

CONTEXT FOR AN  
UNFORGETTABLE DESTINATION:  
A PUBLIC HISTORY WALKING TOUR  
OF NEW ORLEANS

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WALKING TOUR OF NEW ORLEANS

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New Orleans holds a place of fascination for a significant number of Americans, and 20 million tourists visit each year. Walking tours are one of the most common methods of conveying public history in New Orleans. The thesis argues a very foundational public history presentation was missing from a city that welcomes a broad range of visitors for rather short stays in the city. The thesis explores the development of a public history presentation that could succinctly, in a matter of a two-hour walking tour, provide the context for some of the most common questions of New Orleans visitors. The project goal was to provide a comprehensive, yet coherent, chronological, historically complex tour to a broad segment of the public. The project demonstrates it is possible to create a historic walking tour in a dense urban setting that is spatially and temporally coherent. It was developed within the Friends of the Cabildo Walking Tour, a program of the 60-year old non-profit arm of the public Louisiana State Museum system in New Orleans. Many curatorial choices immediately imposed: finding the right balance of academic rigor to entertaining delivery; navigating the inherent limitations of urban geography and human physicality; and choosing the narrative through-lines to impart, when telling a 500-year history. The embedded argument within the tour is that the history of New Orleans, if one of colonial legacies, port connectivities, and Creole culture, is also one of complex cosmopolitanism and race. Indeed, the slow, and arguably on-going Americanization of this historically Caribbean and Creole city is full of stories of conflict; the city's centrality in the domestic slave trade, its three-tiered caste system, and its repressive racial discrimination clashes with a reputation as the cosmopolitan center of the South. The thesis dialogued with recent scholarship and public history work within Southern heritage tourism and public memory of race in the South, and documents the development of a tour that acknowledges the complicated—brutal, dehumanizing, and persistent—history of slavery and racial inequity in America, in this case in New Orleans.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

New Orleans holds a place of fascination for a significant number of Americans. The city is regularly featured in popular culture, and frequently marketed to Americans as a place that is the closest that many Americans will ever get to visiting a foreign country. One of the city’s top tourism companies publicizes New Orleans as “unlike any other city in the world – foreign, in many ways, to even other Americans.”<sup>1</sup> Nearly twenty million people per year visit this city<sup>2</sup> with a local population estimated at 390,000.<sup>3</sup> According to the third-party vendor hired by New Orleans’s tourism board, the city had 18.51 million visitors in 2018<sup>4</sup> and 19.75 million in 2019.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> NewOrleans.com. “International Travel Tips: Info to explore before exploring New Orleans.” <https://www.neworleans.com/groups/international-groups/international-travel-tips/> [accessed June 13, 2020].

<sup>2</sup> Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism, *2019 Louisiana Visitor Volume & Spending*, by DK Shifflet (Baton Rouge, 2020).

<sup>3</sup> For local population estimates, estimated by US Census Bureau on July 1, 2019], <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/neworleanscitylouisiana>

<sup>4</sup> Tyler Bridges, “How many visitors come to New Orleans each year? Depends whom you ask – and what counts,” *The Times Picayune*, March 9, 2019.

<sup>5</sup> Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism, *2019 Louisiana Visitor Volume & Spending*, by DK Shifflet (Baton Rouge, 2020).

The profile of a New Orleans tourist is distinct from national or Louisiana averages. Sixty-nine percent of New Orleans tourists are classified as Generation X, millennials, or Generation Z, while a mere fourteen percent of New Orleans travelers are retired, a full eight percent lower than the national average. The median household income of the city's visitors is \$87,900, over \$3,000 higher than the national median and \$5,500 higher than the state median. In short, tourists to New Orleans are significantly younger and marginally wealthier than American tourists at large. And they do not stay long, with visitors averaging 2.59 days in the city. Over two-thirds of these visitors come from outside Louisiana. The top out-of-state origin markets for visitors to New Orleans are Chicago, Houston, Dallas/Fort Worth, and Washington DC, in that order.<sup>1</sup>

Approximately 1 million of New Orleans annual visitors are international guests, with New Orleans welcoming direct international flights from Toronto, London, and Frankfurt. Expectedly, Canadians, Brits, and Germans log the most trips to New Orleans, followed by visitors from Australia and France.<sup>2</sup>

Visitors to New Orleans engage in activities that certainly deviate significantly from national and statewide averages. Culinary and dining experiences top the list of tourism experiences for New Orleans travelers. Historic sites come in at number 4, touring and sightseeing as number 7, museums and art exhibits as number 9, and parks as the number 10 activity for New Orleans tourists. New Orleans visitors are twice as likely to visit a historic site or take in a nightlife activity as tourists nationally. Tourists of the big easy are 3.1 times more likely to visit a gambling establishment and 1.9 times more

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<sup>1</sup> Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism, *2019 Louisiana Visitor Volume & Spending*, by DK Shifflet (Baton Rouge, 2020).

<sup>2</sup> Will Sentell, "Louisiana's rate of international visitors is way up, lieutenant governor says," *The Advocate*, January 14, 2019.

likely to take in live music during their stay in New Orleans compared to the average tourist experience nationwide. Essentially New Orleans tourists are specifically far more likely to travel for dining, night life, gambling, live music, and historic sites, than the average American tourist.<sup>1</sup>

D.K. Shifflet and its client, the New Orleans tourism board, are keen to point out the particularities and peculiarities of the city, seeing singularity as a selling point. But visitors, observers, and scholars alike have also long touted the city's peculiarity in contrast to other American cities. The Australian historian Ian Tyrell, an expert on "American exceptionalism," has argued that New Orleans is "a special case 'outside' the normal patterns of laws of history." For a country that posits American history as exceptional in comparison to the history of other nations, Tyrell argues that New Orleans is an exception to the exception.<sup>2</sup> Scholars have noted the arguments of Tyrell, describing this predisposition within the academy as powerful, if dangerous. In *Remaking New Orleans: Beyond Exceptionalism and Authenticity*, co-editors Thomas Jessen Adams, Sue Mobley and Matt Sakakeeny contend that, "A long tradition of both scholarly and popular ethnography has produced a vision of New Orleans as containing unique and static culture, a vision deeply informed by marketing strategies."<sup>3</sup> Alongside scholars, the broader public has also developed ideas about New Orleans. According to Alecia Long in *The Great Southern Babylon*, people believe that New Orleans "is different from the rest of the United States," a difference they attribute to the city's

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<sup>1</sup> Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism, *2019 Louisiana Visitor Volume & Spending*, by DK Shifflet (Baton Rouge, 2020).

<sup>2</sup> Ian Tyrell, "American Exceptionalism in an Age of International History," *The American Historical Review*, Volume 96, Issue 4, October 1991, 1031.

<sup>3</sup> Jessen Adams, et al, "Introduction," *Remaking New Orleans: Beyond Exceptionalism and Authenticity*, ed. Jessen Adams, Sue Mobley and Matt Sakakeeny (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019), 27.

“decadence”: “that its cultural distinctiveness is related to its reputation for tolerating, even encouraging, indulgence of all varieties.”<sup>1</sup> Judged good or bad, the perception of “decadent” marks the city out.

And it is not just historians, ethnographers, or visitors who have made the claim for exceptionalism. Local residents are often the first to note the peculiarity of their city, a core message that emits from diverse groups. To wit, when *Travel + Leisure* named New Orleans to its world’s best travel destination list in 2014, the white CEO of the New Orleans Convention Bureau, Stephen Perry, said, “Only in New Orleans can you walk a few simple steps to your hotel to hear a jazz musician on the street...and be inspired by the historic French and Spanish architecture found only in our city.”<sup>2</sup> Also that year, Cherise Luter, a Black local journalist writing for the online site, *Bustle*, described growing up in New Orleans to be “like growing up in another country. The food, culture, music, and language seem completely foreign to most of the rest of America. We drink anytime, eat rich foods, listen to great music, and enjoy waterfront views on the regular... our day-to-day life still resembles other people’s vacations. Maybe that is why many people refer to [New Orleans] as the northern most part of the Caribbean. Often, we have more in common with island folk than we do with people from Alabama.”<sup>3</sup>

This narrative of New Orleans is not exclusive to the year 2014, or even to the twentieth century, for that matter. According to New Orleans geographer, Dr. Richard

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<sup>1</sup> Alecia P. Long, *The Great Southern Babylon: Sex, Race, and Respectability in New Orleans 1865-1920*, (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2004), 1.

<sup>2</sup>New Orleans.com. “New Orleans Voted Worlds Best City by Travel and Leisure.” <https://www.neworleans.com/articles/post/new-orleans-voted-a-worlds-best-city-by-travel-leisure/> [accessed July 10, 2020].

<sup>3</sup> Cherise Luter, “41 Things Only New Orleans Natives Understand, Because Everyone Else Thinks You Live on a Bayou,” *Bustle*, posted October 13, 2014, <https://www.bustle.com/articles/30817-41-things-only-new-orleans-natives-understand-because-everyone-else-thinks-you-live-on-a-bayou> [accessed June 13, 2020]

Campanella, the idea that New Orleans is an exceptional place has been a dominant narrative for over 200 years. Surveying the rhetorical landscape, Campanella, contends that interpreters of New Orleans have generally fallen into two camps: the exceptionalists and the assimilationists. The minor group, assimilationists, according to Campanella argue “that two centuries of American dominion have enveloped New Orleans almost entirely into the national fold” and dismiss the exceptionalists’ insistence on cultural uniqueness, describing it as a fabrication “drummed up first by ‘local color’ writers in the late 1800s, and today by the industrial tourism machine.”

And yet, the “exceptionalism” of New Orleans history has become the entrenched narrative of the most powerful quarters, comprised of local historians, civic leaders, and the tourism industry. The dominant “exceptionalists,” according to Campanella, “see in New Orleans an enduring uniqueness, dating back to its colonial origins and very much alive today... [They] view modern New Orleans as a place with its heart still in the Franco-Afro-Caribbean world from which it spawned, resigned only reluctantly to its American fate.”<sup>1</sup> Applied to the official message of New Orleans & Company (formerly the New Orleans Convention and Visitors Bureau), Campanella’s analysis seems correct. The most influential tourism bureau in the city, New Orleans & Company currently markets the city as volleying “between the French and Spanish from the late 17<sup>th</sup> century until the United States bought Louisiana...in 1803.” New Orleans, the tourism bureau asserts, “is forever shaped by its European heritage.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Campanella, *Bienville’s Dilemma: A Historical Geography of New Orleans* (Lafayette, LA: Center for Louisiana Studies, 2008), 356.

<sup>2</sup> NewOrleans.com. “New Orleans History.” <https://www.neworleans.com/things-to-do/history/> [accessed June 13, 2020].

Growing up hundreds of miles away in rural Oklahoma, even I was witness to the narratives of New Orleans' historical and cultural exceptionalism. I developed a rather intense childhood fascination – conjured by music, movies, food, and advertisements. The dominant “exceptionalism” narrative predisposed me to be one of its adherents once I began to personally dig into New Orleans' history as a young adult—through books, both academic and literary. But it was not until I was nearly thirty years old that I took the opportunity to finally visit. The first time I visited New Orleans nearly a decade ago, I returned home to Oklahoma with an intense desire to begin to understand aspects of the City's history that had made it such a cosmopolitan seeming place. While always an avid reader of history, it was not until this chapter of my life that I began to seriously consider pursuing a graduate degree in History.

Upon beginning my studies in Public History, I began to realize that public historians broadly recognize that developing such an intense desire to understand a city is a common reaction among new residents of a city or tourists approaching it as a destination. As such, local public history organizations, as well as tourist industries, have increasingly readied themselves to accommodate that interest. Robert Patterson, director for the local history museum in Clarksville, Tennessee, has written of this pattern among new arrivals: “Residents... are eager to visit an institution or a locale that explains the community's history and its life in relation to them.”<sup>1</sup> These public sites of interpretation, according to the historian Barbara Franco, have the crucial charge of

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<sup>1</sup> Robert B. Patterson, Jr., “In Local Historical Agencies Museums, and Societies,” in *Public History: Essays from the Field*, ed. James B. Gardner and Peter S. LaPaglia (Malabar, FL: Krieger Publishing Company, 1999), 297.

“using history to strengthen community identity.”<sup>1</sup> Moreover, public history has come to play a critical part in the tourist economy and experience of cities. For Franco, public history can aid in urban development, as cities become “heritage tourism destinations that provide authentic and educational experiences for a sophisticated audience for travelers who find local heritage an important part of travel.”<sup>2</sup>

In terms of catering to tourists, the public history and tourist sectors of New Orleans have capitalized on environmental traits and strategic narratives. New Orleans benefits from generally agreeable weather, making possible a year-round tourist season full of outdoor attractions. Strategically, city boosters have long prioritized specific historic sites and engineered its urban space to reflect certain priorities. As a result, New Orleans has come to live on the tourist industry, which is a significant economic engine in the city. In 2019 tourists spent a combined \$10.05 billion: \$2.13 billion on lodging, \$2.4 billion on food and beverage, and \$1.31 billion on entertainment and recreation. Of the sites they visit, over 75 percent are in the best known of the city’s preserved urban spaces, the French Quarter, a small pocket of land measuring merely 2/3 of a square mile. Visitor interest in the French Quarter is well recognized, and reinforced, by New Orleans & Company; of fifty attractions promoted by the main tourism bureau on its website, thirty-eight of those attractions are in the French Quarter historic district.

Billed as the historic heart of New Orleans, the French Quarter is world-renowned for its preserved architectural gems but also for its animated atmosphere at night. A tourist hub, the French Quarter offers 21 hotels or 19% of the city’s total, 158 restaurants or 15.2% of the city total, 98 bars or 33.8% of the city total, and 131 nightlife attractions

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<sup>1</sup> Barbara Franco, “In Urban History Museums and Historical Agencies,” in *Public History: Essays from the Field*, ed. James B. Gardner and Peter S. LaPaglia (Malabar, FL: Krieger Publishing Company, 1999), 323.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, 321.

or 33.2% of the city total. Complementing the focus on hospitality (but often running in tension with it, too) are the historic sites of the quarter not related to revelry—the buildings, public spaces, and architectural features broadly known as the “historic sites” of the French Quarter. A quick look at the New Orleans & Company Guidebook gives some sense of what those “stalwarts” encompass: Jackson Square, the Cabildo Louisiana State Museum, the Historic New Orleans Collection, and the New Orleans Jazz Museum at the U.S. Mint. Many of these sites, it should be noted, purport to provide not just a history of the French Quarter, but of New Orleans overall. In other words, while boosters tout the French Quarter’s singularity, they often market it to speak for the city as a whole. Visitors tend to think, then, that they are “seeing” the authoritative New Orleans when visiting the French Quarter; and in this, they have a full menu of public history types to choose from: museums, historic houses, monuments, and tours.

Walking tours are one of the most common methods of conveying public history in the city, more precisely in the French Quarter. A tourist performing a cursory search on the world wide web will find multiple hits for walking tours: cemetery tours, voodoo tours, drinking tours, culinary tours, and jazz tours. According to the New Orleans & Company, there are thirty-eight separate French Quarter tours, seventeen companies offering haunted ghost tours, and three companies specifically offering cocktail tours. Twenty companies offer history tours in the French Quarter, a full half of all history tours offered throughout the city.<sup>1</sup> In terms of historic walking tours of New Orleans, they tend to fall heuristically into three camps, distinguished by their objectives: to entertain, to educate, and/or to revise what the standard narratives leave out (often pushing beyond the boundaries of the French Quarter and crossing over into Tremé).

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<sup>1</sup> NewOrleans.com, <https://www.neworleans.com/> [accessed July 10, 2020].

Over years of regular visits to New Orleans, I became one of the millions of tourists who engaged broadly with, indeed sought out, authoritative representations of the city's history. I read the labels at New Orleans' many museums, climbed the stairs at historic sites, and followed the tour guide on walking tours. Given the significant number of tourists to the city and the city's hold on the public imagination, I also sought out the numerous high-quality options for popular history books, as well as academic treatments. I read countless books on the history, geography, and culture of the city. A few of my favorites included *Tremé* by Michael Crutch, Jr., *Bienville's Dilemma* by Richard Campanella, and *A New Orleans Voodoo Priestess* by Carolyn Morrow Long. These experiences in New Orleans itself, as well as between the pages of books, began to inform my understanding of how the city evolved into the place that it is today.

Despite the quantity and quality of these thematic and in-depth options to engage with New Orleans history, I continued to be haunted with a sense that a very foundational public history presentation was missing from a city that welcomes a broad range of visitors for rather short stays in the city. Through anecdotal evidence, I learned that I was not alone in my assessment. Whether on a street corner, standing in line at a corner store, or sitting at a bar, I frequently visited with first-time tourists to the city who desperately wanted some context for what they were encountering. Many of these visitors were unlikely to pick up several New Orleans history books or spend the several days necessary at the history museums to gather a general history of the city. Indeed, as the city's own research shows, the average tourist only stays in the city for 2.59 days,<sup>1</sup> and spends most time being entertained and informed in ways other than history museums.

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<sup>1</sup> Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism, *2019 Louisiana Visitor Volume & Spending*, by DK Shifflet (Baton Rouge, 2020).

All the same, they often show themselves curious enough to devote a few hours to better understanding the city, especially if it helps translate the city's cultural elements. Based on fleeting conversations with fellow tourists, I noted how many were taking walking tours of New Orleans history as a means of not just seeing but also “feeling” the city's past—on the streets. And as mentioned above, they had options.

I know these options from both an academic and a personal standpoint. In the first few years of visiting New Orleans, I participated in multiple walking tours promising to entertain and educate. One of my first tours was a Friends of the Cabildo walking tour, which I took around 2010. The tour came highly recommended, and I did learn a lot; still, I found certain shortcomings, namely that it provided little in the way of compelling chronology, thematic focus, or social diversity. When I visited New Orleans again and took part in other walking tours, I felt more dissatisfied. On the whole, New Orleans tours—even those billed as educational—relied upon entertaining, anecdotal stories. None of the tours provided a substantive context that would help me understand New Orleans in unsparing, chronological, comprehensive detail. Over five years, I did not find a walking tour with that objective. In short, I felt a gap and yearned for it to be filled.

I wanted a public history presentation that could succinctly, in a matter of a two-hour walking tour, provide the context for some of the most common questions of New Orleans visitors. Why is the city by the Mississippi River? Why does the old French city have Spanish plaques on buildings? What is creole? Why are the alcohol laws so different in New Orleans? How did the French Quarter stay so intact? Why are there blighted, almost exclusively Black neighborhoods just outside the bustling French

Quarter? How is that a Deep South city appears to have anything but conservative politics? Why is the National World War II Museum here? Where did the Mardi Gras Indians come from? Did Hurricane Katrina affect the French Quarter?

I finally decided that I needed to develop the public history presentation that I felt was missing; my goal was to provide a comprehensive, yet coherent, historically complex tour to a broad segment of the public. Many curatorial choices immediately imposed: finding the right balance of academic rigor to entertaining delivery; navigating the inherent limitations of urban geography and human physicality; and choosing the narrative through-lines to impart, when telling a 500-year history. Another curatorial choice was institutional: under what auspices should I pursue my public history walking tour? As mentioned above, public walking tour institutional affiliations abounded. I also had the option of putting my shingle out and going it alone. My own social network ultimately impacted my decision. Through my decade of regular visits to New Orleans, I had become friends with several walking tour guides, and with their counsel charted a course for pursuing this personal project. In 2018, I found myself at the heart of the French Quarter; I was about to complete the Friends of the Cabildo's annual tour guide training course.

