



fonville winans' legacy

By Kim Hevey

The late Fonville Winans was born in Mexico, Missouri, in 1911.

In the 1920s, he came to Louisiana with his father and fell in love with the state. In the early 1930s, he made several trips to Grand Isle and took some of his most acclaimed photographs.

His images captured the heart and soul of South Louisiana.

Winans' legacy is preserved in the book *Fonville Winans'*

Louisiana: Politics, People and Places, written by Cyril Vetter, chairman and owner of Vetter Communications Co.

Published by Louisiana State University Press, the book has a foreword by James Carville and afterword by C.C. Lockwood. Vetter wrote the accompanying text to the 100 black-and-white photographs that were taken by Winans over a period spanning nearly 40 years.

Vetter said he first started the book because of his interest in Winans' photographs.

"I've always been a big fan of Fonville's work," Vetter said. "I really started off the project as a way to help him raise some money. But the project kind of got larger than both of us as it went along."

From an early age, Vetter was a fan of Winans' work. Many of the pictures used in the book are from Vetter's personal collection.

Winans' pictures have served as the ultimate teacher to photographers. As Lockwood wrote in the afterword, "His solid composition and delicate tonal range put magic into the sweeping live oaks and the Cajun life portraits of people on their boats and in their homes."

"I learned a lot from Fonville in the first few years I knew him; I will learn much more from his legacy of master photographs."

One client that was promoting the Louisiana crawfish industry asked Humphreys to photograph several crawfish dishes. The resulting poster featured crawfish bisque, crawfish fettucine and fried crawfish all prepared by Humphreys.

Since starting his business in the early 1980s, Humphreys has learned how to market his own work: by word-of-mouth. His phone number isn't even listed in the yellow pages. Humphreys recalled the advice of the late photographer Fonville Winans: "Make 'em think they found you." His first trip to Winans' studio made him a follower of the philosophy. The only "sign" outside Winans' business was his name etched in pencil under the doorbell. "Fonville was something that people didn't know we had," Humphreys said.



heartbound
by david humphreys

This summer, he hopes to add to his clientele through the use of a web page on the Internet. Even on the World Wide Web, Humphreys will not get lost in the glut. His secret ingredient?

"Originality. What else is there?" Humphreys said. "People will always need creative people..."

"At least, I hope so," he added with a chuckle.

It's only one month since photographer Marie Constantin returned from Haiti. This particular trip, her second since August, was a whirlwind of film and camera cases as she wrapped up a project on Sister Althea Jonis and her order's volunteer work in Haiti.

"This month, I've gotten focused," she said. "This is my life's work."

Constantin's mission is to tell the story, in both words and pictures, of people who put their own lives at risk to improve the lives of the destitute.

"I used to fish and birdwatch," she said. "Now, I've turned into a workaholic."

Her interest in missionary work dates back several years when she began working with Mother Teresa of Calcutta and her order of nuns. Constantin has traveled to Rome, Calcutta, Singapore and even the Bronx to work with the sisters. When she learned of Sr. Althea's work in Haiti, she saw an opportunity for a story—her first attempt at documenting the day-to-day struggles and challenges of missionaries at work in a Third World country.

"It was a lot of pressure, both writing and shooting," Constantin said. According to Constantin, who was trained as a writer, the writing was frequently more difficult than shooting—even when the subject matter was something as colorful as a motorbike-riding nun.

"Sr. Althea would never say anything until we were on her motorcycle," Constantin said. "I'm writing while she's driving 40 miles-an-hour."

Among her mementos from her trips to Haiti: scraps of paper that she would hurriedly grab for when Sr. Althea would suddenly begin talking in detail about her work.

Despite the fun, there was a very sobering aspect to the work.

"It's very dangerous," Constantin said of the atmosphere in which Sr. Althea works. "She was there during the embargo."

Constantin has been shooting for nearly 13 years, but she didn't pursue it professionally until 1990. Her first love was writing. She came to LSU in the early 1980s to pursue a journalism degree. She picked up a camera for the first time while serving as editor of LSU Catholic. The weekly publication had no staff photographer, so Constantin filled in.

"Then I was shooting every week," Constantin said. It was during that period that she began her extensive coverage of the late Bishop Stanley Ott.

"He was so easy to photograph if you did it in a news fashion," she said. "He was so genuinely loving and warm."

Not unlike Lockwood and Humphreys, Constantin's progress in photography required self-discipline and trial and error.

And maybe a little chutzpah. Constantin ordered her first lighting kit with very little knowledge of what equipment she would need on her photo shoots. When the kit arrived, she just read the instructions and put it together. The next day, she used it on a freelance job.

"If you stop experimenting, you're dead," Constantin explained.

"I was in my 30s before I did anything creative," she said. "People get into these niches (careers) by accident."

Constantin's commercial photography business in Baton Rouge supports her travels. In fact, her photojournalism background, she said, has actually improved her commercial work.

"The work I do with the missionaries makes me a better commercial photographer," she said.

"I try to merge news and commercial photography," Constantin said. "I feel that the spontaneity (of photojournalism) is important in commercial photography."

"Sometimes you just watch and see what they're going to do,"

baton rouge's photographic legacy



david humphreys



marie constatin

cc lockwood



Baton Rouge is home to three photographers who have a passion for imagery, and whose works attract a varied audience. gris-gris caught up with C.C. Lockwood, David Humphreys and Marie Constantin to talk about their latest projects, their inspirations and their experiences.

Lockwood, whose new book, *Beneath the Rim*, will be in bookstores this summer, is probably the best recognized of the three photographers. Known for his extensive work photographing and filming the Atchafalaya Basin, Lockwood has been published in *National Geographic* and has five books to his credit, including *Beneath the Rim*, a photographic study of the Grand Canyon.

