheeled wagon with bundles piled behind the seat, pulled by a donkey, a stocky, shawled, long-skirted woman standing beside the wagon smiling into the lens of Natalie’s kodak camera.

My darling little old Bé-

What do you think of this picture? I took it myself...That is the little boy, Guillermo, I wrote you of, and his donkey, Valencia. What do you and Nauman think Tony would do with a cart like that? Valencia is very clever, and whenever she comes to a hill, she tries to go the other way! The old woman is Guillermo’s “aura” or nurse, and they talk Majorcin together, which is harder than Spanish. But he speaks English, too. Dearest love and sweetest kisses to you.

Natalie.¹⁷

Natalie completed her north African and central European tour, then reached Paris in late May before
Sidonie, Mrs. Provosty and the children arrived in Le Havre on board the De La Salle. The plan was to show the family around Paris, then enroll the children in the summer camp at Etretat, an hour north of Le Havre on the Normandy coast. Natalie registered them in the Hotel Jacob of the Latin Quarter, which had a small elevator and was near Natalie's Hotel Danube. They toured the popular sights of Paris, the Eiffel Tower, the Cathedral of Notre Dame, a Seine River boat ride, the Tuileries Gardens and Palace where they enjoyed a Punch and Judy show and Natalie showed them where her World War I Red Cross office had been across the street. The children were assigned a young French girl to help with their French. Then they returned to Le Havre by train to deliver the children into the safe hands of the camp directors, Mr. and Mrs. De Rosey, including young Bino who was kept in the home of Mrs. De Rosey's mother, a French woman living in Etretat.  

From here, Natalie, Sidonie and Mrs. Provosty began their tour, first visiting the cities and battlefields of northern France, including Gisors and Beauvais where Natalie had been stationed in hospitals near the front, including also Compeigne, Soissons, Reims, Pompelle and Chateau-Theirry. Back in Paris, they were entertained by Fanny Craig Ventadour, Provosty relatives and other friends, also dining in Natalie's favorite restaurants and
enjoying leisurely days in the Latin Quarter and in Montmartre, with excursions to Versailles, Fontainebleau and the chateau of Madame Chaffraix. Natalie wrote of the changes in the French capital.

Paris is a beautiful vampire, and like all vampires, part of her charm is her inconstancy, her versatility. She is always changing, always different...now, if you please, from the smart motors in the Place Vendome, step sports costumes brightly colored, and the most sacred of revered shops of the rue de la Paix. Likewise find many among their most exclusive patrons coming to make their purchases gowned undeniably "pour le sport." Eh, eh, it may perhaps make Paris less imposing....

Every season brings its new favorite star, sometimes briefly, sometimes with great permanence among the classic cabaret rendezvous. Ciro’s, the Café de Paris, Recors, the Dannou, keep their places always, as do the dozens of other smart restaurants, the Tours d’Argent, Foyots, Larue’s, Paillairds...This year, the great bid for popularity has been made by the “Florida,” which is just next to the “Perroquet” in Montmartre’s gay borders....

The ever-adorable Maurice continues as the star of the dance...He is truly an artist, there is the personality, as well as the gift of dance, the wonder of rhythmic motion...He is dancing at the fascinating "Jardin de ma Soeur" in the rue Caumartin...its alias of “The Embassy Club,”...The gossip...says that Maurice is lamenting still his former dancing partner Lenora Hughes, and...will not be comforted.

However, his new partner is a scintillating bit of loveliness....

Natalie, Sidonie, and Mrs. Provosty explored the Loire valley, South of France, the Riviera and southwestern France, touring the coast of Brittany, then working their way back to Etretat and a visit with children. Their visit
to the American Camp was extended because Natié, the youngest of Sidonie’s three daughters, was ill with the whooping cough. Natalie took the older children in her old Citreon for a trip to Rouen on the Seine River.\textsuperscript{20}

Afterwards, the three adults resumed their explorations, this time traveling to England. Throughout their vacation, the three travelers sent a profusion of postcards to the children at camp, but few were sent home to America. In early July, Ledoux Provosty reported to a New Orleans \textit{States} writer that he had received no word from Sidonie or his mother since their departure in early May.\textsuperscript{21} There were, however, letters being exchanged with Mr. Provosty in New Roads, whose replies were generally humorous but also confirmed the news that the great Mississippi River flood had devastated Louisiana, though their New Roads home place and the city of New Orleans were safe.\textsuperscript{22}

Meanwhile, their postcards marked their progress through England and Scotland. On August 15\textsuperscript{th}, Natalie’s card to the American Camp was mailed from the British Museum in London, a photo of an ancient handwritten bible on its face. To her nieces she explained.

...It belonged to a rich nobleman. The book was made before printing was invented, when all books were written by hand on sheepskin called parchment. And they were full of beautiful pictures like this.
People cannot make such a beautiful blue anymore.\textsuperscript{23} Then on August 18\textsuperscript{th}, she sent a card, with verse quotations appearing on its face, from William Wordsworth's Dove Cottage.

...where the poet who wrote all of the lines on the other side, lived a long time with his sister, Dorothy. It is tiny, but has the prettiest garden, and there are pretty little lakes and woods all around it....\textsuperscript{24}

Natalie's August 20\textsuperscript{th} card was written in Oxford with a photograph of a castle they visited in Sterling. Each child, particularly Natié who had been ill, was showered with cards from all three women. They toured Wales and Scotland, returning to London, then finally back to France.

At the end of August, Natalie saw the family off from Le Havre harbor as they set sail aboard the Niagara, the return voyage taking them to ports of call at Vigo, the Canary Islands, and Havana in route to New Orleans. But there was more misfortune. They left with alarming news received before their departure. A serious fire badly damaged the Barrister street house in Alexandria during early August, the roof destroyed before the fire was extinguished. The Scotts faced the task of moving into a temporary home several blocks away while their house was rebuilt. Much worse news was realized when the travelers reached the Provosty home in New Roads. Mr. Provosty's farmlands and crops were overwhelmed by the destructive
Mississippi River flood, inflicting a severe financial setback from which he could not recover. Most of his property was forfeited to satisfy debts, though the Provosty house was saved from both the high waters and the creditors.  

The Hotel Danube was Natalie's Parisian home for the next four months, as she wrote for the Associated Press, the International News Agency and the New Orleans States while enjoying life in the Latin Quarter. She maintained her correspondence with Sidonie and the Scott children in their temporary home. One written in mid-November from Paris had a photograph of the Cluny Museum on the postcard face.

Do you remember this, dear Bébé? Don't you remember how often we passed it? How do you like your new house, and did you help Mom move or were you in the way? And what do you mean by growing too big for your birthday dress? Lots of my love to your roly poly self....

Natalie

During mid-December, the Times-Picayune society column verbalized what many Natalie Scott friends were wondering.

News of Natalie Scott is rather scarce and we are impatiently waiting for her to decide whether it will be Christmas, Easter or the summertime before she turns homeward. Right at present she is in Paris and enjoying herself thoroughly from all accounts.

Natalie was not home in November when Old Plantation Houses in Louisiana was distributed to retail bookstores. The publication met with enthusiastic reviews and heavy local
sales for the Christmas season. Meigs Frost wrote one
review for the New Orleans States.

Like a marvelous panorama, lavish with beauty, the ancient glories of America's most glamorous state unroll before the eye in a book, "Old Plantation Houses in Louisiana," that has just been published in New York.

That book is the work of two widely known New Orleans people, - Miss Natalie Scott and William P. Spratling. Miss Scott, a brilliant member of the New Orleans States' staff,...wrote the text, and Mr. Spratling, member of the faculty of Tulane University...has drawn the illustrations....

This book...has been waiting long to be done. The beauty has been there. The story has been there...this permanent record that has caught a vanishing epoch and held it for all time....Every plate and sketch in the book was made on the spot. Every paragraph of the text comes from notes taken in hundreds of interviews....

"Old Plantation Houses in Louisiana" is a book that should be in every library, and should as well be a treasured possession of every reader who has ever felt the charm and glamour of this colorful period in American history. Mark Twain would have loved it. George Cable would have loved it.

The book is published by William Helburn, Inc, of...New York, and the New Orleans agents are the Pelican Book Shop in Royal Street....

Natalie stepped off her ship just before Christmas, reappearing unannounced in the city, quickly visiting a few friends before leaving again. She and Jack Scott wrapped presents and drove to New Roads, again reuniting for Christmas with the Provostys and the Scotts. On January 1st, the newspaper reported her return to New Orleans, also commenting that Natalie was contemplating changes in her

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career, perhaps as Lyle Saxon and Roark Bradford had done before she left for Europe. Her work in Paris for the Associated Press and the International News Services were ongoing opportunities.

Natalie Scott dropped in on a pleased and waiting number of friends, quite as delightful and interesting as ever. After travel in Spain, motoring in France, months in Paris, Christmas in New Orleans was the only thing she wanted. A hurried packing and a quick trip on the "Paris," and here she is! A charming, interesting, clever Natalie...Natalie’s plans for the moment are unsettled, her talent and popularity pulling her many ways. Her book, with Bill Spratling’s drawings, on Louisiana plantation homes, made its appearance in time to turn into the loveliest of Christmas presents. Well written, with fine sketches, it is an addition to any library.29

The Times-Picayune also welcomed her home.

Didn’t we know that Natalie Scott would arrive unannounced...the same Natalie who went away nearly a year ago. We expect delicious unexpected things from Natalie...A little time in New Orleans, just long enough to let a few friends know she was home again...she left to spend Christmas with the Albin Provostys in New Roads....30

Natalie had been writing the Peggy Passe Partout column for eight years. Despite coaxing by friends and colleagues that she should turn away from the column and reach for higher journalistic and writing goals, Natalie enjoyed her work and stayed with it. Now her restlessness went beyond her work. She did not move back into the French Quarter, instead living near her old uptown friends, though her social life with Spratling, La Farge, Roark Bradford and others continued to range between the Quarter
and uptown. She enjoyed her free lance journalism for the Associated Press and the International News Agency; the success of her book with Bill Spratling was further evidence she could earn her living writing independently. Her one-act play, "Grand Zombi", written so quickly the previous Christmas, had won the Petit Theatre's contest and was to be performed in her honor in April. This play would achieve a second place selection in an international contest in 1929 and be published in a national anthology the same year.  

Yet Natalie possessed no great desire to succeed as a writer or playwright. Most compelling and most responsible for her restlessness was the death of Nauman Scott. His death, his widow, his fatherless children made her life and work in the French Quarter seem less than significant. She admired friends like Hilda Hammond, Martha Robinson, Sidonie Scott, and many others, and adored the families they were raising, though she was not seeking marriage and children. The sense of commitment a family formed, she may have felt, was missing from hers, particularly with the deaths of Nauman and her parents. By leaving the States, a different career might emerge to fill the void.  

Changes had already been made. She sold the Court of Two Sisters several months after her brother's death for a substantial profit, a portion of which she invested in the
stock market. Sam Gilmore had purchased her 714 St. Peter street property, and she had sold her 621 St. Peter street building in 1925. She and Jack sold her father’s Napoleon Avenue house in April, 1928, to balance the succession’s accounts. Her Orleans Alley apartment was occupied by a tenant, as this property she co-owned with John McClure provided marginal income. In December, 1926, she had acquired two rental properties in uptown New Orleans, both with a profitable cash flow. Natalie had developed a talent for successful real estate investments and relied upon realtor Empsie Lyons to manage the property during her long absences from the city.  

In May, 1928, Natalie purchased her new home in uptown New Orleans, a residential neighborhood near Tulane University and Audubon Park. This two story house, 439 Lowerline, was on a corner lot only a block from the home of Arthur and Hilda Hammond, up St. Charles Avenue from Martha Robinson’s home in Audubon Place. She occupied the downstairs while leasing the upstairs to a tenant. The Lowerline street neighborhood was filled with old friends and their children. Natalie lived here peacefully and happily for the next two years while writing her first two cookbooks on New Orleans cuisine. If not for the crash of the stock market and the advent of the Great Depression in late 1929, the consequential loss and devaluations of
investments and disruption of income, Natalie’s residence in New Orleans may have continued indefinitely. Yet the move to lovely Taxco may have been inevitable regardless of financial matters once she arrived there in 1930. She was already contemplating the move in early 1929, ten months before the market crashed.\(^{34}\)

Natalie resigned her position with the New Orleans States during February, 1928, thereby relinquishing another connection binding her to New Orleans. Accordingly, the New Orleans States began a new society column, replacing Peggy Passe Partout, on February 26, 1928.

...“The Peggy Passe Partout” part of us has passed so many times in and out of other people’s minds and hearts, and secrets and pleasures, and faults and virtues that she merits retirement from such frivolity with leisure for substantial things. We loved our “Peggy Passe Partout” self for it was the inspiration and the best of us; its individual lustre lighted unfamiliar paths where but for it, our smaller self would have fallen ignominiously....

It is a mark of the generous great, when one gifted as our “Peggy Passe Partout” sister, voluntarily places the cloak of her talents on the shoulders of an unknown one,...Legions will miss “Peggy Passe Partout”, and it will be long before we can placate them. We are sure soon to see the accustomed name at the end of articles of international renown such as her intellect, experience and travel warrant. Locally she will still be ours.\(^{35}\)

Natalie’s “Grand Zombi” was performed before the Petit Theatre audience in April, 1928. A large snake, perhaps a boa constrictor, was used as a dramatic live prop in the performance, the musical theme being a wild, eerie, at times
uninhibited jungle beat, with a chorus coming low and deep from the singers.

Zombi jena Voo-doo
Zombi jena Voo-doo,
Me te oir li, me te dig Vous,
me e unti li,
la-pé ri ni Zombi -

The central characters were Marie Leveau, a young and fiery quadroon girl, a known Voodoo queen; Mammy, an old Negro woman who was her mother; Buck, a young Negro man who was in love with Marie; Monsieur Henri, a young white gentleman of a reputable creole family; and a number of Negro men and women who chanted the song and played other supporting roles. A small house on the edge of the swamp near New Orleans was the setting, with a fire burning in the chimney, low stools, blocks of wood and chickens about. On the walls were nailed knots of horsehair, feathers of turkey and buzzards, dried snake skins, rabbits’ feet, and other Voodoo charms. A large cage, the snake within, stood on the floor with a colorful rug before it, on which lay knotted strings, crude wax figures, finger bones of children, mounds of meal, and bunches of gaily colored feathers. A heap of dead chickens were piled before the cage. Before the curtain was raised, the primitive music began, a hushed ecstatic moaning and the voice chanting a Voodoo song, first loud, then a low wail.
Zombi there is a voodoo
Zombi there is a voodoo
I see you here
I say to you
I feel you near
You’ve come, you’re here
Zombi......!!

In the dim light there were prostate forms of Negro men and women, some half nude, moaning and writhing, others bent over crude musical instruments played in near delirium. Marie Leveau was standing on the cage singing, a young woman with a slender “voluptuously rounded” body, black, unkempt hair, and brown skin with dark eyes, “a face almost ascetic but for the pouting swell of the red lips... scantily draped in a bright-colored scarf”, she swayed in place in a slow frenzy of contortions.

As the song ends, she stands taut, her head back, fists clinched, in an ecstasy. The others creep out, fearfully, except her mother, a wizened colored woman, prostrate on the floor. Marie retains her pose for a moment after the last departure, then she half opens her eyes, and surveys the room. Finding it empty, she relaxes abruptly.

Marie: G’on, Mammy, get up. They’s gone. [As the old woman continues her moaning chant unheeding.] Get up, I tell yo’. Quit that foolin’. They ain’t nobody by to give you mind. Leave that fool snake be.

Mammy (casting fearful glances at the cage):

Marie, chère, don’ you talk dat way. Tek care, fer Gawd’s sake, he ha’m yo’.

The story line revolved around the brash and beautiful mulatto Marie Leveau, who profitably manipulated the superstitions of the blacks around her, while also
expecting marriage to the handsome and wealthy Henri. Their secret love affair had been interrupted by his trip to Europe, but now he was expected to return for her. Buck, a poor man whose love for her she ignored, remained always prepared for the day she would accept him. In the play Henri does indeed return to New Orleans and comes to see her, but her dreams are shattered with his announcement that he will marry another. Admitting that their sexual love had overwhelmed him, Henri explains his realization he could not marry her.

Henri: Always? That is long. You say it without thinking.

Marie: You have said it to me.

Henri: It is so easy to say, that one says it. As you have.

Marie: (looking down at him tensely): And when we are married?

Henri: Married? Marie, you know the law does not allow it.

Marie: ...You swore it. You swore it before the Gran' Zombi. You can take me to France, as you said. As you swore.

Henri: Marie, a moment: Listen to me calmly...It was by your wildness that you have made me say things I did not mean, trying to calm you.

Marie: What is it that you did not mean? You did mean you loved me?

Henri: That kind of love, the kind you give. You have been wonderful. Look. For my thanks, I have brought this from London for you (He
holds out a finely embroidered silk bag, and takes from it a gold chain, showing at the same time a roll of bank notes in the bag)....

Then he admits the rumors are true, he is to marry "Mamzelle Véronique". The dialogue heightens, he admits how deeply he cares and she attempts to trap him with a kiss. He drags her across the floor, her arms around his neck, but he resists and finally breaks loose, with her screaming, and leaves.

Marie (screaming): Take yo' regrets! Take yo'self. Go, Go! I gi' yo' my regrets: take them, too...I gi' yo' curses an spells, an' evil eye! (Looks around in a helpless rage). Gran' Zombi, curse him. Don' let him go to her. Strike him dead, you Gran' Zombi. (Beside herself, she starts gathering the cords and feathers, takes up one of the small images, muttering.) M'so Henri, M'so Henri, M'so Henri. (Thrusting at it with a pin, as she does so, then twisting a cord about it; muttering feverishly, and screaming at intervals)....

She is distraught, finally admits to her mother she's been rejected and there's nothing she can do about it. The Zombi can't help her. Then there is loud murmuring outside, and a group of blacks enter, carrying the limp form of Henri and lay him on the floor.

(...Marie looks, screams, and throws herself on the still form. Negroes bend over him, get water, loosen his collar. One feels his heart, and shakes his head. The voices are hushed.)

One Negro: Ain' no use. He dead a'ready.

(Excited murmurs: "My Gawd!" "Lawd save us!" "Bress Jesus!" "Lawda-mussy!" "Amen.")
Then through a chorus of exclamations and moanings:

1st Negro: Fell clear th'ough. Someun put de light in de wrong place.

2nd Negro: Look lak he got hit on de head.

3rd Negro: Mus' be wh'ah he hit w'en he fall.

1st Negro: Look lak he had a spell on him.

2nd Negro: Sho' look lak he had a spell on him.

(They begin to look at Marie Leveau...her eyes fix on the cage of the snake, which she regards with horror, and fascination, and growing awe. She looks down at M'so Henri, slowly draws away from him; then, in a quick, writhing movement, she turns toward the cage, and says, in a clear, low, even voice):

Marie: Gran' Zombi! Devil!

(She remains, kneeling, with eyes fixed on the cage. The face of Buck appears at the window.)

Curtain.36

The play was dramatic, even melo-dramatic, but also filled with color, action, music, uninhibited modern dance, eroticism and racial conflict. The newspaper reviews were generous.

...one of our lauded and beloved writers, Natalie Scott, whose enthralling prize winning play was given Monday...The play has a most dramatic opening, colorful and atmospheric, the stage semi-dark, with Marie Leveau, a Voodoo queen, singing incantations over a snake, the doleful and insistent tum-tum of the drum...melancholy note throughout. Esther Dupuy, as the voodoo queen was superb, working herself up in patches of excitement...carrying the audience...She was by turn, superstitious...provocative to the Monsieur Henri whom she loved...passionately alluring in her determination to have him, then balefully
hating as she saw she had lost him, then back to the belief and spell of the voodoo. In every one of these moods, Esther was magnificent with every nuance of her voice, every move of her lithe body, every shade of expression...a born actress.

To Mr. Hollander goes just as much credit for his Buck, the negro....

Natalie has written a play which abounds in dramatic intensity and colorful atmosphere but which is hard to do well. Negro dialect and superstitious voodoo charms and incantations are spoiled if overdone or underdone in the least. The parts must be felt and understood to be well played....

Natalie’s play was selected in 1928 by Theatre Arts Monthly as the best play of the year and copyrighted by the magazine in December, with Natalie retaining all performance royalties. The play placed second in the magazine’s international contest and was published in 1929 in an anthology entitled Plays of American Life and Fantasy, one of eighteen plays collected by Edith J. R. Isaacs, editor of the Theatre Arts Monthly magazine. Others among the eighteen playwrights recognized in the book were Eugene O’Neill, Stark Young, Harold Chapin, Alfred Kreyemborg and Zoe Akins. Natalie brought a copy of the book of plays, Plays of American Life and Fantasy, to Newcomb College for the library, and wrote an inscription:

To Newcomb, - “guiding goddess of my harmful deeds”, - and stimulus towards better.

Natalie Vivian Scott, - 1909

June 11, 1929

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Natalie had left New Orleans during Mardi Gras, 1928, to visit the Scotts in Alexandria. After the "Zombi" production in April, she was busy with her move to Lowerline street, though she went with Martha to a poetry society meeting in early June, 1928. Bill Spratling and La Farge, among others, were frequent visitors to her house. Once, while the Scott children were visiting, Spratling drew the portrait of twelve year old Nauman, Jr. Much time was spent in the Hammond household, only a block away. Natalie organized and rode in numerous horse shows during the Spring, 1928. Hilda and Natalie spent much of June helping organize the national Junior League convention to be held in the city that Fall. Oliver La Farge, Bill Spratling, and poet Carl Carmer presented separate lectures on May 28th, which Natalie attended, an evening organized by Elizabeth Werlein. The same week Natalie, Empsie Lyons, Bill Spratling, Joel Lawrence, and several others went together to the Athenaeum to hear a concert of old Black spirituals.39

The last week of May, 1928, Bill Spratling’s publisher from Architectural Forum was in the city, and Spratling returned with him for a short visit to New York.40

Bill left Wednesday with Mr. Hooper for New York to be there about a week, after which he will come home only long enough to pack for Mexico, sailing on the 7th. Remembering the etching gems Bill drew last
year of Mexico City’s church spires and overhanging balconies, you can understand why we look forward with anticipation and pride for the results....