The Friends of the Cabildo (FOC) is the 60-year old non-profit arm of the public Louisiana State Museum system in New Orleans. Visitors who sign up for a walking tour led by a Cabildo guide pay \$22 dollars (as of 2020) and then thread through the French Quarter in groups of no more than 25, but typically in groups of 5 to 15. Admissions for the tours are the largest source of revenue for the non-profit organization.<sup>1</sup> Due to its affiliation with the Louisiana State Museum, the FOC tour operation takes itself

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<sup>1</sup> Jason Strada, Executive Director of Friends of the Cabildo, e-mail message to author, July 11, 2020.

seriously, both in terms of product and in terms of training. The training is an intensive, month-long course that aims to equip graduates with the resources and research tools necessary to develop their own 2-hour walking tours of the French Quarter. This approach separates the tours from many other French Quarter tours. Unlike for-profit companies that generally recruit individuals to memorize and regurgitate historic facts and scripts, FOC guides each research, develop, and present a unique tour.<sup>1</sup> And in this preparation, the organization provides significant external and internal input.

Indeed, Friends of the Cabildo prides itself on providing academically sourced training. The course includes presentations from several faculty members of Tulane and the University of New Orleans, including professors Drs. Laura Kelley, Frank Perez, and Ron Chapman. Throughout the training, scripts are evaluated several times prior to giving them publicly. As a final hurdle, graduates must pass a comprehensive exam on the history of the city before being permitted to lead a public tour and then agree to volunteer for two years after graduation. Given the codified training, the rigorous evaluations, and the multi-year commitment, FOC bills itself as presenting among the most professional historic tours of the City.

I chose to attempt to develop the tour that I had always wanted to take: a chronological, 2-hour walking tour that presented a concise and coherent overview of 500 years of New Orleans history. In this respect, I was charting new conceptual (and physical) territory. Standard guidance presented in the Friends of the Cabildo course recommends that tours lean towards a focus on a circumscribed historical window: the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century history of New Orleans. Students of the Cabildo

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<sup>1</sup> Friends of the Cabildo. "FOC Walking Tour Guides." <https://friendsofthecabildo.org/foc-walking-tour-guides/> [accessed June 20, 2020].

course are generally encouraged to develop thematic tours or spatial tours that string together interesting stories that occurred in a particular part of the French Quarter. In terms of organizing concepts, tours guides are encouraged to focus on 2-minute stories about interesting individuals. Students are specifically discouraged from developing chronological tours, since the spatial and temporal history of a place rarely align.

According to the instructors, I am the first student in the several decades of Friends of Cabildo Tour Guides, to successfully develop a chronological tour, and one of very few to attempt to present a broad history of the city within our two-hour time constraints. The end product was not without challenges along the way, for reasons universal to public history work and for reasons particular to this project. Among the most difficult aspect of my project was the decision-making process. A two-hour history tour of five hundred years of history relied upon careful cutting and patchwork. To make selections, I began with a central question: “Does this piece of history substantively contribute to the understanding of contemporary New Orleans?” Once each piece of interesting local history was evaluated with that question, many popular New Orleans stories recounted during walking tours did not make the cut. My final tour script did not mention the pirate Jean Lafitte, the Battle of New Orleans, or Octaroon balls. My tour retained lesser known, yet equally fascinating historical events that substantively contribute to providing context for this city that visitors have chosen to visit. Departing from many guides, I also sought to embed an argument into my tour: that the history of New Orleans, if one of colonial legacies, port connectivities, and Creole culture, is also one of complex cosmopolitanism and race. Indeed, the slow, and arguably on-going Americanization of this historically Caribbean and Creole city is full of stories of

conflict, clashing with any easy depiction of the city as an ethnic mosaic on the Mississippi. The city's centrality in the domestic slave trade, its three-tiered caste system, and its repressive racial discrimination clashes with a reputation as the cosmopolitan center of the South.

Despite (or perhaps because of) my engagement in the complexities of the city, the walking has been well received by tour guests. Between 2018 and 2020, I have led the tour over fifty times and have helped educate nearly 1,000 visitors to New Orleans. I consistently receive feedback from my guests that the tour is unlike any walking tour they have ever taken, and on several occasions I have been told by experienced world travelers that it is the best walking tour they have ever taken. In terms of New Orleans proper, I would like to think that the tour does, indeed, offer an experience that departs from its counterparts, both within the walking tour sector of New Orleans, and within the broader public history sector of New Orleans. Much of this thesis sets out to contextualize where my tour fits into the broader landscape of public history, first examining how it fits within the New Orleans sector, before moving on to examine how it dialogues with broader trends and questions in the contemporary South and the United States.

At the widest shell, my public history tour of New Orleans joins other tours like it in recent years (in the United States and the world) that have sought to find a space between the typical walking tour of concise yet random stories and the comprehensive yet distant bus tour. Instead, I seek to provide a concise, comprehensive historical tour connected with the built environment and people living within it. This public history project thesis argues it is possible to create an historic walking tour in a dense urban setting that is spatially and temporally coherent. Rather than giving guests to a city the

typical walking tour of random, anecdotal stories or deeper dives into specific historic themes connected to the built environment, my project provides guests a concise, relevant tour that is connected with the built environment. This provides substantive context to the city in which they are visiting and creates a more impactful visitors experience. My tour has also dialogued with recent scholarship and public history work within Southern heritage tourism and public memory of race in the South, I have developed a tour that acknowledges the complicated—brutal, dehumanizing, and persistent—history of slavery and racial inequity in America, in this case in New Orleans.

At the same time, I must recognize that finishing this thesis in 2020—putting together on paper the notecards that backboned my tour script in 2018—means that I have also come to realize how much more there is to do within the field of public history, heritage tourism, and urban social justice in New Orleans, the South, and America. In this respect, I found in 2020 that my 2018 script requires readjustment in order to speak better to the national reckoning that has shaken American over the course of spring-summer 2020. To that end, I have revised this tour script significantly over the course of my thesis revisions. I have thought more critically about my positionality as a white man presenting tours in the French Quarter to largely white audiences. And I have considered the broader impact that my tour might have, once readjusted to speak more truth to power—an objective that I did not necessarily set out to do when designing this tour, for reasons that I will detail in the thesis, but that I think white Americans want and Black Americans demand. This thesis, then, tells a story of script development in 2018 but also a story of revision in 2020. It is testament to the necessary changing nature of public history, that public historians must make, being an obvious part of America's pursuit of

“its better angels,” placed as we are to toggle between historical scholarship, the broader public, and America’s memory of its past.

This thesis includes four chapters beyond this introduction, as well as a conclusion. Chapter 2, “A Particular Niche in New Orleans: Friends of the Cabildo’s Walking Tours of the French Quarter,” situates the Friends of the Cabildo within a broader landscape of New Orleans walking tours, public history sites, and the tourism sector. It examines historical scholarship and public history practices that have sought to problematize and present the history of the Crescent City over the years, from the early twentieth century to post-Katrina era. Chapter 3, “‘Southern Heritage,’ Slavery, and Black Experience: Dilemmas and Strategies for U.S. Public History,” studies more broadly the spate of recent examinations of how public history and memory have (mis)represented race in America, and points to reform in the sector as well as how it might change from 2020. This chapter looks broadly at America but focuses most precisely on Southern cities like New Orleans and Charleston, particularly in terms of the South’s inextricable relationship with enslavement and plantation economies, the domestic slave trade, and the Civil War.

Chapter 4, “Theories of Interpretation and Tour Guiding,” includes a discussion of widely accepted principles of interpretation, combined with new literature—from public history but also sociology—of the very practice of tour guiding as “doing” public history in a city. Allowing for a more theoretical reflection on the singularities of the public history walking tour, the chapter also seeks to contribute to public history practice more broadly by detailing my interpretative apparatus. Conveying 500 years of history to

visitors expecting short snippets about Bourbon Street or placage required intentional use of interpretative theory and practice on my part; I try to convey them in the chapter.

Finally, Chapter 5, “A Walk Through the French Quarter,” presents the script of my Friends of the Cabildo tour itself, with annotations in the script text that refer back to Chapters 1-4. Through these annotations, I intend to point the reader back the specific chapter sections in which I detailed how I approached specific questions and dilemmas, both in 2018 and again in 2020, during thesis revisions. In a Conclusion to the thesis, I reflect back on the feedback and critiques received over the two years presenting the tour to provide a reflective evaluation of the tour’s strengths and weaknesses. I present the primary points that guests of the tour find most interesting, as key take-aways from the experience. I also reflect broadly on a few lessons for the public history field. To that end, I have included an appendix of supplementary material—a Friends of the Cabildo tour guide application, a map of the French Quarter, and the notes of the tour I have given until revising the script during the process of writing this thesis—to provide first-hand sources of the context in which this public history project took shape and how it changed.

## CHAPTER II

### A PARTICULAR NICHE IN NEW ORLEANS: FRIENDS OF THE CABILDO'S WALKING TOURS OF THE FRENCH QUARTER

This chapter examines the institutional context of my public history tour of New Orleans, a city where the heritage institutions compete for space, funding, social capital, and visitors. It is a city defined, in many respects, by its heritage identities and industries.<sup>1</sup> Multiple institutions and “counter-institutions” exist within the sector, their ethos informing the specific narratives that emanate from their exhibitions, plaques, and tours. As such, this chapter begins with a section that presents the Friends of the Cabildo Walking Tour Guide Program, providing historical background on the institution itself: its founding, its headquarters, its membership, and the philosophy and structure that facilitate new tours each year. I also provide details and statistics on the organization’s tour guide corps, tour training, and revenue streams. This background information provides a sense of the unique attributes that mark out Friends of the Cabildo’s

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<sup>1</sup> J. Mark Souther, “The Disneyfication of New Orleans: The French Quarter as Façade in a Divided City,” *Journal of American History* 94 (December 2007), 804.

institutional character. But such details become more meaningful when used to contextualize how Cabildo tours unfold, and thus the chapter proceeds to “read” a model Cabildo tour route and tour script. A following section examines how the Cabildo fits into the broader landscape of the New Orleans heritage and public history sector, particularly those aimed at a general audience. I provide a comparative analysis of the Cabildo by juxtaposing its tours alongside another popular heritage site in New Orleans: the Historic New Orleans Collection. By providing this juxtaposition, the limitations, advantages, and positionality of a Friends of the Cabildo tour come into better focus. With the particular nature of Cabildo tours defined, I move on to a final set of sections detailing how I designed my own FOC tour. I present the sometimes-tortured process of employing a litmus test to determine which aspects of the city’s 500-year history belonged in my 2-hour walking tour and detail the creative, yet challenging process of connecting narrative to the built environment. The chapter concludes with an examination of particular problems encountered on the tour route and the creative solutions used when the appropriate period of architectural styles could not be found along particular parts of the tour route, particularly discussing modern history in a space without modern architecture or obvious linkages to the modern history discussed.

### ***The Friends of the Cabildo and its Walking Tour Program***

Before detailing the Friends of the Cabildo guide program—from application to training to tour script and execution—it makes sense to provide a profile of the Friends of the Cabildo (FOC) as an institution, starting with the importance of its walking tours.

The Friends of the Cabildo Walking Tour program is one of the signature operations run by Friends of the Cabildo, the non-profit arm of the Louisiana State Museum (LSM) in New Orleans. The relationship is tight. Tourists searching the Louisiana State Museum website for a New Orleans walking tour are quickly redirected to the FOC page. The tours are popular; sales of tour tickets represent one of the largest sources of revenue for the FOC.

Friends of the Cabildo dates from its incorporation in 1956 and runs out of the Cabildo Building at 701 Chartres Street in the French Quarter. With an annual operating budget of \$600,000 annual budget, the organization is led by an executive staff and a 29-person Board of Directors (as of spring 2020).<sup>1</sup> Annual membership fees run from \$25 for students to \$125 for families to \$1000 for the premier “Cabildo” membership package, which includes (among other perks) “two tickets to a Ghostly Gallivant tour...two tickets to a Creole Christmas Home Tour, and two tickets to the annual adult history class...”<sup>2</sup> All membership levels include free admission to properties within the Louisiana State Museum network, a free walking tour of the French Quarter, discounts on events, and volunteer opportunities. Since 1956, the Friends of the Cabildo has maintained the same mission: to work with the Louisiana State Museum “to enhance and sustain this important and impressive public institution as a high quality and nationality recognized educational, historical, and cultural resource.”<sup>3</sup> In this respect, FOC revenue

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<sup>1</sup> RE: the budget, Jason Strada, Executive Director of Friends of the Cabildo, e-mail message to author, July 11, 2020; Regarding staff and Board of Directors, Friends of the Cabildo. “February March 2020 Newsletter.” [https://friendsofthecabildo.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/FOCNews\\_FebMar\\_2020.pdf](https://friendsofthecabildo.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/FOCNews_FebMar_2020.pdf) [accessed July 10, 2020].

<sup>2</sup> Friends of the Cabildo. “Become a Member.” <https://friendsofthecabildo.org/become-a-member/> [accessed July 12, 2020]

<sup>3</sup> Friends of the Cabildo. “Who We Are.” <https://friendsofthecabildo.org/who-we-are/> [accessed July 12, 2020]

goes to supporting museum acquisitions, artifact restoration, funding support for a Thursday lecture series, and exhibitions—the most recent being *Cislanderus*, a special exhibition about Canary Islander immigrants and their descendants, which the LSM’s Capitol Park Museum site in Baton Rouge hosted from October 2019 to March 2020. To provide such financial support, the FOC generates its revenue through membership fees; ticketed galas, talks, and tours available exclusively for members; and daily French Quarter tours for the public.<sup>1</sup> The latter, which the remainder of this chapter focuses on, generates nearly 1/6 of the organization’s revenue.<sup>2</sup>

A signature program of Friends of the Cabildo, the French Quarter walking tours run out of 523 St. Ann Street seven days a week, charging \$22 per person for a two-hour tour. When visitors sign up for a tour, they are promised an informative, fascinating, ground-level public history tour—a selling point the Friends of the Cabildo is not alone in touting. The *Times Picayune*’s weekly columnist on historic architecture, for example, has recognized the tour program, indeed noted a need for it: “[T]he city needs... a cadre of well-informed guides, not more tour guides like those who weave tales of ‘moonlight and manure,’ riddled with inaccuracies...”<sup>3</sup> Given that the Friends of the Cabildo seeks to distinguish itself by offering top of the line “historically based” tours, the organization puts a premium on the guides that it selects. To that end, the Cabildo Guide Course involves a demanding process of entry and enjoys a reputation as one of the most

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<sup>1</sup> Friends of the Cabildo. “February March 2020 Newsletter.” [https://friendsofthecabildo.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/FOCNews\\_FebMar\\_2020.pdf](https://friendsofthecabildo.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/FOCNews_FebMar_2020.pdf) [accessed July 10, 2020].

<sup>2</sup> Jason Strada, Executive Director of Friends of the Cabildo, e-mail message to author, July 11, 2020.

<sup>3</sup> R. Stephanie Bruno, “Friends of the Cabildo offers training for tour guides,” *The Times Picayune*, January 17, 2017, [https://www.nola.com/entertainment\\_life/home\\_garden/article\\_d5de7ae1-c6ca-5f23-bc69-cd73b0092924.html](https://www.nola.com/entertainment_life/home_garden/article_d5de7ae1-c6ca-5f23-bc69-cd73b0092924.html) [accessed July 11, 2020].

rigorous in town.<sup>1</sup> My own experience—from start to finish—gives an inside view into how the guide program recruits, screens, tests, and then trains its volunteer guides.

Applications for the 2018 FOC tour guide class opened on November 29, 2017, with a deadline of December 30. The online application assessed career experience, educational attainment, and teaching or public speaking experience. It inquired whether an applicant is retired (as most tend to be) and asked for proof of prior work (and commitment) in a volunteer capacity. No less than three separate times did I sign documents promising to fulfill the two tours per month volunteer commitment. There were clearly past instances of program graduates failing to fulfill the commitment. Participation in the course is clearly skewed towards individuals with education, career success, and the means or life situation to dedicate a full month to the course and volunteer regularly thereafter.

In January of 2018, after passing this first stage, I flew to New Orleans to be interviewed by staff of the Louisiana State Museum system as well as several highly experienced volunteers of the Friends of the Cabildo. The interview itself was congenial, taking place in the Armory Building of the Cabildo Building and lasting about an hour, but a current of rigor flowed through the room. Part of that owed to the fact that the Friends of the Cabildo volunteers on the interview panel were also full-time professional tour guides, some with over forty years of experience. Several of the tour guides on the interview committee began their careers as tour guides through the Friends of the Cabildo Walking Tour Guide Course decades ago. They viewed their place on the interview panel and role in leading the course as a way of paying forward for a program that in

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<sup>1</sup>R. Stephanie Bruno, "Friends of the Cabildo offers training for tour guides," *The Times Picayune*, January 17, 2017, [https://www.nola.com/entertainment\\_life/home\\_garden/article\\_d5de7ae1-c6ca-5f23-bc69-cd73b0092924.html](https://www.nola.com/entertainment_life/home_garden/article_d5de7ae1-c6ca-5f23-bc69-cd73b0092924.html) [accessed July 11, 2020].

several cases literally provided them with a career and livelihood. As someone who applied for the program with the expectation that the course would be an enjoyable learning experience and volunteering as a walking tour guide would be an interesting hobby, it was hard not to be slightly intimidated by how passionate these individuals were for the program.

Acceptance into each year's class of Friends of the Cabildo Tour Guides is a competitive process, and the interview stage tests guides' various skills. The panel sought to assess my curiosity in history, my experience in public speaking, and my commitment to completing a rigorous course and volunteering for the Friend of the Cabildo for two years. Upon being offered a spot in the 2018 class, I paid \$250 in tuition and signed up to lead at least two tours per month for the next two years. In addition to the tuition, I needed to purchase books. The course had only two required texts:

*Beautiful Crescent* by Joan Garvey and Mary Lou Widmer, and *A Young Person's Guide to New Orleans Houses* by Lloyd Vogt. However, the course included a couple of dozen recommended texts, all of which I purchased from the Friends of the Cabildo bookstore.

To begin the course, students are required to participate in four tag-along tours. During the month of February 2018, I traveled from Oklahoma to New Orleans on several occasions to participate in the requisite number of tours during which I had an opportunity to learn more about the tour guide corps. I gained a general sense of the profile of Friends of the Cabildo tour guides, an impression that I was later able to confirm when seeking out demographic and institutional data in the research for this thesis. According to Friends of the Cabildo's own data, the organization typically has a roster of 100 guides, of whom 60 percent are women, 40 percent are men, 10 percent are

persons of color, and 90 percent are White.<sup>1</sup> I also noted what seemed to be a disproportionate number of retirees, although that is purely my own observation; I do not, in short, have statistics.

These demographics are significant, and they have come to mean more to me as I prepared this thesis; at the time, however, I was paying less attention to demographic profile and focusing more on “practical” dimensions: facts, routes, and delivery strategies. And overall, I found the FOC tours to be of higher quality than the walking tours I had taken through the years with for-profit tour guide companies. Each of the tours was led by a guide who was enthusiastic about sharing knowledge. Each guide had passion for the City of New Orleans. Part of that difference, I soon came to realize, clearly owed to the fairly comprehensive nature of the FOC’s legendary training course.

The Friends of the Cabildo Walking Tour Guide Course is a 100-hour course; I took mine throughout March 2018 alongside 24 other trainees. The course covers New Orleans history, public speaking, and the mechanics of leading a walking tour. Its sole purpose is to train volunteer tour guides to staff the organization’s walking tours. Class was held each Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. in the Arsenal Building of the Cabildo. History lectures, lasting 90 minutes each, covered the following topics: the Mississippi River, American Indians, French Colonial Period, Ursuline Convent, Spanish Colonial Period, the Louisiana Purchase, Becoming American, Slavery and Free People of Color, St. Louis Cathedral, the Battle of New Orleans, the Irish in New Orleans, Jews in New Orleans, French Quarter Architecture, Disease in New Orleans, Baroness Pontalba, Civil War, Beauregard Keyes House, New Orleans Literary Contributions, Voodoo and Storyville, Jazz, World War II, LGBTQs in

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<sup>1</sup> Jason Strada, Executive Director of Friends of the Cabildo, e-mail message to author, July 11, 2020.

New Orleans, and the Port of New Orleans. A few of the more distinguished lecturers included Dr. Laura Kelley of Tulane University, Professor Frank Perez of Loyola University, Professor Ron Chapman of Nunez Community College, and Ashley Rogers of the Whitney Plantation.

