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- PLEASE CHANGE YOUR RSS FEED ADDRESS FOR TIMES-PICAYUNE BREAKING NEWS 10:05 p.m. CT
- Crime issues still unresolved 12:55 a.m. CT
- No public outrage in Central City death 9:45 p.m. CT
- Park's progress slowed by Katrina's effect 12:44 a.m. CT
- Historic park will be all things jazz 12:29 a.m. CT
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North Shore Updates

- Slidell teen dies a week after car wreck 6:12 p.m. CT
- Mini-bus service targets Sept. 1 start date 4:17 p.m. CT
- New school administrators named 3:49 p.m. CT
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Business Updates

- Local gasoline price hits new all-time high 10:25 a.m. CT
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Varied Treasure

'30s BOOK A FIND FOR NEW ORLEANIAN

Saturday, April 12, 2008

JILL ANDING

THE PIECE: A limited, first-edition copy of "New Orleans Drawn and Quartered" by Olive Leonhardt, published in 1938 and signed by Lyle Saxon, author of the book's foreword.

THE OWNER: Barbara Brown of New Orleans came upon this volume while browsing an out-of-print and rare books Web site. "I was actually looking for a book by Lyle Saxon," she said, explaining that she was intrigued to find this copy of drawings by Leonhardt and decided to buy it instead. Brown had purchased it sight-unseen, and was delighted to find that it was in very good condition with no apparent defects.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: A native of Jackson, Miss., Leonhardt was a painter, illustrator and graphic artist who lived in New Orleans and was educated at Newcomb College at the same time that Lyle Saxon was a celebrated New Orleans journalist and author. "New Orleans Drawn and Quartered" features Leonhardt's sketches of scenes familiar to local residents both in the 1930s and today, including street bands, cemeteries, shotgun homes and majestic oaks. Only 1,000 copies were printed.

SCARCITY VS. RARITY: A book is only considered rare if it is in demand and has importance. Likewise, the age of a book does not make it rare or valuable unless it is from a significantly distant time period, such as several centuries ago. Considering the number of books printed in the past 500 years, it is more likely that an old book is just that; collectors generally look for first editions of major works in the arts and humanities, or tomes with unique physical characteristics such as special binding, innovative print process or an important signature or inscription.

ADVICE FOR COLLECTING: A savvy book buyer can begin to assemble a collection by keeping a few important facts in mind. According to the Antiquarian Booksellers of America, first editions and first books from an author are usually the most valuable. Protect books from heat and humidity and store them on shelves (or in boxes) in an upright position. Experts also encourage the use of dust-jacket protectors, like the ones used in libraries, as the condition of the jacket translates to value. Finally, be advised that collectible books may take years, at least five, but more often 10 to 20, before increasing in value.

DETERMINING VALUE: While Brown bought her copy for \$48, the same Web site listed another copy of the same edition for \$175. Since Brown's book is in "fine to near fine" condition and contains the added signature of Lyle Saxon, it may be the more valuable one. The best way to determine value is to have a book appraised by an expert who can properly assess the physical conditions and characteristics, and who is knowledgeable of collectors' interests. "Condition of the book is paramount unless it is extremely rare," says a representative of Beckham's Book Shop, a dealer in out-of-print and rare books on Decatur Street. Lists of book appraisers and their specialties can be found on Web sites such as AbeBooks.com and Alibris.com.

Barbara Brown of New Orleans found this limited, first-edition copy of "New Orleans Drawn

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and Quartered" by Olive Leonard, signed by Lyie Saxon, while browsing a web site.



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