

While excellent railroad men existed in the South, the Confederate government never made a conscientious effort to mobilize their collective wisdom as was accomplished by the North. There was jealousy and competition between Southern railroad owners, a state rights mentality prevailed even in the transportation sector, and, in this reviewer's opinion, one of the most capable railroad men in the South, William M. Wadley, was never confirmed by the Confederate Congress to manage their Railroad Bureau. Such negligence would limit the South's use of the railroads as a strategic resource. Ironically, many of the Confederate generals as well never recognized the value of this technology or employed the rails in their own strategies or as arsenals of offense or defense.

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TIME AND PLACE IN NEW ORLEANS. By Richard Campanella. (Gretna: Pelican Publishing Company, 2002. 177 pp. Contents, preface, introduction, reference, conclusion, appendix, references, index. Cloth \$45.00, ISBN 1-56554-991-0).

Environmental analyst and historical preservationist Richard Campanella's second contribution to the historical geography of his adopted city comes on the heels of a favorably reviewed previous work, *New Orleans Then and Now*, co-authored by his wife Marina. *Then and Now*, also published by Pelican, was a largely pictorial examination of New Orleans' historical architecture heritage. *Time and Place in New Orleans: Past Geographies in the Present Day*, on the other hand, blends the generalized aspects of this same subject into a carefully written examination of the city's natural environment and the overarching factor of human adaptability.

The second work is richly supplemented with hundreds of varied illustrations, as well. Many are half-forgotten products of early photography (the aerial photos are particularly stunning), while others demonstrate the author's own camera skills as well as the latest technical accomplishments of satellite imagery and computer mapping. Campanella, incidentally, is currently assistant director of the "Center for Bioenvironmental Research," an agency under the joint-sponsorship of Tulane and

Xavier universities. Earlier, when he co-authored *Then and Now*, he was affiliated with both the Stennis Space Center and the Preservation Resource Center of New Orleans. Such a background suggests a wealth of interdisciplinary experience in the areas of geography and environmental science.

The author's second work is a thoughtful analysis and brilliantly illustrated display of the city's physical and cultural landscapes from prehistory to the present. And *Time and Place*, with an abundance of both scholarly detail and superior artistry, succeeds in spanning a readership from the living room coffee table to the shelves of the academic library. Campanella's *Time and Place* calls to mind the earlier writings of H. W. Gilmore and Peirce F. Lewis, both of whom characterized much of New Orleans' distinctive urban history on the basis of its singular deltaic ecology. Site and situation, a low-lying natural and man-made topography, sentimental cultural attachments to natural features, an endlessly evolving polyglot culture, together with an assortment of peculiar landmarks and centralized nodes all helped to contribute to the city's inimitable character. The author, of course, has included both of these urban specialists among his impressive compilation of hundreds of published sources.

However, it is Campanella's personal field investigations conducted in virtually every square mile of the city that have enabled him to provide a great volume of detail and a facility for making connections heretofore less developed in previous environmental studies. And unlike many other urban specialists, he is not ashamed to disclose his love for New Orleans when he is not dispassionately assessing the city's familiar laundry list of internal shortcomings. Campanella's personal tone gives the impression that no other city could possibly take the place of New Orleans as an object of affection as well as fascination. He is the urbanologist as romantic—perhaps the most valuable human resource for any city vaguely or passionately concerned with preserving the surviving remnants of an historical landscape—the bits and pieces of irreplaceable identity.

Campanella's comparative examination of the city's site and situation covers practically all of the geological headlines subsequent to the last Ice Age fadeout. Most significant is the "underlying" fact that the great deltaic plain on which the city and its closest suburbs cluster is comprised of a layered succession of earlier active deltas stretching from Vermilion Bay on the

west to Mississippi Sound on the east. During the last 5,000 years the nascent Mississippi River has periodically swung back and forth much like a pendulum—the result of its tendency to eventually choke on its overburden of silt, followed by the necessity of seeking an alternate escape route to the sea.

It is remarkable to contemplate that today's surface elements within and surrounding New Orleans have all been created in the relatively short time interval subsequent to the building of the pyramids at Giza. An assortment of man-made and natural levees, shifting battures (of which St. Mary Batture is the most fascinating), and broad, winding backslopes comprises a slender backbone for civilization while the encircling swamp and marsh offer a flimsy barrier to recurring natural hazards brought in by the sea. Equally frightening is the meandering river atop the ridge, whose capacity for flooding and relocation has never been completely harnessed. Essentially one-third of Louisiana's population presently occupies the narrow alluvial ridges cradling the Mississippi and Bayou Lafourche and a few lesser streams south of the Atchafalaya and Lake Pontchartrain basins. Campanella repeatedly employs this dramatic backdrop explicitly and implicitly as he examines the nature of the city's unique historical experiences and a succession of technical improvisations such as canals, drainage systems, extensive land reclamations, earthen levees, and concrete sea walls.

One of the author's best discussions concerns the choosing of the site for French Louisiana's new capital during the early colonial period. At least nine other sites vied with the dubious French Quarter site until Jean-Baptiste Le Moyne de Bienville ended the argument in 1718. In another instance, an elaborate examination of New Orleans' topographic character demonstrates, among other things, that much of the city's surface is gently undulating rather than flat, and it is considerably above, rather than below, mean sea level. The glib assertion that the entire city occupies a saucer-like declivity 10 to 15 feet below m.s.l.—often tirelessly hawked by hurricane-tracking newsmen—is once more laid to rest. In another chapter, Campanella focuses on the impact of the colonial arpent or long lot property in shaping the city's radiating street pattern at right angles to the Mississippi. He notes that many a city tour guide has ignored the long lot division and explained the pattern solely in terms of the meandering river. Connecting curvilinear streets, on the other hand, helped to inspire the time-honored

phrase "Crescent City" as they stretched upriver and downstream from the core of the Vieux Carré. Hugging the Mississippi's eastern backslope above the cypress swamps at the city's rear, their parallel formation once resembled the shape of a quarter-moon.