The time commitment beyond the classroom exceeded the 100-hours of the course. Creating my public history tour essentially required a dedicated month of nothing but eating, sleeping, and developing the tour. The work outside the classroom included a significant amount of assigned readings, study in preparation of the written licensure exams assessing knowledge of New Orleans history, additional research on areas of focus for my tour, substantial time writing and revising my script, and memorization and practice of the tour script narrative. Additionally, I spent over 50 hours walking and re-walking every block and cross street within the French Quarter, making notes of the architectural styles of the structures, and brainstorming routes that would allow the spatial environment to align with my desired tour narrative.

Each student was assigned an advisor who provided feedback on the tour's development and several separate practice tours. These advisors are some of the most experienced tour guides in the City of New Orleans, and my advisor, Mac Corbin, provided several excellent tips. My advisor also consistently advised me that my objectives for my tour were impossible, my content was too heavy, and that I should more closely follow the tour blueprints provided in the course. I held firm, mostly.

On our final day of class, prior to taking the city's tour guide licensure exam, we each presented our tours to a fresh examiner. I was assigned, no doubt intentionally, to one of the relatively few Friends of the Cabildo Tour Guides who happened to be African

American. The organizers of the course had assigned me a final examiner who, like myself, strived to present a substantive tour and did not avoid uncomfortable aspects of race. She provided glowing reviews of a tour that was unlike any she had seen. She was impressed with my ability to concisely cover such a broad swath of New Orleans history, to do it chronologically, and confront many shameful chapters of New Orleans history. Upon passage of the licensure exam, application, and background checks for my City of New Orleans Tour Guide license, I was able to lead my first tour in early April 2018. My first tour with guests included a final exam: an experienced guide tagged along and signed off on the tour's quality. On my first tour, I was nervous but excited. My tour was a departure from the "typical" historic tour circulating in the French Quarter, indeed quite different from the "typical" Friends of the Cabildo walking tour.

### ***French Quarter Narratives – Reading Other Tour Scripts***

In this next section, I will present and "read" a set of other narratives—other tours—of New Orleans, an exercise that identifies counterparts useful for demarcating my own narrative. Taking up where the last section left off, I will begin with a deeper investigation of other Cabildo tours, all which share certain traits because of institutional dictates. Friends of the Cabildo tours all begin at the 1850 House. They are all confined to the French Quarter boundaries. And, as evidenced by how FOC trains its tour guides, the tours all seek to give visitors a historically rigorous tour, achieving that last objective, however, depends heavily on the tour guide's choices. If the FOC model is to be lauded for the curatorial independence it gives its guides, the model also has risks. That

impression dates from my earliest acquaintance with Friends of the Cabildo tours. As a tourist in 2010, one of my first tours of New Orleans was a Friends of the Cabildo walking tour. At the time, I was familiarizing myself with the city's history and was attracted to the apparent merits of a FOC tour. I recognized that the tour was associated with the Louisiana State Museum, I viewed the then \$20 fee as reasonable, and for a good cause, and I anticipated a relatively scholarly treatment of New Orleans history.

Alas, the tour I attended in 2010 did not have connections between the separate stops, and it did not attempt to communicate a coherent, connective narrative. It also made omissions that I found surprising. A detailed account of the route and the script will make these points more clearly. The tour began in Jackson Square, the national landmark at the core of the French Quarter and a space of power contested over the years. It was here in 1811, then the Place d'Armes, where officials hung three enslaved Blacks as punishment for the country's largest slave revolt. That story, however, did not come up. Our tour guide began the narrative under the equestrian statue of Andrew Jackson, for whom the square is now named, who had led US forces against the British in the 1815 Battle of New Orleans. From there, the tour moved across Decatur Street to Washington Artillery Park where the group could clearly see the Mississippi River and hear a story about the river's critical importance to the city, as well as history on the river: barge traffic, the invention of steamboats, and the arrival of the Mardi Gras King Rex on Lundi Gras evening. I recall feeling a flash of irritation as, standing in the park, I realized that this tour would be a disjointed tour—chronology at the whim of geography.

We then proceeded downriver to Café Du Monde, where we saw the making of beignets and learned about the history of the French Market. As an individual history in

its own right, the Market was fascinating. The tour guide arched back to the days before European colonization, when Native Americans had established a trading post here, then moved us into the modern period, when seafood vendors had sold the daily catch and the Works Progress Administration had renovated and preserved the site in the 1930s. The history was riveting and far-reaching—but I still felt disoriented; we seemed to be whipsawing in time, from Jackson in 1815 to King Rex in 2010 to the WPA in 1930.

After a subsequent stop at Madame John's Legacy, we proceeded upriver along Chartres Street to the Beauregard-Keyes House. Again, the reality of the preserved built environment created chronological discontinuity. Here we were transported back to the Civil War, as we learned about the home's garden and the home's most famous resident, General Pierre Gustave Toutant Beauregard, the first prominent general of the Confederacy and a proponent of the surrender at Appomattox in April 1865. From that stop, we crossed Chartres Street to look upon the Ursuline Convent, the oldest extant structure in the French Quarter, and discussed the history of the Ursuline nuns. A short walk later, we were back at Jackson Square, where the guide provided short historical biographies of St. Louis Cathedral, the Cabildo, and Presbytère, all which feature Spanish colonial architecture and date from either the eighteenth or nineteenth century.

We ended the tour at the 1850 House with the story of Baroness de Pontalba, a Creole aristocrat who had designed the building in the 1840s. Hers was a fascinating life to finish with, but the ending also reinforced for me the disjointed chronology of the tour. I was also aware of its gaps. At no point in the tour had the guide discussed People of Color, slavery, segregation, class exploitation, immigration, or LGBTQ people. In my

optimism, I still presumed that other Cabildo tours might do more. As I would come to learn, the tour was more representative of Friends of the Cabildo Tour than I had hoped.

Fast forward to February 2018, eight years later, and after a few more FOC tours. I was now aware that Cabildo tours had their fair share of letdowns, yet the organization still offered one of the best training models and aspirational ethos among operators in the city. I was now fully immersed in the training process and tagging along on the four tours required. So let me note a salient observation: in the four, two-hour walking tours that I took with trained Friends of the Cabildo tour guides, I never heard a single mention of enslaved people or indigenous people in New Orleans. That is not for lack of material. Despite few extant buildings relevant to this sordid history—in part due to preservationists' own historical visions—there are abundant ways to point out the city's leading role in slavery, the domestic trade in slaves, and Jim Crow oppression.

As I would come to discover, omission of this New Orleans history was not for lack of education and encouragement from FOC course instructors. Through conversations with fellow Friends of the Cabildo tour guides through the years, I came to conclude that these omissions were based on a level of discomfort from the tour guide not having the confidence to address these brutal aspects of history. In some cases, the guides initially included histories of violent enslavement, domestic trade in humans, and entrenched discrimination in their tours, but through the months and years of presenting the information gradually dropped those portions based on the response from their tour guests. Some of the guides told stories of confrontational guests that wanted to argue about the cause of the Civil War. For reasons to be discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, in my own experience, I have yet to have a single similar experience. But reticence about

taking on a history of oppression remains strong in New Orleans. In this respect, and as I will demonstrate in the next set of “readings,” FOC guides are not alone in their omission.

A block away from Jackson Square and the Cabildo, the seat of the Historic New Orleans Collection sits in a sprawling salmon pink home dating from 1794, festooned in the flags that have hung over New Orleans. Entry through this building, known as the Merieult House, leads visitors into a warren of buildings and courtyards that comprise the Historic New Orleans Collections’ main site—the Louisiana History Galleries, the historic Williams Residence, and bougainvillea-filled courtyards. Across the street, at 520 Royal Street, a special exhibitions and events space sits alongside the museum shop and Café Cour. Like FOC, the Historic New Orleans Collection (HNOC) dates from the postwar period, founded in 1966 by Lewis Kemper and Leila Williams, a wealthy couple and prominent residents of the French Quarter and advocates for its preservation. And also like the Friends of the Cabildo, the HNOC sees its mission as public based and “dedicated to preserving the history and culture of New Orleans and the Gulf South.”<sup>1</sup>

There are other respects in which HNOC--as a heritage institution, experience, and tourist site—overlaps with the Cabildo. Like the Cabildo Building itself, which includes galleries overseen by the Louisiana State Museum, the HNOC’s mission implies a comprehensive approach to preserving and presenting New Orleans history to the public. And yet, the institutional inheritance of this heritage purveyor hangs heavy. Kemper Williams had made his fortune in the business of extraction, first in cypress logging and then in land and mineral royalties. His wife, Leila, a New Orleans native,

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<sup>1</sup>The Historic New Orleans Collection. “About.” <https://www.hnoc.org/about> [accessed July 13, 2020].

became a leader of New Orleans high society. Together they had purchased two properties in the French Quarter in 1938, filling them with a collection of Louisiana artifacts (what became the Historic New Orleans Collection). Their home, today called the Williams Residence, anchors the HNOC as an institution and is open six days a week for 1-hour-long guided tours throughout the day, at \$5 per person. In its online marketing, the HNOC website advertises the house as the quintessence of the city elite, “tucked away at the end of a classic French Quarter courtyard...filled with antiques and other objects d’art” collected by the couple.<sup>1</sup> It also notes how the house is distinctive: “Established as a museum in 1973, the Williams Residence is the only French Quarter House open to the public with original furnishings.”<sup>2</sup> If not exactly giving visitors a period house from colonial times, the Williams Residence still sates a desire—offering as it does an elegant French Quarter vernacular, as if frozen in time, that tourists expect.

But here it makes sense to point out the extent to which the HNOC (and the Cabildo) trade on this vision of a “frozen” French Quarter without problematizing the process that made places like the Williams House possible. Historians Anthony Stanonis and J. Mark Souther have both pointed to an unavoidable truth that, as Stanonis puts it finely, “The Big Easy was made.”<sup>3</sup> While Souther takes on the “making” of New Orleans heritage tourism in the post-World War II era, Stanonis’ book covers the consequential period when French Quarter preservationists gained hold of city planners’ imagination, leading to a process of razing, restoring, and repopulating the quarter with money. In *Creating the Big Easy: New Orleans and the Emergence of Modern Tourism, 1918-1945*,

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<sup>1</sup> The Historic New Orleans Collection. “Tours.” <https://www.hnoc.org/visit/tours> [accessed July 13, 2020].

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Anthony J. Stanonis. *Creating the Big Easy: New Orleans and the Emergence of Modern Tourism, 1918-1945*, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2006), 244.

Stanonis takes as his subject the very period during which the Williams were, ostensibly, shopping and furnishing their French Quarter home(s). Stanonis charts how port industries dried up over the first half of the twentieth century, leading a collection of New Orleans political leaders, businessmen, and philanthropic-minded groups to consider new futures for the city, including preservation and heritage tourism. "White civic leaders structured the cityscape," contends Stanonis, "to reflect their vision of the past and to reinforce their values in the present."<sup>1</sup> The preservation of the French Quarter took shape in the 1920s; wealthy couples like the Williams invested here in the 1930s.<sup>2</sup>

A tour of the Williams Residence, however, pays little heed to this more expansive urban story of money and preservation, and the racial redlining and class gentrifying that came as the old city turned into preserved treasure—the French Quarter. Visitors to the Williams House are promised “a two-story Italianate brick townhouse originally built in 1889...” with a “meticulously decorated interior” combining mid-20<sup>th</sup> century furnishings with the “antiques and art reflecting the couple’s Louisiana roots and their worldwide travels.”<sup>3</sup> Tour guides take visitors through the tidy kitchen, two parlors filled with richly upholstered settees and armchairs, a formal dining room, and a study accented with cypress wood paneling. There is scant mention here of why cypress wood was chosen—even though it offers opportunity for a discussion of the wider (and local) implications of Kemper Williams’ lifetime work in natural resource extraction. The

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<sup>1</sup> Anthony J. Stanonis. *Creating the Big Easy: New Orleans and the Emergence of Modern Tourism, 1918-1945*, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2006), 213.

<sup>2</sup> Anthony J. Stanonis. *Creating the Big Easy: New Orleans and the Emergence of Modern Tourism, 1918-1945*, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2006), see Ch. 2 (French Town: The Reconstruction of the Vieux Carré). Also see J. Mark Souther, “The Disneyfication of New Orleans: The French Quarter as Façade in a Divided City,” *The Journal of American History* 94 (Dec. 2007): 804-811.

<sup>3</sup> The Historic New Orleans Collection. “Williams Residence.” <https://www.hnoc.org/visit/williams-residence> [accessed July 13, 2020].

couple's formal tastes and preservationist mindset are leitmotifs of the tour. In the formal dining room, visitors learn that Leila Williams wore a long dress at dinner, no matter the occasion, and set her table with antique Italian linens and Baccarat stemware. The HNOC is keen to point out that the "Williamses acquired the property in 1938 in an effort to revitalize a neighborhood in decline..." For the HNOC, the Williams Legacy is described as "a legacy of the owners' commitment to French Quarter preservation."<sup>1</sup> The messier aspects of the preservation movement are not mentioned, including the fact that Kemper Williams led the New Orleans Housing Authority from 1936, which put him in charge of the city's first foray into "slum clearance" and low-income housing development.<sup>2</sup> Other omissions included any significant acknowledgement of the history of racialized privilege which enriched people like the Williams, a fact I will return to in Chapter 3.

In short, while the Historic New Orleans Collection departs in some key respects from the public history delivery that visitors find in Friends of the Cabildo tours, there are notable overlaps in mission, method, content, and tone. There is also a similar tendency to "forget" aspects of the past that tell inconvenient truths about New Orleans, first in terms of how white elites used money and power to create deep racial and social inequities in the city, and then how those same elites used the past—through the politics of preservation—to set *their* memory of history in stone.

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<sup>1</sup> The Historic New Orleans Collection. "Williams Residence." <https://www.hnoc.org/visit/williams-residence> [accessed July 13, 2020].

<sup>2</sup> See Anthony J. Stanonis. *Creating the Big Easy: New Orleans and the Emergence of Modern Tourism, 1918-1945*, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2006), and The Historic New Orleans Collection. "Williams Residence." <https://www.hnoc.org/visit/williams-residence> [accessed July 13, 2020].

### *500 Years of History—My Friends of the Cabildo Tour of New Orleans*

The tours analyzed above did not provide a comprehensive overview of the history of New Orleans; indeed, they tended not to make that promise. But as I read further into New Orleans history, I became increasingly convinced that I would not be satisfied if I did not try. At this point, allow me a brief interlude to give some sense of what scholarship was influencing me as I resolved to try and interpret 500 years.

The Friends of the Cabildo course provided two standard texts, including the 1982 book, *Beautiful Crescent*. Regarded as “the tour guide’s handbook” among Cabildo guides, much of the City’s official tour guide examination is based on its material. As a book, it is recognized for its clarity. The former President of the city’s main tour guides association described it as, “uncluttered, informative, yet entertaining history.”<sup>1</sup> Given its canonical status among guides and clear relevance to the city exam, it certainly contributed to the development of this public history project. But I was equally aware that more rigorous scholarship over the last forty years had called into question some of the book’s conclusions, as well as its scope. I expanded my preparatory list well beyond the course’s two required readings, and as my list grew, so, too, did my plan for the tour.

I familiarized myself with the work of Margaret Humphreys and Ari Kelman, who have argued for spatial understandings of New Orleans, contending that its environmental qualities—a river city, a depot near cotton and sugar, an estuary of plague and floods—has entangled with race, politics, industry, and culture to create a city that can best be interpreted by casting a wide net. And while broad New Orleans histories certainly contributed to the tour development, more focused studies also provided

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<sup>1</sup> Ari Kelman, *A River and its City*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2006).; Margaret Humphrey, *Yellow Fever and the South* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999).

valuable content for parts of the tour. Arnold Hirsch and Joseph Logsdon's *Creole New Orleans: Race and Americanization* provided a scholarly argument for New Orleans exceptionalism on the measure of race. The collected essays provide an extensive analysis of race throughout the history of New Orleans, conceding the similarities in racial exploitation and discrimination that New Orleans shares with other southern cities, while highlighting the many ways that race was unique in New Orleans compared to other American cities. Michael Crutcher, Jr.'s *Tremé: Race and Place in a New Orleans Neighborhood* provided depth in the form of a history of a neighborhood that ultimately gained more attention in my tour than any neighborhood other than the French Quarter itself. And Emily Epstein Landaou's *Sex, Race, and Memory in Storyville, New Orleans* provided scholarly support as I prepared my tour's segment on sex work in New Orleans.

Finally, for reasons that will become evident as I turn to how my tour ultimately cohered, I came to rely on scholarship about the historic geography and built environment of New Orleans. Broad contributions to the development of this tour came from Dr. Richard Campanella's 2008 book, *Bienville's Dilemma: A Historical Geography of New Orleans*. Over the last fifteen years Campanella has been one of the most prolific local history writers, producing fascinating scholarly work, much of it accessible to non-specialists of historical geography, like myself. As an amateur in architecture, I also came to rely on Roulhac Toledano and Lloyd Vogt, whose books effectively connected the city's history with its built environment. In particular Vogt's *Historic Buildings of the French Quarter* provided valuable support in helping me to connect the tour script with the French Quarter's built environment.

As I read, the objectives of my tour came together: to pull off a coherent narrative of a 500-year-history of New Orleans, using historic events helpful for my sightseers to understand the contemporary city that they had chosen to visit. My personal objective was not to create a tour of the most *dramatic*, or even famous, historic events of the city's 500-year history. When evaluating which historic events should be included in my tour, I created a basic litmus test: does this historic event or facts contribute to my guests understanding of the contemporary New Orleans that they are experiencing today?

That litmus test eliminated numerous historic events from the tour, including events of great significance in the context of United States history or world history. Perhaps the most conspicuous example is my only passing mention of General Andrew Jackson at the Battle of New Orleans. As demonstrated earlier in this chapter in my reading of a Cabildo guide's tour, the vast majority of the FOC Tour Guides describe in some detail the Battle of New Orleans and its role in the United States' victory in the War of 1812 as well as its role in eventually propelling General Jackson into the Presidency. No doubt, this military engagement taking place a few miles downriver from the New Orleans French Quarter is one the city's most notable historic events in the context of American history—indeed, world history. Our Friends of the Cabildo Walking Tour Guide course included an entire two-hour lecture discussing nothing but the Battle of New Orleans. One of our recommended texts for the course was a 250-page book covering nothing but the Battle of New Orleans. However, when I applied my litmus test to this particular chapter of New Orleans history, I could not answer to my satisfaction how the details surrounding that particular military engagement, as significant as it may

be in the context of American or world history, would substantively improve a visitor's understanding of what they are experiencing in contemporary New Orleans.

I certainly, however, retained events that were significant for both New Orleans today *and* national, or world, history. Indeed, I find historical events in my tour that simultaneously accomplish both of those objectives to generally be the most powerful. Perhaps the best example of this can be found in my tour stop at Dauphine Street and Orleans Streets, where I present New Orleans' role as a crucible of racial oppression, the civil rights movement, and ongoing economic inequality. Beginning with the story of Plessy vs. Ferguson, I can cover the long history of civil rights activism, as well as the obstacles to it, that have shaped both New Orleans and the United States. Here, the nationally-known last name of Homer Plessy takes on greater meaning for my tour guests once they understand that this man--whose 1896 court case codified the "separate but equal" legal doctrine of the Jim Crow era--lived in a little segregated neighborhood just over a block from where they stand. My guests learn that his arrest took place in the adjoining Marigny neighborhood. These stories that relate to New Orleans today--and altered American and world history--prove to be particularly powerful among guests.

The decision-making process for this tour involved not only what topics to include, but how deeply to engage them. There are several instances in the tour in which historic events are presented that passed my litmus test in terms of contemporary local relevance, but that I ultimately had to condense, or even excise, for reasons of space. During my tour stop focused on the Free People of Color, for example, the tour describes the remarkably large number of refugees coming to New Orleans as a result of the Haitian revolution. Given the significant cultural bonds that New Orleans and Haiti

shared, in my earliest tour scripts I included a concise, but substantive description of the revolution in Saint-Domingue. Yet, through the process of tightening my script to fit my time constraints, I could no longer justify its inclusion, even though it presented an interesting comparison of a fellow French colony with significant cultural and economic ties to New Orleans. In the end, I did not even include the historic term “Saint-Domingue” in that it would require additional time to define and explain for my guests.

