

Black surgeons during Civil War remembered in Tulane exhibit

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University archivist Ann Case, left, and Rudolph Matas Library of the Health Sciences history librarian Mary Holt, right, prepare the “Binding Wounds, Pushing Boundaries” exhibition, which is open through Feb. 17, 2018. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

They were in hospitals and on the battlefield — African-Americans serving in the roles of surgeons and nurses providing medical care to soldiers and civilians during the Civil War.

Through photographs, illustrations and other documentation, the lives of those individuals are remembered in “Binding Wounds, Pushing Boundaries,” a traveling exhibition from the National Library of Medicine.

The exhibit, which traces activities back to the late 1800s, is currently on display through Feb. 17 in the Joseph Merrick Jones Hall Gallery, 6801 Freret St., on the uptown campus.

Both men and women are shown pushing the boundaries of traditional roles for African-Americans at the time. Men wore sophisticated army uniforms, a controversy in itself, and acted in positions of authority while tending to the wounded. With no formal training, nurses hired from the population of fugitive slaves provided comfort and care to soldiers.

With the “Binding Wounds” exhibit coinciding with the New Orleans tricentennial and the approach of Black History Month, Tulane University archivist Ann Case and Rudolph Matas Library of the Health Sciences history librarian Mary Holt have added a selection of items from the university’s collections, including photographs, rare books, documents and manuscripts from the Matas Library, the Louisiana Research Collection, University Archives, and the Rare Books division of the Howard-Tilton Memorial Library.

Other contributing archives include LSU Special Collections, New Orleans Public Library- Louisiana Division and the University of New Orleans Special Collections.

“The items that I found most powerful in my research were the original newspapers, *L’Union* and the *New Orleans Tribune*,” said Holt. “The concerns of the publishers of these papers had the same issues about the rights of African-Americans during the years before and after the Civil War as the problems that were still being faced in the 1960s – voting rights, segregation of schools, ability to attend theatres, not needing identification to be on the streets.”

During an opening reception on Thursday, Jan. 18, at 6 p.m. in Jones Hall, room 204, Mark Roudané, the great-great grandson of Louis Charles Roudanez, physician, activist, journalist and founding publisher of both the *L’Union*, America’s first black [newspaper](#), and the *New Orleans Tribune*, America’s first black daily paper, will serve as the guest speaker.

The opening reception and the exhibit are free and open to the public.