Spratling resigned from the Tulane faculty before he left for Mexico, apparently confident he could make a living with his free lance drawing and illustrated journalism. Thus, Spratling followed the example of Lyle Saxon, Roark Bradford and Natalie Scott, throwing his fate in a new direction, cutting the umbilical cord of secure employment while accepting the risk, as the other three had, that talent and ideas would sustain his independence. He did sketches and writing that summer for The World’s Work, an international political journal published by Doubleday, and The Architectural Forum. Spratling was also an occasional lecturer on colonial architecture at the National University in Mexico City. This was his third successive summer in Mexico.

Natalie’s work with the Associated Press took her on two journeys, both a combination of pleasure and writing, one to the Democratic Party’s national convention in Houston during July and, afterwards, she embarked on a slow trip up the eastern seaboard, visiting friends, relatives and celebrities, such as Sherwood Anderson, along the way, finally reaching New York in November, 1928.

The Democratic convention trip was preceded in early July by an automobile excursion to Hot Springs, Arkansas
with Sidonie Scott, Jeanne Provosty Griswald (Sidonie's sister), Nugent Provosty (one of Sidonie's younger brothers), and young Nauman. Nauman, Jr. recalls their meeting Natalie's train in Vicksburg, Mississippi, from where they all traveled to Hot Springs in Sidonie's car, with Natalie doing the driving over the dirt roads much of the way.

They had not been on the road long, when their trip was suddenly enlivened by another motorist passing them, drowning them in blinding dust. Natalie was infuriated and stomped the accelerator. There ensued a high speed race down the narrow road as Natalie was determined to overtake the offending car in order to retaliate with a dust storm of her own. The other driver would not allow her to pass, responding to her challenges with higher and higher speeds. Throughout the fierce contest, Natalie trailed, she and her occupants coughing and choking in the thick cloud of dirt and gravel, always on the heels of her opponent. The spectacular race had ensued so spontaneously, everyone in the car could only hold on, covering their faces from the flying dust with the hope Natalie would prevail and put an end to the storm about them.

The spirited flight through the backwoods finally ended in defeat as they sped into the town of Lake Providence, encountering a crossroad, the contest
concluding with the other vehicle speeding away in another direction at the first intersection, waving his arms in victory as he disappeared down the road. Filthy and thirsty, Jeanne Griswald suggested a visit to the home of an old boyfriend living in Lake Providence where she was certain they could clean up and be welcomed with refreshing cocktails. They found the boyfriend but were offered only lemonade, a fact that disgusted them but amused young Nauman, then they completed the trip to Hot Springs, where they enjoyed the courtesies and therapeutic baths of the Arlington Hotel.

After several days, the entire group resumed the vacation by driving to Houston, where they were the guests of George and Theo Christie in the Rice Hotel, the Democratic Party’s headquarters for the national convention. Natalie’s old boss with the New Orleans States, Colonel Robert Ewing, owner of the newspaper, was Governor Huey Long’s hand-picked choice to be the Louisiana delegation’s chairman at the convention. The Associated Press had probably assumed Natalie would have access to Huey himself through Colonel Ewing. But Long decided at the last minute not to attend due to politics in Baton Rouge. Natalie and her family of companions all enjoyed full access to the floor of the convention, and watched Franklin Roosevelt, who Natalie had previously met in New
Orleans during 1921, give the presidential nominating speech for Governor Al Smith of New York. 44

Natalie left July 20th, 1928, on her five and a half month trip to New York, consuming the first three and a half months in the journey itself, the New Orleans States reporting that “she will visit friends in Washington and New York before sailing for Europe to be absent several months, traveling extensively on the continent.” These friends included Martha Robinson in North Carolina and the Sherwood Andersons in backwoods Virginia, as the States reported a month later.

Natalie Scott writes a charming letter of Roscraggan where she visited Martha Robinson at her cottage “Dunrobbin.” She says it is delightful there with so many New Orleans people... “Various others came over from nearby resorts and life is always stirring. There are swimming pools available, and mountains, so there are always parties, more or less impromptu, and Asheville is near enough to make sophisticated joys as movies available, too...”

Natalie wrote this letter from Sherwood Anderson’s newspaper office, his letter-head bearing the information that he is editor and Elizabeth manager and that they are responsible for a lending library, job printing, “Marion Democrat” and “Smyth County News.” They and Natalie had a wonderful time talking New Orleans and exchanging literary gossip. She stayed there for a few days, then was off for more visits before going abroad. I doubt if Natalie will ever make the boat for her popularity is such that every place she stops her hosts try to make her visit permanent. 45

Traveling was Natalie’s work as well as her pleasure, just as it had been with the New Orleans States during her long
visits to Europe; what she saw and did became articles for publication."

Though there were occasional visits, Sherwood Anderson did not live again in the French Quarter. But he remained a midwesterner-turned-southerner for the rest of his life, which ended in 1941. He and Elizabeth separated in 1929 and were divorced in 1932; she returned to California where she worked for the Stanford University bookstore until Natalie Scott invited her to come to Taxco several years later. Anderson remarried again, this time permanently. Most of his writing and newspaper journalism thereafter was about the South, southern labor problems and the southern mind subculture. In 1934 he traveled the Southeast writing monthly installments for *Today* magazine. He published short stories and essays, one collection published in 1936 entitled *Puzzled America*. His last novel, *Kit Brandon* (1936) dealt optimistically with the same variety of Southern social issues. His last publication, an editorial titled "Chance Rules Us All" and published in the Marion College newspaper, reflected on New Orleans and other southern places, and mentions Natalie Scott during his discussion of the South's diversity, as he reflected affectionately upon New Orleans.

How are you going to get it as one picture? There are the plains of Texas; Tidewater, the Southside, the Piedmont...of Virginia; the lowland and
upland counties of North Carolina and South Carolina; Arkansas and Florida; the lower Mississippi (the sugar bowl); the Cajun civilization in the country about New Orleans.

New Orleans itself (oh, sweet tolerant city) . . . put it over against Birmingham; Natchez, Mississippi against Greensboro, North Carolina. It is a vast puzzle.

It is like all America, a changing thing. In New Orleans and Mobile the river packets have almost completely disappeared. When I first began going South, twenty years ago now, the little packets and some of the big ones still loaded . . . at the foot of Canal Street in New Orleans. There were the singing ragged Negroes . . . . You got Negro song, not as you hear it in northern concert halls, but against background of river, rain and woods.

Oh what I owe to the South, the months . . . the aggregate years . . . spent loitering there . . . Friends made, Julius Friend, Jack McClure, Weeks Hall, in that strange old house he brought back to life up on Bayou Teche, Natalie Scott, Wharton Esherick, a Yank like myself . . . .

Bill Faulkner, the talented one . . . .

Spratling returned from his third Mexican summer to New Orleans during September, 1928, while Natalie was away, and, according to biographer Taylor Littleton, Spratling's financial condition was in very difficult straits. His drawings from Mexico were exhibited at the Arts and Crafts Club, perhaps including a few works by Diego Rivera which Spratling had brought from Mexico to try to sell. Spratling also brought back to New Orleans an unusual pet, described by the newspaper as a tiger but probably an ocelot, which he kept "to chase the French Quarter rats" in
his St. Peter street attic apartment. His travels that summer had taken him and his companion, New York artist George Biddle, as far south as the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, where he may have acquired the small jungle beast. The New Orleans States featured a large photograph of Spratling, fastidiously groomed with tie and vest, his pen in hand, the "tiger" comfortably lying across his lap with its head resting over Spratling's elbow, beneath the headline "Tiger Is Pet of New Orleans Artist".

The article also revealed that Spratling's finances were looking up. He had been hired by the Theater Guild in New York to draw portraits of its fifty top stage performers.

There is something new in the world of art down in the Vieux Carre...if Rembrandt ever had a dog, if Picasso ever had a parrot, if Tintoretto had a monkey, the present age does not know of it.

But Bill Spratling has a "tiger" in his attic studio at 621 St. Peter street. Strictly speaking the brown feline with rows of black spots running lengthwise on his back and sides is not a tiger...but that "fearful symmetry" might be used in describing Bill's beast...The front legs are shorter than the rear ones...there is a camel-like hump on the back. The face is the face of a cat...Bill scratched his head thoughtfully. "I don't know just how this tiger would be classed biologically. He is no lord of bengal jungles, it is true, but down in Columbia the natives call his kind tigers. He must be a member of the jaguar family. He may be an ocelot. I played safe in naming him. Gatito, meaning 'little cat'... 'Tito'.... The artist disappeared into the depths of a cupboard and came forth with a nice piece of fat bacon. "Here kitty, kitty."....He galloped
across the floor like a small elephant and damned near
took a hunk of Bill’s finger with the bacon.\textsuperscript{48}

The article confirmed he had taught classes in Mexico and
described the apartment Spratling and Faulkner had
previously shared, revealing Spratling’s current
preoccupation with Mexico. The cat had been lounging on a
Mexican blanket.

Tito growled happily over his snack. Bill lighted
a cigarette while his visitors looked curiously about
the brightly decorated panorama of the attic studio.

There were bookshelves overflowing with tomes of
all sizes. Wash studies of hands hung above the
books. There was Mexican pottery, mostly in the form
of horses....Mexican blankets and tapestries took the
place of wallpaper. Unfinished drawings littered a
table.

Bill Spratling, when a member of the Tulane
University faculty...went every summer to Mexico. He
was a member of the faculty of the art school of the
Universidad Nacional in Mexico City last summer.

Next week Bill is going to New York. He has been
commissioned to draw the portraits of the principal
actors and actresses of the New York Theater Guild.
He will do about fifty portraits and will be away from
New Orleans about six weeks.

“Franz,” said the artist, “is going to take care
of my tiger while I am away.”

This last reference was to Franz Blom, whose apartment was
in the St. Ann street Pontalba building.\textsuperscript{49}

Meanwhile, Natalie was working her way up the east
coast toward New York. In Washington, she visited her
cousins Fannie and Lee Steele at Fairmont Place, with whom
Natalie had lived for a year in 1910 when she attended

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Fairmont Seminary. On October 29th, she was in Owing’s Mills, Maryland at a place called “The Meadows” when she wrote Lyle Saxon to congratulate him on his new book.

Dear Lyle,

Fabulous New Orleans arrived to-day, thanks to the efficiency of Century Company and has given me most agreeable hours. I have just closed it, and now click this off into the silence for Mr. R.F.D. in the morning, - all to tell you how truly delightful I found the book. So much color and warmth, - and smell!....It really is so nice it makes me homesick....And that, too, when I know how lightly you esteem my criticisms! But of course, about that I don’t agree with you; I think myself they’re most enlightened, - enough to condemn my own creative efforts and commend yours, a commentary in itself.

But I’m so incorrigibly friendly that I send the congratulations along any old how: do with them as you will. Buried in the country, I don’t see the reviews, but I’m sure they can’t fail to be flattering to an extent to redeem you from the sway of the Great God Dumps, - if indeed you have remained there in my absence.

I’m awfully glad it is such a good book.

Natalie

In a postscript, she added that the kerosene ran out in her lamp, so the letter was written by candlelight. She was in touch with Spratling, and adds a note that “Bill Spr. expects to be in N.Y. about the 10th. Tell Bill Faulkner I dreamed about him the other night! Nothing Freudian (if he is uneasy).” She added that she had been swimming despite the “ice down here...I must get admiration on some grounds!” By mid-November, virtually the entire French
Quarter family had been transplanted to New York, though Oliver La Farge had gone back to New Orleans under unhappy circumstances.\textsuperscript{51}

La Farge was terminated by Tulane University in September because of the personal animosity of a member of the Board of Trustees dating back to a 1926 incident. His biographer D'Arcy McNickle offers this explanation.

Oliver’s keenest disappointment came late in the year. He was at Harvard in September 1928, carrying out a research assignment for Tulane, when word came to him that he had lost his job. He explained to a colleague later: “I got into a row with the son and daughter of one of the Trustees at a masked dance in April, 1926. The eventual fruit was that, when my name came up for promotion to Associate (from an assistant-ship), the Trustees rose up and demanded that I be fired, and I was, incontinent.”

Apparently La Farge’s temper had gotten the best of him, slapping the son according to one source. Nevertheless La Farge returned to his French Quarter apartment and, by May, 1929, finished his book, \textit{Laughing Boy}, a Navaho Indian love story. His book was published the following November and won the Pulitzer Prize in May, 1930, it’s selection prevailing over Ernest Hemingway’s \textit{A Farewell To Arms}, also published in the fall of 1929.\textsuperscript{52}

During December, 1928, Esther Dupuy, Spratling’s romantic interest who played the lead role in Natalie’s \textit{Petite Theatre} production of “Grand Zombi”, was in New York where she saw a lot of Spratling. One evening Spratling...
and Faulkner took her by train to Hoboken to see a Christopher Marley play, then to a German beer hall. As she reported to the newspaper after her return home, Faulkner left for Shreveport while she was still in New York. According to Esther Dupuy, Spratling was happy and successful in New York, at that time visiting with artist George Biddle, who had been Spratling’s traveling companion in Mexico the previous summer, but planning to move into Greenwich Village. Tommy Farrar, she said, was “still designing stage settings, his last work having been for Milne’s ‘The Perfect Alibi’…” Esther also reported that Natalie was well.

Our will o’ the wisp Natalie Scott has remained in New York where she is having such a good time. She was as vague and undetermined as ever about her plans but spoke of coming home soon, which means very little from Natalie. Our old resident Sherwood Anderson was in New York and Esther also saw a great deal of Lyle Saxon whose “Father Mississippi” and “Fabulous New Orleans” have brought him such fame.\footnote{53}

The newspaper writer was wrong about Natalie. She had no intention of missing Christmas in New Roads with the Scotts and Provostys, and she arrived in time for she and Jack to make the drive together. She had forgone Europe, opting instead for her meandering journey through the mountains of the eastern seaboard states from July until mid-November, then the long visit among her friends in New York. The
year 1929 began with Natalie back in her home on Lowerline street.\textsuperscript{54}

Natalie spent 1929 and the first three months of 1930 in New Orleans living on the first floor of her Lowerline house, which was large and roomy, with large screen porches on both levels overlooking the front yard. During 1929, the quiet, old neighborhood was filled with middle income families and many children, including the Eustis’ family, the Goudchauxs’, the Ochsners’, and the Alsobrooks’. During visits with Natalie, Sidonie Scott’s children played through the neighborhood with the Hammond children. Hilda and Natalie regularly made the short walk between their homes, Hilda was “Whildoo” and Natalie was “Snata”, and the two influenced each other in creative ways, as one of Hilda’s daughters recalled decades later.

Martha and Aunt Natalie were great friends, not rivals. However they were definitely individuals and could argue (Aunt Martha too) at the drop of a hat. But then mother loved to argue with anyone about important things - Socialism, liberalism. She was pretty liberal, Pa was super conservative....I loved those gatherings...very stimulating.

Both were regular contributors of articles for local magazines such as the New Orleans \textit{Illustrated News} and \textit{The New Orleanian}.\textsuperscript{55}

Hilda was emerging from ten years of child-rearing, her oldest son Arthur was ten and Blanche, the oldest daughter, almost nine, both able to help their housekeeper
Mammy Cooper with the two younger children. Natalie was the god-mother of both Arthur and Blanche. Hilda had worked for the Times-Picayune, organizing the society page, and also created a children's section of the Pelican Bookshop in the French Quarter, where she periodically held book parties with refreshments, puppet shows, and story readings. During the next fifteen months on Lowerline, amidst the chaos of children and Junior League projects, Natalie wrote two unique and profitable New Orleans cuisine cookbooks, while Hilda wrote a national prize-winning children's play based on Jean Lafitte and the Battle of New Orleans, then a children's book of two visiting French children who encountered and learned the legends and customs of exciting New Orleans.56

Hilda's children retain vivid memories of their "Aunt" Natalie from those days on Lowerline street and later when she visited from Mexico.

She came once or twice a year and stayed awhile with us and then Aunt Martha. I adored her - she had dancing eyes and a wonderful smile. She and mother were great together, they would recite poetry and dance around the room. The phone never stopped ringing when she was there and she was entertained constantly by many, many people, - Lyle Saxon, Harnett Kane and other literary figures were her best pals. They came to the house often and their conversations were wonderful. I met Tennessee Williams through her. He had an apartment in the French Quarter. She was very popular....57
Natalie's social life was as engaging as ever. Lyle Saxon and Oliver La Farge were in the city most of 1929, as was Franz Blom, though Bill Spratling returned from New York for only a short time during March. In New York, during November and December, 1928, Natalie and Spratling had spoken seriously of permanently residing in Mexico. Aside from aesthetic and cultural fascination with the Spanish country, the prospects for making a living were enhanced by the growing American interest in Mexican art and history, a fact which fit well with Natalie's freelance association with the Associated Press and the International News Agency. Furthermore Mexico was a much less expensive place to live.

In the aftermath of Ledoux Provosty's New Orleans marriage to Queen Baskerville on February 9th, 1929, Natalie went to Alexandria to help Sidonie Scott move her family back into the newly rebuilt Scott home, by then enlarged to two stories with an enclosed back porch to accommodate the five children and guests more comfortably. She found a moment to write a letter to Lyle Saxon which, aside from discussing her uncertain professional plans, also demonstrated the social whirl of her life.

Dear Lyle,

All night long, - or a good part of it - we waited for you at David Cohn's. Then my usual
initiative asserted itself and I called up the Monteleone and found that you had fled. Helas!58

Saxon had left due to an incapacitating head cold incurred in the aftermath of too much absinthe. Natalie had tried to telephone him with a home remedy.

Now learn from this, - my angle on it - never to disregard inspiration. When Ethel bobbed, rolled, or somehow made her way in that evening, I said in just so many words: "I think I’ll ring up Lyle and suggest a Turkish bath."...I feel that a Turkish would have saved you. It has cured incipient colds for me several times.

Wasn’t that absinthe exhausting? It was several hard days’ work for me. Our sweet John Mason Brown told me that his two lectures nearly got drowned in it...I imagine in the aftermath thereof one is more susceptible to colds and their evil ilk. Meigs reports that you are suffering and this is a note of sympathy.59

She wrote of the lovely garden of the Scott home, “its yellow daffodils and the red flowering quince...the winter blooming honeysuckle.” She wrote of the liveliness of the Scott household, “things happen continuously, as they will when there are five children to get them under way.” Then more on her New Orleans social itinerary.

...the Frosts’ on Sunday...Walker, Charlie, and Sam had supper with us Sunday evening,...grand onion soup: you should have been there. Saturday afternoon I spent with John Mason Brown on the river. He was very amusing, a gale of spirits by relief at the past­ness of his two lectures.60

The three supper guests had been Walker Ellis, Charlie Bein, and Sam Gilmore. Then the letter turned to Bill Spratling and future plans.
I am waiting for news from Bill before definite plans for Mexico, but leave New Orleans I must: it is too costive. My lofty ambition is to stave off getting a job till next fall...Come up if you can. Be generous with your typewriter and let me know when you are going to Natchitoches. We shall be driving through there and might be coaxed into stopping for coffee...People have arrived with groceries, with wedding presents, to see the floors, to put up curtains, and now I see one with a fishing-pole. I give up...Did I tell you that Oliver’s book is accepted? That’s all. The fishing-pole is for the curtains. We are spending Sunday in New Roads....

Natalie

Oliver’s book, of course, was Laughing Boy, destined to win a Pulitzer Prize. At that moment, La Farge was unemployed and planning a return to Harvard in the fall to finally complete his master’s degree. There was a sweet irony to the lives of Natalie Scott and her friends. Much was being accomplished. Little money was being made. Their social lives, however, were prospering.

Bill Spratling returned to New Orleans during the third week of March, 1929, but stayed in town only ten days, long enough to see friends, pack up and vacate his attic apartment. Spratling was returning to Mexico where he planned to continue writing illustrated articles on Mexican architecture, which his publisher hoped he would expand into a book on Mexican cities. Spratling had been authorized by Carl Zigrosser, Director of the Weyhe Gallery in New York, to act as the gallery’s agent in selling French and American paintings the gallery was exhibiting in

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Mexico City. According to Spratling's memoirs, he had received a two hundred dollar advance from the publishing firm, Cape and Smith, for his planned Mexican book, plus he would be paid fifty dollars a month for writing a monthly "Mexican Letter" for Irita Van Doren's book section in the New York Tribune. These opportunities, together with his plans to again teach part time during the summer at the Mexican national university, were reasonable assurances that he could make a living in Mexico.\(^6^2\)

Natalie did not accompany Spratling to Mexico, as she had indicated in her February letter to Lyle Saxon she might do. Instead, she remained in New Orleans, managing her modest properties with her nest egg safely invested in the stock market, organizing and riding in horse shows, and receiving more recognition, and perhaps some royalties, when her play "Zombi" was published that Spring in Plays of American Life and Fantasy published in New York by Coward-McCann, Inc. During mid-April, Natalie was among ten New Orleanians honored, including author-preservationist Grace King, opera empresario Harry Loeb, Dorothy Dix, Lyle Saxon and Roark Bradford, in a program of entertainment entitled "New Orleans in Song and Story." In March, she successfully defended her Bridle Club equestrian championship won the previous year, then, in November, her

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surprise cookbook was favorably reviewed by local newspapers as the "perfect Christmas present."63

During May, 1929, Oliver La Farge confirmed surprising rumors by announcing in New Orleans his engagement to marry Wanda Mathers, a New York socialite. The New York wedding took place in September and the couple traveled to Arizona for their honeymoon, then to New Orleans during early November for a round of parties in their honor, as the newspapers duly reported.

