

having already gained one-fourth of the estates of her two deceased daughters, the court awarded Adelia 19-96th of the disputed property and 77-96th to Emma, leaving nothing to the institute. The will was broken, and the proposed school, although it could draw on properties outside of Louisiana, was never founded. In 1869 Adelia purchased Fairvue from John Armfield, an executor of the Isaac Franklin estate, but in 1882 sold it to Charles Reed of New York.

During her marriage to Acklen, Adelia bore six children—Joseph (1850), the twins, Laura and Corinne (1852), William (1855), Claude (1857), and Pauline (1859). All of them lived to maturity except the twins who died near the beginning of 1855 only seventeen days apart when two years of age. In November of the same year, Emma, the last surviving Franklin child, who was almost eleven years old, died from diphtheria.

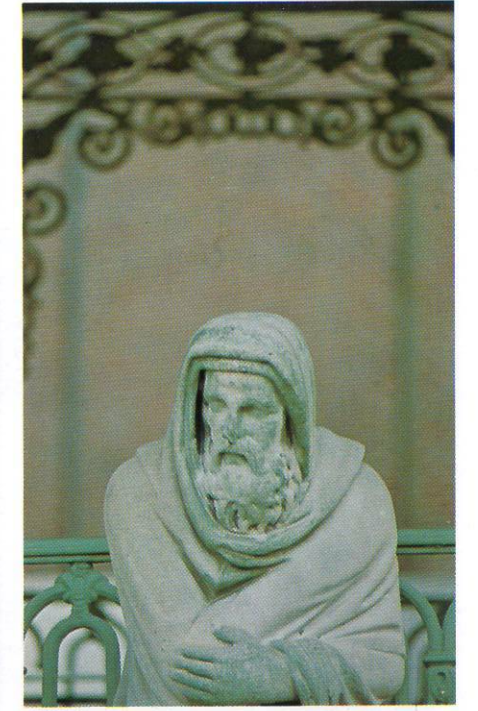
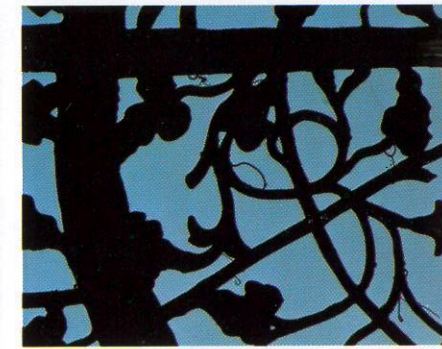
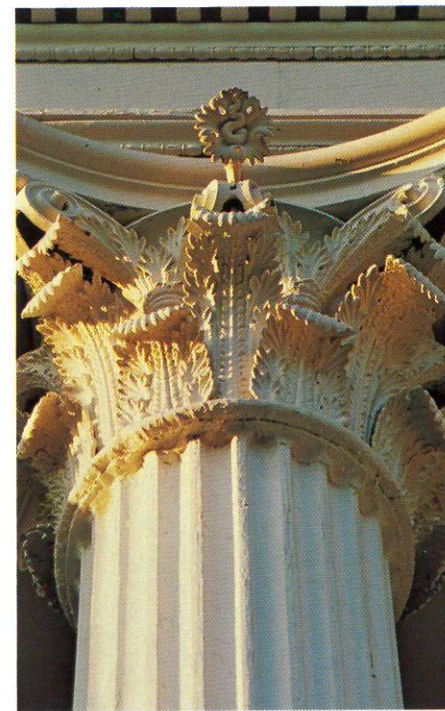
Because of her vast properties, Adelia was very fortunate in her choice of a second husband. Acklen proved to be an excellent manager. He lived in Tennessee in the summer but spent six to eight months a year on the Louisiana plantations. A correspondent to the *Southern Cultivator* in 1852 described Acklen as a man who was “of fine personal appearance, very bold, frank and decided in every thing, with great energy and industry.” The same writer also wrote—

Col. Acklen is one of the largest planters on the Mississippi River and has the finest and best managed one in the South . . . Col. Acklen has about thirty mechanics, and a large steam sawmill, from which he is furnished with the best building materials. He employs six overseers, a general agent and book-keeper, two physicians, a head carpenter, a tinner, ditcher, and a preacher for his negroes. The houses on each plantation are neat frame houses, on brick pillars, and are furnished with good bedding, mosquito bars, and all that is essential to health and comfort. The negroes are well fed and clothed, and seem to be the happiest population I have ever seen. Every thing moves on systematically, and with the discipline of a regular trained army. Each plantation has a hospital for the sick, well furnished; a nurse house, and a general cook house. . . . Col. Acklen takes great interest in planting; has a fine agricultural library, and regardless of expense, keeps up with all the modern improvements in farming.

Acklen became somewhat of an authority on the management of plantations. He developed a model agreement for overseers which was later expanded into “Rules in the Management of a Southern Estate,” which appeared in two parts in *De Bow's Review* of New Orleans, December, 1856, and April, 1857, and later in pamphlet form in 1861. According to his instructions, written in his usual direct style, Acklen believed in firm and consistent control, following the dictum, “It is the certainty, more than the severity, of punishment that prevents crime.” He also admonished his overseers: “Feel, and show that you feel, a kind and considerate regard for the negroes under your control. Never cruelly punish them, nor overwork them, or otherwise abuse them, but seek to render their situation as comfortable and contented as possible. . . .” The correspondent to the *Southern Cultivator* stated that Acklen was “the best master I have ever known” and that his slaves were “very much attached to him.” Upon the visit in 1858 of some Englishmen and New Yorkers to observe how the slaves were treated, Adelia wrote in a letter with evident pride, “We intend to show them around.” Many years later, William, the son, wrote that his father wanted to show “the world the better side of slavery in an ideal plantation life.”

The Acklens were of the upper elite in both Tennessee and Louisiana and in the latter state were in the very exclusive group of families which dominated the state's economic life. During the prosperous 1850's, the Acklens increased their wealth significantly. In the 1860 census, Acklen claimed he possessed \$2,000,000 in real estate and \$1,000,000 in personal estate. During the Civil War he told a U.S. naval commander that he was possibly the richest man in Louisiana, possessing 1,000 slaves and raising annually between 5 and 6,000 bales of cotton.

The Louisiana plantations were not only a source of wealth but provided a home during the winter months. While Franklin was still living, Adelia with various family members made annual trips to Louisiana where she could enjoy a more equitable climate and at the same time visit New Orleans, a cultural center whose social season attracted the wealthy.



Visitors marvelled at the classical beauty of Belmont Mansion and its spacious surroundings. The formal gardens included fountains, intersecting walks, flower beds, gazebos, and statuary.