Another such example, when New Orleans and world history intersected but did not make the final script, is that of Higgins Industries. The local builder gained renown when the “Higgins Boat” transported GIs to the Normandy beaches in 1944, playing a key role for the Allies in World War II. In my tour script I certainly refer to Higgins Industries, the staggering statistics of its military production, and its legacy being the main reason New Orleans is home to the National World War II Museum. I had material to develop an impressive World War II tangent and more fully describe how New Orleanians at the Higgins Industries plants contributed to Allied victory. However, as you will read in my script, I chose to forego a lengthy description of New Orleans’ impact on World War II and rather tell the story of Bourbon Street and burlesque in this period. I am fully cognizant that if one’s objective is to develop a tour including the most significant aspects of United States or world history, then the calculation here might be different. And yet, when considering my objective and litmus test for which historic events to include, the history of Bourbon Street and burlesque are critical to understanding the evolution of debauchery in the city, as well as better understanding ongoing tensions over power within New Orleans.

For all my principle—to tell a story that would help visitors better understand contemporary New Orleans—it must be said that I developed the narrative before truly considering how to tell it physically. In short, I now needed to figure out how to map a chronological story about New Orleans, where contemporary and local relevance was paramount, onto the prescribed physical space—the French Quarter. My task was further complicated by my desire to largely present a chronological series of historic events that could somehow be connected to places and the built environment, so that my guests would sequentially walk through the French Quarter. During my evenings after class, I would grab my Basset Hound and we would walk every single block, and every single cross street of the French Quarter forwards and backwards. I toyed with configurations of routes that had never been executed in a Friends of the Cabildo Walking Tour. I timed our walks and timed our routes, trying to get a sense of the limits of a 2-hour walking tour. Perhaps most importantly I walked the French Quarter looking for inspiration on how to connect my narrative outline to the built environment.

### ***The Built Environment as a Through-line***

My most critical idea that allowed me to develop a chronological walking tour was to tell the story of New Orleans history largely by examining the evolution of architectural styles. Since architecture reflects the values and economy of the time, I determined I could tell much of the story of New Orleans by connecting each chapter of New Orleans history to the built environment and a quality example of the architecture of the time of the historic events being discussed. The New Orleans French Quarter is

unusual in that within a half-mile radius, a visitor can see virtually every major architectural style that was built in the city from the 1718 French Colonial period to the waning years of Craftsman architecture in the 1930s.

At the same time, much of the old city had also disappeared (or “been disappeared,” as some scholars have argued).<sup>1</sup> Prior to the 1920s there were no restrictions on the demolition of historic structures; the built environment had changed, largely unimpeded, for reasons owing to nature, politics, industry, class, and race. Through this 200-year period there were two major fires in the French Quarter, major changes in municipal building codes, cycles of economic decline and reinvestment, evolutions in the highest and best value for properties on certain streets and portions of the French Quarter. There were properties owned by the same family for hundreds of years that were maintained and able to exceed what would be the typical useful life for a property. Other properties were subdivided into tenement housing, lacked proper maintenance, and owners determined to squeeze the last bit of economic life out of them with low rents and poor living conditions for tenants before finally demolishing the structure to build a new structure with the architectural style of the time. This haphazard mix of historic architectural styles within such a dense setting provide ample, but not unlimited, options to connect the tour narrative to the built environment.

Even with the changes of the twentieth century, and after preservationists had formed the Vieux Carré Commission to save the French Quarter, I knew that not all buildings had survived. The preservation of French Quarter’s buildings had its own past. Preservationist and politicians had made decisions in the interwar period and postwar era,

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<sup>1</sup> Anthony J. Stanonis. *Creating the Big Easy: New Orleans and the Emergence of Modern Tourism, 1918-1945*, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2006).

razing housing stock and businesses not deemed “positive” reflections of the city’s past.<sup>1</sup> If the extant buildings reflected a story of their time, I also realized that what remained in 2018 also reflected, to a certain extent, a story of what people in places of power had preserved over time. That meant that I also needed to look for erasures, as well as creative ways to conjure up visions of buildings that had long since come down.

In addition to finding buildings (or coming up with creative strategies for those that had disappeared) I also resolved to use a consistent delivery of information, structuring each stop a similar way. I created a script that, written down, looks something like a linked set of museum labels. Upon arriving at each stop on the tour, I try to begin by giving a clear name, date, and short description for the historic structure we are examining, quickly anchoring my guests chronologically while advancing the narrative. I then move into a deeper discussion of the structure and its architectural elements, which frequently involves discussion of the societal and economic changes taking place at the time. Once that context is set, I then typically describe what I consider to be some of the most relevant historic events of the time period that will contribute to my guests understanding of the contemporary New Orleans that they are encountering.

This strategy of chronological narrative to extant architecture, it should be noted, is not employed in the first tour stops, partly because of institutional constraints and partly because of geographic realities. All Friends of the Cabildo Tours begin at the 1850 House, in the Upper Pontalba Building on Jackson Square. Since the Pontalba Building dates from the 1840s and I wanted to begin my chronological tour well before that era, I chose to utilize the quiet, sheltered courtyard of the 1850 House to present my

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<sup>1</sup>J. Mark Souther, “The Disneyfication of New Orleans: The French Quarter as Façade in a Divided City,” *Journal of American History* 94 (December 2007), 806.

introduction. I have found the courtyard is an historic, quiet, serene space that is perfect for setting our intention before heading out into the bustling French Quarter.

The narrative for the second stop of the tour, like the first, does not quite connect with the built environment where we stand. I chose a relatively quiet spot on Chartres Street, a half-block from the 1850 house. Here, I provide the European colonial context for the existence of New Orleans. We are just outside the noise and bustle of Jackson Square. The spot had the added benefit of being partially protected by a second story gallery. (Protection from rain and sun was a consistent consideration in choosing the ideal spot for a tour stop. Morning and afternoon tours receive sun differently, and weather conditions dictate whether my guests will generally prefer standing in the direct sun on a brisk December afternoon or plead for the shade on sweltering August morning.)

At the third stop of the tour, however, I begin to work in the visual built environment around us. At the corner of Chartres Street and Madison Street, I gather my guests so they can look over my shoulder and see the French Market and see what I consider one of the most historically evocative blocks in that bustling part of the French Quarter. Throughout my tour I frequently employ the tool of directing my guests to look down the street for a block or two to connect them to the place that we will be describing. In this instance I direct my guests to look toward the French Market, which is the precise location of the indigenous markets that predated European settlement. I also ask them to envision the Mississippi River that lies just on the other side of the French Market, out of view. While the river is not far, the commitment of time to safely cross the busiest street in the French Quarter, and pass through the busy French Market just to see the river while I talk about the significance of the Mississippi River was not an investment of time that I

could justify. I have generally found that most of my guests have either already viewed the Mississippi River from the banks of the French Quarter or plan to. In my route development I chose to prioritize taking my guests to portions of the French Quarter that they are less likely to visit without the assistance of a guide.

Despite my visual strategies, I also realize that my tour guests have some expectation of being proximate to the built environment—to sites that that they can *touch*. Hence, we arrive at the fourth stop. From here, outside the French Colonial home of Madame John's Legacy, I can point out numerous buildings from colonial periods. Just yards away on Dumaine Street stands a modest, but excellent example of Spanish Colonial architecture that serves as a perfect means for which to talk about the Spanish Colonial period. Another half block back on Dumaine sits a Creole Cottage that happens to lack siding or stucco, allowing a visitor to see the peculiar construction techniques in this early New Orleans home. The Creole Cottages began to be constructed in the later portion of the Spanish Colonial period as Free People of Color from Saint-Domingue, the topic of that stop on the tour, brought the architecture to New Orleans.

Mapping my tour's narrative into the 1800s, aspects of which I will detail in the next chapter, offered fewer physical obstacles; there are ample buildings that remain standing. The twentieth century was a different story, and the remainder of my tour stops ultimately followed a more thematic, although still loosely chronological, through line. For example, I used a home at 521 Dauphine Street to explain the evolution of sex work beyond Storyville—New Orleans' traditional vice district—and to segue into the Tango Belt of the 1920s, when jazz clubs and drinking dens proliferated in the city. Two stops later (after a discordant stop at an 1830s Federalist Georgian home that I have found

tourists simply cannot pass without explanation), we have advanced up St. Louis and another 40 years beyond my 1910s-1920s Tango Belt tour stop. At this stop along Bourbon Street, I direct my guest toward several historic structures that were home to a couple of Bourbon Street's most famous burlesque clubs in the 1940s and 1950s.

For much of the remainder of the tour, I continue discussing what occurred within the historic structures, but I do not go into detail about the architecture of the structures themselves. Since the chronology of my narrative has advanced into the twentieth century, and the French Quarter does not contain architectural styles more modern than the Craftsman era of 1900-1930, my next stops use creative solutions to link the passing environment to a selection of subjects covering modern New Orleans history: music, cocktail culture, Dixie Bohemia, and the historic preservation movement.

My final stop returns my guests to Jackson Square, and describes the historic architecture of the square while bringing the narrative up to the time of contemporary New Orleans. I connect Jackson Square to contemporary times by describing the speech of President George W. Bush following Hurricane Katrina, and use the rebuilding following Katrina as the transition to present-day. By then, we have covered 500 years of history, and I take a moment to reflect on that fact, acknowledging how much history has run through this city, and how the city might look towards the future. Many of my guests come up to me at the end, offering some thoughts, commentary, even questions. Some are amazed how much history we have just walked and want to know how I managed it.

Here is what I say, or at least imply: that developing a tour such as this one is a process of tackling a series of public history problems. The experienced organizers of the Friends of the Cabildo have essentially developed a tour template that allows their

students to avoid most of the public history problems encountered in this more ambitious tour. However, as this chapter demonstrated, it is possible. A set of narrative objectives, a commitment to interpretative clarity, and a creative approach to mapping out the story can overcome those public history problems. Furthermore, as I will cover in the next chapter, my tour addresses the history of slavery, racism, ongoing inequities, and Civil War memory, which so many public history sites and heritage tours in the French Quarter have traditionally avoided. Aware of broader critiques of these erasures about racial hegemony within my sector, I instead wish to be part of a broader movement seeking to change those public history habits, not despite of but because of my own positionality.

## CHAPTER III

### “SOUTHERN HERITAGE,” SLAVERY AND BLACK EXPERIENCE: DILEMMAS AND STRATEGIES FOR U.S. PUBLIC HISTORY

As the preceding chapter pointed out, places like the Historic New Orleans Collection have traditionally conveyed a specific history of New Orleans—that of Kemper and Leila Lewis and the social circles to which they belonged. More to the point, as Erin Greenwald recently noted in *The Journal of African American History*, the HNOC has long been “considered by some to be a bastion of elitism and, not to put too fine a point on it, whiteness...” In the same article, she described recent attempts at the HNOC to reform its reputation and redress some glaring erasures in its own institutional history. Namely, as she noted, up to 2015 and thus “in its fifty-year history in a majority black city, HNOC had never organized an exhibition on the history of slavery or the slave trade.”<sup>1</sup> As part of a process of historical recompense, the HNOC thus inaugurated a major exhibition in 2015 called *Purchased Lives: New Orleans and the Domestic Slave*

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<sup>1</sup> Erin M. Greenwald, “New Orleans Public History and the Domestic Slave Trade,” *The Journal of African American History* 103, no. 4 (Fall 2018: New Orleans at 300 Special Issue), 652-657.

*Trade, 1808-1865*). Squarely owning up to the city’s role as the country’s largest slave market in the nineteenth century, Greenwald noted how the exhibit attracted “local visitors, including many who had never before attended a HNOC exhibition or program, made up 33 percent of overall attendees.”<sup>1</sup> The HNOC next converted the exhibition to travel—to the Alexandria Museum of Art in central Louisiana, to the State History Museum in Austin, and to the National Civil Rights Museum in Memphis. “To date, more than 120,000 people have visited *Purchased Lives*,” wrote Greenwald in 2018. A large group of visitors seemed to want the truth.

Truth-telling about enslavement, domestic trafficking, the Civil War, Jim Crow laws, and ongoing racism in American society has proved a wrenching process in public history settings. As this chapter will show, white American discomfort can be high—often fragile, sometimes hostile—when acknowledging in public history settings how white supremacy has under-girded the nation’s politics, society, economy, and culture. And it is not just an issue that public historians in the traditional “Old South” have squirmed with; the North has struggled, too. In Philadelphia, where slaves served George Washington in the presidential home, and in Hartford, CT, where Black laborers came for jobs during the Great Migration, the public history sector has also twisted and turned.

That said, most of this chapter will examine how *Southern* heritage sites have struggled to obscure, as well as acknowledge, histories of Black suffering that lie beneath manicured plantation lawns, pedestalled military generals, and preserved porticos. To better contextualize my tour script, including how my inclusion of race fits within broader dialogues about public history and heritage tourism, I begin this chapter with a

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<sup>1</sup> Erin M. Greenwald, “New Orleans Public History and the Domestic Slave Trade,” *The Journal of African American History* 103, no. 4 (Fall 2018: New Orleans at 300 Special Issue), 656.

broad discussion of heritage tourism and public history, particularly in the South. Here I draw on recent analyses of the Southern heritage sector, which has struggled to interpret slavery, racism, and the Civil War. The chapter then examines a set of revisionist tours—in New Orleans but also Baltimore and Hartford—that point a way forward, or outward, for the heritage sector. Throughout the chapter but most thoroughly at its end, I reflect on how my Friends of the Cabildo tour dialogues with critiques of the presentation of race in public history and heritage tourism, as well as ideas for reform.

### ***US South as a (White) Heritage-Tourist Destination***

A romanticized view of the US South has characterized the way (white) Americans have tended to frame the region—think William Faulkner, Margaret Mitchell, Tennessee Williams, and Eudora Welty. Since the early twentieth century, White Southerners themselves, as well as elite “Yankees,” have expressly traveled to cities receptive to offering them myths about the “sweetness” of the South. Indeed those same cities—Charleston, Savannah, and New Orleans—played a key role in propagating a “golden haze” about the “Old South” that drew the tourists in.<sup>1</sup> Over the first half of the twentieth century—and not just in southern cities but also in the hinterlands, particularly at old plantation sites—savvy white Southern proprietors converted their holdings into “heritage destinations” for select travelers.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, as Hollywood produced films mythologizing the “Old South,” from *Gone with the Wind* (1939) to *Steel*

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<sup>1</sup> Stephanie Yule, *A Golden Haze of Memory: The Making of Historic Charleston, (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2005)*, 27, re: Charleston.

<sup>2</sup> Boone Plantation outside Charleston, for example, first opened to the public in 1959. [https://getd.libs.uga.edu/pdfs/donnell\\_renee\\_a\\_201405\\_mhp.pdf](https://getd.libs.uga.edu/pdfs/donnell_renee_a_201405_mhp.pdf) [accessed July 12, 2020].

*Magnolias* (1989), a larger audience consumed this “golden haze.” From the 1980s, mass tourism became a real objective and reality within the Southern heritage sector, leading to a rapidly evolving and expanding sightseeing-scape that continues to this day.

Historians have become increasingly interested in the phenomenon of Southern tourism, in part because the South has increasing interested tourists since the 1960s. How do we explain this uptick? Books like *American Tourism: Construction of a National Tradition*, which covers the entire country, gives us a comparative framework for understanding the South’s trajectory. On the one hand, the edited volume finds the recent history of capitalism to be a key engine in the South’s metamorphosis into tourism hub. Amidst macro-economic structural changes, the book broadly argues, the economic elite of Southern economic (once agricultural or industrial barons) found tourism to be a compelling postindustrial alternative. And they had little to lose themselves.

The cost-benefit analysis was obvious; or, as *American Tourism* puts it, the tourism economy functions as a double-edged sword in the localities where it is wielded. On the one hand, tourism boosters champion the economic benefit that tourism dollars can bring to distressed rural areas or urban neighborhoods; on the other hand, tourism industries by and large yield the most returns for elite investors.<sup>1</sup> So especially in Southern states, where economic inequality was already high, tourism industries have reinforced those disparities. New Orleans proves a model case. Jobs in the tourism and hospitality sectors tend to be low wage jobs on precarious terms. African Americans disproportionately work in the sector, disproportionately experience the lower wages, and disproportionately find themselves without a voice at the table. In short, tourism’s

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<sup>1</sup> Nicholas Dagen Bloom and J. Mark Souther, “Introduction,” *American Tourism: Constructing a National Tradition*, ed. Nicholas Dagen Bloom and J. Mark Souther, (Chicago: Center for American Places, 2012), xxvi.

alleged benefits are shared unequally. And yet, that calculus—a lucrative investment through low-cost overheads—explains, in part, the postindustrial rise of Southern tourism.

Beyond the economic factors that explain the uptick in Southern tourism, *American Tourism* also points to Americans' embrace of "ethnic tourism" in the US. In this respect, destinations in the South have not necessarily pursued such "attractions" in the same fashion, though there are certainly some parallels. Like in the case of the French Quarter, other cities' preservation movements have also impacted local minority populations, often by either removing them or by commodifying them. From the 1920s and 1930s, entrepreneurs and preservationists in various cities across the US became bedfellows, pushing together for specific legislation, complex public-private partnerships, and systems of urban regulation on virtually every level of government, including federal. Their work—ostensibly focused on saving bricks and stones—carried underlying motives of gentrifying the neighborhoods in question, sanitizing and whitewashing not just picket fences but also the inhabitants themselves. When ethnic minorities managed to remain, either as permanent residents or as an everyday presence, they were often commodified in the name of *cultural* preservation, perhaps best exemplified by French Quarter jazz clubs.

In this respect, New Orleans is not alone. In various city blocks across the United States, communities of color—descendants of slaves, children of immigrants, and first-generation immigrants themselves—saw curiosity in their neighborhoods and culture grow over the twentieth century. The interest had many roots: official tourism bureau strategies, "globalization" of American culture, and grassroots activism among ethnic

minorities to benefit from tourism in a postindustrial economy.<sup>1</sup> So it was that New York boasted Chinatown and Little Italy by mid-twentieth century for travelers willing to venture to downtown Manhattan. Harlem, too, saw tourist interest during the interwar years, at the height of the Harlem Renaissance, before a long period ensued of mainstream white tourist abandonment.<sup>2</sup> In his work on urban tourism in New York, Johannes Navy has tracked how the ethnic residents of Chinatown, Little Italy, and Harlem have navigated the processes of preservation and commodification, with levels of engagement and comfort depending (unsurprisingly and understandably) on the extent to which they feel represented in the planning and oversight.

On the other coast, similar dynamics have played out. In San Francisco's fabled Chinatown, according to Raymond Rast, residents have chafed at increased tourism of their community, but also sought it out. In ways that anticipate this thesis' discussion of New Orleans' Black community, Rast's study offers insight into the social, economic, and psychological dilemmas faced by ethnic minority groups and people of color as they grapple with the "tourist gaze."<sup>3</sup> And far from the Pacific West or American South, we find that the fetishization of America's diverse past is strong—and far-ranging. Steven Hoelscher's work on "America's Little Switzerland" in New Glarus, Wisconsin, provides a salutary reminder that touting and touring "European identities" remains a common practice within the American heritage sector. "Ethnic identity is never static," Hoelscher

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<sup>1</sup> Volkan Aytar and Jan Rath, eds. *Selling Ethnic Neighborhoods: The Rise of Neighborhoods as Places of Leisure and Consumption* (Hoboken: Taylor & Francis, 2011), 2-7.

<sup>2</sup> Johannes Navy, "Urban Ethnic Tourism in New York's Neighborhoods: Then and Now," in Aytar and Rath, eds. *Selling Ethnic Neighborhoods*, 21.

