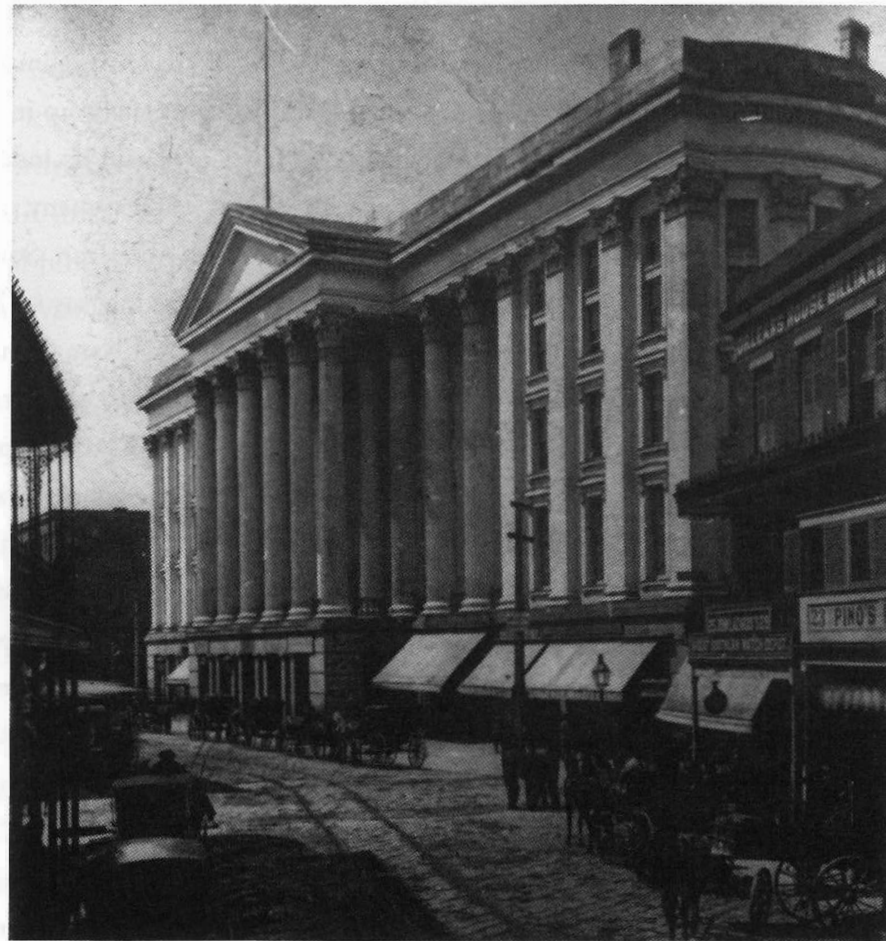


Adelicia Acklen spent her Louisiana winters divided between the Angola plantation and the St. Charles Hotel in New Orleans. The original hotel burned in 1851, but in 1852 an equally grand building took its place. (Ca. 1869, Library of Congress)



Keeping in mind the year was 1849, and the legal rights of married women to their property few, the document executed by Adelicia Franklin and Joseph Acklen transferred ownership of all the real and personal property she intended to bring into the marriage to her father, Oliver B. Hayes, with the stipulation said property would be used by and for the support of Franklin and her heirs, specifically.⁶⁵ The marriage contract in place, just two months short of the tenth anniversary of her marriage to Isaac Franklin, on May 8, 1849, Adelicia Hayes Franklin and Joseph A.S. Acklen were married in a ceremony, once again, solemnized by the Reverend J.T. Edgar.⁶⁶

Shortly after she married Acklen, Adelicia challenged Isaac Franklin's will, and the manner in which it distributed his wealth. The Louisiana Supreme Court found in her favor with its decision that the provisions of the will dealing with the establishment of the Isaac Franklin Institute were "void on the ground that it set up a perpetuity,"⁶⁷ the school he intended to create never came to fruition, and the balance of the estate reverted back to Emma and Adelicia.

Between 1850 and 1859, Adelicia and Joseph Acklen welcomed six more children into the family, three boys and three girls.⁶⁸ As was the case during her first marriage, however, Adelicia suffered a great deal of

sorrow where her children were concerned. As 1855 dawned, the Acklen family included ten-year-old Emma Franklin, four-year-old Joseph Acklen, and two-and-a-half-year-old twins, Laura and Corinne Acklen, named for Adelicia's younger sisters. In late January, while the family was in residence at its Angola plantation in Louisiana, the twins became ill with scarlet fever and died within days of each other, as had their half-sisters a decade earlier, Laura on January 25 and Corinne on February 11.⁶⁹ Illness, and particularly it seems when they were on the Louisiana plantations, was a recurring theme in family letters that do survive for, just a year prior to the twins' passing, Acklen's brother Henry Martyn Hayes—"Hal" to the family—wrote to his father he "was sorry to learn that Sister Ade's family had suffered so much by sickness—that little Buddie [Joseph H. Acklen] was reduced to a mere shadow of his former self."⁷⁰ With the loss of the twins, Acklen certainly held Emma and Joseph more closely, and both feared and anticipated the next birth; a son, William, was born in September. The year 1855 was not yet finished with Acklen, and tested her strength, determination, and faith one more time in late October when Emma became ill, and died at Belmont on November 1. "Little Emma is no more!" her grandfather, Oliver B. Hayes, wrote his son and her uncle, O.B. Hayes, Jr., on November 3, 1855, "She died night before last. The funeral will take place in Sumner Cty [County] at the vault at 4 °Clock PM of tomorrow."⁷¹ The vault to which Hayes

refers was the Fairvue vault, where Emma was interred with her father, infant brother, two sisters, and probably at this point in time, her twin half-sisters. In his introduction to "Scion of Belmont," John W. Kiser suggests William "was not so robust as his older brother Joseph and may have been overly protected by his mother."⁷² Considering the trials and tribulations Adelicia Acklen was called upon to endure in 1855, it makes perfect sense she would cling to the child born amidst all of her anguish and loss.

Acklen's voice is finally heard in letters from the late 1850s, as she entered her forties, thanks to the "collecting" nature of some of her friends and relations, and particularly her sister Corinne Hayes Lawrence. Despite an age difference of almost twenty years, Adelicia and Corinne were very close and seemed to spend a significant amount of time together either at Belmont or the Lawrence home, Hillside, located just adjacent. During the winters, though, with the Acklens in Louisiana, the sisters relied on letters to keep current on the happenings in each other's lives. Acklen's surviving letters from this period deal largely with three topics: plans for upcoming trips to New Orleans or Tennessee; the health and well-being of the children—both Lawrence's and hers; and the scarcity of letters she received, particularly from family members. In and among the routine, though, are bits and pieces of information that help bring the Acklens' lives in Louisiana more clearly into focus. In February of 1857, for instance,