Oliver La Farge and his charming wife have been visiting here for the last week...Versatile and clever Oliver is a much beloved old friend and it was not long before Wanda endeared herself...Last Sunday night Elizabeth Werlein entertained them for supper...Monday night Natalie Scott had a dinner for them, and Natalie in her brilliant way made the party a clever affair....64

The last comment in the newspaper was probably a private joke at Natalie’s expense. Her party for the La Farges was more hilarious than clever. The guests on Lowerline street included the Ike Stauffers, the Alex Leonhardts, the Walter Stauffers, Elizabeth Werlein, Joel Harris Lawrence, Esther and Marie Elise Dupuy, Dorothy Oechsner, Keith Temple, Franz Blom, Charles Bein, Sam Gilmore and numerous others.

Natalie made all the preparations for an elegant dinner, including the idea of serving café brûlot, a very potent brandy after-dinner drink, served hot, which was fun
and dramatic to prepare as the guests watched, everyone seated around the dining table. A large silver bowl was used, and servings made by a ladle in small cups. The ingredients included lemon peel, all-spice, cloves, sugar, whole coffee beans, aloes and brandy. The dramatic step in the preparation was to ignite a ladle-full of the liquid, then sink the fiery brew back into the bowl to ignite the entire mix. The lights in the room were put out so everyone could watch the bowl blaze merrily while into it was poured exceptionally strong coffee. This was allowed to blaze, while ladled and stirred, dipping up the flaming contents and pouring it, while burning brightly, gently back into the bowl again. When at last the blaze was extinguished by having a cover clapped on, then brûlot was served.

The entire brûlot process went well. Helen Stauffer made the brûlot in a beautiful silver bowl Natalie had borrowed from Hilda Hammond, the bowl a family heirloom with a repoussé design of raised silver throughout its interior. The lights were put out for the fiery show, then turned on again for the serving. As everyone sipped from their small cups, they noticed large lumps of soft silver floating in their drink. The hot and burning brûlot had melted the silver designs, in clumps, ruining the beautiful bowl Hilda had provided for the occasion.
According to Esther Dupuy’s recollections, over sixty years later, everyone got a great laugh on the occasion, especially when Natalie confessed this was Hilda’s bowl. Of course, Natalie had to face her friend the next day and make restitution as best she could, an inevitable fact that was good for more laughing at the party.65

Perhaps as a lasting memorial to the silver bowl disaster at her La Farge party, Natalie made “café brûlot” the final recipe, under the “desserts and sweets” section, in her new cookbook released to bookstores during November, 1929. Several weeks before its appearance, local newspapers learned of its coming publication.

What do you think Natalie Scott has done now? We know Natalie well in the roles of authoress and actress but she has adopted the new one of housewife with her book of recipes which is soon to be published. All the delectable dishes therein are typical of New Orleans and each one is, I hear, fit to set before a king.

Olive Leonhardt is designing the cover as an extra touch and it won’t be long before Natalie’s volume will be the joy of young brides and the comfort of older housekeepers. Who, but Natalie would have thought of doing such a thing, and who could have done it half so well?66

Uniquely, her cookbook used as its theme the image of the unsurpassed culinary talents and expertise of the black mammy. The title was Mirations and Miracles of Mandy: Some Favorite Louisiana Recipes. The cover featured five smiling images of fictitious “Mandy” wearing her wrapped
red tignon over her hair with wide collars around her shoulders. Natalie’s introduction made clear that this book was dedicated to her cook Pearl Sideboard, who alternated days working for she and Jack. The book was filled with humor, great recipes, mixed with pieces of kitchen wisdom expressed in vernacular. Aside from Pearl, she got her recipes by going into the kitchens of her friends and cooking with their cooks. She perpetuated many of them by putting their names in her preface.

"My madam say she writin’ mah cookin’ down. Lawdy, put me frontin’ a cookin’ stove, an’ I don’t needs no prescription”, says Mandy.

Mandy, of course, is a composite.

My own Mandy’s name is Pearl. Bless her earnest face, and her soft voice, and her good brown eyes, — and bless particularly that vital sixth culinary sense, which creates delectable miracles of food without ‘no prescription’!

There are the Mandys of all my friends, — Mammy Lou, and Phrosine, and Tante Celeste, Venida, Felicie, Mande, Tidine, Elvy, Mona, Relie. It is said that the witch doctors of North Africa have a mastery of mental telepathy. These Mandys, too, have some such subtle sense. They become miraculously aware of this way of dealing with the vegetable, that way of concocting a soup. They have culinary tentacles of the spirit always aquiver to appropriate each good new idea.

New Orleans exposes them to many. We have among us exponents of many culinary learnings: the herbs of France, and its sauces; the oil and the garlic of Spain; the pastes of Italy; the meal and chili of Mexico; hot-breads from South Carolina and Virginia; pot pies from Germany and New England; chefs d’oeuvres, creations of our own master restauranteurs, unexcelled as they are. Somehow, mysteriously, the
Mandys acquire them, only to let them reappear slightly altered and marked with the stamp of their own cult, which is the stamp of inspiration.

In the various cuisines of which they are the muses, mysterious rites go on, heritage of many countries, heritage of many years. I have peeped here, watched there, borrowed and begged, and doubtless, inadvertently stolen, to offer in these scant pages a few of these local treasures....

Dear Mandys. They are integrally of our life, part of its suavity. They trick us, harass us and serve us; understand us amazingly, and love us. And we, - we scold them, distrust them, rely on them, take care of them, love them. Wanting a more worthy token, I offer them this little tribute, with, fittingly, echoes of their homely wisdom and reflections of their homely but true art.

"Good talkin' mought mek happy comp'ny; but good eatin' sure do." 67

Roughly two hundred fifty recipes appeared on the book's sixty-one pages, divided logically into "appetizers", "soups", "entrees", "fish, oysters, crabs and shrimp", "meat, poultry and game", "vegetables", "sauces", "salads and dressings", "desserts and sweets", the last, as mentioned earlier, being "café brulot", with the closing words, "And so in this fading glow, Mandy and I make our departing bow, with the not ignoble hope that we have served!" The book is full of quotations of the "homely wisdom" spoken of in the introduction. For example, among those in the dessert section appears this quaint truism,

"my madam says tea-time fer talkin'; but I 'low de comp'ny lak sump'n mo'n jes' talk between dey teef."
One of those in the soup section:

"many ez de y got cooks in de kitchen, da's how many ways you kin ster up a gumbo."

Another two from the appetizers section:

"rough talk turn smoov in de mouf, ef yo' got a tasty somep'n ter pop inter it."

and

"grace kin raise de low up high, - en' fixin is de grace o'food."

Before the spinach dishes is another.

"Dey sez spinach is ez good es a doctor; huh, it's better'n dat, 'cause it don' leave no bills trailin'."

For turtle soup:

'yas'm; things is diff'ent how yo' take 'em: turtle don't get nowhar in a race, but come to soup, he go long ways."

Before the onion recipes is another culinary principle:

"dey's good, en' bad, en' better, en' wuzzer; but ain' many gotta-be's. Onions is one o' 'em."

Then another of these from the desserts:

"dey talks erbout a sweet toof lak dey's on'y one; huh! by de end o' dinnah dey's all o' 'em sweet."

The introduction to salads is accompanied by this thought,

"Wouldn't be no trouble 'bout salvation ef ev'rybody 'd give in ter grace lak salad does ter fixin'."

There were many more such quotations scattered through the narrow cookbook.

Natalie was not a cook, but she was a gourmet, intensely interested in the art of cooking, though she
often accused herself of being as much gourmand as gourmet. The _Mirations and Miracles of Mandy_ was the first of five very successful Louisiana and Mexican cookbooks she wrote. All went through many subsequent editions. The Pelican Publishing Company re-registered the copyright for _Mirations and Miracles of Mandy_ in 1978 and has republished it many times since. _The Gourmet’s Guide to New Orleans_, first published in 1933, was in its twenty-third edition in 1987, and there have been more. All share a flavor of good will and humor, along with a unique selection of sound recipes, and some added touch to make them interesting.

For _Mirations_, it was the authenticity of the “Mandys”, and the humorous phrases of down-home wisdom. For _200 Years of New Orleans Cooking_, the French Quarter illustrations by Bill Spratling were an added feature. In _Gourmets Guide to New Orleans_, the foreward was by Dorothy Dix and the recipes and drinks were each credited to various New Orleanians, restaurants and celebrities, such as John Dos Passos and Roark Bradford, various Mexican friends as well as numerous soldiers from the two world wars. Bill Spratling wrote the preface for _Your Mexican Kitchen_ which was illustrated by two young Mexican boys, both students in Taxco’s open air art school. Natalie began using her Mexican cookbooks in 1939 to raise money for the peasant school she founded in Taxco.68

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Natalie and Martha Robinson finished 1929 by appearing on stage together in the two lead roles of the Petit Theatre's production of "The Devil's Disciple", a three act play by George Bernard Shaw. The opening night was November 25th, running through December 3rd. For Christmas, Natalie and Jack Scott drove to New Roads to celebrate the holiday with the Provostys and the Scotts. Though the New York stock market crash had already occurred on October 24th, the realization that the market would not recover took time to settle in. By January, reality was becoming more clear. The downward drift and financial failures were precipitous for the next four years. Natalie lost most of her savings, the money she had invested from her father's life insurance and from her profitable real estate sales.⁶⁹

All sorts of Mexican rumors had filtered north to New Orleans newspapers about Bill Spratling's activities. Even in March, 1929, before his departure, there were rumors.

Speaking of talented people, our Bill Spratling...reached town Tuesday morning from New York....[W]e have had from time to time during his absence accounts of his instant success in New York. There were rumors of his going to Mexico City to direct an educational movie of the beauty spots there and all sorts of other vague details...He will be here for some time and before he departs again, I shall give you a detailed account....⁷⁰

No accurate update ever occurred because Spratling set sail for Mexico only five days later. Months afterward, during
September when La Farge’s honeymoon reception in New Orleans was being planned, the newspaper offered another bundle of hearsay.

Have you read about all the stir Bill Spratling has been making down in Mexico, discovering a priceless old Indian manuscript. You know, didn’t you, that he had been in or around Mexico City all summer drawing and working and that his value as an artist is well appreciated there. On the 15th of this month he and Covarrubias will leave on a trip, the purpose of which is rather vague...mostly to do with sketching and finding material in out of the way places....

Spratling was indeed moving in influential circles in Mexico, and Miguel Covarrubias became a good friend to both Spratling and Natalie. The ancient sixteenth century manuscript, Lienzo de Noxtepec, was a pre-Columbian history of a small Guerrero village, Noxtepec; Spratling made two tracings on sheepskins, one he kept in Mexico and the other he sent to Franz Blom at Tulane.71

Spratling and Natalie each became deeply immersed in the Mexican world during 1926. Both made important friends, René d’Harnoncourt, Frances Toor, Diego Rivera, Fred Davis, among many others in prominence. Spratling, also befriended by Dr. Atl and teaching at the national university the next three summers, knew well and had published in American magazines articles about Mexico’s greatest artists; he traveled extensively in Mexico and

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made deep and lasting friendships and business associations.

In 1929, with his $200 advance from publisher Harrison Smith, Spratling’s plan for writing his new book, *Little Mexico*, was to “go native” by isolating himself in a Mexican village, to live as Indian villagers live, to become absorbed among the people of a remote village as thoroughly as possible. He wanted *Little Mexico* to be written from within, not as an observer of a Mexican village, but as an inhabitant so the reader could feel the rhythms and nature of being a Mexican in a native Mexican world. He chose Taxco because the village was isolated, beautiful, a peasant village seemingly preserved from another century, undisturbed and uncorrupted, and close enough to Mexico City.  

But other demands and opportunities meant postponement of these plans for his book. He taught that summer at the National University’s summer school while also helping to organize the French and American art exhibits scheduled for the Escuela de Bellas Artes in July, 1929 pursuant to his agreement with Carl Zigrosser. Aside from trying to earn commissions by selling the Weyhe Gallery paintings to the Mexican government or other possible buyers, he was also trying to sell to the New York gallery works of Diego Rivera, Carlos Merida among others. But in April, while
Spratling was stretching his money, living with Fred Davis in Mexico City, a rare opportunity arose, the consequence of an important friendship he had made the previous summer through Davis and René d’Harnoncourt.  

U.S. Ambassador Dwight Morrow and his wife had purchased from Fred Davis in 1928 a weekend house in Cuernavaca which they wished to renovate and add on an extension. Spratling had sold them Davis’ house plans in 1928. Then, in 1929, the Morrows engaged Spratling to draw the renovation plans. They also retained René d’Harnoncourt to acquire and fill their Cuernavaca house, which they called “Casa Manana,” with authentic Mexican handicrafts, sculptures, pottery, textiles and jars; d’Harnoncourt entrusted this task to Spratling, an opportunity for him to earn more fees. During April, 1929, Spratling was hard at work on the house project with a much-needed advance of one hundred and fifty dollars. Through the summer he made extended trips into the Indian villages near Taxco and other regions of Guerrero, investigating, authenticating and acquiring the native pieces which, in his tasteful judgment, he chose for the Morrows’ house. He made a catalogue identifying the various pieces, earning additional fees along the way.  

By mid-August, Ambassador Morrow’s plans changed. He was to become a member of the U.S. Senate for New Jersey
and his tenure as Ambassador would end in January, 1930.

Spratling explained in his autobiography.

It was Mr. Morrow’s idea when he left in 1930...that, since he might not be coming back to Mexico, he would like to present to his beloved Cuernavaca a gift which would add importance to that village, and yet could not be commercialized or involved with local politics. I convinced him that Diego Rivera, my dear friend, who at that time happened to head the Communist party in Mexico, was perhaps Mexico’s greatest painter and that he might get him to paint frescoes in the Cortés Palace in Cuernavaca. The problem was that Diego felt that if he visited the U.S. Embassy, he would lose face with his party. We solved the problem by having Mrs. Morrow invite him to tea.

Diego and I arrived at exactly five o’clock one afternoon. Diego was wearing a new sharkskin suit, a Texas hat and a forty-five. Mr. Morrow appeared at the same moment from his office, took Diego by the arm and we walked over to the residence. From then until perhaps nine thirty that evening, Mr. Morrow and Diego Rivera had a most marvelous interview....

The next day Diego and I met for lunch at the Lady Baltimore. He was worried. He had no idea what to charge Mr. Morrow. I said, “Look, Diego, let’s figure it this way. We know Mr. Morrow is a businessman. Suppose you and I go down and measure the square meters of the Cortés Palace wall area in Cuernavaca. Tell Mr. Morrow you sold Mrs. Murphy an oil painting one meter square for a thousand dollars (which is true). But, since the frescoes will not be portable and cannot be resold, that you will do it for him for four hundred dollars per square meter. Let’s see what it comes to.” So we hired a car, went to Cuernavaca and measured the wall. The figure came to about twelve thousand dollars. Diego was shocked.

Diego said Mr. Morrow would never pay twelve thousand dollars. I said, “Diego, five thousand dollars for a portrait in the United States, just a conservative portrait, is more or less normal.” Diego said, “If Mr. Morrow is willing to pay me twelve thousand dollars, I promise you and I insist you
accept a two thousand dollar commission.” I said, “Juega!” That means “You’re on.”

The Morrows were delighted with the idea, did not think it expensive, and the family was delighted to know that Spratling was getting a two-thousand dollar commission. And with the two thousand dollars which Diego paid me two months later, the only commission I ever received, I bought my house in Taxco....

Spratling received his money at the end of January. During early February, 1930, Spratling purchased his little house in Taxco on the Calle de las Delicias, and moved in. “I was now able to sit down and write Little Mexico, doing it from inside-out instead of outside-in....I had chosen to stay there in Taxco until it was done.” The house was in a beautiful spot above the zocalo, overlooking the Cathedral de la Santa Prisca, the red-tiled roofs of the village and the mountains beyond.
CHAPTER NINE

MEXICO

Taxco seemed a foreordained destination when the States' Sunday edition ran its feature article in mid-August, 1929, on the ancient Mexican silver mining town. After Bill Spratling's descriptions and renderings of Taxco, and with Spratling's desire to write his book there, the large Taxco drawing of the Cathedral de la Santa Prisca on Sunday's front page seemed more than coincidence. Just as surprising was the fact that, simultaneously in Mexico City, Spratling and Rivera were striking the $12,000 bargain with Ambassador Morrow that would make Spratling the owner of his Taxco home six months later.

If half what the New Orleans newspaper said was true, Taxco was almost magical.

...So perfect is its ancient, arresting beauty, so utterly is it the type and exemplar of the idea that Spanish builders sought...with Aztec workmen...the Republic of Mexico has decreed that no modern note of progress shall mar that ancient beauty. Any new structure in Taxco must be approved by a board of artists and government officials....

And, rising in the middle of Taxco, is one of the most astounding monuments in the world. It is a cathedral built over a silver mine still rich in silver. A cathedral built as a shrine of gratitude by the man who owned the mine, and who decided that he had money enough! So he closed the mine and sealed it with that cathedral - and the cathedral stands above that unmined silver to this day.¹
The first silver sent back to Spain from the New World came from Taxco four centuries earlier. The mine came into the hands of José de la Borda, nobleman and devout Catholic, who became wealthy beyond his dreams and prayers. Early in the eighteenth century, over the opening of the mineshaft in the heart of Taxco, he started to build the pink-stoned cathedral. According to local belief and legend, as the Indian workmen, newly converted to Christianity, were working high above the church roof putting the tall towers in place about the massive dome, a terrific thunder storm burst upon them, long jagged lances of lightning leaped at them from the blackness of the heavens.

They knelt on the scaffold so high in the air, and prayed. Later, back on the ground, they told a miraculous story. The good Santa Prisca, they said, suddenly had appeared in a glory of light against the storm-black sky, and with her shining hand had seized a great bolt of lightening that was darting straight at their heads; that would have slain them and wrecked the cathedral dome.

The cathedral that was to have been dedicated to the Virgin, had found its name...Cathedral de la Santa Prisca. In the ancient paintings within its ancient walls, you can see depicted Santa Prisca holding in her hands the jagged bolts of lightning.

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Still the streets are paved with strange cobblestones of black basalt, of white marble, of a native stone green as with copper ore. Curious figures are set in those streets. One treads on Indian mosaics of bulls and deer and stars. Whenever the streets have been repaired, this ancient pattern is maintained, and the date of the repair set in mosaic...discernable today, from 1828 to 1924....Mexico’s grand artists throng there...painting Taxco scenes, Roberto Montenegro and Cuevas...busily at work there.

And a strange sight can be seen on the dome of the Cathedral....The Aztec workmen, long ago, set in that dome in the soft and vivid colorings of Pueblo tile the star-pattern that is one of the symbols of the Aztec Sun-God.

The symbol of an Aztec deity crowning a Christian church!

The newspaper article was inspired by an exhibit of Taxco paintings and drawings that week at the Arts and Crafts Club, all by local artist Tom Kemp, an art instructor at the Arts and Crafts Club who had spent the summer painting Taxco scenes. The descriptions reported in the article were his, written by Meigs Frost.

Natalie was promptly informed when Spratling purchased his house. Thirteen months had passed since her return from New York. The newspaper mentioned on March 30th, 1930, that Natalie was preparing for Mexico, within a month of Spratling’s house purchase.

We can always depend on our delightful wanderer, Natalie Scott, to give us news...She is in a great rush of preparation, renting her apartment, packing, buying, doing a million odd duties before going off to Mexico City for a visit...We hear, spasmodically, that Bill Spratling, our talented artist, is coming back to New Orleans...If Natalie can’t bring him home with her
at least she will be able to tell us about him, his house down there and the life he is leading....

Two obstacles conspired to delay Natalie's departure. One was her interest in the success of the Arts and Crafts Club Ball on April 26th. Within a month of the event, she accepted a leadership role in ticket sales and promotions because the event appeared to be in trouble. As the States reported on April 13th, "upon the financial success of the ball depends the development, even the very existence of the club next year."

A second problem was a bad case of poison ivy she had contracted during a long horse back ride in the woods, as she mentioned in a letter to her niece, "...my legs are not pretty at all. They look as though someone had poured a good lot of scalding water on them. However, I put on my thickest stockings and my longest dress and no one knows the difference." Her April 29th (a Tuesday) letter was written from her friend Empsie Lyons house on Marengo street, where she was staying, confirming the March newspaper report she was leasing out her Lowerline apartment to go to Mexico. She wrote to her twelve year old niece Bé of her problems and pending departure.

It was very sweet of you to write such a delightful Easter letter to Jack and me....

I do wish I could have spent Easter with all of you. But at Easter time I could not even walk across the floor....You remember that Pa used to call you his
'fall guy'? I think I am going to be a competitor for the title. Do you know that I fell down the steps last Friday and did all sorts of things to myself....It must have been very funny to look at, though, and when I am not busy grunting over my injuries, I have to laugh at what a figure I must have cut, for I turned a complete somersault, starting on the top step, I caught my heel, turned over and landed on my head, and then turned again and landed on my feet. Can't you imagine how funny I looked?

Mrs. Lyons' daughter, Celeste, was there, and I thought she was very good not to laugh, but she thought I must be dead, so she didn't. I sprained a finger, cut my leg, bruised my cheek and arm, and hurt my coccyx (do you know what that is?) and am very lame....