<sup>3</sup> Raymond W. Rast, "Chinatown's Tourist Terrain: Representation and Racialization in Nineteenth-Century San Francisco," *American Tourism: Constructing a National Tradition*, edited by J. Mark Souther and Nicholas Dagen Bloom, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012).

reminds us. And indeed, the perceived danger of ethnic fluidity is one reason, some scholars argue, why Americans have flocked to the US South since the 1960s.<sup>1</sup>

In part because of that curious statistical trend, historians have increasingly sought to analyze the reasons for this uptick of Southern tourism. Indeed, the South has been the region of the country most analyzed for its tourism industry in recent decades by historians, among them Richard Starnes' two-volume collection of essays, *Southern Journeys: Tourism, History, and Culture in the Modern South*. In the southern journeys of the book's title, Starnes' contributing authors find the wheels of social reproduction at work among the Southern travelers themselves. The essays, in short, analyze how social hierarchies, conflicts, and fragilities among Southerners not only affect how tourism has been produced in the modern South, but also significantly who and how Southerners of different social hierarchies consumed the content on display. Social inequities, it is shown, influenced how stories were told, but also who could partake, marginalizing the Black minority but also poor whites. While the experiences of low-income Black and white populations clearly parted ways, neither regularly had access to the tourism sites on offer in their communities. Or, as Starnes puts it, "Tourism required money and status that, for many southerners of both races, remained out of reach."<sup>2</sup>

The implications of this finding, which Stephanie Yuhl's work on Charleston supports leads to a perhaps surprising conclusion: wealthy white travelers from the North have often generated much of the South's self-referential tourism business.<sup>3</sup> According to

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<sup>1</sup> *American Tourism: Constructing a National Tradition*, edited by J. Mark Souther and Nicholas Dagen Bloom, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 196 .

<sup>2</sup> Richard D. Starnes, "Introduction," *Southern Journeys: Tourism, History, and Culture in the Modern South*, (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2003), 6.

<sup>3</sup> Stephanie Yule, *A Golden Haze of Memory: The Making of Historic Charleston*, (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2005).

Yulh, in *A Golden Haze of Memory: The Making of Historic Charleston*, the interwar period saw a boom in the “white cultural refashioning of Charleston,” when men and women descendants of the planter elite used preservationism to freeze the city in the antebellum era. Their vision was of a mythic agrarian life of noble masters, genteel ladies, and contented slaves—a time when “America” had been simpler. According to Yulh, this “moonlight and magnolias” vision of America’s past—before the ills of industrialization—sated a special demand among Northerners seeking respite from newly congested cities, polluted rivers, and high-stress jobs. Wealthy Yankees found new hotels and reinvented Southern traditions in Charleston. <sup>1</sup>And in them, Charleston found a way of refashioning its economy, forever changed in the wake of the end of slavery.

In this respect, New Orleans proves a similar case. Alecia Long and Mark Souther have both demonstrated how outsiders flocked to New Orleans French Quarter and its historic red-light district, Storyville, helping turn tourism into the economic engine of a city in need of new trade. Pulling no punches, they describe how the French Quarter and Storyville evolved into “physical safety valves” for “statistically typical white American seeking the exotic.” Indeed, New Orleans’ boosters strategically demarcated these spaces as “safer” than the surrounding neighborhoods or New Orleans as a whole. In the case of Storyville, the city sought to legitimize prostitution and provide a safer space for tourists to partake in what in most places was illicit and considered dangerous. The French Quarter became the safe space of outsiders, promoted

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<sup>1</sup> Stephanie Yule, *A Golden Haze of Memory: The Making of Historic Charleston*, (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 27.

as an ‘outdoor history museum,’ conceptualized by tourists as unique, and marked off from neighboring Black neighborhoods stigmatized as “crime-ridden.”<sup>1</sup>

As should be clear by now, white tourists came to the South, or traveled between Southern destinations, often in search of “white history.” They sought a sanitized depiction of a “golden age” of white supremacy, as in the case of Charleston, and they desired a sanitized space cleared of Black people and Black history. Books such as Karen Cox’s 2012 edited volume, *Destination Dixie: Tourism & Southern History*, bolster these readings of sanitized Southern tourism packaged to attract white tourists from afar. Like *Southern Journeys* and *A Golden Haze of Memory*, the essays in *Destination Dixie* problematize such consumption of the South, from the contested terrain of memory and history, to culture and commodification. The book offers multiple case studies of a US South where tourism, heritage sites, and the politics of memory struggle to present what public historians obliquely refer to as “difficult history.”<sup>2</sup> Sites like these, where historic spaces create numerous dilemmas about how to address white privilege, often involve famous Southerners—from Mark Twain’s boyhood home in Hannibal, Missouri, to the Margaret Mitchell House in Atlanta, to Elvis Presley’s birthplace in Tupelo, Mississippi.

Equally controversial, if not more so, has been the history of sites of the Civil War in the American South. Several essays in *Destination Dixie* take this subject on, examining how Civil War sites, particularly those paying homage to the Confederacy, have evolved into tourist sites and how this contentious history is interpreted at these

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<sup>1</sup> *Southern Journeys: Tourism, History, and Culture in the Modern South*, edited by Richard D. Starnes, (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2003), 19, 24, 125, and 137.

<sup>2</sup> *Slavery and Public History: The Tough Stuff of American Memory*, edited by James Oliver Horton and Lois E. Horton, (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

sites. These sites exist across the South: at Yorktown National Battlefield in Virginia, at a Confederate iron furnace in Alabama, and at Stone Mountain in Georgia. Critical commentary of these sites has pointed to the need for interpretation on the ground that situates how these places *became heritage sites* as much as they *are history sites*. In other words, as John Walker Davis and Jennifer Lynn Gross write in their essay about the Confederate Iron furnace, “monuments and historical sites and the money spent on them ultimately tell us a lot more about contemporary southern society and its beliefs than they do about southern history.”<sup>1</sup> Written a decade ago, this point is gradually becoming an accepted truism among public historians and even more common in the public dialogue. As Americans collectively begin to awaken to the origins of these Confederate memorials—first in light of the 2017 “Unite the Right” alt-right march in Charlottesville and then with the racial reckoning shaking the country in 2020—we see real awareness building of how to better contextualize these histories and heritage sites. The specters of “Confederates in the attic” and “the Lost Cause” are still with us, but Southern nostalgia about the Civil War may finally be fading. That is not to say that public debate or display of the Antebellum South, however, remains any easier.

### **Bringing Hidden Histories to Light—Strategies for Reform**

Beyond dilemmas about how to depict the history of racial privilege or the history of brutal racism of white Americans in the South, the dilemma of how to present Black people has loomed just as large. Indeed, in Southern spaces, where race is the dominant

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<sup>1</sup> John Walker Davis and Jennifer Lynn Gross, “Calhoun County, Alabama: Confederate Iron Furnaces and the Remaking of History,” *Destination Dixie: Tourism & Southern History*, ed. Karen L. Cox (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2014), 218-219.

source of conflict in southern memory, even seemingly apolitical figure like Jesse Owens can become divisive. For example, on a polemic that broke out during the planning of a Jesse Owens Memorial Park in Alabama, author Barclay Key notes: “The controversies that arose over his commemoration are representative of the contests over race and memory that often characterize tourism and southern history.” (Key 49)<sup>1</sup> The challenges of interpreting enslavement, the domestic slave trade, Jim Crow, and the Civil Rights Movement are vast, and the stakes are high. This final section of Chapter 3 examines some of those challenges and stakes before moving on to look at recent revisionist trends, as Black scholars, Black interpreters, and Black tourists have expanded our practice.

Let us begin by recognizing that these challenges are certainly not limited to New Orleans or even to the American South. The question of how (and even if) to represent Black people’s subjugated role as slaves has also rippled through the Smithsonian museums of Washington D.C. and the national landmarks of Boston, New York, and Philadelphia. Indeed, as Roger Aden shows in *Upon the Ruins of Liberty: Slavery, the President’s House at Independence National Historical Park, and Public Memory*, Philadelphia was the site of a 2002 public history dilemma about “showing slavery” – at the National Park Service’s Independence National Historical Park, no less.<sup>2</sup>

In 2002, according to Aden’s account, a scholarly publication had broken the story that George Washington had enslaved Blacks living in his Philadelphia home while he served as the nation’s first President. Perhaps even more crueling, he had apparently cycled the slaves back to his Virginia plantation at six-month intervals so as to avoid the

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<sup>1</sup> Barclay Key, “From ‘Lawrence County Negro’ to National Hero: The Commemoration of Jesse Owens in Alabama,” *Destination Dixie: Tourism & Southern History*, ed. Karen L. Cox (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2014), 49.

<sup>2</sup> Roger Aden, *Upon the Ruins of Liberty: Slavery, the President’s House at Independence National Historical Park, and Public Memory* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2017).

laws granting them freedom after six months residence in Pennsylvania.<sup>1</sup> The evidence showing one of the country's most beloved historic figures to be further complicit in the institution of slavery was certainly more than enough to cause an uproar in and of itself. As Aden describes in his book, the tension was heightened with plans to break ground on a new \$12.9 million center to house and interpret the Liberty Bell mere feet from Washington's sordid history. The obvious dissonance forced park administrators to recalibrate their interpretation plans, a process that ultimately brought the National Park Service into dialogue with the city's African American leaders. Final interpretation of the site included aspects of the President's treatment of enslaved Blacks, both at the presidential home that once stood at Independence Mall and at Mount Vernon Plantation.

The opportunity seized through this debate on the interpretation of enslaved people aside the Liberty Bell helps us begin to address critical questions about redressing erasures. Or, as Cathy Stanton asked in a 2016 article in *American Quarterly*: "How can we bring into visibility the erased or repressed histories and memories of enslavement and racialized oppression in the United States?" One answer, as she writes in "More than Just Inclusion: Race, Memory, and Twenty-First Century Cultural Industries," is an embrace of new techniques—what she calls rendering visibility through "visitability." In other words, how can public historians better utilize ever-expanding strategies to convey these often-hidden stories of violence and oppression to a broad public? In the case profiled by Aden at Independence National Historical Park, the NPS found an answer in cutting edge digital technology. But it need not be flashy or App-based to be effective.

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<sup>1</sup> Cathy Stanton, "More than just Inclusion: Race, Memory, and Twenty-First Century Cultural Industries," *American Quarterly*, Volume 68, Number 3, (September 2016), 816.

In the case of the public history project discussed in this thesis, I adopted a far more “analog” approach—but it carried impact, all the same. Put simply, I looked for opportunities to expose the brutal hidden stories in places that people knew but did not necessarily expect connected to the violent racial past. Based on my anecdotal observations, as chronicled in Chapters 1 and 2, I am an anomaly in doing so, at least as far as New Orleans Friends of the Cabildo tours go. But that also means that we are missing a golden opportunity; we have over 5,000 visitors per year pay for a FOC encounter with the city’s history, yet most of those visitors are rarely exposed to a fraction of the stories that could be told about gender and class oppression, and especially about the racism and racial violence that structured New Orleans history. It is a public history project that seeks to enhance the visibility of racialized history through a tour mechanism that the public is already engaging. In this respect, it complements—from the mainstream—the revisionist tours of New Orleans that are breaking new ground.

Some of these tours—including the “Hidden History Tours” led by Black civil rights activists, Leon Waters—are profiled in Lynnell Thomas’s deconstruction of the New Orleans tour industry, *Desire and Disaster in New Orleans: Tourism, Race, and Historical Memory*. Thomas takes the tour industry to task, arguing that the dominant historical narrative has been constructed specifically for white tourists and distorted the city’s history, minimizing the city’s sins towards its Black residents.<sup>1</sup> Presenting specific examples of New Orleans tours, she argues that the dominant narratives are incomplete, and that even most tours claiming to present an “alternative” narrative fall short.

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<sup>1</sup> Lynell L. Thomas, *Desire and Disaster in New Orleans: Tourism, Race, and Historical Memory*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014), 7.

One such example that receives extensive treatment in her book is the “Le Monde Creole / Insider’s French Quarter Courtyard Tour.”<sup>1</sup> The tour’s narrative prominently features a biracial son of an elite, White Creole father and enslaved Black mother. While the tour certainly gives a treatment of the difficulties of someone considered Colored in an Americanized New Orleans, it relies on the often-romanticized view of interracial relations in Colonial and Antebellum New Orleans. This tour, as is common among tours across the city, fails to confront the inherent power imbalance in such relationships. Thomas also repeatedly confronts the mythological narrative of the city’s nineteenth century cosmopolitan nature, which she argues is in place to obscure the city’s centrality to domestic slave trade in the Antebellum period.<sup>2</sup>

Fortunately, Thomas’ research also uncovered a new crop of Black-led tours that do more to problematize the city’s history. In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, Thomas finds, new opportunities for Black history tours have emerged. As a function of the hurricane’s impact, Thomas argues that the exhaustive media attention surrounding Katrina heightened the American public’s consciousness of a New Orleans. The city’s actual Blackness, as well as its socioeconomic inequities revealed by disaster, now overlapped with the romanticized notion of New Orleans that was more familiar. Katrina showed the nation that the majority of New Orleans looks very different than Jackson Square, the Superdome, or St. Charles Avenue. As tourists began to return to the city after the storm, Thomas finds, there was a larger market of individuals interested in learning more about racial inequity and the social justice projects at work since 2005.

Thomas is cautiously optimistic, if sometimes downright pessimistic, about the potential

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<sup>1</sup> Lynell L. Thomas, *Desire and Disaster in New Orleans: Tourism, Race, and Historical Memory*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014), see Ch. 3

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, 14.

commodification of Black social justice. At the same time, she is willing to wait and see. Black guides are now in demand, as are “Black histories”—and by Black tourists as well as white tourists. Running counter to the White-dominated tourist narrative, these new tours (“1811 Slave Revolt,” “African Life in the French Quarter,” and “Black History Bus Tour,” for example) have an activist bent.<sup>1</sup> And they are not unique to New Orleans.

In places like Baltimore’s West Side, a traditionally Black part of town, visitors can take a tour focused specifically on Civil Rights activism in the city. Like the Friends of the Cabildo tour explored in this thesis, the Baltimore tour is operated by a mainstream non-profit, Baltimore Heritage—an organization dedicated to preservation and promotion of Baltimore’s historic built environment. But Baltimore Heritage’s Civil Rights Tour, as evident in its name, has a focus: highlighting the Black experience over time by striving to connect the history of Blacks on the historic West Side to people living in the neighborhood today. Connections to the contemporary residents of the neighborhood, in short, drive the purpose of the tour, elevating the stakes by attempting to create personal, immediate connections by contextualizing the history of this marginalized community.

Such connections to contemporary people when interpreting the history of racism are an admirable goal, and effective when executed well. However, the connection can be difficult to create between a community and tourists. There are several challenges for public historians when interpreting a history of violence and oppression against African Americans for largely White audiences. In the case of the Baltimore Heritage tour, where the tour happens in earshot of its subjects, the challenges are magnified.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Hidden History Tours. <https://www.hiddenhistory.us/home> [accessed July 13, 2020].

<sup>2</sup> Lauren Safranek, “Civil Rights Activism in Baltimore’s Historic West Side Walking Tour by Heritage Baltimore.” *The Public Historian*, Volume 38, Number 3 (August 2016), 120-123.

The racialized dynamics, despite the best intentions, are ever present. In the case of the Baltimore Heritage tour, at least the one attended by a public historian who later reviewed it in *The Public Historian*, the tour guide leading that day was white man active in Baltimore Heritage's social justice projects. All the same, it can be challenging for a tour guide to lead a group of largely White tourists through a historic Black neighborhood and strike the right tone. At no point, of course, does the tour guide want to give any semblance of objectifying the residents; they are not characters in a living history presentation or artifacts in a museum. A tour guide who is a Person of Color might be better able to navigate this course more by serving as a sort of intermediary between the Black residents of the neighborhood and the predominantly White tour guests. This challenge manifested in the Baltimore Heritage tour, prompting the public historian's review in *The Public Historian*: "The Tour offered several profound moments to engage with city space and think about troubling relationship between power and place," observed Lauren Safranek. "But I felt a certain uneasiness all the same. There was a separation between the residents that occupied the neighborhoods and our group as we walked, hearing their stories of struggle and injustice."<sup>1</sup>

Safranek welcomed certain aspects of the tour, in addition to its core mission of social justice. "Today was most successful when it featured scenes of erasure, which was only possible to imagine and experience through guided narration," she noted. "The tactic of interpreting structures and spaces no longer there was emotional and powerful, and clearly informed by historical research." But it could not overcome the core discrepancy of racial difference between the people touring and the people being

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<sup>1</sup> Lauren Safranek, "Civil Rights Activism in Baltimore's Historic West Side Walking Tour by Heritage Baltimore." *The Public Historian*, Volume 38, Number 3 (August 2016), 120-123.

“toured.” And even when the demographic dynamics are less uncomfortable, the problem of physical erasures in mostly Black neighborhoods remains. The Shoeleather History Project Walking Tours run out of Hartford, Connecticut, face such a challenge. A grassroots effort by the Black community to preserve the remains of a Black neighborhood, the tour also seeks to reveal what has been erased in the neighborhood. And yet, it is no small feat. Comparing the Baltimore Heritage and Shoeleather tours, Laura Safranek heartily welcomed that the Hartford tour was Black-led while implying that it fell slightly short in terms of technique: “Touring the locales where key structures *used* to be or where historically marginalized individuals and groups *once* lived proves universally challenging,” she noted. “Sightseeing without sites requires a different sort of vision.”

The analyses by Lynnell Thomas and Lauren Safranek of public history walking tours in New Orleans, Baltimore, and Hartford helpfully contextualize some of my own tour’s dynamics. My tours, for example, have proved challenging in many of the same ways discussed for the case of Baltimore and Hartford. For one, the Friends of the Cabildo tour profiled in this thesis took place in a predominantly White neighborhood, the French Quarter, by prescription of the program. It meant that I needed to find alternative ways to generate connections with contemporary Black New Orleanians without actually engaging with the built environment in which most Black New Orleanians generally live. And in terms of the historical buildings of Black New Orleans, the relative scarcity of extant sites related to Black history required creative thinking. I had employed abstraction (“If we were to look over these tree tops”) and rely on my ability to effectively construct a three-dimensional image in the minds of my audience.

As such, some of the techniques deployed in the Baltimore Heritage West Side tour sounded familiar. It is common in African American walking tours, including in New Orleans, to creatively construct an image of a neighborhood in which Blacks have been displaced or to paint an image of the built environment that no longer exists. The guides in Baltimore's West Side used vivid visual language to construct scenes of erasure of the Black population and significant aspects of the built environment. I also attempt to do this in a limited sense when describing several eras of French Quarter history in which African Americans made up the largest share of the neighborhood's population. I have found that it often highly dependent on the narration and the performance skill of the tour guide to be able to verbally paint such pictures in the minds of guests.

I want to conclude this chapter by pointing to something quite distinctive about my tour when compared to those led by New Orleans Hidden Heritage Tour, Baltimore Heritage's Civil Rights Tour, or Hartford's Shoeleather History Project Walking Tour. I do not provide the same tight focus on race and social justice in my tour, but that is partly because my tour guests are not promised that theme. In contrast to the tour group makeup of my Friends of the Cabildo tour, the tours covered in this latter half of the chapter host guests who have affirmatively sought out a tour which they fully expect to confront violent and racially oppressive chapters of the past. After all, a reviewer of the Hartford Shoelace Leather Project tour warned prospective guests: "Keep in mind that the SHP walking tour is not designed for those seeking lighthearted entertainment or attractive architecture." That, however, is specifically what Friends of the Cabildo Tour advertises to its guests: tours that "emphasize the history, architecture, and folklore of

this fascinating city.”<sup>1</sup> The promotional materials for the tours are upbeat and festive; the city’s darker undercurrents do not appear. This creates a different challenge for Friends of the Cabildo tour guides who attempt to present the often-horrific stories of marginalized people—to a group of guests who signed up to hear about mansard roofs. In the next chapter, “Theories of Interpretation,” I detail some of my strategies for taking them on.