Campanella also provides a close inspection of the city's changing commercial districts, neglected and gentrified neighborhoods, historic boulevards and interstate traffic corridors, as well as a variety of preserved and demolished architectural buildings. For every subject there is a lavish selection of color photographs and detailed maps that give a clear reference and added familiarity.

Any criticism of *Time and Place* lies more with the material left out of the volume than with what is included. Little or nothing is said of political personalities such as Benjamin Butler, Martin Behrman, Robert Maestri, and DeLesseps Morrison and their approaches to environmental clean-ups, surface drainage measures, and improved sanitation. All too often the human details behind the main headline events are lightly touched upon. As a conscientious preservationist, Campanella records the demolition of a few architectural gems such as the former Louisiana Sugar and Rice Exchange in 1963, but he does not appear to be interested in penetrating the subject more deeply. For a city now desperately seeking economic salvation through an expanded tourism largely sustained by historical architecture, I find the irony somewhat chilling. Sadly, today's demolition experts and Disneyesque architects seem busier than ever. And yet the author does not delve into the machinations of the powers that be: stealthy politicians and greedy developers. Indeed, it may be too late to ask what portions of the city—if any—constitute hallowed ground, or even speculate on the wisdom of a market prospectus seemingly intent on ringing the Vieux Carré with a monstrous Southern-fried version of Las Vegas.

In his poignant conclusion on this most fragile of American cities, Campanella enumerates almost all of New Orleans' social ills, including a "tragically high" crime rate and poverty pockets that are "almost Haitian." He throws in a few other peccadillos such as a shrinking middle class, chronic white flight, a disastrous public school system, vanishing churches, folding local businesses, and the continuing nightmare of corporate closures. With the exception of the tourist industry, it al-

most appears as if New Orleans has been permanently blacklisted by the national economy. The author does not forget the nagging natural hazards either. He ruminates on heavy rains, a flooding river, ground subsidence, overall decay, the constant threat of fire, drainage disorders, menacing tropical storms and hurricanes, air and water pollution, coastal erosion, and—lest we forget—one of the more dubious contributions of global trade: a plague of Formosan termites.

But in his final assessment, Campanella reminds the reader that throughout its colorful past the city has somehow managed to survive a mountain of problems. "Greatness," he says, "will always find a home in this splendid and distinguished American city." And in an earlier note, the author hints his disapproval of the city's gloomy skeptics, noting that they have come and gone by the carload. At the risk of putting myself among the ranks of those doubters, I can only sigh: "Nevertheless, I can't help but wonder."

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OPENING THE OZARKS: *A Historical Geography of Missouri's Ste. Genevieve District, 1760-1830.* By Walter A. Schroeder. Foreword by Terry G. Jordan. (Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri Press, 2002. xxi, 444 pp. List of illustrations, list of tables, preface, acknowledgments, introduction, conclusion, appendices, bibliography, index. Cloth \$49.95, ISBN 0-8262-1398-7).

Magnum opus, chef d'oeuvre, Meisterwerk, this thick volume by Professor Walter A. Schroeder was two decades in the making, originating as part of the Ste. Genevieve Research Project at the University of Missouri, Columbia. This volume is the only major study to emanate from that project and is clearly intended to vindicate it.

Opening the Ozarks is structured in four principal parts: Part I lays out the natural environment in which settlement occurred within the region under consideration, which lies south of St. Louis along the west side of the Mississippi River, extending back some forty miles into the hinterland. Part II deals with the policies of various governments, colonial and Ameri-

can, that affected settlement. Part III, logically the longest, portrays different settlement patterns resulting from the interplay of environmental factors, diverse ethnic groups, and the actions of policy makers and administrators. Part IV puts the components into motion by analyzing administrative policies, population movements, and transportation networks, finally then revealing how the Ste. Genevieve area related to neighboring outlying communities. This volume is a gold mine of rationally assembled data, and will remain for decades the standard authority on the metamorphosis of the region's landscape as it experienced demographic, ethnic, political, and cultural shocks between 1760 and 1830.

There are numerous admirable features to this large volume. Schroeder's prose is as lucid and concise as that of any social scientist who has ever written. Only on rare occasions does he slip into sentences such as, "During this period of dynamism, it is no surprise that the incipient hierarchical central-place system rearranged itself." Innumerable, comprehensible, useful and attractive charts, graphs, and tables adorn the text; the bibliography is massive and reveals Schroeder's broad and eclectic reading, especially in secondary sources; last but not least comes a truly grand index, of a kind increasingly important in our era of proliferating scholarship but also, alas, increasingly rare.

Professor Schroeder is at heart a dogged objectivist. He believes passionately in the existence of objective truth and in scholars' responsibility to pursue it, locate it, and convey it to others. These beliefs are a major strength of his book, but to some degree also a weakness: strength because it contains mountains of data that will be of service to generations of scholars to come; weakness because in pursuit of objective facts Schroeder shuns and eschews larger issues of meaning, relevance, and significance. Speculation, for example, on the connection between the unique landscape created by the settlers in the colonial Illinois Country (meticulously reconstructed in this book) and their daily habits and mental constructs Schroeder would find hair-raisingly subjective and unscientific. Schroeder understands this about his own scholarship. At the very beginning of the volume, he remarks that "those who study the Ste. Genevieve District are fortunate to have an exceptionally rich documentary base. To that archival base we will now add geography." (p. 24) In other words, Schroeder intends his study to