The rabbit was very sweet to me. He brought me letters from all of you, which were the nicest things of all. And then Mrs. Hammond gave him some peppermints for me, and Mrs. Robinson a lovely bottle of the nicest perfume. I must say that it was partly because I was ill that I was so spoiled.

Further in the letter, she commented on her Mexico plans.

I am going to go to Mexico...a week from Thursday....My good-bye visit was so long ago that I feel that I need another. But I shall have to make it a how-do-you-do visit when I come back, instead....

I am trying to do a little work, getting some notes so that I can write some articles while I am in Mexico and make some money...My address in Mexico is going to be the Sonora News Co., Avenida Madera 17, Mexico, D.F., Mexico. But I am going to ring you all up for good-bye before I leave....

The planned departure date was May 8th, 1930. The Madera address belonged to her friend Fred Davis, where Spratling also stayed and received his mail in Mexico City.

Natalie and a group of her uptown friends, despite Natalie's injuries, planned to go that night to the unusual
evangelical camp-type meeting held several times each week by a black preacher and faith healer named Mother Catherine Seals, who had become a New Orleans attraction during the 1920s in her "Manger," a ninth ward tent-covered compound near the levee in the lower Ninth Ward. Natalie loved to attend Mother Catherine's services, which were outlandish events, and, while Natalie and her friends endorsed the Manger's work as a commune and shelter for battered or neglected women, they found the outfits, sermons and religious names she gave her members to be outrageously funny. Natalie had apparently known Mother Catherine for several years and told the Louisiana Writer's Project in an interview during the late 1930s that "...First she got the spirit of King David and opened a church on Jackson Avenue. Her church was originally founded to stop abortions."

Mother Catherine typically robed herself in colorful garb (covered with religious figures and symbols), played the trombone, and invited jazzmen to play on these occasions, including members of the Olympia Brass Band. A photograph taken of one of her Manger services by jazz guitarist Danny Barker, who, obviously amused over his friend being anointed as a saint, inscribed on the back, "Mother Catherine's Religious Cult...Ernie Cagnoletti was the Angel Gabriel." Though their attitudes may have been a bit sacrilegious, Natalie, her uptown and French Quarter
friends became regulars, finding these unorthodox camp meetings to be uproarious. In the letter to her niece, she wrote:

...this evening, a crowd of us are going (if my back will let me) to hear Mother Catherine. You would love to see her. She is an old colored woman, fat and good-natured, who has started what she calls a church. She gives very funny sermons and all the colored people sing, with a big orchestra. The favorite ones wear bright-colored cotton robes with their names embroidered on them. Not their regular names, but special ones which Mother Catherine says the spirit gives her for them. One is named St. Therita, - she doesn't like it if you call it Rita, or Theresa, instead. And another is Marrow of St. Anthony! How do you like that for a name? And last Sunday, Mother Catherine gave all her congregation a big dose of Castor Oil! I hope she doesn't do that to-night....

Natalie was not the only one going to Mexico. There were tentative plans for Olive Leonhardt to rendezvous with her during July, and several other local artists also were traveling to Mexico to sketch, and see for themselves what the attraction was. By July 6th, long after Natalie's departure on May 8th, the newspapers took notice of the New Orleanians gathering in Mexico.

...we have the departure of Olive Leonhardt on July 11th for Mexico City. She goes down to join Natalie Scott, who is settled for the summer in an apartment in Cuernavaca. From reports, Natalie is doing a great deal of writing and Bill Spratling is preparing illustrations for her work. Charlie Bein is in Mexico City at present and with the addition of Olive Leonhardt's artistic ability we will have quite a talented colony there....

Then came word directly from Natalie, an article in letter form published on July 20th in the society section of the
States. She was writing from Taxco, her new address being Callejón de la Luz, Number 1, a location on the mountainside just below the Cathedral de la Santa Prisca, and above the ancient road to Mexico City.

I have taken an infinitesimal, wholly adorable cottage here, with a big garden, full of everything, and a superb view. I have a cute little maid, who all but pays to work for me, and feeds me magnificently on chayotes, and camotes, and ejotes, and calabasos and such delicacies. There are several Americans scattered about. Bill Spratling lives about eight blocks away — when he is here; but he has been in Mexico most of the time, involved in getting up the exhibit of Mexican arts and crafts which the Carnegie is taking on tour in America next winter. He has a grand collection of Mexican stuff himself.

The town, Taxco, is incredibly charming, set precariously on a mountain in the midst of mountains, houses and innumerable churches of Mexican colonial trend, for it has been here since not long after Cortez. Little white houses with colonnaded galleries and red tiled roofs, with a gay pink church looking down on everything and little white churches scattered all about. Too sweet, I tell you.

I am too kind to speak of how deliciously cool it is, and how I shiver under my two blankets when a wind blows up at night. I had a grand swim in a mountain pool yesterday...in the midst of the woods, cupped into solid rock and icy cold."

Natalie's letter added that Charlie Bein and artist Marjorie Callendar were in Orizaba, and that Olive Leonhardt had joined her.

There are numerous books and studies about the American colony of artistic and literary people who gathered in Mexico during the 1930s which, in references to Natalie Scott, include the story of her arrival in Taxco by
horseback, having descended from the Texas border at Laredo or Brownsville. While she did indeed make the journey from Brownsville to Taxco by horseback, two-thirds of it alone, this 900 mile horseback journey occurred during August-October, 1934, after a visit home to Louisiana. On that occasion, she reached Brownsville by automobile and went the rest of the way by horse. The route took her south along the coast through the thorny, snake and tarantula infested wilds of the Mexican state of Tamaulipas, then, due to flooding rivers, she and her two companions were forced to abruptly turn west to Ciudad Victoria, where her two male companions departed for Tampico and boarded ship for New Orleans.$^{10}$

One of these two companions on the Brownsville to Ciudad Victoria leg of the journey told of rock formations rising above the cool water of a Tamaulipas river with sunken holes in the soft stone where they bathed joyously after days of riding; they were stuck in forests of tall, heavy limbed, piercing thorn bushes or trees for weeks, slowly moving south, making their campsites each night within the dense thorny forest. Another camp site was near the Gulf shoreline, a wide plain where the grass stood above their heads. They were awakened very early in the morning, puzzled by the strange movements under their sleeping bags, then suddenly aware of a moving carpet of
creeping sea snails covering the earth, including underneath their bags, moving in mass, making their migration to the sea. Over-sized spiders and rattlesnakes plagued them; river crossings so dangerous that they changed their route to the west to avoid further river encounters and to reach the relief of Ciudad Victoria as quickly as possible.\footnote{11}

On this 1934 journey, Natalie continued alone on horseback from Ciudad Victoria, southwest over the top of the high mountains of the Sierra Madre Oriental range, making camp in Indian villages where possible. She sent postcards as best she could, one to Martha Robinson dated September 13, 1934, from the mountain village of Cerritos northeast of San Luis Potosi. The postcard photograph depicted the narrow, winding dirt trail outside of town, Cerritos visible in the near distance, backed by a mountain. Natalie was thrilled to reach the town.

Electric lights and post-cards, as I live! Rode up that road in foreground yesterday - glorious scenery, with marvelous birds and flowers, very friendly people. Cactus (unreadable) stupendous. My hotel is the building with arches (see arrow). Lots of (unreadable section), and cattle. The town is small and quiet and full of corn, lots of character, charming buildings, (unreadable section)....Nat.\footnote{12}

On one instance, when she was traveling alone through the mountains southwest of Ciudad Victoria, in an Indian village where Natalie was made welcome, the tribe had
outdoor bathroom facilities consisting of side-by-side holes over a pit. As she was engaged, expecting privacy, the village chief joined her on the hole beside her, the regular immodest tribal practice as she soon realized so she and the chief amicably conversed in broken dialect, even laughing together, as they each completed the process. Natalie, with her talent for languages, had acquired some proficiency in various Indian dialects. She reached an isolated ranchero, where the sole occupant, a kindly Mexican, extended her every courtesy and, apparently lonely, invited her to stay on if she wished.13

By the time she reached the Rio Lerma northwest of Mexico City on September 28, 1934, Natalie had acquired several friendly Mexican riding companions. Due to heavy rain and rushing flood waters, passage was treacherous and all attempts failed, several horses being swept off the wooden bridge into the swift river. Later, when the trip was finally over in October, 1934, she had a Taxco peasant paint a retablo for her as an amusing souvenir, a small painting memorializing the dangerous incident at the Rio Lerma, as a wry expression of grateful thanks to the Taxco goddess Santa Prisca for miraculously saving her life. A retablo is a small miracle painting common in Mexican churches, placed by parishioners to sanctify an act of God in their lives. Natalie’s colorful little painting, today
slightly damaged, illustrates the flood waters washing two horses away but, with Santa Prisca hovering above grasping her lightning bolts, Natalie and her companions were granted their safe passage through the deep river. At the bottom of the painting, in Spanish, are these words:

On the 28th of September, 1934, Miss Natalie Scott had to cross the River Lerma, which due to the amount of rain, the bridge was covered with water that had already turned over various animals. Seeing the danger of such a crossing, Miss Scott invoked the help of Santa Prisca of Taxco and it stopped raining a little the next day and there was not as much water going over the river as was expected by those who knew the region. Little more or less, there was about a meter of water going over the bridge being now possible for Miss Scott and her friends to pass guided by a man from San Bartolo, of name Julio Corea and having come out of the crossing without casualty thanks are given by Miss Natalie Scott to the miraculous image of Santa Prisca who is venerated as Patroness of the Mineral Town of Taxco, Guerrero and to whom this is dedicated.¹⁴

Natalie’s arrival by horseback in Taxco in October, 1934, was witnessed by many local residents, including Dorothy Sutherland Chittim, whose parents owned the Taxqueño Hotel. As everyone gathered around, Natalie’s exhausted horse collapsed beneath her. One version of the story appears in the published memoirs of Elizabeth Anderson, by then divorced from Sherwood Anderson, who moved to Taxco upon Natalie’s invitation subsequent to Natalie’s long ride from Texas. Incredulous when she learned of Natalie’s adventure, she asked if what she had heard was true.
...a local legend had grown up around her fantastic trip of over eight hundred miles through wild territory. Everyone in Taxco believed that she had come riding triumphantly into the Borda Plaza and that her horse had promptly dropped dead of sheer exhaustion. It was a legend I would not find hard to believe, considering her sturdy frame. I asked her if it was true.

"Of course not!" she said. "Not more than two weeks after I got here, Caroline Durieux and I wanted to go see an old hacienda in the country. Caroline offered to supply me with a horse but I said, 'That's foolish. I've got a perfectly good horse that I rode here from Brownsville.'"

"So I had the horse saddled and brought out. It took one long, sad look at me. That's when it dropped dead!" Natalie rocked with laughter. "The poor thing thought I was headed back to the border!"

By 1934, Natalie had made many trips into untamed regions of Guerrero, Michoacan, Oaxaca and other distant areas of Mexico, many lasting longer than the Brownsville ride. Every year during the decade of 1930's, between her fortieth and fiftieth birthdays, she made such trips, usually alone, sometimes with companions. She was an expert equestrian, whereas horseback travel was new for Spratling. Yet his curiosity, with his hunger for pre-Columbian artifacts driven by the spirit of adventure, and also to establish a basis for an important chapter in his book _Little Mexico_, Spratling also made horseback and river trips. By the time his silver business eased his money problems during the 1930s, he enjoyed riding in the
mountains so much that he purchased a beautiful stable of horses, riding daily.  

Spratling and Natalie made their first wilderness journey in late August and early September, 1930, their first summer in Taxco. This was planned as a ten day trip into the Tierra Caliente, “the hot country”, to the west, dropping down through the jungles to the spectacular Balsas River which threads through the states of Guerrero and Michoacan; at the Balsas, they boarded a small native vessel, negotiating enormous rapids, for one leg of the journey. Spratling wrote a business letter from Taxco to Carl Zigrosser in New York on August 27, 1930, the day before their departure, sending various canvasses and prints, noting that to cover costs, “...having no other means of mailing money and Natalie being the only one with a bank account, - I’ve bought a check from her for $30 which I send herewith.” Finally turning away from business, he wrote:

Tomorrow Natalie and I are off on a 10 day horseback trip to Meacacingo, Teloloapan, Acapetlaluaya, Arcelia, Totoloapan, Pungarabato and other points on the river Balsas (see map). It should be a highly interesting trip and Natalie’s crazy to do it. I, naturally, have misgivings. Natalie speaks of you often and sends her very best -

Yours

Bill

Spratling’s “misgivings” might be a reference to Natalie’s womanhood, but more likely his misgivings were his own
realization of the discomforts he would have to endure. This trip was dramatized in Spratling’s book, Little Mexico, which in part describes covering the rough terrain by horseback, the precipitous declines, the jungle world, the heat, the hardship, their trip on the rushing river over the wild rapids, the native inhabitants, their mysterious practices, and the search for rare pre-Columbian treasures and artifacts. Here is Spratling’s introduction to this most interesting, exceptionally well written chapter of his fascinating book.

Beyond the capital of Mexico, they say, all is Cuantitlán – small town stuff. It is not true. Because beyond, and below Mexico all is “Tierra Caliente” – the hot country...Here in Mexico one says “Tierra Caliente” as though speaking of another land. And it takes on the quality of another land in people’s thoughts. It is a Mexico unknown even to Mexicans. In the same sense it is the country’s physical subconscious. It is vast and fecund; forbidding and promising; it is practically unexplored and difficult to access. It is a tierra but slightly incorporated in the nation....Allá en tierra caliente!...yes, there is supposed to be much gold there...but it is wild country, and also it is infernally hot...they say it is not even populated...then too there is the pinto...what if one goes and comes back with the pinto?...only imagine such a disease! – a disease which affects and discolours an entire people, about which practically nothing is known...white men have killed themselves from sheer disgust of the thing...there isn’t even a name for it, only “the Dis-colour.” Through all the region traced by the river Balsas there is pinto; but there is much more besides. There are great sierras; rich valleys. There is gold and silver and petroleum, untouched; sugar, ajonjoli and coffee grow abundantly. There are ancient cities, temples, pyramids – vestiges
vastly significant of antique culture and the most ancient races of the continent. In open country and in huts of the poor exist sculptured gods in marble, in jade, in exquisitely wrought clay...It is all pregnant with what has been, and what will be Mexico...Tierra Caliente, seen from the mountains of Guerrero or Oaxaca or Vera Cruz, quivers in a distant blue heat. It appears somewhat unreal, fantastically impregnable, like Indo-China, or Africa.  

Natalie helped Spratling with the editing and typing of his book. When it was published in early 1932 by Jonathan Cape and Harrison Smith of New York, Faulkner’s publisher, Spratling presented her a copy, wrapped as a present with a card, “For Natalie - who knows all about this too and who helped so very much - With love - Bill...” He inscribed the book, “para Natalia - compañera en todo esto. Su atrevido amigo...Bill.” (For Natalie - my partner in all things. Your bold or impudent friend)

At mid-summer, 1930, Natalie had reached age 40. The New Orleans chapter of her life was over and a very different one underway in Mexico, a vastly different world from the others she had become so intimately familiar with: New Orleans, Europe, New York. At first blush, the change in her environment seemed drastic, radical. Her life seemed to fit into a series of clear cut stages: The Bay St. Louis period, idyllic and structured, except for the horror of the yellow fever epidemic; the Newcomb period, - the happiest of times as a student, campus activist, then
teacher; World War I and the Red Cross period, - the joys and tragedies of war-torn France had defined her as a woman; the French Quarter and Peggy Passe Partout period, - intellectual growth, frivolity, and the deep wounds of losing her dearest loved ones.

Natalie’s Mexican life of the 1930’s was the next period, what proved to be a permanent home within a vastly different culture. The structures of her life, her status in New Orleans, specific goals, parents and employment had been removed, one by one. Unexpectedly, due to the Great Depression, she had lost much of her financial security. Aside from finding an inexpensive place to live in those harsh times, and writing cookbooks and articles to eck out a living, what was Natalie Scott doing in Mexico?

One of the articles Natalie wrote for magazines that first year in Taxco was about Bill Spratling, published in the November 14th edition of The New Orleanian magazine. In it, she proceeds to answer the same question for Spratling, - what was he doing in Taxco? Her response was at least partially applicable to herself. There were parallels to New Orleans. Taxco was a relic of the distant past, just as was the rare architecture of the dilapidated French Quarter that she had championed for restoration and preservation for the past ten years, her newspaper advocacy of the Quarter as a place to live, to establish businesses,
to invest. Her work for the Petit Theatre and the Double Dealer, her willingness to invest her time and risk her meager monies to acquire buildings where artists could live for a pittance, to renovate and reestablish old buildings like the Court of Two Sisters, - these efforts of Natalie and others had transformed the heart of the French Quarter from its slum-like conditions to a magnetic place of aesthetic beauty, attracting the colony of interesting, creative people who had come, gathered, enjoyed and achieved there.

Taxco had the same prospects. Spratling’s house on Calle de las Delicias and hers on Callejón de la Luz, both humble and seemingly unlivable at the outset, had proven to be charming dwellings. Already, as the November, 1930 article pointed out, they had formed a “Friends of Taxco” organization. Moise Saenz, the former assistant secretary of the Mexican Department of Education and the president of the government’s Beneficiencia Publica, had commissioned Spratling to remodel a Taxco house for him. Natalie was doing the same for Caroline Durieux, who moved to Mexico City with her family in 1930. She renovated another house for photographer Gordon Abbott and his friend Arnold Tempest in Taxco during 1931. By then, she and Spratling counted among their friends Roberto Montenegro, musician Carlos Chavez, Diego Rivera, author Carleton Beals,
Catherine Anne Porter, Francis Toor, Anita Brenner, David Alfaro Siqueiros, Miguel Covarrubias, and "the ambassadorial couple, the Morrows." Taxco, as Natalie wrote,...

...continues the traditions of the New Orleans predecessor in being a center for the pleasanter intellectuals and artists....

To give an example....Mrs. Morrow recently appeared at the Casa Spratling rather unexpectedly, with some eight or ten guests, and at a moment's notice, a very adequate luncheon for the whole group made its appearance with perfect smoothness and ease....

The town of Taxco itself is almost a museum. It was one of the earliest centers after the Conquest, and the superb mountains which surround...are gashed with wounds made by Cortez's gold-seekers. Mines were in operation there three years after the Conquest. Before that, the same treasure-teeming earth affords tribute of its riches, in silver and some gold, to Montezuma.¹⁹

Already, by writing such articles for American magazines and by her reports published in New Orleans' newspapers, Natalie was doing what she had been doing for the French Quarter.

Within a year, Natalie would acquire and renovate another small house above Spratling's, overlooking the zocalo, as Spratling reported to Carl Zigrosser in late September, 1931.

Natalie has a new house, across the barranca from mine, and its pretty swell....She sends her best to you, and she and I both wish you were down here again with us.²⁰
Her first house was leased to another American, John Evans, then Howard Cook and his wife. Natalie’s new house would be leased to poet Hart Crane during December, 1931, when she went home for a Christmas visit. In time, she would establish the Kitigawa House where artists and writers could find comfortable lodging and food for two pesos weekly. She recruited the first physicians to reside in Taxco, and founded a nursery and school for peasant children that was renamed for her after her death. She continued her journalism, also translating Mexican literature to English, and published three more cookbooks during the 1930's, and established a barely profitable and very informal real estate management business, of which she was the sole employee. The evolutionary process of enhancing the colony of interesting people in Taxco would occupy Natalie for the balance of her life.

The complete biography of Natalie’s life, 1930 through her death in 1957, remains to be written in appropriate detail. But glimpses of her work in Taxco, her anthropological expertise, the resumption of her Red Cross career during World War II, her fundraising leadership for the 1950 Newcomb College campaign, and her ongoing humanitarian work and social life in Taxco, may be gleaned from the following summary of the twenty-seven years that were to follow.
A syndicated feature story written by journalist Ernie Pyle, after a 1936 visit with Natalie Scott, was published across America and also abroad in numerous languages. The opening is reminiscent of Natalie’s apprehension in September, 1917, when she left New Orleans for France and World War I, - she wrote her mother sixteen letters plus a plethora of telegrams between September 4th, when she left New Orleans, and September 13th, when she boarded ship in New York. Here is how Ernie Pyle perceived her.

THE STORY OF A GIRL WHO WAS AFRAID,
AND WHO WON A HERO’S CROSS IN FRANCE,
AND NOW RIDES ALONE ALL OVER MEXICO

TAXCO, Mexico, April - Natalie Scott grew up to be afraid of everything....

She got over it all right. She got over it plenty. I’d hate to see anything she’s afraid of now,....

Natalie Scott’s childhood was spent at Pass Christian, on the Mississippi coast, the garden spot of the New Orleans territory. I judge that she was a daughter of considerable means. She has a culture that comes usually only from an early start along paths of velvet.

She learned English and French simultaneously, as New Orleans’ daughters do. She started riding a horse when she was five. But she was afraid. She was also afraid to make her debut.

I forgot just how Natalie Scott got into the war. It had something to do with her ability to speak French. She served through the whole thing in French hospitals. When she went in, she would faint at the sight of blood. When she came out she had the Croix de Guerre, and no fear of anything that walks, flies, crawls, or slinks through the night.
Natalie Scott probably knows Mexico better than any of the 15,000 Americans who live in Mexico. In two years she has ridden horseback, mostly alone, over a good many thousand miles of Mexico.

She has ridden from Texas to Taxco — took six weeks.

She has ridden all over primitive Oaxaca in the south — two months.

She travels light. She wears riding pants and boots, but takes one dress to put on in the evenings if she’s in a village. Mexican women don’t like women who dress as men.