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<sup>1</sup> Friends of the Cabildo. “French Quarter Walking Tour and Booking Info.” <https://friendsofthecabildo.org/tour-info-and-bookings/> [accessed July 10, 2020].

## CHAPTER IV

### THEORIES OF INTERPRETATION

The scholarly context of this public history project thesis will primarily consist of an examination of the public history principles at play in the tour's development and presentation. The primary intervention in this thesis consists of the utilization of public history interpretation methods in the creation of an original type of tour. The tour created provides guests with a spatially and temporally coherent experience in a dense urban setting. The narrative is concise, relevant to an understanding of contemporary New Orleans, and of course connected to the built environment.

This chapter exploring the scholarly context of public history interpretation is divided into four sections, which help organize some of the largest questions in interpretation. The first section serves as an introduction to the scholarly evolution of interpretation itself. The chapter builds upon this context with an exploration of scholarly best practices for interpreters engaging with an audience. The subsequent "authority"

associated with presenting uncomfortable aspects of history, specifically enslavement and racial discrimination. That section evaluates the role that provocation plays in helping the interpreter and audience engage with difficult material. Each subsection will also include examinations of specific challenges encountered in the development of the tour and how the scholarship influenced the tour development process.

### ***Interpretation***

Scholarly views of interpretation have expanded, since Freeman Tilden essentially coined the term over sixty years ago in his landmark work *Interpreting Our Heritage*. Dr. Allison Horrocks wrote that “In the sixty-plus years since Tilden’s guidebook on interpretation was published, there have been not one but several revolutions in the way people teach, study, and interpret history.”<sup>1</sup> Tilden originally defined interpretation as the “function of the custodians of our treasures,” in which “naturalists, historians, archaeologists, and other specialists are engaged in the work of revealing, to such visitors as desire the service, something of the beauty and wonder, the inspiration and spiritual meaning that lie behind what the visitor can with his senses perceive.”<sup>2</sup> More succinctly he further defines interpretation as “the revelation of a larger truth that lies behind any statement of fact.”<sup>3</sup> While few public historians would quibble with the endurance of that definition, many would advocate for an expanded definition and goals of interpretation. A member of the National Council on Public History’s

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<sup>1</sup> *Interpreting Our Heritage in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. <https://interpretingourheritage.com/> [accessed June 16, 2020].

<sup>2</sup> Freeman Tilden, *Interpreting our Heritage*. (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 25.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, 33.

Interpreting Our Heritage in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Working Group, Sara Patton Zarrelli, “define[s] 21<sup>st</sup> century interpretation as a focus on inclusive presentations that includes multiple perspectives,” particularly those previously described as thorny and involving the evolving debate on shared authority between interpreter and visitor.<sup>1</sup>

The expanded definition of interpretation causes many public historians to question the relevance of Tilden’s foundation work. A public historian with the National Parks Service, Dr. Allison Horrocks, concedes that Tilden “remain[s] on training bookshelves and in public history syllabi.” Yet she sees many of her Public History colleagues are, “keen to point out that Tilden [is] largely in the rearview mirror of their methodological practice, noting that his foothold only seemed strong at government-run heritage sites.” The most significant aspect of interpretation’s expanded definition is the expanded role of the audience in the process of interpretation. Public Historian Megan Tewell writes, “Public history requires the discussion of the role of audiences as active, participatory entities, not merely as recipients of interpretation. Considering the effect of interpretation, and the ways in which visitors carry and implement it moving forward in the outside world, is an integral component of the public historical forum.” Another member of the National Council on Public History’s Interpreting Our Heritage in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Working Group, Edward Roach, had even harsher criticism of early historic interpretation, “Tilden’s principles strike me as a combination of the obvious and the debatable. Any presentation of any information in any setting is ‘interpretation.’ Historians ‘interpret’ source materials in publications and presentations; they choose what to include and what to leave out.” The sense among Public Historians that Tilden’s

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<sup>1</sup> Interpreting Our Heritage in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. <https://interpretingourheritage.com/> [accessed June 16, 2020].

scholarship on interpretation is narrow in today's context, and perhaps rather simplistic as argued by Roach, is quite common. Horrocks continues to find foundational value in Tilden's scholarship. She wrote, "Tilden's writing is still useful to "think with," even as it remains (like all historical documents) a product from another time. *Interpreting Our Heritage* will stay on my shelf, but it will not stand alone. Tilden will be joined by the works of historians, fellow interpreters/experts."

Other Public Historians are even more generous towards the lasting impact of Tilden's scholarship. Public Historian, Dr. Dann Broyld, author of *Borderland Blacks*, wrote that Tilden fully expected the scholarship surrounding his work to expand, and Tilden even conceded that his core six principle of interpretation would evolve through the years. Broyld wrote that Tilden, "recognized his interpretive principles were an "unsacred six." He was sure a seventh element would materialize to amend his work and even someday a twenty-seventh. Like the United States Constitution, his principles belong to the current generation. For modernity's pages turn, but foreshadowing is not easily eclipsed by the foundation. Failure is but an attempt. So Public Historians, Tilden urges, to add other equally robust principles."

Public historians generally find broad agreement that effective interpretation involves creating a connection to place or an object, and connection to the audience. Zarrelli writes that, "the foundation for any successful program: experiences connected to the "real thing," opportunities for both emotional and intellectual connection, provocation to think critically, and a respect for different audiences."<sup>1</sup> Tilden emphasize this point as his critical first principle of interpretation when he writes, "Any interpretation that does

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<sup>1</sup> Interpreting Our Heritage in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. <https://interpretingourheritage.com/> [accessed June 16, 2020].

not somehow relate what is being displayed or described to something within the personality or experience of the visitor will be sterile.”<sup>1</sup> Likewise, Public Historian Hanna Howard, “Subscribes to the idea that interpretive content should be developed with the visitor in mind... and also believe[s] it is important that visitors feel seen and recognized in the content they consume. In other words, [she] love[s] visitors in that [she] want[s] to meet them where they are in their historical knowledge, but also want[s] to approach interpretation with respect for/to the knowledge they carry with them as a result of lived experience.”<sup>2</sup> This thoughtful approach taken by Howard is likewise the fundamental to my tour.

Before each of my tours begin I spend time visiting with my guests and gaining a sense of what motivated them to invest their money and two hours of their time to participate in a historic walking tour of New Orleans. I ask questions about careers and from where they are visiting. I constantly look for opportunities to incorporate additional pieces to the story that I believe might personally interest my guests. Approximately a quarter of all my participants are international tourists, most commonly from the United Kingdom and Germany. I always invest a little extra time helping such guests connect their nationality to the New Orleans story. Helping facilitate personal connections with my guests to my New Orleans story consistently leads to far more engaged guests.

Public history scholarship broadly supports these notions of the value of connecting people to place. Public historian David Glassberg, author of *Sense of Place*, asserts that a significant number of people utilize place and history in complex ways:

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<sup>1</sup> Freeman Tilden, *Interpreting our Heritage*. (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 34.

<sup>2</sup> *Interpreting Our Heritage in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. <https://interpretingourheritage.com/> [accessed June 16, 2020].

“Sensing history, we explore fundamental questions concerning personal and group identity and our relationship to the environment. A sense of history locates us in space, with knowledge that helps us gain a sense of where we are, helping us to understand why our formerly thriving inner-city neighborhood is now a wilderness of vacant lots, or why a piece of erstwhile productive farmland nearby is now a shopping mall.”<sup>1</sup> As opposed to his description of academic historians being trained to virtually feel no sense of place, he embraces the value that public historians and interpreters put on place when he wrote, it “begins with a place that they care about and then asks, ‘What happened here?’”<sup>2</sup>

Public historians commonly encounter experiences that emphasize Glassberg’s point. Savannah Rose recounts a relevant story during her formative training as a public historian. She remembers, “my supervisor took all of the interns out to the battlefield. He regaled us with a story from that part of the Battle of Gettysburg, filling our young minds and heart with emotion and a sense of relevancy about our jobs as interpreters.” Rose’s story takes a turn when, “We then travelled to the local Walmart parking lot and listen to the same exact story. We left the parking lot with confusion, not only about why were out in a parking lot but we had forgotten the relevance of the story in relation to the 1863 battle. We came back into our classroom and my supervisor read aloud Tilden’s first principle.” This young public historian had become a disciple of Tilden’s years after his death. Rose wrote, “This principle and lesson taught me the power of place and the

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<sup>1</sup> David Glassberg. *Sense of History: The Place of the Past in American Life*. (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001), 19.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, 111.

importance of our jobs as interpreters. Without seeing what you're interpreting, there is no relevancy to the interpretation.”<sup>1</sup>

The scholarship also emphasizes the skills required to make decision on which materials to include in a public interpretation presentation. Tilden write, “The interpreter who creates a whole, pares away all the obfuscating minor detail and drives straight toward the perfection of his story will find that his hearers are walking along with him – are companions on the march. At some certain point, it becomes their story as much as his.”<sup>2</sup> I do not recall reading these words prior to developing my public history project, but I have scarcely read any works that so aptly describe my person motivation and process in developing my tour. I passionately sought to develop a narrative that was far from a collection of interesting local historical anecdotes, but rather a highly curated, purposeful narrative could provide my audience the most succinct, yet broad historical context possible in understanding contemporary New Orleans. This was an inspiring, yet difficult process of culling through the enormity of the fascinating stories of New Orleans that I wished to tell. Tilden perhaps best described the interpreter as an artist that, “ruthlessly cuts away all the material that is not vital to his story.”<sup>3</sup>

Tilden contends, “Interpretation is an art, which combines many arts, whether the materials presented are scientific, historical, or architectural. Any art is in some degree teachable.”<sup>4</sup> Zarelli builds upon this in a contemporary context by asserting that “*anyone* can be trained to provide decent interpretation, and there are no excuses for bad

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<sup>1</sup> Interpreting Our Heritage in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. <https://interpretingourheritage.com/> [accessed June 16, 2020].

<sup>2</sup> Freeman Tilden, *Interpreting our Heritage*. (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 58.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, 57.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, 35.

interpretation.” She criticizes some of her public historian colleagues’ “turn towards new interpretation methods” when there is simply “a failure to teach proper classical technique; [and] we move towards audience centric programming because we think they will solve the perceived problem of engagement that stems instead from poorly presented programs that do not reflect audiences’ interests or motivations for visiting.” Zarelli continues by writing, “Instead of focusing on rewriting principles, I suggest that we focus our attention on better training in the basics for all interpreters and recognizing that all interpreters can be at least generally successful by understanding their audiences.” Public Historian Nick Sacco, a regular author in *The Journal of the Civil War Era*, agrees with Zarelli’s contention that this aspect of Tilden’s philosophy remains applicable today. Sacco writes, “That interpretation is artistic, informative, and provocative. Facts do not gain their relevance simply because they exist; instead, they gain their meaning and relevance when placed within a larger context of human activity and thought. When facts collaborate with interpretation, they can be put to use in making the world a better place.” Sacco continues, “The job of the interpreter, then, is to use knowledge and communication skills to create personal meaning, inspiring a lifelong journey of curiosity, creativity, and discovery among all participants.”

Considering the level of creativity employed in devising ways to connect the tour’s narrative to the built environment, and then construct a route that sequentially contained the right kind of architecture along a route that also passed specific spaces that I needed to connect to the narrative, I fully agree with assertions of Zarelli, Tilden, and Sacco that quality interpretation is an art form.<sup>1</sup> Tilden once described an outstanding

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<sup>1</sup> Interpreting Our Heritage in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. <https://interpretingourheritage.com/> [accessed June 16, 2020].

interpreter he observed that was not aware of any principle of interpretation, “but was merely following his inspiration. I actually believe that if there were enough pure inspiration in the world to go around, this might be the best way to perform the service.”<sup>1</sup> The process required to develop this innovative tour most certainly included several moments of pure inspiration. The creativity required to devise the unusual connections between the narrative and the built and the vision to identify a route that met the requirement of my narrative, was likely the single biggest factor in successfully developing this public history project.

### ***Engagement***

Public History scholarship abounds on different philosophies in best engaging the visitor. Tilden writes, “Information, as such, is not interpretation. Interpretation is revelation based upon information. But they are entirely different things. However, all interpretation includes information.” As will be discuss at some length over the next two chapters, the tour is a form of interpretation that is curated, focused, and purposeful, yet leaves interpretative space for my guests to draw their own conclusions. The decision-making process of selecting which aspects of a rich, 500-year local history belong in a tour script and will be most engaging and revelatory to the audience is at the core of what Tilden references in this principle.<sup>2</sup> The principles surrounding audience engagement have evolved significantly since Tilden’s era, and that evolution of scholarship was incorporated into the tour. Dr. Allison Horrocks describes, “that interpreters are now also

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<sup>1</sup> Freeman Tilden, *Interpreting our Heritage*. (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 26.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, 34.

called upon (to a much greater degree) to honor the knowledge that their audiences bring.” Historian Chuck Arning expounds that, “The days of the audience coming to the mountain for information on a specific site are over. People come to our parks with a fantastic amount of experience.” Arning continues, “In order to tap into that experience, to truly make their visit memorable and meaningful, the interpreter needs to engage the audience, to make them feel comfortable enough, to share their perspectives on the talk with the group.” In further evidence of how far the principles surrounding interpretation and engagement has evolved, Horrocks writes that she hopes, “Tilden’s basic triangulation of knowledge—interpreters conferring the work of experts to relatively passive visitors—is foreign to [the] practice [of today’s interpreters].”

The supremacy of visitor motivation has evolved into central tenant of historic interpretation in a public setting. Historian Hanna Howard writes that she, “subscribe[s] to the idea that interpretive content should be developed with the visitor in mind and based in well-researched historical information.” Howard continues, “I also believe it is important that visitors feel seen and recognized in the content they consume. In other words, I love visitors in that I want to meet them where they are in their historical knowledge, but I also want to approach interpretation with respect for/to the knowledge they carry with them as a result of lived experience.”<sup>1</sup> Tilden contends that visitors want to build upon their knowledge and are motivated to seek a broad understanding. Tilden specifically describes this principle as “interpretation should aim to present a whole rather than a part and must address itself to the whole man rather than any phase.”<sup>2</sup> This

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<sup>1</sup> Interpreting Our Heritage in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. <https://interpretingourheritage.com/> [accessed June 16, 2020].

<sup>2</sup> Freeman Tilden, *Interpreting our Heritage*. (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 35.

principle clearly aligns with the tour's objective of covering 500-years of New Orleans history within a 2-hour walking tour. While thematic or partial period histories of New Orleans can convey intriguing information, Tilden's writing supports the assertion that a solid historic context and understanding of the contemporary dynamics of a place are best achieved by presenting the broadest history possible.

Several pieces of public history scholarship have informed the tour's objective to present a collection of historic narratives that allow guests to draw informed conclusions on complex historic events, all the while presenting it in a broad enough context for the visitor to put that complexity into perspective. Particularly valuable scholarship in this space include the 1998 book *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life* by Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, and the 2001 book *Sense of History: The Place of the Past in American Life* by David Glassberg. Rosenzweig and Thelen's research allowed for fascinating observations on what the public desires from a public history engagement. Most significantly in my mind was the revelation that the public not only understood that the history discipline involved interpretation, but that one of their greatest grievances towards the profession was that historians do not leave enough interpretation to the public, and frequently present simply narratives that have already drawn conclusions. Several essays in another staple of public history scholarship, the 1999 book *Public History: Essays from the Field* by James Gardner and Peter LaPaglia, argue that public history presentations should be a simple history, running along a linear timeline, making it easier for the consumer to digest.

Public historians face challenges packaging history in such a way that is true to history's methodology of encouraging interpretation while try to tell a simple narrative

that it is assumed the public wants. In the development of the tour I drew from the arguments on both sides of this debate. Gardner and LaPaglia present arguments in favor of the public preferring a linear, chronological history. Rosenzweig and Thelen's research demonstrates much of the public has the capacity to interpret historical information outside of a chronological timeline. However, when it is possible to present information chronologically, I side with Gardner and LaPaglia in the view that the public can engage the information more easily in that context. Rosenzweig and Thelen's work clearly enhanced my view of the public's capacity and desire to draw conclusions from complex and nuanced historic interpretation. This informed the principles for the development of the tour as I sought to develop a robust chronological narrative that allowed for nuance, complexity, and engaging the audience's desire to draw their conclusions on the historical facts presented.

Public Historians recognize that the audience not only wants that personal respect, but the audience as has an innate desire to personally be a part of the story being interpreted. Tilden wrote that "whether or not he is conscious of it, man seeks to find his place in nature and among men – not excluding remote men."<sup>1</sup> He believes that members of the audience not only want to find ways that their ancestors might be connected to the history being presented, but also ways that the individuals audience members themselves are potentially part of the history. This was accomplished most accomplished most vividly in the final tour stop, returning to Jackson Square. Bringing the tour narrative to the historically significant 2005 destruction of Hurricane Katrina, helps the audience understand that historically significant events can and do occur within their lifetimes.

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<sup>1</sup> Freeman Tilden, *Interpreting our Heritage*. (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 37.

Further, the tour concludes by describing the contemporary reasons that visitors such as the audience members come to New Orleans, and make sure they understand how important people like them are to the modern New Orleans economy. The tour purposefully tries to ensure that the guests feel like they are witness to and a part of the unfolding history of New Orleans. Tilden writes, “He may be there for the explicit hope that you will reveal to him why he is there.”<sup>1</sup> Historian Sara Patton Zarrelli agrees in the timelessness of this wisdom, “This simple directive seems as true today as it was in 1954—visitors want to know why, on a deeper level, they are there and gain deeper meaning to their visit.” Zarrelli continues, “If we can recognize that both visitors’ goals and our own goals for interpretive experience still reflect that desire to ‘reveal why he is there,’ we can build from Tilden’s strong foundation to experiment with and explore what that revelation means in the 21st century.”<sup>2</sup>

### ***Authority***

One of the most contested aspects of engagement with visitors in an interpreted public history setting is the thorny issue of authority. The turf of authority in public history settings has historically always been contested between public historians, interpreters, and the visitors. Public Historians Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, in their widely read research, *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life*, make the major point that respondents in their research appreciated the

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<sup>1</sup> Freeman Tilden, *Interpreting our Heritage*. (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 45.

<sup>2</sup> Interpreting Our Heritage in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. <https://interpretingourheritage.com/> [accessed June 16, 2020].

ability to largely retain interpretive authority for themselves.<sup>1</sup> This revelation, and related efforts by Public Historians to create space for greater interpretation among the audience, is certainly a change from the early scholarship on interpretation. Public Historian, Dr. Allison Horrocks, describes the authority of the visitor in early interpretation scholarship like, “an overarching view of the interactions between three groups: specialists who produce research, interpreters who deliver programs, and visitors who take part in the interpretive experience.” Horrocks continues, “To a large degree, Tilden encourages historic interpreters to use expertly sourced material to build a program that provokes and enlightens the visitor.” This however, falls short of the standard of “shared authority” for visitors that is widely seen as standard practice in Public History today. One critic of the contemporary application of this early scholarship is Public Historian, Dr. Anne Whisnant, Director of Duke University’s Graduate Liberal Studies Program. She writes, “Tilden makes interpretation into an almost religious activity. Among other problems, this sets up an unequal relationship between visitor and interpreter, as the Interpreter is imagined to have almost magical or clerical powers to lead the visitor (parishioner) to some kind of transcendent ‘truth.’” Whisnant continues, “This is unjustified and untenable given the wildly different training, skill, knowledge and perspective among those working in ‘interpretation.’ It also runs counter to a ‘shared authority’ model of historical encounter, in which interpreters and visitors both bring knowledge and engage in a dialogue.”<sup>2</sup> The research of Rosenzweig and Thelen’s clearly indicate that their respondents seek this kind of “shared authority” and look to historians to more generally

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<sup>1</sup> Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, *The Presence of the Past*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 197.

