

I would like to supplement my request for a renewal of my Rosenwald Grant with the following information:

The job of doing a good book on John McDonogh is taking much longer than I originally expected, for the reasons listed below:

1. The Howard-Tilton Memorial Library has a large collection of McDonogh manuscripts, but these manuscripts tell only a part of the story. Other documents have found their way to some very strange places. New Orleans has had its share of unscrupulous "collectors" and many documents - records of lawsuits (McDonogh had many) etc., are mysteriously missing from the public archives where they were originally deposited. The problem of tracing such records has been a very delicate and complicated one. And there are still some gaps.
2. The stories of McDonogh's proposal to and rejection by (A) Micaela Almonester, later the Baroness Pontalba, and (B) the Miss Johnson who later became an Ursuline Nun required thorough investigation. The problem of finding out the truth about anything concerning a Creole Baroness or an Ursuline Nun is a large one in New Orleans.
3. Miscegenation, always a delicate subject, is particularly so in New Orleans, which has experienced so much of it. McDonogh's adventures in this field, as well as his general relations with his slaves and with free people of color, make a very complex situation.
4. McDonogh spent fifty years (1800-1850) in New Orleans during the most colorful and crowded phase of its history. This period witnessed the transfer of Louisiana from Spain to France and then to the United States, the Battle of New Orleans, the growth and boom days of the plantation system and the beginnings of its decay, etc. To make the book come to life intensive research was necessary.

5. The long litigation resulting from McDonogh's remarkable will and the final disposition of the estate is another complicated story.

I have already spent so much time and energy on Mr. McDonogh and his times that I want to do a really thorough job rather than add another inconclusive volume to those already published. The wealth of material in English, French, and Spanish (frequently bad French and worse Spanish), the infuriating gaps where documents have been stolen or destroyed or are otherwise mysteriously missing, and the difficulty of obtaining answers to certain delicate questions, have all, however, made the task a longer and more difficult one than I had at first anticipated.