She carries a serape (heavy blanket) to wrap around her when she has to sleep on the ground.

She carries a canteen of water, and one change of underclothes, and a small toilet kit, and that is all. It’s all on her saddle.

She’s had some weird times. Once, down south, she was met outside a village and taken before the town council — assembled bare-footed on a dirt-floor hut. One by one the councilmen rose and made speeches in the Mixtec Indian dialect. She couldn’t understand — but she suspected.

Finally the town “secretary”, who always knows Spanish, got up and said they had got along all right without any outsiders, and what was she doing there, but it didn’t matter anyhow for she wasn’t welcome, and to GET OUT.

She had to think fast. She thought of crops, the key to any Indian’s heart. It worked. She said: “See, you don’t know what they raise in Michoacan, and they don’t know what you raise here. That’s what I came up for, to see your crops.”

The first thing she knew they were producing special dishes of food for her. She stayed and talked all day and all night. They begged her to stay longer, but she had to go.

Another place they didn’t beg her to stay, they told her. The village was run by an old, old man, who
got it into his head this woman on horseback knew about a treasure in the pyramid ruins. He told her that if she’d tell him, he’d split with her. She couldn’t tell him, for she didn’t know.

When she rode away, she was followed and brought back. Next day she left again, and rode between lines of silent men holding shotguns — and was brought back. Then the old man kept her in a hut for three days, thinking she’d tell. Finally he gave up, and told her to get out and stay out. She got, and stayed.

Natalie Scott’s longest day’s ride was 15 hours, starting at 3 in the morning. She has forded rivers deep as her waist. She bathed in rivers, in secluded spots.

Her house stands behind a maze of foliage, way up on the mountain. You can sit on her cool stone veranda and look down at Taxco. The rooms are full of weird Indian fiesta masks, and French books, and native art, and old, old furniture on a bare stone floor.

Natalie Scott came to Mexico six years ago, because her yearly trip to Europe was too much for a depression income. She came to Taxco, and she stayed here because it was the first place for years where she could sleep at night. She will live here for the rest of her life.

She is a handsome woman, neither young nor middle aged. Her bobbed hair is graying. A New York literary tea or a Paris drawing room would be (and has been) graced by her presence.

She lives on a slight income from New Orleans. She has worked on newspapers in New Orleans and Paris. She has written three cook-books — two on New Orleans foods, one on Mexican. She is proud of these.

She expects to take more horseback trips. She’d like to do an expedition for a museum. She has already mapped and stepped off several buried pyramids.

“Are you going to make a book of your experiences?” I asked.
"I'd like to, but I'm too busy now," she said.

"Busy doing what?"

She laughed. "Busy walking up and down these hills," she said.\(^{21}\)

During November, 1936, Natalie was interviewed by WWL Radio station in New Orleans during a visit, the subject being the tribal practices of Mexican Indian groups.

**Question:** Tell us something of these dance masks and what material they are made of?

**Natalie:** You understand that the dances are not social nor aesthetic in purpose, though often they are aesthetic in effect, because of the Indians' natural feeling for the beautiful. And they are social, because the performers are villagers and a whole village and people from nearby villages as well look on. But the intent is religious. The dances are given in honor of some patron saint. They represent drama to the natives. The dance is most often a pantomime representing a story, and usually there are words as well. Sometimes the masks are made of alternating layers of cloth and paste, so that they look like a crude paper mache. Usually, they are made of wood, often a very light wood called Zempantle. But sometimes, as in the dance of the Tlaceleres, where the dancers whip each other with heavy quirts, the masks are thick and heavy. The Tulane Museum of Middle American Research has some fine examples. Some of the dances date obviously from after the Conquest, but some few, like the beautiful Dear Dance of the Yaquis, or the Tehuanes, the Tiger Dance, of my own state, Guerrero, are of pre-Conquest origin.

**Question:** What do you take on these trips and what conveniences do you have in travelling?

**Natalie:** On most of my trips, I have taken only what I can carry on my horse. A bolster-shaped pack with zippers down it, with a change of shirt and underclothes. And a dress. I always change into a dress when I arrive in a village, for the Indians don't like ladies in trousers. And a gourd of water, - a gourd keeps water deliciously fresh. And a manga,
which I believe is called a poncho up here. And a blanket. My horse looks like a hat-rack with all these things strung on. I sleep where the natives sleep often on the floor with the family; sometimes in hammocks in the hot country; or on cots made of cane tied together. I eat what they eat, tortillas, sometimes cheese and honey, and an occasional chicken. I find that if you demand things of Indians, you get little. If you ask hospitality as a courtesy, you get all the best they have. For graciously formal dignified courtesy, no courtier in the world can equal the Indian. And his generosity is limitless.

Question: What has impressed you most in taking these trips into the interior of Mexico?

Natalie: For one thing, the superb beauty of the country, ranging from sea-side and cocoa-palm of the lowlands, or virgin forest hung with orchids and starred with giant begonias, to the austere grandeur of the mountains. For another, the graciousness of the people, as I have said. But most of all, the achievements of the present government in education and hygiene. The smallest, most remote villages have schools. The teachers are devoted: they teach until four, then supervise play, and frequently have night-school as well. And they instill into the people elements of hygiene. In parts of Mexico, there are villages where the adults speak only an old Indian language: now the children all speak school-learnt Spanish. These people who were formerly economic slaves are living in constantly improving conditions. The government has changed from a government for the few to a government for the many. I’m incurably a lover of people. So all this delights me even more than the majestic archaeological ruins, the fantastically beautiful foliage and flowers, and the strange animals, tigers, and tapirs, snakes, monkeys, and gorgeous birds. It’s a great country. Always when I go back to it, I want to shout. Viva Mexico.22

Natalie served with the Red Cross in World War II in north Africa, Italy, France, and Germany. The war ended as she was being transferred to the Pacific theater so she proceeded to serve during the post-war occupation, first in
Kyoto, Japan, then in Seoul, Korea until 1948 when she finally returned home. Her World War II letters to Martha Robinson, and to other friends including several to Lyle Saxon, have survived and form a historical record similar to her World War I letters, filled with anecdotes, perspectives, moments of courage, patriotism, hilarity, and deep sadness. Just as Natalie translated to English much Mexican poetry and literature during the 1930s, she also translated a small French book, only 125 copies privately printed in June, 1944, written by French artist Alexandre Renaud after he had witnessed the battle of Sainte-Mère-Église, the first American bridgehead in France.

When she returned to Taxco in 1948, after her long wartime absence, she stepped off the old Mexican bus in the zocalo, with the Cathedral de la Santa Prisca on one side of her and on the other side the second story Bar Paco, a popular gathering spot that overlooked the square. As she stood beside the bus gathering her baggage, loud applause and cheers broke out from above her, the Bar Paco patrons, her old friends, all standing along the patio’s iron railing looking down upon her, smiling, clapping and welcoming her home after almost six years of overseas duty. She quickly resumed her life in Taxco, operating her peasant school until her death in 1957.
Natalie made visits to New Orleans, including friends and family nearby, every year. While in New Orleans with Hilda Hammond and Martha Robinson for the fortieth year reunion of the Class of 1909, she accepted Newcomb College's request that she organize and chair the school's nationwide fundraising campaign in 1950, consequently spending much of 1950 in New Orleans and speechmaking across the nation. Otherwise, she remained in Taxco where she maintained a very active social life amidst a very stimulating American-Mexican community of writers, authors, visiting celebrities, and friends while devoting herself to writing and operating her school. Natalie died in November, 1957 after a short, sudden illness. She is buried in Taxco.

The donations that flowed in after Natalie died completed her fund-raising campaign to acquire a new building for her school. The building was completed, opened and dedicated a year later, its name changed from "Pro-Infancia Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz" to "Pro-Infancia Natalie Scott." Along with contributions came letters, including one from her old friend Vera Von Meysenburg O’Leary, a German-American who remembered the ostracism she had felt in New Orleans following the first world war; she also recalled the fun of Natalie’s visits from Mexico.
during the intervening years after 1930. Here is an extract.

"Hi Verily! What gives?" were the cheery words that greeted me as I picked up the receiver of my phone...The words, the voice, quickly dispelled the gloom that had settled over me that morning...instead a warm glow of gladness. It was Natalie. And it was a surprise.

Natalie. Natalie Scott. Her name alone set off a welter of thoughts and memories....There was bustling and commotion always when Natalie came to town!

Our phone chat...tid-bits of spicy gossip and swept along by gales of laughter, for Nat was a wit and could make anyone laugh. Yet, with her wit went profundity too....

It was shortly after World War I had ended. It was a harrowing time for me as it was for most of us. I would like very much to skip this part of my story but I cannot, for it was this that really brought Nat and me together and tied the knots of our friendship.

We met in a Tea Room in a downtown section of our city, a Tea Room which, because of its German flavor and name, was destined to die....

I was leaning over the glass counter trying to decide which of a long row of appetizing tarts I should choose - when I felt a tap upon my shoulder, followed by a cheery voice which I did not recognize at first. Nor did I even recognize Natalie whom I had known only slightly and had not seen in years.

"Hi, Verily!" she greeted me, "It's been a long time....The smile that accompanied her friendly greeting warmed...my heart starved as it was from so much unfriendliness! Indeed, it was a treat, for heretofore, during those early post-war days, only frowns or jeers had greeted me everywhere, from old and new friends alike, who were now my enemies! I was wary of course, for I had been too deeply hurt too often, not to watch for signs of insincerity. But Natalie seemed genuinely sincere, - and interested!

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Amenities over, during which I observed her every expression, she cordially insisted that I lunch with her....She who had won the Croix de Guerre for her bravery requested that I relate a few of my own experiences in Germany, which hesitantly, I did! The ice was broken; a bond established. Urged on by her deep understanding that was so fundamentally a part of Natalie, I even went so far as to confide in her the taunts, the jibes and all the insults I had suffered after my return from Germany in 1917, even though the re-telling hurt and only opened afresh, my wounds. She had heard them all before...their injustice, their untruthfulness had infuriated her and was the reason why she was determined to look me up had we not met by chance.

She even offered me a job that was vacant in the same newspaper office where she was working which I gladly accepted. Thus for several years we were thrown often together while our friendship deepened and grew....

She had only recently returned when I met her, but I knew that the whole city was acclaiming her a heroine.

It astonished me therefore, yet flattered me too, that she should seek me out and want me for a friend at a time when she was being lionized...when I was more or less an outcast!...Now, many years later, I appreciate more than ever what she did for me: She restored my trust in humanity and gave me back the faith I had lost!

Is it any wonder that through the years since her death, I have carried, and shall always carry in my heart, the notes of her clarion clear voice, and whenever my telephone rings, hear her cheery greeting:

"Hi Verily! It’s been so long - what gives?"23
CHAPTER TEN

EPILOGUE

William Faulkner published an article in The Atlantic Monthly during June, 1953, entitled "Sherwood Anderson, An Appreciation," in which he expressed realization of his debt to Anderson, simultaneously providing insight into their relationship. The importance to Faulkner of the New Orleans period is clear from his words.

I learned from him (Anderson) that to be a writer one has first got to be what he is, what he was born; that to be an American and a writer, one does not necessarily have to pay lip-service to any conventional American image...You have only to remember what you were. "...You're a country boy; all you know is that little patch up there in Mississippi where you started from. But that's all right too; pull it out, as little and as unknown as it is, and the whole thing will collapse, like when you pry a brick out of a wall."

"Not a cemented, plastered wall," I said.

"Yes, but America ain't cemented and plastered yet. They're still building it....That's why ignorant unschooled fellows like you and me not only have a chance to write, they must write. All America asks is to look at it and listen to it and understand it if you can. Only the understanding ain't important either: the important thing is to believe in it, and then try to tell it, put it down. It won't ever be quite right, but there is always next time...."1

Sherwood Anderson, more than any of the other arrivals who joined the Renaissance after 1922, enhanced and added to the heights reached in the French Quarter, inspiring others to write fiction, bringing New York publishers to
the city, promoting the **Double Dealer**, adding prestige to the Vieux Carré colony. Sherwood Anderson’s presence there, initially in 1922 for a visit, then subsequently as a resident, was the product of the awakening, the cultural revival of the French Quarter by talented New Orleanians. The local renaissance was well underway when he arrived, the product of local pioneering, vision, effort and work, including the creation of the Petit Theatre, the Vieux Carré Society, the Quartier Club, the Arts and Crafts Club and the **Double Dealer**. The revival was already in place creating a youthful, magnetic, bohemian place in the beguiling and unique French Quarter. So, along with many other talented people, he came, returned and stayed.

Sherwood Anderson, though deep into his career when he moved to New Orleans, benefitted by his French Quarter years, as he acknowledged many times before his death in 1941. He wrote well and prolifically in New Orleans and enjoyed his role as mentor, the leader and celebrity of an energetic band of young talents, and these were among his happiest years. He reached the summit of his career between 1922 and 1926, finally dimmed by the self-doubts, self-analysis, and writer’s block largely induced by the challenge to his high position, primarily by Hemingway, then professionally eclipsed by both Hemingway and Faulkner, young writers he had helped and fostered.
Anderson rebounded during the 1930s to a degree, remaining a southerner and regaining stature as a publishing author and journalist.²

The impact on Natalie Scott and her young French Quarter friends, because most of their careers lay ahead of them, was more definitive and obvious. Oliver La Farge came to New Orleans in 1925 for the purpose of participating in Tulane’s Mayan expeditions. He was no writer and had no intention of becoming one. Recruited by Natalie to the French Quarter, within two years he was publishing short stories. Within four years he had written a Pulitzer Prize-winning book, an accomplishment that would highlight his long anthropological career among the Indians of the American Southwest. Franz Blom soon followed to the French Quarter, and turned to scholarly writing, his two-volume Tribes and Temples, which appeared in December, 1927, and his later works being authoritative in the Mayan field, as he assumed the chairmanship of Tulane’s Middle American Research Department.

William Faulkner gained far more than he added at the time to the French Quarter Renaissance, his rather taciturn nature not attracting much attention until his writing gained a national audience. The entire direction of his career was changed as he wrote and published his “French Quarter Sketches” and “Mirrors of Chartres Street” in the
Double Dealer and the Times-Picayune, for the first time placing his work before a wide and important readership. He was fortunate to live with a popular, energetic, versatile talent like Spratling, whose busy apartment brought Faulkner friendships with other artistic people and whose productivity stimulated his own. The idea of writing prose became almost inevitable, with his daily exposure to Anderson and so many other writers, as Carl Sandburg, Anita Loos, Carl Van Doren, John Dos Passos all passed through during Faulkner’s first eight months in the city. Spratling mentions this in his autobiography:

...Besides our own gang, there was Ben Hecht, Carl Van Doren,...Carl Sandburg...or a great publisher from New York, Horace Liveright or Ben Heubsh...

John Dos Passos was in the Quarter at the time, hiding out to finish a novel. He and Bill would have dinner every night at Tuchi’s, a grandiose Italian joint in the French Quarter, where Tuchi and his wife gave resounding interpretations of arias from “Pagliacci” and other Italian operas. Dos had already published his Three Soldiers and Confessions of a Young Man. At that time, we all considered him one of the top guys, certainly better than Hemingway was at that particular date...

Faulkner, of course, drank constantly, though I must add that I don’t think I ever saw him really drunk - perhaps a little vague, but never sloppy. In the morning, once I was out of bed, Bill would already be out on the balcony with a drink, usually alcohol and water, banging away at his typewriter; this was every morning. 3

The entire direction of Faulkner’s career was transformed in the French Quarter, converted almost immediately from a
mediocre poet to a publishing prose and fiction writer, then writing his first two novels and, with the concept of his future work firmly in mind, in accord with the lesson learned from Anderson, as noted above, he returned to Oxford, Mississippi.4

The impact upon Spratling, an artist, being surrounded by so much writing talent, was compounded: after all, in addition to such figures as Anderson and Dos Passos, he was living with William Faulkner, and Lyle Saxon, Natalie Scott, Roark Bradford, John McClure, Meigs Frost, and Hamilton Basso were close companions. Spratling became a fine writer.

Such an atmosphere of free lance writing professionals likely was a factor in Roark Bradford and Lyle Saxon leaving their secure but demanding Times-Picayune journalism positions to instead write books and short stories, dramatic career decisions for both men. Saxon published his short story "Cane River" in Dial in early 1926, then was an O. Henry Award finalist the next year when his work was also selected for publishing in The Best Short Stories of 1927. In 1928, he published Fabulous New Orleans, then Old Louisiana appeared in 1929, then Lafitte the Pirate in 1930, which was later adapted to Cecile B. DeMille's film "The Buccaneer" in 1938. Saxon returned to free-lance journalism during the 1930s, also publishing a
novel *Children of Strangers* in 1937, when he was the director of the W.P.A. Federal Writers’ Project in Louisiana from 1935 to 1942.5

Of course, another beneficiary of the 1920s Renaissance was the French Quarter and the City of New Orleans. Revived, partly renovated and energized, the Vieux Carré, the city’s historical legacy and most valuable asset, was given new life, its valuable architecture being gradually restored and preserved for future generations to care for. New Orleans has not achieved another artistic or literary period comparable to the 1920s, but a creative legacy was maintained by the later work of Lyle Saxon, Hamilton Basso, Harnett Kane, Tennessee Williams, Walker Percy, Anne Rice, among others. The Quarter remains a magnet for painters. The Petit Theatre du Vieux Carré, with the St. Peter street theater still serving well, is prosperously approaching the eightieth year since Natalie Scott and her fellow charter members staged their opening performance in the Pontalba Building at St. Ann and Decatur streets during October, 1919.6

Roark Bradford’s 1927 short story, *Child of God*, won the O. Henry Memorial Award, then his *Ol’ Man Adam an’ His Chillun* (1928), with Marc Connelly, was adapted into the play “The Green Pastures” which won the Pulitzer Prize in 1930. Carl Carmer came to New Orleans in 1928 and
published his book of verse French Town; Edward Larocque Tinker also wrote in New Orleans at the end of the decade, publishing Lafcadio Hearn's American Days, Toucoutou, and Old New Orleans. Playwright Barry Townley was writing in his apartment on St. Louis street by the end of 1928, his play "Virtue on Parade" performed by the Petit Theatre, while his "Chiffon Girl" and "Princess April" were being staged in New York. The Arts and Crafts Club continued to prosper and produce fine artists who abounded in the Quarter, superimposing new talent upon the veterans of the 1920s. Alberta Kinsey, Edith Davenport, Will Stevens, Gideon Stanton, Xavier Gonzales, Anna L. Thorne, Olive Leonhardt, Charles Bein, Weeks Hall, Paul Ninas, John McGrady, Boyd Cruise, Clarence Millet, John Clemmer, many of the newcomers with long careers stretching through the twentieth century. Sculptors have included Enrique Alferez, Albert Rieker and Angela Gregory.

During the 1920s, the French Quarter was a diverse mixture of people, backgrounds and lifestyles. This quality persevered in much of the Quarter primarily because areas away from St. Peter, Royal, and Chartres Streets, and Jackson Square had not been as materially altered. Though property prices rose in the heart of the Quarter during the 1920s, the Depression years brought them down again. Though conditions were improved, roads paved with better
lighting, drainage and law enforcement, the intellectuals, though arriving in large numbers, had not driven out of the Quarter the poor, the criminal element, nor the prostitutes. The writers and artists did not particularly want them out because they were part of the color, part of the bohemian atmosphere that had attracted them. Edmund Wilson, Bill Spratling, Faulkner and others wrote of their escapades with prostitution and illegal whiskey.®

Yet change had been accomplished and more was underway. The restoration of buildings was ongoing, some wisely and some not so tastefully or wisely, shops on Royal Street became more stylish and more expensive. New restaurants, new shops, and new residents were gradually pushing the Sicilians and other poor citizens further downtown or toward Rampart street as more houses were purchased, courtyards cleaned out and restored, following the early examples of the Pontalba Buildings, the Court of Two Sisters, the Broulatour House, the Morphy House, the new Petit Theatre building, among many other examples, in becoming fashionable again. The Vieux Carré Commission was formed, then with Elizabeth Werlein’s leadership, the Vieux Carré Property Owners Association was formed, successors to the early Vieux Carré Society of the 1920s. Prices for property and apartments rose rapidly, particularly after World War II. Though there had always been some tourists
in the French Quarter, tourism became big business. By 1950, the French Quarter was described this way.

Today, the French Quarter is - as in a way it has always been - a mixture of many things. It is a community unto itself in many ways, a part of New Orleans, yet apart from it....It is beautiful; it is ugly; it has charm and depravity;...It probably has the strangest conglomeration of human beings to be found in any place so small. Here live families who have seldom traveled far from residences that have been theirs for generations. Here live socialites, painters, writers, prostitutes, nightclub entertainers, bartenders, professional gamblers and beggars. Here live some of the wealthiest people in New Orleans and some of the poorest, side by side, quite literally. Here, too, of course, are many people who haven’t yet realized that bohemianism is out of fashion....

The restoration, stopped by World War II, goes on. It is a rather sporadic and piecemeal affair, with a house being renovated here and another there and in between many that are still slums. But where interest before the war was mostly centered in the part of the Quarter near the river and within the first eight blocks or so of Canal Street, it is now spreading all through the neighborhood. Streets as far back from the river as Dauphine and Burgundy and all the way downtown to and including Esplanade Avenue are now being sought out as residences. Prices soar and soar,...Apartments that rented for twenty dollars a month before the war now sometimes rent for a hundred or more. A house that sold for $3,000 in 1927, and $4,500 in 1929, recently sold for $28,000....

But the Quarter also still attracts workers in matters literary and artistic. Typewriters click from behind drawn blinds all day and night and writers, arrived and unarrived, are hard at work just as they were in the days of Sherwood Anderson and his contemporaries.