<sup>2</sup> Interpreting Our Heritage in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. <https://interpretingourheritage.com/> [accessed June 16, 2020].

collect and state facts, allowing the audience to take care of more of the interpretation. The survey responses indicate that most of the public does not mind complexity. As Thelen said in his afterthought, “respondents said they wanted a culture in which individuals took responsibility and acquired skills to interpret history for themselves.” Many respondents feel they already have the skills necessary to interpret history, and so specifically seek out sources of history that will provide first-person accounts.<sup>1</sup> Given the limited amount of training the survey sample likely received in historic methodology, it was impressive to see how many intuitively sought to utilize a portion of it.

The survey respondents described in Rosenzweig and Thelen’s book not only do not want a simple historical narrative as described in James Gardner and Peter LaPaglia’s book, *Public History: Essays from the Field*, they are suspicious of anyone that tries to provide them such a simple narrative. Rosenzweig and Thelen’s respondents statistically believe that historians have taken too much authority in the interpretation of history. Rosenzweig and Thelen believe that society has grown increasingly cynical and the survey responses demonstrate that the public is very watchful of externalities such as profit or political agendas that may influence the interpretation of the history presented.<sup>2</sup> I have been personally told by numerous tour guide guests that they trust the information presented by interpreters of a non-profit like the Friends of the Cabildo, more than they would from a for-profit tour company. Respondents to Thelen and Rosenzweig’s surveys are far more likely to trust historical interpretation from public television than commercial television because they see much of the motivation for profit being removed in the public television system. They are also much more likely to trust a historical

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<sup>1</sup> Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, *The Presence of the Past*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 194.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, 197.

interpretation presented at a museum than in a book.<sup>1</sup> Chapter 4 of their work describes how the respondents found that the collaborative work required for the development of museum exhibits reduced the chances that a single person's agenda might affect the quality of interpretation. This leads me to conclude that the independent nature of the development of tours for the Friends of the Cabildo, while generating enhanced trust on other levels, may cause guests to trust them a little less.

David Glassberg's essay on the Ken Burns' documentary *The Civil War*, and particularly how viewer letters were so similar to the responses Rosenzweig and Thelen received their public survey were likewise relevant to the tour's development. According to Glassberg's analysis of letters, he said, "clearly most Americans who watched *The Civil War* saw not an interpretation of the past to accept or reject, as an academic historian might, but rather a vast, colorful album that they could fill with additional information about the war".<sup>2</sup> This describes a significant ingredient to Ken Burns' success. As was well established in Rosenzweig and Thelen's analysis of their survey, Americans prefer presentations of history that allow for a level of interpretation on the part of the reader, viewer, or listener. Americans tend to bristle at the high level of interpretation that is often applied to the work of academic historians, often viewing the opinions expressed as "revisionist history". Thelen observed in the afterthoughts in his book that their research provided "evidence that academic history differs from everyday history".<sup>3</sup> Further Thelen wrote that their respondents felt that, "Both popular culture and

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<sup>1</sup> Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, *The Presence of the Past*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 100.

<sup>2</sup> David Glassberg. *Sense of History: The Place of the Past in American Life*. (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001), 107.

<sup>3</sup> Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, *The Presence of the Past*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 190.

formal history classes mediated between them and actual experiences from the past, frequently conveying distortions, lies, and inaccuracies.” Thelen continued, “Respondents said they wanted a culture in which individuals took responsibility and acquired skills to interpret history for themselves.”<sup>1</sup>

Rosenzweig and Thelen contend that Americans desire for historians to present them with well-researched primary sources, allowing them to draw their own conclusions. Rosenzweig wrote in his afterthoughts in their book that this type of participatory historical model “would take seriously how... [people] live lives and meet needs in relationships driven by forces different from those that power institutions and cultures.”<sup>2</sup> The selection of which primary sources to present certainly provide historians with the power to influence the conclusions drawn, and the critical analysis of those chosen is a part of the criticism levied again Burns by professional historians. Likewise, I concede that my editorial decision on sources and stories to include in my narrative, greatly impact the interpretation and conclusion of my audience. While Burns’ work certainly represents historic interpretation, his presentation tends to draw far fewer conclusions. Burns very effectively taps into the public’s desire to at least feel as though they are interpreting history for themselves. Through reading significant public history scholarship, I likewise recognize this desire of the public, and likewise hope that my audience feels equipped and empowered to interpret history for themselves.

This illustrates a power that public historians such as Ken Burns possess that many academic historians do not. Based on the research and arguments Glassberg, Rosenzweig, and Thelen, one would generally conclude the public is far more likely to

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid*, 194.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, 197.

trust the historic interpretation that they believe they are making based on primary sources, as opposed to highly interpreted works. The public views the highly interpreted works of academic historians as containing a significant amount of opinion, and if they did read those works, would read them with a healthy amount of skepticism.

Unfortunately, the public is likely to be far less adept at discerning how a historian might present specific primary sources to often lead the reader or viewer to a pre-ordained conclusion that the author or producer seeks to elicit. The level of trust that the public places in this type of presentation of history thus place an added ethical burden on public historians to present a wide variety of primary sources and interpretation that will allow the public to make an informed decision on how to interpret an aspect of the past.

I was further heartened by Rosenzweig and Thelen's assertions in Chapter 5 that describe how the respondents do not favor the "triumphal national narrative favored by those who write textbooks or advocate history as a means of teaching patriotism and civics."<sup>1</sup> The public's increasing cynicism toward government could not help but produce a growing distrust of the nation-state narrative, and I suspect this likely includes many conservatives that conventional wisdom would dictate fully embraces the nation-state narrative. My tour's narrative certainly presents historic facts that paint the United States government, people, and policies in less than favorable light through much of the history of New Orleans. Through my years of presenting my tour, I have had more than a handful of guests wearing shirts that resembled United States flags, and none of them have objected to my fair presentation of historic facts. Based on Rosenzweig and Thelen's research, I can surmise that these individuals are capable of processing

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<sup>1</sup> Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, *The Presence of the Past*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 116.

complexity and nuance and recognize that the United States government has pioneered oppression and war, and not simply liberty and happiness over the last three centuries.

### ***Provocation***

Just as critical theory of interpretation should be the basis of a public history tour, so should engagement with specific historiographies. In the case of public history in the South, the historiographies of slavery, race, and the Civil War necessarily shape how public stories are told. The telling of these stories, in that particular historiography, have some of the greatest potential to amplify one of the more universally accepted tenants in the theory of interpretation: provocation.

Just as the key scholarly debates on interpretation involve questioning the continued usefulness of its foundational scholarship, the key contemporary debate at the intersection of public history and African American history likewise involves reflection on whether the foundational “freedom narrative” is the most effective means of storytelling. This foundation largely originated with Dr. John Hope Franklin’s seminal 1947 book, *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans*. Dr. Franklin traces the history of African Americans from African origins, to largely enslaved conditions in the Americas, to emancipation and the ongoing struggle for racial equality. Dr. Gregory Downs describes this “freedom narrative” as “shap[ing] much of the writing and teaching of African American history. He contends that it “allows scholars at once to portray the horrors of slavery, the transformative impact of freedom, and the long, slow, unfinished climb toward—but

not yet to—equality.”<sup>1</sup> Over the last decade historians have increasingly questioned whether freedom should continue to be the core narrative for African American history.<sup>2</sup>

While many argue for the replacement of the freedom narrative, there has yet to develop a consensus on what should replace it. Dr. Eric Foner asks, “Is emancipation the pivot of how we ought to understand the African American experience in America from the early colonial period to the present, or do we need a narrative that really displaces emancipation?” Dr. Thavolia Glymph defends abolition as historic flashpoint and useful narrative. She said, “Making freedom was undeniably difficult and deadly work but we risk doing a fundamental disservice to the difference freedom made when we make a hard turn in a direction that suggests it accomplished too little to much matter.” Dr. Annette Gordon-Reed agrees by emphasizing how the 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, and 15<sup>th</sup> amendments were critical pivots in American history, establishing the promise of rights, while slowly realized. While recognizing how exhausted many, particularly academic historians of the field have grown with the limitation of the freedom narrative, Gordon-Reed realizes public historians regularly continue to face audiences holding a racist Lost Cause narrative. She argues that it is difficult for public historians to move beyond a

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<sup>1</sup> The Future of the African American Past. “Slavery And Freedom: Historians Debate Continued Relevance Of An Old Paradigm. <https://futureafampast.si.edu/blog/%E2%80%9Cslavery-and-freedom%E2%80%9D-historians-debate-continued-relevance-old-paradigm> [accessed June 17, 2020].

<sup>2</sup>See Stephen Kantrowitz’s 2012 book *More than Freedom*, Stacey Smith’s 2013 *Freedom’s Frontier*, Jim Downs’s 2012 work *Sick from Freedom*, Kidada Williams’s 2012 book *They Left Great Marks on Me* (2012), and Kate Masur’s 2010 *An Example for All the Land*.

freedom narrative to a more complex interpretation, when so many Americans have yet to embrace the freedom narrative.<sup>1</sup> (futureafampast)

The dissonance between the prevailing freedom narrative and the commonly encountered “Lost Cause” narrative, creates incredible opportunities for public historians to utilize a widely accepted principle of interpretation: provocation. Like many tenants of interpretation, this principle was coined by Tilden, “The chief aim of interpretation is not instruction but provocation.”<sup>2</sup> Historian Megan Tewell expounds on this application, “Abandoning the idea of information for information’s sake, public historians instead look at history’s utility and the possibilities of its application. Relevance, the oft-cited objective of historians, public historians, universities, and museums alike, in my mind, requires provocation.” There are, however, critics like Historian Edward Roach, who wrote, “understanding a topic and the reasons that it is worthy of interpretation of any sort takes precedence over provocation, and it is understanding that would replace provocation in my version of Tilden’s list.” Despite such critiques, provocation remains a widely accepted principle in interpretation.<sup>3</sup>

Best practices in provocation within the context of race and slavery are also a debated scholarly subject. James Oliver Horton's work influentially shaped the creation of this public history tour that. He is the co-editor and essay author, of a particularly thought-provoking essay from his 2006 book *Slavery and Public History: The Tough Stuff of American Memory*. Horton’s view of slavery interpretation was well

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<sup>1</sup> The Future of the African American Past. “Slavery And Freedom: Historians Debate Continued Relevance Of An Old Paradigm. <https://futureafampast.si.edu/blog/%E2%80%9Cslavery-and-freedom%E2%80%9D-historians-debate-continued-relevance-old-paradigm> [accessed June 17, 2020].

<sup>2</sup> Freeman Tilden, *Interpreting our Heritage*. (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 35.

<sup>3</sup> Interpreting Our Heritage in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. <https://interpretingourheritage.com/> [accessed June 16, 2020].

stated with his use of the John Hope Franklin quote: “We should never forget slavery. We should talk about it every morning and every day of the year to remind this country that there’s an enormous gap between its practices and its professions.” Horton contends that all historians should set about accomplishing this goal.<sup>1</sup> I certainly recognized that within the context of creating a succinct, yet broad history of New Orleans, that the institution of slavery played an enormous role in that history. This was a fully recognized responsibility to make sure that guests had an appreciation for that significance. Dr. Allison Horrocks encourages interpreters to be provocative and disregard the idea of tour guests as “happy amateur” historians. She writes, “especially in relation to programs on complex and difficult topics... striving to only tell an amiable story about the past to a group “in love” with the history is not typically in service to the broader mission of interpreting a site.”<sup>2</sup>

The experience in the presentation of the tour over two years, discussing slavery with a broad and diverse audience, has both confirmed and caused disagreements with some of Horton’s arguments surround the slavery in a public history setting. Horton contends that generally Americans believe that slavery was “a relatively minor part of the American story.”<sup>3</sup> Admittedly Americans do not have a deep understanding of many aspects of our nation’s history, and slavery is certainly no exception. But of the limited knowledge of history that Americans do possess, I have personally found the audience to

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<sup>1</sup> James Oliver Horton, “Slavery in American History: An Uncomfortable National Dialogue,” in *Slavery and Public History: The Tough Stuff of American Memory*, ed. by James Oliver Horton and Lois E. Horton, (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 54.

<sup>2</sup> Interpreting Our Heritage in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. <https://interpretingourheritage.com/> [accessed June 16, 2020].

<sup>3</sup> James Oliver Horton, “Slavery in American History: An Uncomfortable National Dialogue,” in *Slavery and Public History: The Tough Stuff of American Memory*, ed. by James Oliver Horton and Lois E. Horton, (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 37.

consider slavery a rather significant part of our nation's history. The audience generally understands that slavery was the cause of the Civil War, one of the most popularly studied aspects of history. The audience also generally understands that a significant percentage of today's African Americans are descended from individuals forcibly brought to this nation and held in bondage. Despite this understanding, experience leads me to be in total agreement with Horton's assertion that Americans do not understand the true depth of slavery either temporally or geographically. I commonly find that guests have an antebellum plantation understanding of the institution of slavery. Discussions of 18th Century French Colonial and Spanish Colonial slavery, the existence of the Free People of Color, and the almost all-consuming role that slavery had over the New Orleans antebellum economy is consistently mind-altering to my guests. Avoidance of such topics is common, according to Dr. Jeff Strickland. He writes in reference to historic interpretation in Charleston, "It is no secret that historical tours of the city barely mention that slavery existed... In reality, Charleston occupied a central position in the transatlantic and internal slave trades." As the tour script points out, after the end of the transatlantic slave trade, New Orleans would replace Charleston in that most shameful central position.<sup>1</sup>

A common theme throughout *Slavery and Public History* is whether slave holding individuals should be judged by modern standards or forgiven in the context of commonly accepted thinking on freedom and slavery of the day. In Lois Horton's essay, "Avoiding History: Thomas Jefferson, Sally Hemings, and the Uncomfortable Public Conversation on Slavery," she describes survey results that shed light on if, or how

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<sup>1</sup> Interpreting Our Heritage in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. <https://interpretingourheritage.com/> [accessed June 16, 2020].

people judge Thomas Jefferson's views on race and the institution of slavery. Some of the results reflected a lack of adequate historic interpretation by the docents at Monticello.<sup>1</sup> Horton has strong grounds from which to argue slavery should be accurately presented as a more historically significant aspect of the Jefferson and the Monticello story as well as provide a greater social and cultural context by helping visitors understand the imbalance of power even within mutually affectionate relationships. Horton writes how many guests at Monticello, even those with a cursory knowledge of the Sally Hemings story, do not arrive with an awareness of how problematic the power imbalance would be between an enslaved woman and a man who owns her. Horton fairly emphasized that that power imbalance should be emphasized beyond any narrative of mutual affection between Jefferson and Hemings.<sup>2</sup> Historian Megan Tewell writes of how effective interpretation can help an audience relate to history in a personal way. Tewell writes that interpretation, "should prioritize the stimulation of empathy (or relativism) in order to show visitors that their own values, judgments, and experiences do not necessarily need to correlate to certain histories in order to make them valid." She continues, "Certainly, interpretation can aid this process by emphasizing elements of shared humanity (love, success, struggle, resistance, etc.). However, an emphasis on empathy deepens awareness beyond the self, promoting

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<sup>1</sup> Lois E. Horton, "Avoiding History: Thomas Jefferson, Sally Hemings, and the Uncomfortable Public Conversation on Slavery," in *Slavery and Public History: The Tough Stuff of American Memory*, ed. by James Oliver Horton and Lois E. Horton, (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 148.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, 147.

connectivity, curiosity, and potentially discomfort, which can be viewed as a positive and potentially transformative response.”<sup>1</sup>

In the case of the tour, I ultimately decided to remove a sense of historical arbitration. The tour presents a complex history of thorny relationships where the power imbalance and racial inequities are made obvious. The tour script does not address whether slaveholders should be judged by contemporary standards. The tour provides a substantive interpretation describing the brutality and dehumanizing aspects of slavery, describes its relative acceptance in the local community, and describes its condemnation by other regions of the country and political movements. As time permits in my format, I tell the full story of the thinking of the day and let the visitors themselves decide how they want to judge individuals that were involved in slavery.

A judgment upon slaveholders and best practices in Civil War interpretation is a contentious issue in public history circles. Jerry Russell, the decades long national voice in the battlefield preservation movement, wrote, “Battlefields are not about ‘blame’ or any other political agendas or sociocultural agendas or any arguments about political correctness. Battlefields are about honor.”<sup>2</sup> Russell defends an increasingly untenable position in contemporary public history circles by contending that context and critical analysis surrounding battlefields and Confederate memorials are dishonoring the soldiers that fought and died. Dwight Pitcaithley’s essay “A Cosmic Threat: The National Park Service Addresses the Cause of the American Civil War” within *Slavery and Public History*, counters Russell’s philosophy as he argues for a substantive presentation of the

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<sup>1</sup> Interpreting Our Heritage in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. <https://interpretingourheritage.com/> [accessed June 16, 2020].

<sup>2</sup> Dwight T. Pitcaithley, “A Cosmic Threat: The National Park Service Addresses the Causes of the American Civil War,” in *Slavery and Public History: The Tough Stuff of American Memory*, ed. by James Oliver Horton and Lois E. Horton, (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 179.

experience of enslaved people at Civil War sites.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Jeff Strickland, author of *Unequal Freedoms: Ethnicity, Race, and White Supremacy in Civil War Era Charleston*, takes a more hardline stance than Pitcaithley. Strickland writes, “The Confederacy is not worthy of commemoration. It never has been. Lost Cause rhetoric as the Civil War ended has emphasized the role of state’s rights as the overwhelming cause for secession, denying that southern states fought a treasonous war against the United States over slavery.”

New Orleans, with its recent removal of its Confederate shrines, is grappling with a new way of describing its Civil War history, or whether an emphasis on Civil War history advances a narrative of the oppression. Harrocks writes about such challenges, “In recent years, many public historians have worked ardently to point to the ways that various monuments, forms of heritage tourism, and public lands were tied to white supremacy.” Harrocks continues, “This internal professional story is one that we all must continue to grapple with—not as ‘middlemen of happiness’ but as figures with some authority who still have much to learn.”<sup>2</sup> Civil War sites, even urban sites like New Orleans, present incredible opportunities for historians to inspire, educate, and challenge visitors. Pitcaithley’s use of Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address perfectly counters arguments, like those of Russell’s, that Civil War sites should simply be about honor: “we cannot consecrate – we cannot hallow – this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggle here, have consecrated it far about our poor power to add or detract.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Dwight T. Pitcaithley, “A Cosmic Threat: The National Park Service Addresses the Causes of the American Civil War,” in *Slavery and Public History: The Tough Stuff of American Memory*, ed. by James Oliver Horton and Lois E. Horton, (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 185.

<sup>2</sup> Interpreting Our Heritage in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. <https://interpretingourheritage.com/> [accessed June 16, 2020].

<sup>3</sup> Dwight T. Pitcaithley, “A Cosmic Threat: The National Park Service Addresses the Causes of the American Civil War,” in *Slavery and Public History: The Tough Stuff of American Memory*, ed. by James Oliver Horton and Lois E. Horton, (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 178.

I consistently strive through much of the tour to maximize the level of provocation that the audience can bare. “Provocation” in this context is the efforts to challenge the guests’ preconceptions about New Orleans and its history. Tilden writes, “But not with the mere recitation of facts. Not with the names of things, but by exposing the soul of things – those truths that lie behind what you are showing your visitor. Nor yet by sermonizing; nor yet by lecturing; not by instruction but by provocation.”<sup>1</sup>

Provocation is accomplished by incorporating a substantial amount of alternative history that is likely to make many of my guests uncomfortable. The tour strives to balance tour stops that create higher levels of discomfort with tour stops that maintain a more upbeat, yet historically genuine message. The tour employs verbal tricks that will be explored later, that allow me to challenge preexisting misconceptions within my audiences’ historic knowledge yet maintain engagement and not lose my credibility within their eyes. Dr. Alexandra Lord, author of numerous public history articles including “The View from Outside the Ivory Tower” and “Putting History to Work”, encourages interpreters to help the audience “understand the experiences of people who were not like us and to use that knowledge to understand not only who we are today but also the roots of many of the of the issues we currently face.”<sup>2</sup> The narrative I developed for my tour is unlikely to be something anyone from the New Orleans Chamber of Commerce or New Orleans Convention and Visitors Bureau is likely to utilize in selling the city. My tour, then, is guided by this maxim: to truly understand the City of New

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<sup>1</sup> Freeman Tilden, *Interpreting our Heritage*. (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 67.

