

Donated by the  
Lionel Kabel Sr. Family

Lionel Kabel  
artist, writer, entrepreneur

Lionel was born and raised in New Orleans. At the age of nine he was struck with Osteomyelitis. Without the use of antibiotics in 1944, he spent a year in bed in a body cast. To occupy his days his parents gave him a beginners set of Devoe Oil paints that helped him discover his artistic abilities. An older cousin, Mimi Bedde, who would also become an accomplished artist added to his tools a set of colored pencils.

In 1953 the Kabel family relocated to Baton Rouge and Lionel, fresh out of high school, went to work in the printing department of a large munitions plant. Here he made the acquaintance of Herb Schaffer, a commercial artist and graduate of fine arts at LSU. Working nights with Schaffer led to a job with Lamar Advertising. While under the tutelage of Paul Sorio, Lionel fine tuned his commercial art capabilities and learned a deeper appreciation of fine arts.

In 1969 Kabel moved to Denham Springs and opened his own business known as Kabel Signs located on 4-11

club road. Supporting his family with this venture, he began photographing and painting local scenes and historical landmarks in his spare time. Today many of his paintings occupy banks, businesses, schools and private collections around this area and can also be viewed at Taylor Clark and Collier Galleries in Baton Rouge.

Not content with capturing local scenes on canvas, Kabel began researching local history. Befriended by the Bentons he was allowed to examine numerous documents, personal letters and a justice of the peace journal dating to the early 1800's in the possession of William H. "Bill" Benton. With Bill's assistance and seven years of research, Kabel published his book in 1994 which ~~is~~ will be valuable to historians in the future. Titled "Benton's Ferry", the book is an early history of the Denham Springs, Livingston and Feliciana Parishes and ~~is~~ has a large index of family names. Copies of the book can be purchased at Benton's Antique Mall and Southern Hearts in Denham Springs and at Cottonwood Books in Baton Rouge.

Shortly after his publication Kabel was invited by Mayor James De L. . . .

of Denham Springs to take a more active interest in the historical aspects of the community. Kabel helped found the Historical Preservation Commission and served as its president for four years. Along with a good staff of members, the organization was responsible for acquiring the federally funded "Main Street Program" and assisted in working toward the restoration of the old City Hall building on Mattee St. To help with the fundraising Kabel created a painting of the old structure as it appeared in the 1940s and donated it to the city. Prints of the painting can be acquired from the city and the proceeds are dedicated to the project and the original can be viewed at the new City Hall.

While president of this commission St. Governor Kathleen Blanco presented Kabel with the "1997 Volunteer of the Year" award. The State of Louisiana presents this award to a citizen who has exhibited outstanding leadership qualities in the community.

Sionel's future plans are to continue painting local scenes of south Louisiana while a future book of short stories containing little known

historical facts in the Florida parishes  
is already started. Kabel is a current  
member of the Denham Springs Fine  
Arts Association and the Louisiana Art  
and Artist Guild in Baton Rouge.