There are, undoubtedly, more artists in the Quarter now than there have ever been. There are numerous art schools....The school at the Arts and Crafts Club, now known as the New Orleans Art School,
under the direction of John Clemmer, a nationally known painter, holds large classes. The New Orleans Art Academy, situated in the old La Prete mansion... its teachers include many of New Orleans’ leading artists, many of whom have been painting in the Quarter for years, including John McGrady, Clarence Millet, Joseph Donaldson, Leonard Flettrich and others....

We may safely conclude there has been continuity since the French Quarter Renaissance, with moments when an artist or writer breaks through with a particular achievement, such as *A Streetcar Named Desire, A Walk on the Wild Side* and *The Moviegoer*. Shirley Ann Grau, John Kennedy Toole, Walker Percy, Zora Neale Hurston, Anne Rice, and Tennessee Williams are among the noteworthy authors who have connected the Natalie Scott era of revival in the French Quarter with the continuing artistic legacy of New Orleans today.

What judgment does Natalie Scott deserve for her role in New Orleans during the twenties decade, and what, if any, accomplishments did she record? Where should she be placed historically as she emerged from the twenties? An examination of the other society pages and columns in the New Orleans newspapers of the era clearly establishes that Natalie’s Peggy Passe Partout was unmatched, nothing else in the city to compare. The Dorothy Dix column in the *Times-Picayune*, though very popular was not comparable, much shorter, an entirely different “Ann Landers” type...
format, and Dorothy Dix was late in her career by the 1920s. As quoted in the New York Herald Tribune in 1929, Sherwood Anderson declared Natalie Scott to be "the best newspaperwoman in America," a high authority considering Anderson's background in Chicago, New York, his lectures throughout the country, and the fact that he himself was a newspaperman in 1929. No doubt he was favorably prejudiced in his appraisal.

Peggy Passe Partout made her readers laugh, made them think, and informed them what was going on. The great depth she offered of current information about the city and the activities of its people was available nowhere else. Her articles entertained. Her travels, her anecdotes, her reviews of lectures, plays and books were enticing and interesting. Her advocacy of causes were effective and compelling, whether by wit or passion. Seldom, if ever, has a social column been raised to such a high literary or journalistic standard. A fair conclusion is that she was an exceptionally effective and popular columnist and journalist. Her talents could have translated to scriptwriting or fiction, as she demonstrated the few times she applied herself to this task. That was the problem. The other pursuits in her life, the "living" of her life, crowded out the writing.
In respect to her role in the French Quarter Renaissance, the most important figures during the decade of the twenties were probably Lyle Saxon, Natalie Scott and Mrs. James Oscar Nixon. Unlike Saxon, the importance of Natalie Scott and Mrs. Nixon has been overlooked because both were gone by the 1930s, though Natalie continued as an irregular visitor for lengthy social stays for the balance of her life. Thus, their contributions were eventually overshadowed, generally forgotten, by the lifetime service of Elizabeth Werlein, who died in 1946, and Martha Robinson, who lived actively into the 1970s, among others. Helen Pitkin Schertz was a vital figure during most of the decade, and Martha Robinson was important through the decade and beyond in the Petit Theatre, preservationist causes, and many other civic and charitable causes, even politics. Elizabeth Werlein’s role in New Orleans and French Quarter preservation was unsurpassed.

Perhaps alone, Natalie Scott was instrumental in each of the key forces that created and shaped the French Quarter Renaissance. She was a charter member of the Petit Theatre, one of its most prolific performers and workers, and one of only three local playwrights to produce plays there. Natalie was a staff member for the Double Dealer each year of its existence, a devoted worker, writer, the fourth largest stockholder, contributor and a financial
guarantor of the magazine. She was among the early
pioneers to move into the French Quarter. She and John
McClure were the first to acquire property to create
affordable, attractive studios for artistic and creative
people to move into. Natalie was a pioneer investor,
despite her modest resources, purchasing five historic
properties, when few others were willing to take the risk,
carrying out successful restorations wisely and usefully.
Natalie was one of the very small handful of people who
attended the organizational meeting in 1920 to start the
Vieux Carré Society, the pioneer organization that began
the movement to clean up the French Quarter. Natalie Scott
was deeply involved from the beginning in the Arts and
Crafts Club and its operations. She was a charter member
and provided the original headquarters for the Old Quarter
Club, and was a charter member and avid publicist for the
Quartier Club (later the Petit Salon) and the League of
Women Voters, which also located in the French Quarter.

Amazingly, Natalie was not only there that first day
when Sherwood Anderson came to the Double Dealer office,
but, repeatedly, she was consistently the first to meet,
greet and influence many new arrivals who became
significant to the French Quarter Renaissance. She was the
first person Bill Spratling remembered meeting when he
arrived in the city; she proceeded to put him in his first

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apartment then introduced Spratling through the Quarter and recruited him for work at the Arts and Crafts Club. She was the first of the French Quarter circle to meet Franz Blom. She was virtually the first person that Oliver La Farge met when he came to the city in March, 1925; she introduced him to her friends, took him to a party, and even put him on a Mardi Gras float before his departure for Mexico. She found La Farge his French Quarter apartment and Blom soon followed. When Sherwood Anderson returned with his new wife Elizabeth, Natalie made the couple welcome and introduced them through the city. Of course, she liked these and many other people she met and enjoyed helping them become settled in the French Quarter. More importantly, she felt it was important that these people like the city and its people. All were given attention in her column as she promoted their work. So she happily made the effort of being an unofficial French Quarter recruiter, promoter and hostess on a public and private basis.

Superimposed upon her deep involvement in every phase of advancing the French Quarter, Natalie and Lyle Saxon were by far the two most effective publicists, advocates and newspaper spokespersons of the French Quarter. The value of their newspaper work was inestimable on behalf of art exhibits, concerts, the Double Dealer, the Arts and Crafts Club, Petit Theatre productions, and promotion and promotion and
publicity for individual writers, dancers, performers, artists, arrivals and visitors, various restaurants, shops and other enterprises that enhanced the Vieux Carré. As writers themselves and French Quarter residents, while Natalie was also a stage performer and playwright, both Saxon and Natalie possessed a bond with the artistic people who streamed into the Quarter. Natalie Scott is entitled to a substantial share of credit for creating, fostering, and contributing to the awakening of the French Quarter, the artistic and literary colony that formed there, and the creative Renaissance that took place during the 1920s.

Natalie Scott's literary accomplishments in New Orleans included Old Plantation Houses in Louisiana, a very good book, significant in the narrow field of Louisiana architectural history. Her play "Grand Zombie", though a noteworthy accomplishment, has long been forgotten, but was significant in the context of the times, a local playwright producing a play worthy of being chosen in an anthology of the work of America's best playwrights. Her early cookbooks, Mirations and Miracles of Mandy, then Two Hundred Years of New Orleans Cooking (1931), were additional expressions of creativity and the zest for life, adding to the creative atmosphere and culinary reputation of the city, though not of literary significance, both with a highly picturesque New Orleans aspect. Both became
classics in the city. Furthermore, of inestimable value today as a resource in reconstructing the social and cultural history of New Orleans during the 1920s, are Natalie Scott's accumulated Peggy Passe Partout columns. Few other resources can match them. The indexing of Natalie's years of newspaper columns by name and subject matter would be most beneficial, a treasure trove of new information on this period.

Natalie Scott's local historical significance is best understood in the full context of her New Orleans life, as opposed to the examination of the 1920s alone. Though there were highly decorated soldiers in the city, she was the city's best known war hero from World War I. She was noteworthy before going to France for her leadership in the Louisiana Women's Committee, the local Red Cross and Belgium refugee relief work, and for her work as a student reformer, a teacher and later an alumni leader and fundraiser for Newcomb College. After 1930, she was New Orleans' best known expatriate for her exploits in Mexico and, in the broader context of women's history and even American history, Natalie Scott may have relevance in several realms. Few people served in both World Wars, then Japan and Korea, and left such an enlightening, informative and entertaining written record of people, events, and
experiences. The same is true of her life in Mexico before and after World War II, as a humanitarian, non-professional anthropologist, art patron, and as the unofficial publicist and hostess for the town of Taxco. While appropriate historical examination of these aspects of her career must await another day, there are common threads that bind these segments of her life to her role in New Orleans during the twenties.

In each stage of her career, she exhibited characteristics that harken back to Newcomb College, and her upbringing in Bay St. Louis and New Orleans. She was deeply steeped in Greek and Classical studies, poetry and literature, music, stage and opera, history and politics, as well as high proficiency in English, Spanish, and French, with only modest proficiency in Italian, German, Greek, Latin, and various Mexican Indian dialects. This foundation provided the basis of her patriotism, her great wit and humor, her worldly sense of citizenship and brotherhood of mankind, her respect for decency, humanity, charity, and courage, and her willingness, perhaps ironically, to go to war for these values, though few persons anywhere detested war as she did.

These same traits characterized Natalie’s role in the peacetime French Quarter of the 1920s. Her enthusiasm and commitment reflected her love of the arts and authentic
intellectualism, her appreciation of the cultural and aesthetic value of the Vieux Carré, her pure enjoyment of frivolity, her pride in the accomplishments of her friends, her own intellectual growth and enjoyment of interesting people, and the sense of civic activism that she and her friends had demonstrated so decisively and productively during their Newcomb College and pre-World War I days. These same motivations and characteristics, her romantic sense of adventure, the pursuit of accomplishment, her humanitarianism would mark her subsequent years in Mexico, in Europe during World War II, then Japan, Korea, and her final decade in Taxco.¹⁰
Sherwood Anderson and Elizabeth Prall Anderson (circa 1923)
William Philip Spratling (1929)

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William Faulkner (by William Spratling, 1925)
Orleans Alley from *Picturesque New Orleans* (by William Spratling, 1923)

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Cabildo Alley from *Picturesque New Orleans* (by William Spratling, 1923)
Nauman Scott family portrait: (from left) Nauman, Jr., Natie, Sidonie Provosty Scott, Bino, M'Adèle and Be. Photo of Nauman Steele Scott, Sr. is on the table (autumn, 1926)
States Star Writers Romance On Latin America

Meigs O. Frost and Miss Natalie Vivian Scott, brilliant members of The States editorial staff, from drawings by Prof. William Spruill, New Orleans artist and head of the architectural department of Tulane University. Mr. Frost dips into Honolulu and Miss Scott into Mexico for interesting stories today.

Meigs Frost and Natalie Scott (New Orleans States, December, 1926). Natalie has bobbed her hair

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MISS DOROTHY OESCHNER and MR. OLIVER LA FARGE, prominent members of the younger set, are shown in the costumes they wore for the ball at the Arts and Crafts Club, a recent lovely event.
Spratling (standing) and Hamilton Basso (sitting) in the attic apartment (621 St. Peter). Circa 1926
THE LOCALE, WHICH INCLUDES MRS. FLO FIELD

"The Locale" from Sherwood Anderson and Other Famous Creoles
(by William Spratling, 1926)
Sherwood Anderson caricature from Sherwood Anderson and Other Famous Creoles (by William Spratling, 1926)
PEGGY PASSE PARTOUT TAKES A HURDLE

Natalie Scott (Peggy Passe Partout) caricature from Sherwood Anderson and Other Famous Creoles (by William Spratling, 1926)
Franz Blom caricature from Sherwood Anderson and Other Famous Creoles (by William Spratling, 1926)
Caroline Durieux caricature from Sherwood Anderson and Other Famous Creoles (by William Spratling, 1926)
Roark Bradford and John McClure caricatures from Sherwood Anderson and Other Famous Creoles (by William Spratling, 1926)
William Spratling and William Faulkner

Spratling and Faulkner caricatures from Sherwood Anderson and Other Famous Creoles (by William Spratling, 1926)
WILLIAM SPRATLING
and his Columbian tiger who share a Vieux Carre studio. The jungle-beast runs free among the easels and brushes and shows a wholesome respect for modernistic art, not molesting Bill's pictures at all. His growls, however, sometimes are disconcerting to visitors.

Spratling with his Mexican tiger. New Orleans States (November, 1928)
Taxco, Mexico (by Antonio Gallegos)
Natalie Scott retablo (October, 1934). An adventure in route from Brownsville to Taxco by horseback
Natalie Scott in Mexico

Natalie Scott in Mexico (circa 1936)

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Portrait of Natalie Vivian Scott (circa 1940)

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION


5. Ibid.


7. Ibid.


11. Ibid.

12. Ibid.


16. Jambalaya, 1909. For example, Tulane had nothing to match the Newcomb Arcade.

17. Martha Robinson Interview. N.V.S. Collection (Box 10, Folders 1 and 2; Box 12; Box 13, Folder 2, 11, 18, 22; Box 7, Folder 6, 7; Box 8, Folder 1, 2, 3, 7; Box 9, Folder 1, 3, 4). Jambalaya, 1909.

18. Martha Robinson interview. Tulane Weekly, October 7, 8, 15, 22, 1909. N.V.S. Collection (Box 10, Folder 1, 2; Box 13, Folder 18, 22; Box 8, Folder 1, 2, 3, 7; Box 9, Folders 1, 3, 4; Box 12).

19. Ibid.


22. Dixon, 132-143. N.V.S. Collection (Box 1-3; Box 8, Folder 2, 7; Box 9, Folder 2, 3, 4; Box 13, Folder 22; Box 10, Folders 1-4).


24. Ibid.

25. Ibid.

26. Ibid.

27. Ibid. N.V.S. Collection (Box 1-3).
CHAPTER TWO: THE AWAKENING OF THE VIEUX CARRÈ
(1919-1921)


2. Examples of each appear in this chapter and in chapter two.


4. Natalie Vivian Scott (hereafter cited as N.V.S.) was with Pershing on numerous occasions during his Mardi Gras visit, N.O. States, February 17, 1920; again during the national American Legion convention, N.O. States, October 22, 1922. Enrico Caruso, N.O. States, June 20-27, 1922; William Butler Yeats, N.O. States, April 18, 1920; Eamon de Valera, N.O. States, April 25, 1920; President and Mrs. Harding, N.O. States, November 18, 21, 1920; Anne Morgan, N.O. States, February 22-March 2, 1920. Others Natalie met and interviewed in her first year included Major General John A. Lejeune (war hero, Commandant of the Marine Corps, presidential aspirant and Louisiana native); Florence Spencer Duryea (Near East Relief Commission and national suffragist leader); Joseph Hofman (Polish concert pianist); Alessandro Bonci (he and Caruso were the great tenors of their time; Natalie described him as the greatest living exemplar of Bel Canto); Helen Taft (president of Bryn Mawr College and daughter of former President Taft); Gordon Kay (concert singer); Maurice Maeterlinck (Belgian author and playwright); Florence Easton (a premiere soprano); Antonio Scotti (a premiere baritone); J. E. Swift (Swift and Co.); George Carpentier (French heavyweight boxing champion); Edith de Lys (concert soloist); Nobuko Hara (Japanese operatic star in Madame Butterfly; her uncle was then Prime Minister of Japan); Luis Carlo Portillo (Mexican Consul in New Orleans); Sidney Shields (New Orleans born actress and movie star); General Nivelle (hero of Verdun); Robert Hungerford (feature journalist for the Saturday Evening Post); Raoul Vidas (concert violinist); Mme. Toscanini (Italian opera star); Edna Swanson Ver Haar (Swedish contralto); Nelli Gardini (operatic soprano); Carolina Lazzari (Metropolitan Opera star, contralto); M. Bernard Fay (French author and Columbia University professor); Ornstein (concert performer); Eugene Ysaye (violinist and conductor of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra) and soloist Carolyn Cone-Baldwin; Miss Emma
Cooley (famed Red Cross leader in Eastern Europe, a New Orleans native); Madame Schumann Heinck (German singer and new American citizen); Tom Taggart (former U.S. Senator from Indiana and renowned painter); Sophie Braslau (concert performer); Mario Valle (tenor with San Carlo Grand Opera); Howard Christy (America's leading portrait painter), among numerous other personalities.

5. George C. Marshall, N.O. States, February 17, 19, 20, 1920. Harry Hopkins, N.O. States, March 7, 10, 1920 and January 23, 1921. James W. Thomas, Lyle Saxon, A Critical Biography (Birmingham: Summa Publications, Inc., 1991) 18.; Jane Addams, N.O. States, April 4, 1920. Addams had already become well-known in the Wilson administration as a progressive pacifist; opposed to U.S. entry in World War I she was a charter member of the American Union Against Militarism (Natalie's Red Cross friends Paul U. Kellogg and Edward T. Devine had also been charter members) and the Women's Peace Party. David M. Kennedy, Over Here, the First World War and American Society, (Oxford, New York, Toronto, Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1980) 30, 34-35, 284. Hereafter cited as Kennedy. Others included Caroline Wogan Durieux (painter and artist; New Orleans native whose 1920 marriage, art exhibits, career and family activities often appeared in Natalie's column); F. Edward Hebert (then student leader of Tulane's debate team, and future anti-corruption crusader as a N.O. States writer and editor during the 1930s; he served as a New Orleans Congressman for decades thereafter); Harry B. Loeb (opera and concert impresario and artistic director of Philip Werlein and Company; N.O. States, June 24, 1920); Lyle Saxon (newspaper journalist, Saxon was also the publicist for the New Orleans Red Cross office during 1919 when Natalie returned from the war, subsequently a well-known author and novelist); Weeks Hall (painter, owner and future restorer of Shadows on the Teche ante-bellum estate, and unique Louisiana personality); William Percy (poet, author, and attorney from Greenville, Mississippi); Robert Hayne Tarrant (opera impresario in New Orleans; artistic director, Grunewald's Music Company; director of the Robert Hayne Tarrant Opera Series in New Orleans) and Alberta Kinsey (French Quarter painter). Many from this list, including Saxon, Kinsey, Durieux, Hall and Loeb, were among Natalie's close friends and were discussed frequently in her Peggy Passe Partout columns.

6. N.O. States, January 1, 1920. The article elaborated on the significance: "...His requiem was sung in the restaurants and cafes, accompanied with noise and
confusion of the years now gone...If sorrow there was at John’s passing, it was drowned in the nectars he has made famous. Tingling cut-glass, instead of trolling bells, wafted him...a dry America in 1920...

It was, perhaps, the last welcome that New Orleans would give the new year with wine and other intoxicating liquors, and everyone who had a quart or pint of whiskey, gin, wine, champagne or liquor wafted his glass to the coming year and drank to the success of himself and others.”

7. N.O. States, January 14, 1920. The article stated: “Brightness was taken out of the lights of Royal Street Tuesday night and the joy of a visit to the famous Old Absinthe House was robbed of its charms by agents of the Department of Justice and the Internal Revenue collector...the agents made two arrests in Royal Street, partially wiping out the oasis there, - not satisfied with their work, they swooped down on the Old Absinthe House and took Pierre Cazebonne, the proprietor, to jail for selling liquor...

Around the corner to 238 Bourbon Street marched the government men. It was about suppertime and there were many in the Old Absinthe House partaking of the evening meal. Liquor was being sold, so the government agents alleged, in coffee cups.

Department of Justice and Internal Revenue agents will be busy from now on...after Saturday they will start enforcing the National prohibition law with a vengeance.”


10. N.O. States, articles appear almost daily during much of 1920, often front page. Examples: Carranza killed (May 18, 1920); Mexican orchestra in New Orleans (May 20, 1920); banquet for Mexican leaders in New Orleans (November 4, 1920); Louisianians in Mexican oil rush (November 30, 1920).

11. N.O. States, October 26, 1919, October 27, November 2, 4, 9, 11, 1920.

13. N.O. States, October 26, Nov. 4, 5, 1919, March 22, 1920. N.V.S. Collection, Tulane University (Box 2, N.V.S. war letter of Nov. 22, 1918 regarding Rosalie Nixon). Hereafter cited as N.V.S. Collection. Rosalie Nixon probably recruited Natalie to replace her during early 1920 to become a feature writer and social columnist; Rosalie Nixon left the States previously in 1918 when she went to Paris. Ms. Nixon was involved in the Louisiana Suffrage Party, the League of Women's Voters, the woman's suffrage campaign in Baton Rouge during the summer of 1920, and was a delegate to the Southern Tariff Convention in Atlanta in 1920 where she helped organize the reception for Vice-President Calvin Coolidge. N.O. States, November 30, 1919; April 11, September 24-30, November 2, 7, December 5, 1920 and February 13, 1921. Note 25 provides information on Mrs. J. Oscar Nixon, Jessie Tharp, and Helen Schertz.


