LOUVRE VISITORS — Mr. and Mrs. Pierre Verlet of Paris, France, were special visitors to the Art Center for Southwestern Louisiana this week. Mr. Verlet is a curator of the Louvre, France’s national art museum, and Mrs. Verlet has researched 18th century silver and ceramics from the Louvre in Paris and his wife, who is a curator of early silver and ceramics, wanted to come to the Art Center for Southwestern Louisiana in Lafayette to discuss our Louisiana French colonial exhibit and catalogue that was held here last spring and summer.

The Honorable Pierre Verlet and Mrs. Verlet arrived Friday March 21, for a day and a half before they returned home. Mrs. Claire Heymann Clark of CODOFIL joined us for a day-long trip to Lafayette, New Iberia and St. Martinville to look at some of our best examples of 18th century French furnishings.

Mr. Verlet is completing a major book on French furniture throughout the world during the reigns of Louis XV, Louis XVI and Napoleon I. On this tour the curators stopped in Martinique, New Orleans, and the Lafayette area.

Furniture Book

“I wanted to restrict my book to the furniture of Paris,” Mr. Verlet said, “but my publisher wanted me to include French furniture everywhere. I am most interested in the royalty pieces that were signed by the best cabinet makers.”

Mr. and Mrs. Verlet were somewhat surprised to find that the Louisiana pieces were not as well known as the provincial furnishing of France. They expressed some disappointment in seeing that one or two pieces in New Iberia had been altered or that the hardware had been replaced with much later reproductions.

In our area they were most interested in the 18th century pieces owned by Mr. and Mrs. James Buehrig of Lafayette and the table at the Art Center that is owned by Mr. and Mrs. Verlet returned in perfect condition. They are looking at the Bicentennial flag at the Art Center right now, Mr. Verlet said.

TWO LOUVRE CURATORS — Mssrs. and Madame M. Verely of Paris, France, spent two days at the Art Center recently doing research for a book on 18th century French furnishings. Verely is curator of 18th century royalty furniture, and Madame Verely is curator of 18th century silver at the Louvre national art museum, in Paris.

Armoire Moved

On Liberation Day I got, five or six men to move the great Girard Armoire to the basement from the third floor. Bullets were coming through the windows and we did not know whether they were from the German army, our police, or from the resistance. We locked the doors of the Louvre, but when General de Gaulle marched in, German soldiers broke the windows with their hands and got in to hide. Several of them were found hiding in the Egyptian sarcophagus cases.

During the first year of the war Mr. Verlet was a soldier in the Argonne. Later he was imprisoned for a year.

“Because I had five children, the Germans finally let me come back to Paris to take care of my family. During the last years of the war I worked in the Louvre and catalogued the Italian collection of ceramics.”

Today the Verlets have 10 children between the ages of 20 and 40 and they are about to retire. They believe that throughout the world the dealers are getting too much money for antiques. Mrs. Verlet pointed out that on the island of Martinique, some of the owners of fine pieces destroy their family heirlooms.