

Part II, “New South,” traces early 20th-century efforts to brand and sell a paradoxically nostalgic and forward-looking version of the South, while heightening racial tensions, poverty, and hunger plagued the region. The era between Reconstruction and the civil rights movement saw tremendous social and economic change throughout the South, as industrialization and rapid technological change correlated with shifting gender roles, racial attitudes, and a regional identity crisis. This period, too, was marked by paradoxes: the poverty and hunger induced by an unjust sharecropping system; abundance and lack; the prevalence of commodities and tourism that cashed in on nostalgic renderings of “the romance and flavors of the Southern colonies, the antebellum plantations, the colorful Creole landscapes, and the ‘isolation’ of the mysterious mountain South.” Each of these left culinary artifacts, expertly excavated in Ferris’s able prose.

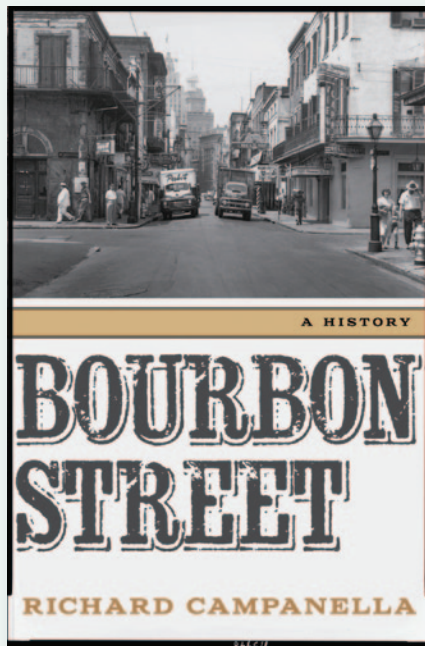
Part III, “Modern South,” begins with the lunch-counter protests of 1964 and ends with a portrait of “nouvelle” Southern cuisine and its possibilities. Once again, the themes of upheaval and change are masterfully revealed through the lens of food. The increasing dominance of industrial agriculture; the ongoing struggle of African Americans to “sit at the welcome table,” where they had so long labored; a resurgent interest in and celebration of “traditional Southern food” and, importantly, the people who made it so: all of this amid demographic and cultural shifts that are bringing new flavors into the ever-evolving (and much-contested) category of “Southern.”

Catarina Passidomo

Bourbon Street: A History

By Richard Campanella.

Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2014. 368 pages. \$30.00 cloth.



Perhaps no other street in American history is more (in)famous than Bourbon Street in New Orleans. Just the mention of its name evokes vivid images of debauchery. But, according to Tulane University professor Richard Campanella in his captivating new book, *Bourbon Street: A History*, there is a deeper, more complex story about how this street became one of the most popular streets in the United States.

Campanella offers a detailed and chronological narrative that is divided into three parts: “Origins,” “Fame and Infamy,” and “Bourbon Street as a Social Artifact.” Using letters, census data, photographs, and illustrations, Campanella first chronicles the settlement of New Orleans and the French government’s practice of honoring the Monarchs by naming streets, or *rues*, after them. “Rue de Bourbon honored any one of a number of Louisiana-involved members of the reigning house of France,” Campanella claims, “a family lineage traceable to the thirteenth century and dominant in the region since 1589.” No matter who the street is named after, it certainly did not start out to be famous. Campanella contends that life on early Bourbon Street was not exceptional; it mirrored any other street in the French Quarter, filled with merchants,

artisans, and other (respectable) middle-class professionals trying to carve out a living.

The 1803 Louisiana Purchase changed the French Quarter as American residents Anglicized many of the street names. French Creoles desperately hung onto their way of life as the first city census of 1805 indicates; Bourbon Street was predominantly Creole and Catholic. Even 45 years after the Louisiana Purchase, 66 percent of Bourbon Street residents had French names. Because of the French, Bourbon Street began to develop culturally during the antebellum period with the emergence of fine restaurants and the very popular French Opera House situated on the corner of Bourbon and Toulouse. The Opera House opened in December of 1859, and French Creoles dutifully attended plays, operas, and Sunday matinees, as it became part of their cultural identity.

By the time of the Civil War New Orleans developed into the largest port city in the South and became known for fine French culture and entertainment. The early history of Bourbon Street is so rich that it could be an entire work itself. Campanella does a sufficient job writing about that era, but he devotes most of the book describing the rise and fall of Bourbon Street since the Civil War, writing, in six different chapters, how Bourbon Street germinated, blossomed, flourished, exploded, degenerated and, finally, stabilized.

With the December 1919 fire that destroyed the French Opera House, Bourbon Street catapulted from a working-class family neighborhood into an entertainment zone and would be affected by three 20th-century events or phases. By the 1930s, the artisans who once populated Bourbon moved out and, as such, employment opportunities soon became based on the nighttime entertainment industry. This time period was a gradual phase out of the old-world traditions. But it was two other events that would forever change Bourbon Street. The second

phase developed because of world events. During World War II, New Orleans served as an embarkation point for American soldiers. In their spare time, these soldiers ventured into Bourbon Street to enjoy its cuisine, saloons, and entertainment opportunities. As a result of the city's status as a port of embarkation and the increase in commerce and trade, several thousand people began to move to New Orleans seeking employment. One can imagine how happy business owners were to have unlimited patronage with pockets stuffed with disposable cash.

By the 1960s, though, residents had become fed up with sex shows on Bourbon and nearby streets, prompting District Attorney Jim Garrison to crack down on vice and crime in the Quarter and ushering in the third phase of the street's 20th-century recovery. Garrison's raids and subsequent efforts by Mayor "Moon" Landrieu's administration in the 1970s to clean up Bourbon Street proved successful. The 1960s and early '70s were certainly the low point for the famous street. How bad, then, did Bourbon get? "A place that was once famous, fashionable, and pertinent to local lives had become infamous, embarrassing, and irrelevant," Campanella explains. City officials recognized that cleaning up the street would boost tourism, which, in the 1970s, surpassed the Port of New Orleans as the city's most profitable industry.

Today, it is hard for tourists to walk down Bourbon Street and realize that it was once a working-class neighborhood. Campanella cautions modern-day visitors of desiring that authentic Bourbon Street experience. "Authenticity," writes Campanella, "is seductive; we embrace it because it makes us feel exclusive. Declaring something to be authentic puts us in the know; it positions us in a place of power and authority, flatters our taste, and flaunts our cultural savvy."

In *Bourbon Street: A History*, Campanella provides a rich look into one of America's famous street's using a wealth of primary sources and quantitative analysis. His multidisciplinary approach is comprehensive. The inclusion of a bibliography, however, would have enhanced the work by allowing readers to continue their own research. Because of its concentration, there is a lot of material to absorb, which may distract the general reader, but scholars wishing to write about New Orleans should have this work on their shelf.

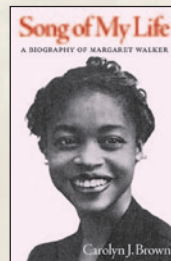
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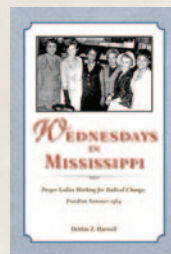
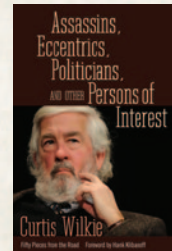
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