

December 2018

Book Review: Cityscapes of New Orleans by Richard Campanella

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Recommended Citation

Powers, Michael S. (2018) "Book Review: Cityscapes of New Orleans by Richard Campanella," *International Social Science Review*: Vol. 94 : Iss. 3 , Article 10.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.northgeorgia.edu/issr/vol94/iss3/10>

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Campanella, Richard. *Cityscapes of New Orleans*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2017. xvi + 383 pages. Hardcover, \$29.95.

This latest collection of articles from geographer Richard Campanella provides an accessible work that emphasizes how fluidity marks New Orleans, from the built environment and neighborhoods to migration and culture. Campanella thus challenges both academics and the laity to resist reducing all aspects of the Crescent City to exceptionalism and keep an eye open to an extent of commonality with other areas of the country. Dealing with the history of New Orleans from its founding to the recent past, the book is a treasure trove of succinct articles that excel in going beyond the anecdotal and provide nuanced interdisciplinary insight. Historians, geographers, and any proud or prospective New Orleanian will welcome this collection of consistently enthralling and valuable articles.

Organized topically, each chapter contains contemporary pop-culture articles such as the origins of the go-cup and the cultural geography of Louisiana radio stations. Articles on significant by-gone facets of the New Orleans milieu will be of interest to Crescent City historians. Campanella's piece on the New Orleans slave trade could serve as a useful primer for an undergraduate classroom lesson on the process of buying and selling human chattel. Articles on the Francophone dynamism of the Old French Opera House, the nineteenth-century social parameters of capitalism as evidenced in the St. Louis and St. Charles Exchange Hotels, and the rise and fall of New Orleans heavy industry through the Arabi Automotive Assembly Plant are but a few other examples. Scholars of architecture will appreciate Campanella's analysis of the overlooked prevalence of late-Victorian stylistic specimens in a city often depicted as a haven of Creole and Greek revival. The collection likewise intersects with transnational and borderlands cultural studies with a look at the myriad influences of that distinctive domicile of the lower Mississippi, the shotgun house.

Of particular note are the numerous articles dealing with the city's post-Katrina or "postdiluvian" era (p.355). Campanella's analysis of gentrification in New Orleans stands out the most in this respect. He emphasizes how cultural and historical memory, often intentionally crafted in neighborhood associations and historic designations, are at the forefront of changes to the urban core of New Orleans and elsewhere. Scholars and city-planners should be mindful, Campanella asserts, to avoid the "concretization of an abstraction" that are neighborhood delineations and instead view neighborhoods as spatially dynamic (p.14). More concretely, a four-phase cycle of "gutter-punks," "hipsters," "bourgeois bohemians," and "bona fide gentry" makeup the process of gentrification and whose often lack of children could, according to Campanella, threaten the long-term viability of gentrified neighborhoods (p.67-68). Campanella also points to four modes of thought in dealing with the urban footprint of New Orleans since 2005. Abandonists advocate for a hard dose of realism in which unsustainable areas should be cut loose while maintainers seek to continue the status quo, albeit with improved infrastructure. Concessionists attempt to find a middle ground between the aforementioned camps while mitigators aim to proactively reduce threats to life and property.

Campanella must be commended for the wide scope of topics and the breadth he treats each one. Yet an article on the Native American impact on the trajectory of New Orleans history, geography, and culture would add even further to the book's comprehensive nature. Similarly, the Civil War and Reconstruction, as well as the 1884 World's Industrial and Cotton Centennial, shaped the Crescent City enough to merit standalone pieces. On the whole, this collection should be on the shelf of a broad range of social scientists and all those who study or admire New Orleans.

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