17. Ibid. N.O. States, October 7, 1919.


21. Ibid.


25. Mrs. J. Oscar Nixon was presented the Times-Picayune Loving Cup in 1920 for French Quarter renewal by the establishment of the Petit Theatre du Vieux Carré. Her father Benjamin Jonas was a nineteenth century U.S. Senator from Louisiana (1879-1885). She was an organizer of the New Orleans Illustrated News Magazine. She also organized the Club Lecture Course, which brought lecturers in art, music, economics and drama to the city for presentations. Prior to the organization of the Petit Theatre, she organized and hosted plays, often French, in her home, performed by the Drawing Room Players as early as 1917 and was a leader of the Drama League. Dedicated to preservation of the French language, the French government awarded her the “Palms Académiques” in 1922. For her work in preservationist causes, she received special tribute and a loving cup from the Louisiana Historical Society. Despite her advanced age, Mrs. Nixon performed in several plays at the Petit Theatre du Vieux Carré, including “Two Crooks and a Lady” by Eugene Pillot, in which she and Natalie played lead roles (March, 1920). Sources: Records of Petit Theatre du Vieux Carré. Hereafter cited as Petit Theatre records. Tallant 259, 304, 311. Gehman 112, 115. The Double Dealer, July, 1921. Peggy Passe Partout column, N.O. States, 1920-28. Helen Pitkin Schertz was prominent in New Orleans society and an author. Her novel An Angel by Brevet was published in 1904 and she wrote a guidebook for the French Quarter during the 1920s. She was the founder of the New Orleans Spring Fiesta. Her home was among New Orleans’ oldest, a small plantation house on Bayou St. John built in the 1730s, where those she entertained included playwright Maurice Maeterlink and

Rhea Goldberg was a founder of the original Drawing Room Players. The first meetings and rehearsals of the Drawing Room Players were held at her home in 1917 in preparation for their first performance before the Drama League at Gibson Hall. N.O. States, December 2, 1917. She remained an active board member and prolific Petit Theatre performer until 1930. She became Mrs. Hermann Deutsch. The plays of the Drawing Room Players were under the auspices of the well-established Drama League. N.O. States, December 16, 1917. Miss Jessie Tharp was a school teacher in charge of the dramatic program at the Boy's High School. She was probably the city's best known actress and theater director. Her preeminence in amateur theater in the city continued through the 1920s when she also achieved notable success in Dallas and New York. Miss Tharp was a war worker in Europe during the final days of the war. She, Natalie Scott and Helen Schertz performed a special New Year's Eve play entitled "A Game of Hearts" on December 31, 1920, as the feature event of the full program and dinner-dance at the New Orleans Country Club. Natalie performed in numerous Petit Theatre productions in which Jessie Tharp performed or directed. Sources: N.O. States, December 26, 1920. P.P.P., N.O. States, 1920-30. Petit Theatre records.

26. Ibid. N.O. States, October 26, 1919. Charles Richards, "Those Merry First Years," Little Theatres of the South Magazine, Vol. 1, No. 3 (Dec. 1933). N.O. Times-Picayune, Nov. 16, 1919. New Orleans Item, October 26, 1919. The New Orleans Illustrated News, December, 1919. Hereafter cited as Illustrated News. Rosalie Nixon, in her Cynthia St. Charles social column, described the new location this way: "And that their long voyage in these hot days of two weeks ago ended most successfully, no one who has had a glimpse at the 'Theatre du Vieux Carré' can possibly doubt. I was lucky enough to be invited to their house-warming last Sunday afternoon...the new clubhouse is over a shoe store...the exact situation of the little theatre is at the corner of Decatur Street and la rue St.
Ann...the nearer-to-the-river corner of the Pontalba building...on the 'down-town' side of Jackson Square.


28. Ibid.


30. Ibid. Petit Theatre du Vieux Carré records. N.O. Times-Picayune, November 30, 1919. The Colonial Dames had established their exhibit and operations on the third floor of the Cabildo several years before. The Daughters of 1812 had just recently made their residence in a little house that had been General Jackson's headquarters. The Louisiana Historical Society was also in the Cabildo. N.O. States, Oct. 26, 1919. The Louisiana State Museum was also in the Cabildo. St. Louis Cathedral had been restored in 1918 by the Catholic Church.

31. N.O. States, December 4-7, 1919. N.O. Times-Picayune, December 4-7, 1919. Tulane University was the owner and maintained only $25,000 insurance on the structure.


35. N.O. States, Dec. 4-7, 1919, January-April, 1923. An attempt was made during 1922-23 to raise funds and gain a state tax exemption to rebuild the French Opera House at its original location. Sadly, funds from a fundraiser became the subject of a bitter lawsuit between the women organizers (Natalie Scott was publicity chairman) and Opera impresario Robert Tarrant. Natalie was not involved in
the lawsuit but wrote searing coverage in her column. The structure was never rebuilt.


40. The Double Dealer, February, 1920.


42. Ibid., Feb. 29, March 21, April 28, 1920.

43. Ibid., May 3, 1920.

44. Ibid.


46. Ibid., June 13, 1920.


50. Ibid., Nov. 28, 1920.


52. N.O. States, Nov. 21, 1920.

53. Ibid., Nov. 28, 1920.
CHAPTER THREE: THE EARLY PHASE:
Peggy Passee Partout, the Double Dealer
And the Visit of Sherwood Anderson (1921-1922)

1. N.O. States, January-December, 1920. Natalie’s memories of 1920 would have included the Petit Theatre opening; the death of Hilda’s father Esmond Phelps of the Times-Picayune in December, 1919; the January visit of, and the Provosty family reception at Judge Olivier Provosty’s home for, Major-General John Lejeune, Commandant of the Marine Corps and Louisiana’s top war hero, who had grown up in New Roads with Olivier and Albin Provosty; Mardi Gras with General John J. Pershing and Belgian poet-playwright Maurice Maeterlinck at the Boston Club, a special military dinner with General Pershing, and attending various carnival balls with both celebrities; the Andrew Whitfield trial; Anne Morgan’s arrival in New Orleans for the French Relief fund-raising events Natalie helped organize; her March appointment to the Near East Relief Commission’s local executive committee and the fund-raising events featuring national suffragist Florence Spencer Duryea, a founder of the national commission; rehearsals and her theatrical performance in “Two Crooks and a Lady”; the divided women’s suffrage battle before the legislature that summer; the appearances in New Orleans during the Spring, 1920, of William Butler Yeats and Sinn Fein patriot Eamonn de Valera; the birth during April of Hilda’s second child, Blanché; Natalie’s reunion at the American Medical Association Convention with Colonel and Mrs. Lambert and numerous other Red Cross friends from the war; the visit of Nauman, Sidonie and their children for Muddle’s birthday in May, enabling Nauman to attend the Bar Convention in New Orleans when Sidonie’s father Albin Provosty was elected Louisiana Bar Association president; floundering parties, horse back riding, sailing regattas and summertime house parties beachside on the Mississippi coast; the June performance of Enrico Caruso; the Tulane University fund-raising drive and Natalie’s speech-making for the school; the birth of Sidonie’s third child, Martha Adele, in August; now this trip to Baltimore for Muddle to receive special hospital care.


5. N.O. States, April 25-May 4, 1920. On April 25, 1920, Natalie wrote: “The present president is Col. Alexander Lambert, who was a conspicuous figure in the work of the Red Cross in France, as chief of the Medical and Surgical Division, and later director of Medical Research. He has the most delightful personality, - he is quite distinguished-looking, like Valentin or Faust, or any figure from classical opera, with his trim pointed beard. His great ability has given him an air of latent power, but at the same time he has an all-pervading sense of humor...Colonel and Mrs. Hugh Young of Baltimore are expected too. Col. Young is another of those who won distinction in the war, and was awarded a Congressional Medal of Honor for his services. He is very distinguished as a surgeon, but he is equally popular for his genial personality...Col. Salmon, who was head of the Department of Psychiatry for the A.E.F...Col. Russell....” Colonel Lambert was an old friend, hunting companion, and physician of President Teddy Roosevelt. On May 2, 1920, Natalie wrote: “One of the most interesting features of all were the A.E.F. reunions, which were likely to occur spontaneously anywhere and any time. Of course, first as usual, comes Col. Lambert. Then there was Colonel Stahley, of Minneapolis,... who was with a surgical unit, and incidentally head of an enormous base hospital. There was Captain Gwathmey, of New York, the world authority on oral anesthesia, who worked tirelessly for months at dressing-stations, and who designed the apparatus that was accepted as the standard by the army committee on anesthesia. Incidentally, he had a son who served with great distinction....There was Major Clark of Washington, with his white hair and his young face, who did invaluable work for the Red Cross in the Montdidier section and the Argonne. There was Dr. Tom Williams, neurologist and psychiatrist...authoritative studies of all kinds of war neuroses for the Red Cross. Captain Harris of Nashville...Captain Yates was here...everywhere in France, always full of fun no matter how trying the situation...from Milwaukee.

The reunions were as exhilarating as any part of the convention; they were so impromptu and joyful. The old hymn is right; there is nothing like ‘knitting severed friendships.’”


13. Ibid., April 25 and May 9, 1920.


15. Ibid., June 3, 9, September 3, 23, 26, 1920. Natalie addresses the subject on numerous instances. On November 7, 1920, she describes her first time to vote.

16. N.O. States, January 9, 12, 13, 30, 1921. The activities of the League of Women Voters was often a topic in her column.

17. N.O. States, February 13, 20, March 8, 12, 13, 14, 20, 25, 1921; October 30 and December 12, 1922. The general law was that a voter was required to show poll tax receipts for the two past years in order to vote. Women were also subjected to this procedure under the 1921 constitution; if a voter was not current on two years of poll taxes by a deadline date, with proof by receipts, the voter would not be allowed to vote.

18. NO. States, January 2, 1921.

19. N.O. Times-Picayune, May 29, 1921. N. O. Item, May 29, 1921. The local tradition of modesty was for the local playwrights not to step out on stage to receive an encore. In other Sam Gilmore plays, and in future plays written by Natalie and Flo Field, the playwright did not appear on stage despite audience calls. On this occasion,
Gilmore was in costume and had a part in the next play on
the bill.
20.
Library.

Samuel Gilmore Collection, Tulane Howard-Tilton
Hereafter cited as Samuel Gilmore Collection.

States, May 11, May 14, November 20, 1922.

N.O.

22. Double Dealer, February, 1922. Robinson
Collection, N.V.S. letter to M.R., October 7, 1920. N.O.
States, March 6, May 22, 1921; January 29, 1922. N.O.
Illustrated News, November, 1922, which announced the
formal opening of the Quartier Club's new quarters in the
Pontalba building. The same edition announced the opening
of the Patio Royale.
23.

N.O. States, May 22, 1921.

24. William Spratling, Picturesque New Orleans (New
Orleans: Tulane University Press, 1923) 3. N.O. States,
January 29, 1922.
25. N.O. States, June 22, 1921. Double Dealer,
February, 1922. Orleans Parish Conveyance Records, book
34 0, page 4 69. The Scott-McClure house, 62 5 Orleans Alley,
provided a home for artists and writers throughout the
decade. She and McClure would be co-owners until 1937.
Natalie Scott moved to Taxco, Mexico in 1930. She also’
converted a house in Taxco into an artists colony; the
Kitigawa House had been the home and art school of Japanese
artist Tamiji Kitigawa, who spent years with his small
family in Mexico during the late 1920s and 1930s. He and
Natalie were very close friends. When Kitigawa returned to
Japan during the mid-1930s, Natalie acquired his house and
put it to use as a pension for artistic visitors.
Interviews with Bé Thomas, Natalie's housekeeper Delores
Busdmante Villalva of Taxco, and Mexican artist Amador
Lugo, who was a school boy in Kitigawa's school during the
1930s and knew Natalie well as she encouraged his art.
Natalie Vivian Scott, Your Mexican Kitchen (New York: G. P.
Putnam's Sons, 1935), preface and illustrations credits
page.
26. Double Dealer Special Collection, Hill Memorial
Library, Louisiana State University.
Frances Jean Bowen,
"The Double Dealer, 1921-May, 1926," Ph.D. Dissertation,
Vanderbilt University, 1954, 3-20. Hereafter cited as
Bowen dissertation.
Julius Friend, "The Double Dealer,
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27. Double Dealer, August-September, 1921. N.O. Illustrated News, December, 1920. Flo Fields was the daughter of Louisiana author Catherine Cole (Mrs. Martha R. Field) and was herself the author of several plays including “A La Creole”, a three act production that was performed by the Petit Theatre in February, 1928, in which she also played the lead role; the play was produced professionally in 1929. Ms. Field was a lifelong friend of Natalie Scott, having known one another even as children during summers in Bay St. Louis. She was an expert tourist guide in the French Quarter and was employed by the New Orleans Board of Liquidation. Sources: The Seacoast Echo, May-September, 1902. N.O. States, November 5, 6, 1919. N.V.S. Collection, F.F. letter to N.V.S., June, 1926. La Petit Theatre du Vieux Carré records. Tallant, 313. Olive Lyons was a poet, the wife of a New Orleans pharmaceutical merchant and a resident of the French Quarter. Thomas, Lyle Saxon, 50; Tallant, 227. Gideon Stanton was a New Orleans artist and served on the board of directors of the Delgado Museum. N.O. States, September-October, 1923, and November 8, 1928.

28. N. O. Illustrated News, December, 1920, announced the Double Dealer first issue would be forthcoming in January, that its motto was “a plague on both your houses” and that its editors included Julius Friend, Basil Thompson, Paul Godchaux, Jr., Albert Goldstein; its advisory council included John McClure, Sam Gilmore, Mrs. Olive Lyons, Gideon Stanton, W. Weeks Hall, and Marguerite Samuels. However, no issue ever included Weeks Hall’s name in any capacity. Lyle Saxon was initially listed as a staff member but his name quickly disappeared from the staff. Natalie’s name was added in the August-September, 1921 issue. The covers were drawn by artist Olive Leonhardt until June, 1922, when she left for an extended European trip, N.O. States, June 4, 1922. Beginning in August, 1922, an enlarged double-faced Roman coin appeared on each cover. Double Dealer, August-September, 1921, 103. Bowen, La. Qtrly., 443-456.

30. Double Dealer, January and February, 1921; April, 1922; April, 1924; Bowen, La. Qtrly, 443-456.


32. Bowen dissertation, 158-159. N. O. States, April 3, 1921. The linen shop was opened by the two women on the first floor of the Weiss Building in May, 1922, N.O. States, P.P.P., May 7, 1922.


35. N.O. States, February 13, 1921.

36. Ibid., February 13, April 3, 1921. Natalie was listed as the fifth stockholder in the magazine prior to the death of Basil Thompson, then fourth through the last issue in June, 1926. Since the quarterly stockholder listings are not in alphabetical order, the number, names and addresses of stockholders change, and Natalie Scott was gradually moved up to the fourth position, it is likely stockholders in the quarterly statements of ownership were listed by the amount of their accumulated contributions. The number of stockholders owning at least one percent was usually in the range of thirty. There was a different list of all guarantors which often appeared on the back cover of the magazine, in alphabetical order, as a gesture of thanks.

37. N.O. States, May 15, 1921.

38. Ibid., June 26, 1921.

39. N.O. States, June 12, 1921. Charles Finger was the editor of the Fayetteville, Arkansas literary magazine All's Well. Double Dealer, June, 1921. Natalie had previously reviewed in her column of May 16, 1920, a book of poems written by William Alexander Percy, entitled In April Once.

40. N.O. States, January 22, 1922.

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42. N.O. States, March 6, 1921. "Guy Severin" was one of the Double Dealer's many fictitious authors, this one being a pseudonym for Basil Thompson. "Becky" was Basil Thompson's wife.


44. Friend, Miss. Qtrly., 589-604.

45. Feibleman, 706.

46. N. O. States, July 16, 1922. New Orleans Historic Collection's French Quarter survey. 626 Orleans Alley (Upper Antoine's Alley), in back of the Cabildo and St. Louis Cathedral, was purchased by Natalie and John McClure for $8,300 during late June, 1921.

47. Feibleman, 705-706.

48. Double Dealer, February, June, September, 1922.


50. Ibid. Walter B. Rideout, "The Most Civilized Spot in America Sherwood Anderson in New Orleans", Richard S. Kennedy, ed., Literary New Orleans in the Modern World (Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1998) 2-5. Hereafter cited as Rideout. Mr. Rideout suggests that Anderson may have seen the Hart Crane review for the first time during this first visit to the Double Dealer office when a copy of the May issue was given to him as a gift. While Anderson accepted the gift graciously, it is doubtful he had not seen it previously. Natalie wrote that week that Anderson had been in touch with the Double Dealer for some time; the magazine's favorable treatment of his work explains Anderson's interest and eagerness to locate and visit the Double Dealer office. N.O. States, January 22, 1921.

51. Rideout, 3-5.

52. Double Dealer, March, 1922. N.O. States, July 13, 1924. Anderson had just married and had come to New Orleans ahead of his wife to find an apartment. "He has taken the Danziger apartment in the upper row of the Pontalba buildings."
53. N.O. States, January 22, 1922. Natalie Scott and Jack and Grace McClure maintained their apartments in the four story house at 626 Orleans Alley, which Natalie and Jack McClure jointly owned. Orleans alley intersects the 700 block of Royal Street. Anderson was lodging nearby on the third floor of the LaBranche Building, 708 Royal, at the corner of Royal and St. Peter Streets. N.O. States, March 4, 1923. New Orleans Historical Collection, French Quarter Survey. Rideout, 2-3.


55. Double Dealer, May, 1924.


57. Friend, Miss. Qtrly., 592. The Double Dealer, August-September, 1921.

58. Double Dealer, August-September, 1921.

CHAPTER FOUR: NATALIE SCOTT AND
THE RENAISSANCE: HOME AND ABROAD (1922-1923)

i. Death certificate of Martha Fauver Scott dated January 23, 1922, death records of Orleans Parish (book 183, page 836). N.V.S. Collection (Box 7, Folder 5; Box 3, Folder 3).

2. N.V.S. Collection (Box 3, Folder 3; Boxes 1 and 2). World War I letters mention Muddie’s abhorrence of funeral homes, open caskets and hearses. Sidonie Scott Thomas interview. Laverne Thomas III, Ledoux (Polyanthos, Inc., 1982) 313. Hereafter cited as Thomas, Ledoux. See herein Chapter 7, note 2.

3. N.V.S. Collection (Box 7, Folder 5). Boss was awarded three patents in 1921, including patent No. 1365197 for a new improvement in cluster piles (January 11, 1921); patent No. 1371119 for new improvements in drift-fenders and dykes (March 8, 1921); and patent No. 1375738 for his new design in pile drivers (April 26, 1921). The patent record indicates Nathanial G. Scott, inventor, filed the invention with the patent office on September 30, 1920 and the patent was issued March 8, 1921. The purpose is stated to be “to arrest driftwood and other such substances and prevent their deposit upon banks of waterways and also to dykes employed to prevent the wearing away of riverbanks and the banks of other waterways.” The records also include diagrams and a very detailed description of the invention. Succession of Mr. and Mrs. Nathanial G. Scott, Civil Suit No. 164,211, Parish of Orleans. Boss would retire in 1924 when Jack formed a new partnership “Scott and Bres, Engineers” with his old Tulane friend Ed Bres. N.V.S. Collection (Box 7, Folder 7). Martha Gilmore Robinson Collection, Tulane University (N.V.S. letter to M.G.R., October 7, 1920). Hereafter cited as M.G.R. Collection.


5. N.O. States, January 22, 23, 29, 30, February 1, 1922. The chairmen of the various news stands are marshaling their workers and reports from Elise Mason Smith, chairman of the court house, Mrs. Frank Soule, chairman of the Louisiana Club, and Mrs. Merrick, in charge at the Boston Club, show that lawyers and club men are going to find those news stands interesting places on February the first. Sadie Downman is getting an especially efficient set of workers for the stand at the Western Union and Mrs.
Benedict Grünewald sends word that the Cotton Exchange will be an especially popular stand and that her workers are ready for action.

6. N.O. States, January 30, February 1, 1922.

7. N.O. States, February 1, 2, 3, 8, 1922. The newspaper also said: "The Women’s Edition of the States’, which lives only for an hour, but it will not have lived in vain if it has carried the message of the Kingsley House and the Day Nursery to the consciousness of its readers...

Under the leadership of Mrs. Paul Jahncke, Mrs. W. C. Dufour, Mrs. E. M. Gilmer (Dorothy Dix) and Mrs. Lucien Lyons, the big paper, teeming with feature stories by women, of women and for women, was made up and placed on the streets without a single hitch. It was a notable achievement, for it is no small thing...to make up and place on the street a daily metropolitan newspaper.

The circulation end of the paper was under the direction of Mrs. W. C. Dufour, and to say that she handled it in a capable manner is putting it far too mildly."

Years later, in late 1939, Natalie would establish a small day school program for the children of the poor in Taxco, Mexico, with schooling, food, recreation and medical care among its services. On a smaller scale in a foreign land where the need was perhaps even greater, Natalie’s Mexican school was modeled upon the work of the Kingsley House in New Orleans; her school continues today to serve the Taxco poor sixty years after its founding.

8. N.O. States, Thursday, February 2, 1922.


11. Ibid.

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13. *M.G.R. Collection*, (N.V.S. letter of October 7, 1920). *N.O. Illustrated News*, May 27, 1922. N.V.S. Collection (Box 14, Folder 1). The Allies fixed the amount of reparations owed by Germany at $32 billion in 1921, although they seem to have expected the Germans to actually pay only $12.5 billion. The French faced immense expenses to repair the war devastation; the hope was that the reparations would make it harder for Germany to re-arm; the French believed the Germans had the ability to pay. Meanwhile, in 1922, the German treaty with the Bolsheviks secretly enabled the Germans to experiment with weapons such as gas and airplanes which were forbidden under the Versailles Treaty. When the Germans defaulted on its war debts in late 1922, France sent troops in the Ruhr Valley to seize Germany’s mines and factories. Meanwhile, inflation was already spiraling in Germany due to its internal war debt and reckless monetary policies. Chodorow, et al, *The Mainstream of Civilization* (New York: Harcourt Press, 6th ed., 1994) 795-796. Hereafter cited as Chodorow.

14. *N.O. Illustrated News*, May 27, 1922. N.V.S. Collection (Box 14, Folder 1).


In England, the group were guests in several homes there, some old friends of Natalie. They were entertained in the beautiful Chelsea home of Prince and Princess Troubetskoy, the Princess before her marriage being Hollie Erminie Rives, a well-known novelist whom Natalie described as "a woman of rare personality, tall, slender, with a great deal of poise and a manner that is distinguished both by dignity and graciousness." Postcards from Switzerland and Amsterdam have survived and are in the Scott family collection.
36. Ibid., August 19, 1922.

