Exhibit Features Louisiana 19th Century Artists

By FRANCES LOVE
"Louisiana Painters and Paintings from the Collection of E. Groves" is the theme of the exhibit which opens at the Art Center for Southwestern Louisiana today and is the name of a new book that has excited art collectors, students, dealers, and historians throughout the state.

New Orleans

Last week the Louisiana State Museum opened a showing of Groves' paintings at the Presbytere in New Orleans, and on September 19 more of his collection will be on display in Baton Rouge at the Anglo American Art Museum on the Louisiana State University campus.

Today Mr. and Mrs. Groves will be guests at the Art Center, and so will Mr. and Mrs. Martin Wiesendanger, curators of the collection. Autographed hardback and paperback copies of the new book will be available throughout the month at the Art Center.

At 3 p.m. today Mr. Groves and Mr. Wiesendanger will discuss the collection and answer questions on the second floor of the building. There is no charge for admission and this session is open to the public.

Started Collecting

"The man who got me started collecting more than thirty years ago was Dr. I. Cline, who was widely known in New Orleans as The Weather-Man," Groves said. "Yes, it's Dr. Cline who predicted hurricanes before radar made his Vieux Carre art and antique shop popular in the summertime. I spent many hours there, where he taught me a great deal about the enormous quantity of fine painters throughout the history of New Orleans and the state."

The thirty-five paintings and drawings at the Art Center now are only a small fraction of the approximately 1500 paintings, prints, watercolors, daguerreotypes, and miniatures in his collection.

Local Exhibit

This exhibit includes a portrait of Lucy Audubon painted by her famous husband, John J. Audubon. A self-portrait of Richard Claude, and drawings by R. B. Mayfield of A. J. Drysdale, Ellsworth Woodward, and Dr. I. Cline will be of special interest. Other paintings include oils and watercolors by Norie, Giroux, Buck, the Coulon family, Castleden, W. E. Walker, Vivant, Herman, Ferron, and several paintings unsigned, artists unknown.

One oil painting titled "Bad News" shows a family of four receiving a black-bordered letter, while two servants wait in the background with a silver coffeepot. The dress and furnishings make it apparent that this painting depicts a family scene during the Civil War as graphically as a magazine does today. The artist is unknown.

Mrs. John J. Audubon

"Dr. Cline told me thirty years ago that he believed the portrait of the dark-eyed woman holding a baby regret to be Mrs. Audubon, but we did not authenticate it until recently."

When Groves first acquired the portrait, it was in poor condition. It had been removed from its stretcher and there was a large triangular tear in the lower left corner, and Mrs. Wiesendanger recently completed restoration, and this painting is the most exciting addition to the display at the Art Center.

Juaréz

My personal favorite portrait is that of Benito Juárez, the Oaxaca Indian who became president of Mexico in 1851 and was re-elected in 1851. He fled to New Orleans in 1853 when he was a rising 47-year-old politician and stayed two years.

In this portrait he appears about ten years younger and somewhat thinner than the famous portrait that now hangs in almost every public building in Mexico. Juárez became the George Washington of Mexico for freeing his country from the hold of Emperor Maximilian and the French government.

About ten years ago the Groves' gave eight fine portraits, two landscapes, and a still life to the USL Foundation for the Art Center which provided Lafayette with a high quality permanent collection of well-known American and French artists who were active in Louisiana during the nineteenth century.

Other recipients in the state have been the Louisiana State Museum in New Orleans, The Anglo American Art Museum on the LSU campus in Baton Rouge, and Delgado Art Museum in New Orleans.

Groves maintains a large private museum in a large 137-year-old building near the old mint at 506 Frenchmen in New Orleans.

Art Center Hostessses

During the afternoon today hostesses at the building will include the Meidames Kaliste Salsom Jr., C. E. Taylor Jr., Scott Myers, Jack Francisco, Frederick Nehrbass, Leo Kaan, J. Wesley Steen, S. Womack, LeJean, Richard Kennedy, C. Thad Montgomery, and Virginia Kyle Hine of New Iberia.