When Lockwood began shooting in the early 1970s, there were few wildlife and nature photographers in the United States. The LSU finance graduate had no journalism training, except for a brief stint with *The Reveille*.

His real training started in the Rocky Mountains. In 1973, he traveled down South to the Atchafalaya Basin.

An Arkansas native, Lockwood had always been a nature-lover, but was overwhelmed by the wildlife activity in the swamp. He invested in a houseboat and spent the next eight years in the Atchafalaya.

Through the years, the mystique of Louisiana's history, people and waterways has provided a wealth of photo opportunities to renowned photographers such as the late Fonville Winans and David King Gleason.

A veritable heart of darkness to outsiders, the Bayou State has managed to produce some of the finest photographers in the world, with only a handful of them known outside of a small, geographic region.

The photographic legacy of Winans and Gleason remains an inspiration to local photographers who document our state and the world beyond.

During those years, Lockwood found a market for his images in Louisianians who were, ironically, unaware of life deep in the Atchafalaya.

"I got off the ground selling prints," Lockwood said, noting that Ansel Adams, a western scenic photographer, hadn't yet established a following.

"Nobody knew it (the Atchafalaya) was out there and it was only 18 miles away," he said. An exhibit of his documentary work was shown at the opening of American Place downtown, giving residents the first taste of his work. His film on the basin was shown a short time later to a standing-room-only crowd.

In 1979, his work was published in National Geographic and in 1980, Atchafalaya: America's Largest River Basin Swamp was published by LSU Press.

Lockwood said that access for wildlife photographers is much easier today with the increased awareness of wildlife and nature preservation.

"People just don't blow them (animals) away anymore," he said.

"There's a lot more parks and refuges.

"But you still have to have patience for the right light, and to catch them doing something interesting," he added.

His latest endeavor, Beneath the Rim, is the culmination of 13 trips down the Colorado River. Lockwood's perspective was from the bottom of the Grand Canyon, rather than shooting from the rim. He prepared himself for the trips by reading books about the explorations and adventures of early photographers on the Colorado River.

"The text ties in my adventures with the early photographers," he said, noting the burden of technology on his photographic predecessors. Instead of glass plates and traveling darkrooms, Lockwood was fortunate enough to live in the days of 35mm Nikons and waterproof equipment.

Lockwood gets inspiration from his travels: An expedition shooting sunsets in the United States led him to Arizona, which prompted the Grand Canyon project. The book on sunsets—temporarily placed on hold—is due out fall 1999.

While his admirers often call him with ideas for projects, Lockwood is not at a loss for things to do. Maintaining an office in Baton Rouge consumes more time than Lockwood would care to allow. However, a project on the Mississippi River, not just Louisiana's share, but the entire river is waiting in the wings.

"I'll spend at least a year so I can see all the seasons," he said. "I can take my time. That's why I chose this job."

Although Lockwood has moved his focus beyond the state of Louisiana, he still believes there are an infinite number of images to be made here at home.

"There's plenty to do in Louisiana," he said. "Louisiana's a great state."

"Maybe after 2000, I'll go back and re-do Atchafalaya," Lockwood said. And show how it's changed in the last 30 years."

David Humphreys, a fine art photographer, will have one of his photos of the Baton Rouge skyline featured on America Online this summer to represent Baton Rouge when the Olympic Torch comes

through town. Some would say that's an impressive accomplishment for a singerturned-architectural-designer-turned-photographer.

Actually, Humphreys' beginnings in photography aren't all that unusual.

"Someone gave me a camera for Christmas, so I started shooting my dog," he explained.

He took one art photography class at LSU and started working in the warehouse at Southern Camera. It was there that he hit a real turning point in his career: A fellow employee loaned him money to buy his first medium-format camera, a Hasselblad. Before long, Humphreys had turned his Spanish Town apartment into a studio and was teaching himself lighting techniques

from none other than a series of Time-Life books.

"I made my own light tents out of canvas stretchers," Humphreys said. You work with what you have."

Humphreys' first sale was a photograph of a violin, shot with portable flash units. From then on, he worked through local advertising agencies. He realized he had outgrown his apartment! studio during a photo-shoot for a local beauty school.

"We were trying to shoot in the living room," he said.

"We had 10 models and 10 hairdressers running around."

Having worked out of his apartment for nearly nine years, Humphreys moved to a bigger facility in the Garden District. Today, Humphreys is well-equipped for his advertising and art photo shoots. He is now creating digital images as well.

"I'm always looking for new directions," Humphreys said. He admits that he finds some photographic techniques easier to accomplish in the studio rather than on the computer.

"There are lots of things you can do without the computer," he added. "My approach is to work with what I know."

His latest photographic tool is a Macintosh computer equipped for high-end graphics illustrations. With Adobe Photoshop and other illustration software, he combines images captured on film with those he creates on the computer.

His work reflects his expertise in lighting and photographic processes. An annual report he photographed for a local company was shot on slide film but processed as negative film. The resulting images exhibit high-key yellows, reds, blues and greens. This, along with a selective focus on subjects in the images, is the theme of the body of work.

"It's lighting and using film the wrong way, but making it work," he explained.

With clients around the country and several images housed in private collections around the world, Humphreys has considered moving to the East or West Coast. However, his love for Louisiana keeps him here. Also, his good working relationships with local clients allow him the creative freedom he enjoys.

"Baton Rouge is amazing as far as the design talent," he said.

"Because I stayed here, I had to be diverse," Humphreys said. "I can do almost anything."

He even cooks and styles his own food illustrations when necessary.