37. Ibid., August 26, 1923.

38. Ibid., August 12, 1923. Edward Sabine was the one who went back for the woman he planned to marry, Kyra Sorokumonfsky. Don Renshaw became a world traveler. Natalie's July 18, 1926 column reports Renshaw's return from two years in India and other exotic experiences.

39. Ibid., August 12, 1923.

40. Ibid., August 26, September 9, 1923.

41. Ibid., August 26, 1923.

42. Ibid., September 9, 1923, November 11, 1923.

43. Ibid., September 9, 1923.

44. Ibid., November 4, 1923.

45. Ibid., November 18, 1923.

46. Ibid., November 18, 1923. The description is set forth in N.O. States, February 13, 1927. Her name was Miriam Pemberton; her two brothers were artist John Peter Pemberton and Gilbert Pemberton who lived near Natalie on St. Peter street in 1927.

47. Ibid., November 18, 1923.

48. Ibid., August 19, November 18, 1923.

49. Ibid., August 12, 1923.

50. Ibid., August 19, 26, 1923.

51. Ibid., August 19, 1923.

52. Ibid., September 16, 1923.
CHAPTER FIVE: THE SECOND PHASE:
SPRATLING, THE ANDERSONS, BLOM AND LA FARGE (1922-1925)

1. William Spratling, *File on Spratling* (Little, Brown and Company, 1967) 16-17. Hereafter cited as *File on Spratling*. N.O. States, October 15, 1922. Penny Chittim Morrill, *Mexican Silver, Twentieth Century Hardwrought Jewelry and Metalwork* (Schiffer Publishing Ltd., 1994) 17-19. Hereafter cited as *Mexican Silver*. Spratling designed the Petit Theatre program for the March, 1927 production of “A La Creole” written by Flo Field; Spratling and Ethel Crumb prepared the scene design. He drew the portrait of Jessie Tharp in her March, 1928 performance in “the Adventurer” and also a portrait of Flo Field in “A La Creole”. Both portraits hang on the wall of the Petit Theatre conference room. Spratling’s role was one of a crowd of people in “John Ferguson” by St. John Ervin, performed during November, 1927; he played two roles, one of the clowns and one of the two witches in “The Rose and the King” by William Makepeace Thackeray.


5. *File on Spratling*, 6-13. Spratling’s college roommate was named Rodney Ollinger, N.O. States, April 8, 1928.


8. N.O. States, October 15, 1922.

10. N.O. States, January 27, November 12, 1922. Mr. William Irby was a wealthy New Orleans businessman who became interested in French Quarter renewal and real estate investments. He died in late 1927, leaving the bulk of his estate to a son and Tulane University. Conrad Albrizio is the other artist who is mentioned. The address of the Brulatour House was 520 Royal street.

11. N.O. States, March 6, 1921, October 1, 15, November 12, 19, 1992, December 3, 10, 17, 24, 1922.


18. William Spratling, Picturesque New Orleans (New Orleans: Tulane University Press, 1923). N.C. Curtiss was the chairman of the Tulane School of Architecture and a former faculty member of Auburn University, who had been instrumental in Spratling being hired by Tulane. Littleton, 58. Curtiss wrote the introduction for the Natalie Scott
and Bill Spratling collaboration, *Old Plantation Houses in Louisiana* (1927) and was a leading illustrator of New Orleans architecture.


20. N.O. *States*, June 8, 1924.


22. N.O. *States*, May 18, 1924.


25. N.O. *States*, August 17, 24, September 28, December 21, 1924. (The inscribed book is in the possession of the Scott Family.)

26. Ibid., May-September, June 8, 1924.

27. Ibid., July 27, 1924.

28. Ibid., August 10, September 21, 1924. Natalie also noted that it was then a six hour drive to Alexandria.

29. Ibid., June 27, 1924.

30. Ibid., October 5, 1924.

31. Ibid., September 14, 1924.

33. N.O. States, September 28, 1924.

34. Ibid., September 28, October 5, December 28, 1924; January 1, 1925.

35. N.O. States, July 20, August 17, 1924; February 15, 1925. N.V.S. Collection (Box 3, Folder 3).

36. N.O. States, August 17, 1924.

37. Ibid., July 20, 1920.

38. Ibid., October 12, 1924.

39. Ibid., October 12, December 28, 1924.

40. Ibid., September 28, 1924.

41. Ibid., September 28, 1924.


43. N.O. States, September 7, 1924; January 4, 1925.

44. N.O. States, October 26, August 3, January 18, 1924. Tommy Farrar’s parents, Rev. and Mrs. Stamps Farrar, were among Natalie’s friends in Biloxi, Mississippi.

45. N.O. States, January 4, 1925.

46. N.O. States, February 8, 1925.

47. Townsend, Sherwood Anderson, 213.

48. N.O. States, February 8, 1925.

49. McNickle, 39-42.


51. N.O. States, February 17, 22, March 8, 1925. McNickle, 39-42. The fact that La Farge came to New Orleans before going to Mexico is established by cited newspaper accounts.

52. N.O. States, February 22, 1925.

53. N.O. States, March 8, 1925.
54. N.V.S. Collection (Box 15, Folder 3). Preliminary report entitled "Archeological and Ethnographic Expedition to Middle America," October, 1925; Tulane News Bulletin, Volume 6, Number 1, October, 1925. N.O. States, February 17, April 21, July 5, 1925.

55. N.O. States, August 23, 1925.


57. N.O. States, August 23, 1925. The reference is to Natalie and Hilda Phelps Hammond’s Colorado exploration on horseback of the Rockies west of Estes Park in 1914.

58. Sidonie Scott Thomas interview, May 17, 1996; Nauman Scott interview, February 17, 1996. N.O. States, August 23, 1925. Tata’s Spanish name was Lazardo Hernandez.

CHAPTER SIX: WILLIAM FAULKNER,
OLD PLANTATION HOUSES,
AND FRENCH QUARTER RESTORATIONS (1924-1925)


2. N.O. States, June 14, July 12, 1925.

3. File on Spratling, p. 17. Scott and Spratling, ix, 1, 26, 50, 72, 91, 106, 132, 142.


5. Rideout, 21.

6. N.O. States, March 8, 1925.

7. N.O. States, May 31, 1925.

8. N.O. Times-Picayune, March 7, 20, 21, 22, 1925. N.O. States, March 8, 15, 20, 21, 22, June 8, 1925.


Collection, French Quarter Survey and title records of 621 St. Peter street. See note 38 herein. Also see Chapter 21, note 42 and Chapter 22, note 47.


15. N.O. States, March 22, 1925, April 12, 1925. Virginia Parker married Arthur Nolte, a New York artist, later in 1925. Virginia Parker was a portrait painter and a close friend of Natalie’s, her St. Peter Street neighbor in the French Quarter. She began painting a portrait of Sherwood Anderson that same month, as she finished one of Carrie Wogan Durieux. She also painted Sam Gilmore that spring.


17. Ibid., March 29, 1925.

18. Ibid., April 12, 1925.

19. Ibid., April 12, 19, 1925.

20. Ibid., April 26, 1925.

21. Ibid., October 26, 1924, April 19, May 3, May 10, 1925.

22. Ibid., April 26, 1925: December 1, 1929. Marian Draper was a rising dancer from New Orleans when she quit to attend Tulane where she was a cheerleader during the mid-1920s. She resumed her successful dancing career in New York and vaudeville during the late 1920s.

23. Ibid., July 26, April 26, 1925.

24. Ibid., May 17, December 6, May 10, 24, 1925. N.V.S. Collection (Box 6, folder 14) which contains a draft of her speech, including humorous remarks, before the Tulane Alumni Association. The Historic New Orleans Collection, French Quarter Survey, New Orleans. Orleans Parish Conveyance Records, book 423, page 31. Natalie purchased the Court of Two Sisters, 613-615 Royal street, on July 14, 1925, from the heirs of Emile B. Angaud, a boot and shoe merchant. Natalie resold the property at a profit to Antony Denapolis on August 16, 1926.
25. N.O. States, May 24, 1925.

26. Ibid., May 31, 1925.

27. Ibid., June 14, 1925.

28. N.O. States, June 28, 1925.

29. N.O. States, June 28, 1925. Albrizio returned to New Orleans during the fall, 1925, and moved into 626 Orleans Alley. Albrizio won important artistic recognition in December, 1925 as his painting was exhibited in the Chicago Gallery of Art, N.O. States, Dec. 20, 1925.

30. N.O. States, June 28, July 12, 1925.

31. Ibid., August 23, 1925.

32. Ibid., August 23, 1925.

33. Ibid., September 27, 1925.

34. Ibid., November 22, September 27, 1925.

35. Ibid., September 27, 1925.

36. Ibid., October 4, 1925.


38. N.O. States, September 13, October 11, 1925, November 1, December 7, 21, 26, 1926, January 16, February 14, 1927. The new Vieux Carré Association was formed in 1925. The idea for a strong ordinance preserving French Quarter buildings and preventing the opening of new cabarets or commercial enterprises without a strict permit system, reached culmination where a strong controversial plan was rejected by the City government in late 1926, but a new consensus plan was adopted in early 1927.

39. N.O. States, October 18, 1925.

40. Ibid., October 18, 1925.

41. Ibid., August 9, 1925.
42. Ibid., November 22, 1925.


44. N.O. States, December 6, 1925.

45. Artist Daniel Whitney and his family moved into Spratling’s Orleans Alley apartment. Whitney was among the city’s favorite portrait painters, and taught several courses at the Arts and Crafts Club. Meanwhile, Conrad Albrezio, who was with Spratling in Spain, was back in New Orleans and an exhibit of his painting scheduled at the Arts and Crafts Club. N.O. States, December 20, 1925. Tommy Farrar, who was credited with acclaimed costuming for the play “Arabesque”, was home for the holidays, N.O. States, December 13, 1925. Spratling’s publisher and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Whittaker of The Journal of the Institute of American Architects, was also in New Orleans. N.O. States, December 20, April 26, 1925.

46. N.O. Times Picayune, October 25, 1925.

47. Littleton, 90.

1. N.V.S. Collection (Box 12, Folder 8).

2. Sidonie Scott Thomas interview. Nauman S. Scott, Jr., interview.

3. Nauman Steele Scott, Jr. was born on June 15, 1916; Sidonie Provosty “Be’” Scott was born October 19, 1917; Martha Adele “M’Adele” Scott was born August 12, 1920; Natalie Vivian Scott was born May 5, 1923; Albin Provosty “Bino” Scott was born October 28, 1925. LaVerne Thomas, III, Ledoux (New Orleans: Polyanthos, Inc., 1982) 312-324.


7. Alexandria Daily Town Talk, June 15, 1926. Nauman S. Scott death certificate, 7709, Louisiana Bureau of Vital Statistics. Hereafter cited as Nauman S. Scott death certificate. The newspaper reported the gunshot to have occurred at approximately 11:15, that doctors were quickly on hand, that Nauman Scott went into shock and died in approximately thirty minutes. The death certificate, signed by an attending physician, sets the time of death at 11:15 p.m. and states the cause of death was “accidental pistol shot of right side (bullet entering in axillary (sic) line between ninth and tenth ribs) about 30 minutes... shock - probably internal hemorrhage.”


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10. Sidonie Scott Thomas interview.


12. N.V.S. Collection (Box 3, Folder 3).

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid.

15. Nauman Steele Scott to Sidonie Provosty Scott letter, March 16, 1924.

16. Nauman S. Scott death certificate. Alexandria Daily Town Talk, June 15, 1926. The mahogany bureau, with the bullet hole from the inside of the drawer, is in the possession of Albin Provosty Scott.

17. Sidonie Scott Thomas interview. Her mother Sidonie Provosty Scott once showed her the note and told her of the incident.

18. Succession of Mrs. and Mrs. Nathaniel G. Scott, Probate No. 164,211, Parish of Orleans, Louisiana.

19. N.O. States, June 27, 1926.


21. N.O. States, June 6, October 17, 1926.

22. N.O. States, October 17, 1926.

23. N.O. States, November 14, 1926.

24. N.V.S. Collection (Box 3, Folder 3). Postcard to Miss Sidonie Scott (Bé Thomas), October, 1926.

25. File on Spratling, p. 19-21. Spratling's recollections were incorrect in at least one respect. Franz Blom's book "Tribes and Temples" was published by Tulane University after his trip to Mexico, in December, 1926, barely in time for Christmas purchasers. N.O. States, December 3, 1926.

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26. N.O. States, December 12, 1926.

27. Ibid.


29. N.O. States, December 12, 1926.

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid.

33. Ibid.

34. Ibid.

35. Ibid.

36. Ibid., December 12, 1926.

37. Ibid., December 19, 1926.

38. Ibid.

39. Ibid.

40. Ibid., December 9, 19, 1926.

41. Ibid., December 9, 1926.

42. Ibid., December 19, 1926.

43. Ibid., November 28, 1926.


45. Ibid.


49. Conrad Albrizio went to the Natchitoches Art Colony during the fall, 1926, and painted a landscape "Red
River" that was exhibited in the Chicago Galleries in November 1926. N.O. States, November 4, 1926.


51. Enrique Alferez interview, June 20, 1996. Alferez, a sculptor who moved to New Orleans in 1929, never knew Spratling in New Orleans but moved into Spratling’s vacant attic apartment in 1929; he said he was offended by the nude figure painted in the shower. Esther Dupuy Breckinridge interviews, April 7, April 15, August 8, 1997. Ms. Breckinridge, who dated Spratling between 1927 and 1929, confirmed the nude shower painting and said it was “absolutely hilarious”.

CHAPTER EIGHT: THE THIRD PHASE:
EUROPE AND THE TRANSITIONAL YEARS (1927-1930)

1. N.O. States, April 13, 1930. Charles Bein was elected president of the Arts and Crafts Club in 1930.

2. N.O. States, November 4, 1928.

3. N.O. States, August 2, 9, 1925; March 6, 1921. N.O. Times-Picayune, March 3, 18, 1928.

4. N.O. States, July 15, 22, August 26, November 4, 11, December 16, 1928; February 24, March 3, 29, 1929; March 30, 1930.


7. N.O. States, October 16, 1926.

8. N.O. States, December 26, 1926.


age, a remarkable woman full of life, humor and personality, opera music playing gayly in her apartment throughout the interview. Spratling’s two drawings of her were framed nearby, including the one drawn at La Farge’s departure. Ms. Breckinridge died after a brief illness in 1998.


17. Natalie Scott postcard, April 25 (sic), 1927, Sidonie Scott Thomas Collection.


19. N.O. States, August 9, 1925; June 18, 1927. Sherwood and Elizabeth Anderson were also in Paris at the same time. Townsend, Sherwood Anderson, 241-244.


23. Natalie Scott postcard, August 15, 1927, N.V.S. Collection (Box 3, Folder 3).

24. Natalie Scott postcard, August 18, 1927, N.V.S. Collection (Box 3, Folder 3).


27. N.O. Times-Picayune, December 18, 1927.


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30. N.O. Times-Picayune, January 1, 1928.


32. Author's interpretation for Natalie's resignation from the States is speculation.


35. N.O. States, February 26, 1928.


37. N.O. States, April 29, 1928.


Spratling had published illustrated essays on Savannah in Scribner's Magazine, November, 1925; on Natchez in The Architectural Forum, November, 1927; on Cane River in The Architectural Forum, April, 1928; on New Orleans in The Architectural Forum, May, 1927; and on Guanajuato, Mexico in The Architectural Forum, February, 1927. These articles opened new opportunities for more free lance illustrated journalism with such publications as Travel magazine. He planned to expand this technique into a full volume on Mexican cities.


Ibid. N.O. States, February 26, July 22, 1928.

N.O. States, August 26, 1928.

N.O. States, July 22, 1928.

Taylor, Welford Dunaway and Modlin, Charles E., eds., Southern Odyssey: Selected Writings by Sherwood Anderson (Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press, 1997) 186-189. Hereafter cited as Taylor and Modlin. Townsend, 249. Anderson and Kelly, 188-195. Mrs. Anderson's memoirs explain that she had received an invitation from Natalie Scott to visit her in Taxco. "I had always liked Natalie and she had been more my friend than Sherwood's, which may have been a deciding factor in accepting her invitation."

N.O. States, November 11, 1928. Littleton, 132, 133-134.

Actually, Spratling had left for New York the Tuesday before the article was published. N.O. States, November 11, 1928. Esther Dupuy Breckinridge interview, August 29, 1997.


Ibid.


54. N.O. States, January 6, 1929.


59. Ibid.

60. Ibid.

61. Ibid.


64. N.O. States, May 26, November 10, 1929.

65. Esther Dupuy Breckinridge interview.


70. N.O. States, March 24, 1929.

71. Littleton, 139. Spratling wrote a letter to Carl Zigrosser, Director of the Weyhe Gallery, as the ship left New Orleans for Mexico. N.O. States, September 15, 1929. William Spratling, Lienzo de Noxtepec. Latin American Library Collection, Tulane University.


73. Ibid.


75. Spratling, File on Spratling, 36-38.

76. Spratling, File on Spratling, 38. Littleton, 166. Mr. Littleton quotes the exchange of letters between Mr. Morrow, Spratling and Diego Rivera while the project was underway through January, 1930. The final payment was made and Spratling received his commission on January 29, 1930.
CHAPTER NINE: MEXICO

1. N.O. States, August 18, 1929.
2. N.O. States, August 18, 1929.
4. N.O. States, April 13, 1930.
5. N.V.S. Collection (Box 3, Folder 3). N.V.S. letter to Sidonie Scott Thomas, April 29, 1930.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid. Jason Berry, "Mother Catherine Seals - A Healer in the City," The Historic New Orleans Collection Quarterly, Volume XVI, No. 1, Winter, 1999. Lyle Saxon, Edward Dreyer, Robert Tallant, Gumbo YaYa (New York, 1945), produced by the Louisiana Writers Project. Mother Catherine’s actual name was Nanny Cowans, thrice married and apparently injured in “a terrible battle with her third husband,” she underwent a religious transformation in 1920, and became Mother Catherine. According to Jason Berry, she announced to her racially mixed congregation, “Lord heals me, I heals all colors,” and the pantheon of spirits venerated included Michael the Archangel, among other Christian saints, and Black Hawk, the rebellious leader of Sauk Indians in Illinois in the early 1830s, who she introduced as her “spirit guide.” Natalie’s story about Castor Oil is true. Jason Berry confirmed that a two year old child, interviewed when she was 70, had been cured of rickets by Mother Catherine. “My grandmother gave her $500...She said put this child out in the heat of the day, give her cod liver oil till it’s coming out of her ears...It was God first and then cod liver oil.”
8. N.O. States, July 6, 1930. Natalie’s work in Cuernavaca may have included her new and much larger cookbook, 200 Years of New Orleans Cooking, which Spratling illustrated and was published in 1931 by Cape and Smith in New York.
10. The author’s belief is that Natalie made one horseback ride from the Texas border to Taxco, and this ride
from Brownsville occurred during August to October, 1934. This journey is well documented and one of her two companions on the first leg of the journey is still alive, approaching 100 years of age. Enrique Alferez interview, July 21, 1996. Another witness to her arrival in Taxco and the collapse of her horse is also alive. Dorothy Sutherland Chittim interview, June 15, 1996. N.O. Item, July 19, 1934 and N.O. States, July 29, 1934. N.V.S. Collection, Box 3, Folder 3. However, a similar ride from Laredo in 1930 is plausible. Assuming Natalie left New Orleans on May 8, 1930, as planned, she had not yet arrived when Bill Spratling wrote his “Books Abroad” column published on June 8, 1930 in the New York Herald Tribune, when he wrote, “George Biddle is still being expected to arrive to do a mural, and Natalie Scott, of New Orleans fame, who Sherwood Anderson speaks of as the best newspaperwoman in America, writes me she is coming to Taxco for a period to do some writing.” The delay in her arrival could indicate a slow journey by horseback. Furthermore, assuming Elizabeth Anderson began her residency in Taxco before 1934, then her memoirs would indeed confirm that Natalie made her original trip to Taxco by horseback (during May-July, 1930).


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15. Anderson and Kelly, 216-217. Natalie rode into Taxco, to the front of the Hotel Taxqueño, whereupon, as friends came out to proclaim her arrival, the horse collapsed and died. Dorothy Sutherland Chittim interview, June 15, 1996.


17. Ibid., August 27, 1930.


CHAPTER TEN: EPILOGUE


7. Ibid.


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United States Department of State, American Foreign Service. Washington, D.C.
VITA

John W. Scott is a life-long resident of Alexandria, Louisiana, where he was born on June 29, 1947. A graduate of Bolton High School (1965), Tulane University (1969) and Louisiana State University Law School (1972), he and Cynthia Henderson were married on June 13, 1970. Mr. Scott has practiced law for 27 years. He was elected to the Louisiana House of Representatives in 1975 and thereafter served three terms until 1988. He received his master's degree in history from L.S.U. in 1995.

The Scotts have three children, two of whom have graduated from college including Natalie, age 26 of Jackson, Mississippi, and John, age 25 of New Orleans, Louisiana. Elizabeth is 22 years old and a senior at the University of Colorado in Boulder. Mrs. Scott is a speech therapist who will graduate this spring from L.S.U. with her master’s degree.

War," received the Martin Hardwick Hall Award from the University of Texas at Arlington and appeared in *Essays in History* published by the Phi Alpha Theta History Honor Society. With his doctoral degree, Mr. Scott's goal is to enter the teaching profession and pursue a career of historical research and writing.
DOCTORAL EXAMINATION AND DISSERTATION REPORT

Candidate: John Wyeth Scott II

Major Field: History

Title of Dissertation: Natalie Vivian Scott: The Origins, People and Times of the French Quarter Renaissance (1920-1930)

Approved:

[Signature]
Major Professor and Chairman

[Signature]
Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

[Signatures]

Date of Examination:

March 3, 1999