<sup>2</sup> *Interpreting Our Heritage in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. <https://interpretingourheritage.com/> [accessed June 16, 2020].

Orleans, is to appreciate the City of New Orleans in all its historical complexity, indeed *for* its historical complexity.

## CHAPTER V

### A WALK THROUGH THE FRENCH QUARTER

Good morning, my name is Ryan and welcome to New Orleans. I am sure each of you has already recognized that life down here is different. The air smells different, the music sounds different, the people talk different, the houses look different, and the food certainly tastes different. New Orleans neighborhoods are different, each separated by a distinct history and a distinct combination of races and ethnicities that create distinct neighborhood cultures. Today we are going to talk about a few of those neighborhoods and spend a couple of hours walking around the city's oldest neighborhood, the French Quarter.

Again, my name is Ryan McMullen, and I live in the Tremé neighborhood, in a little shotgun house just a few blocks outside of the French Quarter. My favorite pastime is having absolutely nothing better to do than walk around the Quarter and enjoy the beautiful, gritty, decaying buildings, rich sensual smells, sounds of street musicians, fortunetellers, poets, brass bands, and other French Quarter characters. On certain blocks I feel like I am transported back in time, and I imagine what my city was like when my great, great, great, great, great, great, great-grandparents emigrated from France in the

1750's and made their new home in this French Colonial Capitol City. So that is why I volunteer as a tour guide for the Friends of the Cabildo, to hang out in the Quarter and tell the story of my city. I am a volunteer, so every penny that you paid for this tour goes to support the non-profit organization that supports the five historic museums of the Louisiana State Museum system here in the French Quarter. Each of our volunteer tour guides has personally researched and developed a distinctive tour that is each our own. Before we go, four quick rules.

#1. You are not in Disneyland, you are not in Colonial Williamsburg, the French Quarter is an actual neighborhood, and people live and work here. When we stop to look at historic buildings, please make sure to leave an open path for sidewalk and doorways. Also, please do not lean against or touch the buildings.

#2. Be cautious of cars crossing the street. While pedestrians have the right of way at intersections, Louisiana is the home of drive-through daiquiri shops, and not all drivers are as kind and attentive as they should be.

#3. Please put your cell phone on silent.

#4. If you need to leave the tour for any reason, please me know.

And #5. This tour is about the journey as much as the destination. So, while we will make several stops and talk about buildings and people, our walk in between those stops is just as much part of your experience. I want you to take it all in: the sounds, the smells, the people, the buildings, and the entire streetscape. If you have any questions about anything you see, just ask. I cannot promise I will know every answer, but I do promise I will not make anything up. So, let us go.



Fig. 1: Entrance to the 1850 House, 523 St. Ann St., New Orleans. Tour guests begin their experience at the 1850 House, adjacent to Jackson Square.

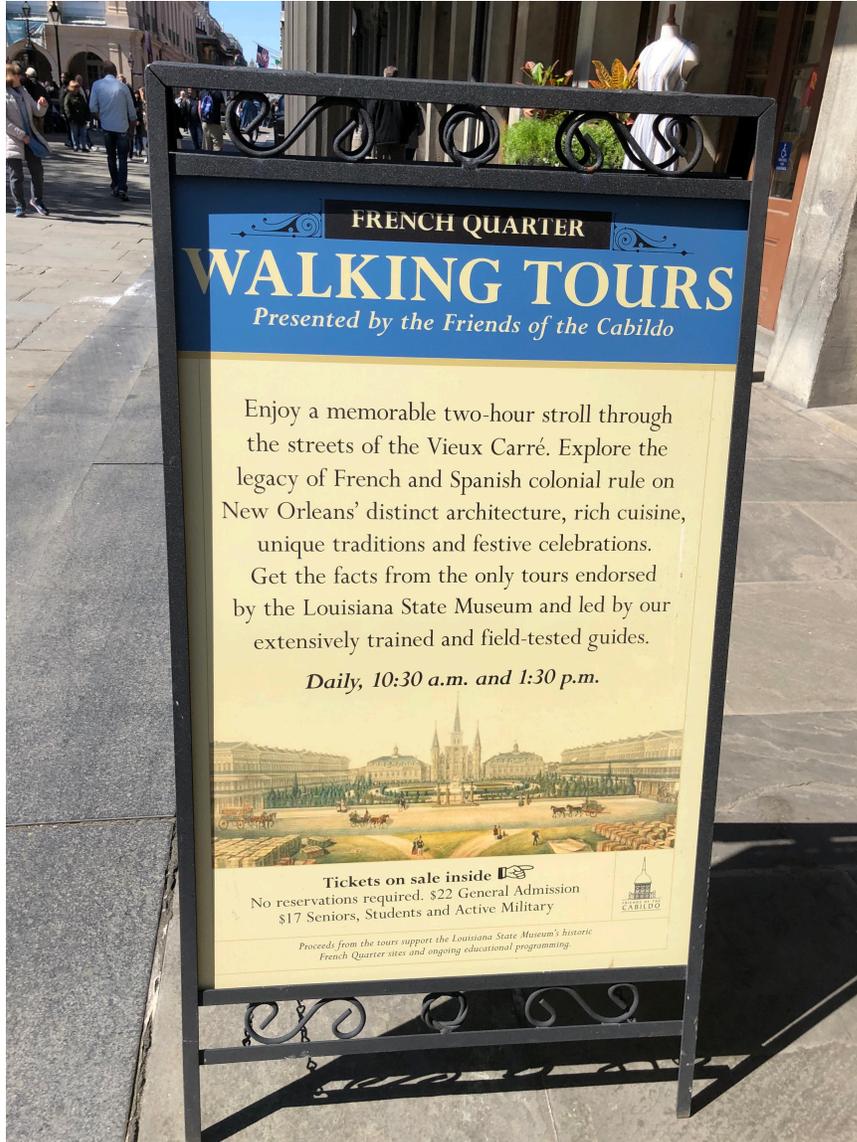


Fig. 2: Sign promoting the Friends of the Cabildo Walking Tour.



Fig. 3: The courtyard of the 1850 House, where the author begins his tour.



Fig. 4: The first stop on the tour. The intersection of St. Ann St. and Chartres St. The Colonial Context.

We have discussed the many initial, observable ways that New Orleans is different than many of the places from which you come. But why? Why are we different in New Orleans? To best understand this, I encourage visitors to quit thinking of New Orleans as an American city. Rather than thinking of us as a southern port city along the Mississippi, I would encourage you to begin to think of New Orleans as the northernmost port city of the Caribbean. In many ways, New Orleans is more of a Caribbean city than an American city. In many ways, we have more in common with Port A Prince, Havana, and Cartagena than Cleveland, Atlanta, or Salt Lake City.

These similarities begin with sheer proximity. Where we stand today on this street corner, we are closer to the Yucatan peninsula in Mexico, than we are to St. Louis, Missouri. We are closer to Haiti than we are Boston, Massachusetts. And from where we stand, we are closer to Cartagena, Columbia, in South America, than we are to Los Angeles.

The similarities obviously extend beyond geography. The foundation of New Orleans culture developed when we were not part of the United States. Rather our cultural foundation was laid as we were a part of colonized Caribbean, Central American, and South American region. Other than language, in many ways our culture is more South American and Caribbean than culturally connected to the United States.

This colonization in the region began when Columbus first landed in the Caribbean in 1492 and laid claim for Spain. Beginning in the late 1500's, other European countries began to capture parts of the Caribbean and lay claim to the lands for themselves. These colonies were established with the explicit purpose of making money for the Europeans. They would sail in, attempt to enslave or kill the indigenous people,

and bring in kidnapped, captured, and enslaved west Africans to do the work. The money extracted from their colonies primarily came from mining gold and silver or farming sugar and tobacco.

As these plantations and mining operations are established, communities and families are established, and children are born. That generation with European and African parents, and born in the Caribbean colonies, were called Creoles. These Creoles were a unique product of the environment and diverse cultures that surrounded them. They were sometimes, but not always, products of mixed-race relationships. It was not uncommon during those times, and widely accepted, for Spanish, Natives, French, and Africans (both free and enslaved) to produce mixed race children.

In the English colonies, both in the Caribbean and on the east coast of today's United States, such racial mixing was taboo and not part of the English way. So, I ask you to keep that distinction in mind throughout our tour. The French & Spanish viewed race very, very differently from the English and their British colonies. That distinction is a thread that is going to run through our entire history of New Orleans.



Fig. 5: Tour stop at the intersection of Chartres St. and Madison St., looking down Madison St. toward the French Market and the Mississippi River. The Indigenous people of New Orleans.

The City of New Orleans is always looking for an excuse to throw a party. And in 2018, New Orleans celebrated what it claimed to be, its 300<sup>th</sup> birthday, or the city's tricentennial. What the city was actually celebrating is the 300<sup>th</sup> year since *Europeans* officially established a city on this ground. In reality, the Indigenous population established a city at this very location at least 500 years ago.

Before Europeans arrived, 20 million American Indians lived along coasts of the Caribbean, Gulf, and lower Mississippi River. These Indigenous people were diverse, including Mound Builders that built earthen pyramids up to 100 feet high. Some of the tribes that lived in the immediate area include the Bayou Goula, Acolapissa, Chawasha, Washa, and Houma. Dozens of American Indian languages were spoken here, and this city served as a central hub for remarkable extensive trade networks among Indigenous people in the region. These tribes include the Choctaw, Chickasaws, Muskogee (Creek), Natchez, and the Caddo.

As you look down this street, you see the New Orleans French Market, and on the other side of the historic market is the Mississippi River. For many of the same reason that Europeans established that market and a city at this precise location, Indigenous people saw tremendous value in this location for conducting trade and commerce. They chose this location for three primary reasons:

#1. It is along the Mississippi River, the world's third largest river system behind the Amazon & Congo Rivers. The Mississippi River drains over 40% of today's United States of America. Six hundred years ago, many American Indians were traders, and river systems were essentially their interstate highway system of the day. Boat travel up

and down the Mississippi was by far the most efficient way to move people, to move goods, and to conduct commerce.

#2. This location is on *relatively* high ground. It was the least terrible location to build city on the lower Mississippi River. For the first 200 miles upriver from the mouth of the Mississippi River, this location was the highest ground available. Before levies and flood control, the large crescent bend of the river caused extra sediment to be deposited along the riverbanks during the spring floods. Today most spots close to river in New Orleans are ten feet above sea level, and while this does not sound like much, it is far preferable to the elevation of any of the communities that later popped up further down the river.

#3. It provides a shortcut to the Gulf of the Mexico. Walking just a few miles over land from where we stand along the river, you will encounter a bayou that drains into the massive Lake Pontchartrain, which flows to the Gulf and the Caribbean. This shortcut was commonly used by early traders, both Indigenous and European, and could shave a couple of days off the trip.

Europeans discovered this site in 1682, when the French explorer LaSalle left French Canada, and discovered the source of a major river in today's Minnesota. LaSalle floated all the way down the Mississippi River, passing the American Indian village located here, and finally got to the mouth of the river. Where LaSalle stuck a French flag in the sand bar and claimed the entirety of all the land drained by the Mississippi River for France. France had claimed and possessed Canada for over 70 years, and now they had a way of connecting their French Canada colony to their colonies in the Caribbean.

Of course maintaining colonies requires more than sticking French flags all over the place. A nation can claim new colonies, but they could only possess what they can defend. A nation defending their claim on a colony requires the establishment of a settlement. LaSalle was unsuccessful establishing a settlement. In 1699 another couple of French-Canadian explorers by the name of Iberville & Bienville sought to strengthen the French claim on the Mississippi River and its tributaries and explored up the river from the Gulf. They were particularly scouting for locations to establish the French colony's earliest settlements. Bienville made note of the geographic virtues of the American Indian village located where we stand today. But it would be nearly twenty years later before Bienville, in 1718 returned to establish the capitol city of the French colony of Louisiana, La Nouvelle-Orléans.

The Choctaws and Chickasaws called New Orleans: "Balbancha", the place of many languages. The river always brought together diverse peoples, and with the arrival of the French in this historic Indigenous city, Balbancha was about to become even more diverse.



Fig. 6: Tour stop at Madam John's Legacy, 628 Dumaine St. French Colonial New Orleans.

The original French Colonial architecture looked quite different than what you see in today's French Quarter. The home behind me is one of the few remaining examples of French Colonial construction in New Orleans. Its architectural lineage was derived from the West Indies Creole homes, which were derived from the modest, vernacular architecture of the Normandy region of northwest France. In Louisiana and the French Caribbean, you will notice massive porch galleries incorporated in a traditional French home as an adaptation to the much warmer, humid climate. Such porch galleries were an architectural design element brought by the enslaved West Africans that actually built homes such as this.

French settlers, primarily utilizing the forced labor of enslaved West Africans, began clearing the land and building basic housing in 1718. These French settlers came from the European continent as well as French Canada and French colonies in the Caribbean, particularly present-day Haiti. Early French settlers trickled in slowly, but began a period of 200 years of rather constant, modest immigration of French citizens into New Orleans. New Orleans in 1718 must have been one of the least attractive destinations on earth for French citizens. New Orleans is hot, humid, mosquito-ridden, and alligator-ridden. This early New Orleans settlement was primitive, swampy, and subject to several floods every single year.

Many of the earliest French residents of New Orleans had to be coerced to immigrate here. In order to help facilitate settlement in the new Capitol City of the French colony of Louisiana, the City of Paris implemented a new city ordinance in which they rounded up who they referred to as "street people". This included the homeless, alcoholics, under-employed, and sex-workers that could be found on the streets of Paris.

Once imprisoned, they were given a choice between continuing their incarceration or accepting a one-way ticket to this alligator paradise. As you can see, many of our earliest French settlers, were not the most industrious individuals France had to offer.

Fortunately the survival of this fragile colonial capital city was not solely dependent on French settlers, and several other ethnic groups provide essential services and resources for the colony's survival. Free people of African ancestry that had acquired their freedom in other French colonies were very attracted to the opportunities available in a brand-new colony, and readily moved to New Orleans. The French were rather successful in maintaining positive relations with the large, diverse population of American Indians that lived here, and referred to the City as Balbancha. These Indigenous people provided food and the technical expertise necessary to survive in an incredibly harsh natural environment. In 1721, German colonists began arriving in New Orleans and settling just up river to farm lands and supply food to New Orleans. The region of present-day Germany was known to be home to some of the most proficient agriculturalists in the world. The French in hopes that they could produce food in this strange and challenging natural environment specifically recruited these farmers.

For most of the city's history, at least half of the city's inhabitants could trace their ancestry to Africa. These earliest years were no exception. Over half of the inhabitants of French colonial New Orleans were enslaved people from the French colony of present-day Haiti or people that had been abducted and transported from West Africa. In 1724 the French colony of Louisiana implemented the Code Noir, the legal basis for limiting the rights of enslaved blacks, free blacks, and other people of color for the next 100 years. This French code mandated that all enslaved people must worship in the

Catholic faith, specifically called for the expulsion of all Jewish people from Louisiana, and forbid enslaved people from being required to work on Sundays. It required owners to permit outside work and income for their enslaved people. It was important to the French that enslavement not be seen as a condition of perpetuity. They intentionally created legal mechanisms in which enslaved people could earn money and purchase their freedom. Such limited freedoms stood in contrast to the more rigid British colonial laws on the east coast of today's United States.

The implementation of the French Black Code in Louisiana was far more permissive than the policy itself. The application of the policy facilitated a cultural acceptance of intimate relationships between the French and people of African ancestry. The percentages of early French settlers were disproportionately men, creating an imbalance in options for marriage and sexual relationships. Relationships between French men and Indigenous women, free women of color, and enslaved women of color were very common, and created a large mixed-race population during the French colonial era of New Orleans. The experiences of this remarkably diverse community of French, Black, German, Indigenous, and mixed-race people varied significantly based on their race and class position.

Of the 500 years of history of this city, the French controlled the city for less than 50 of those years. And despite a steady stream of French immigration over 200 years of that history, German, Irish, Spanish, and Sicilian people far outnumber the number of French that ever came to New Orleans. Enslaved West Africans and Free People of Color likewise outnumber the French. Despite all of this, New Orleans in its soul, remains an undeniably French city, with the obsessive love of good food, alcoholic drink,

and entertainment ranging from high-cultured to debaucherous. New Orleanians, just like the French colonists, love celebrations, holidays, and absolutely any excuse to throw a good party. Three hundred years later this has not changed, and every subsequent immigrant group or nation to control this city has been shocked by the lack of restraint encountered from New Orleanians.



Fig. 7: Tour stop at Spanish Colonial home, 707 Dumaine St. Spanish Colonial New Orleans.

In 1763, France loses a major seven-year war with England, and rather than risk their Louisiana colony possibly falling into the hands of the English, they give it to the Spanish. France did not view this gift as a major loss. As we discussed earlier, the hope of the French crown was that the colony would make money. However, Louisiana, since its founding had always lost money for France. Spain viewed its greatest value as a buffer to help protect its highly profitable Mexico colony from the English along the east coast of today's United States.

New Orleanians send emissaries to Paris begging to remain a French colony, but return without success. Upon their return, 500 New Orleanians: French, German, Africans, & American Indian, lead a revolt against the Spanish and successfully overthrow the Spanish administrator and his troops. And for an entire year, New Orleans essentially functions as its own independent city-state, run by the revoltees. As you can imagine, Spain would not let such an insult stand, and asked an Irish Spaniard by the name of Alejandro O'Reilly to put down the revolution. O'Reilly leaves Spanish Cuba with 2000 troops, captures New Orleans on behalf of Spain, and begins investigations into the leaders of the revolt. Six blocks behind you lies the famous live jazz entertainment district of Frenchmen Street. It was on that very street that O'Reilly executed six of the French leaders responsible for the revolt. The street was later named Frenchmen Street in their honor.

Once Spanish administration was re-established, the French colonists were surprised by the lack of changes instituted. The Spanish administrators were content to maintain French customs, religion, and laws; they simply administered them far more competently than their French predecessors. The Spanish very much wanted to ensure

that New Orleans remained a welcoming place to the French and the French language. In fact, more French colonists immigrated to New Orleans during this Spanish period, than did during the French colonial period.

The Spanish administrators had to skillfully govern one of the most diverse cities on earth. Throughout much of the Spanish period, American Indians remained the largest ethnicity in the city, and rural Indigenous populations increasingly intermarried and assimilated in the diverse city. Since the Spanish maintained the French Code Noir, the city experienced a growing population of Free People of Color, and mixed raced individuals. The Spanish encouraged settlement from people around the globe. Their only restriction for living in New Orleans is that you must be Catholic. The French founded New Orleans as an exclusively Catholic city, and the Spanish were adamant about maintaining the city's devotion to Catholicism. It was during this Spanish period that the Acadians, also known as the Cajuns, were forced from their homes in the newly British-controlled Nova Scotia region of Canada. The Spanish welcomed these Cajuns into Southern Louisiana. The Spanish also encouraged immigration to New Orleans from its colonies around the globe. Colonists arrived in New Orleans in significant numbers from the Spanish colonies in the Canary Islands, Mexico, Cuba, and Chile.

Across the street you will notice one of the best remaining examples of Spanish architecture constructed during this period. This structure is a product of both Spanish municipal code and Spanish building customs. You will notice that unlike the previous French Colonial home that was covered with wood siding, this home is covered with stucco. Unlike many French home that set back from the sidewalk a few feet, this Spanish home sets directly on the edge of the sidewalk. These are changes that the

Spanish instituted in city ordinances to help mitigate the risks of fire after two massive fires swept through the French Quarter in 1788 and 1794. Prior to these ordinances the Quarter had a haphazard development pattern with ramshackle shacks, some homes with front yards, some setting directly on the street with larger backyards. The building patterns and scale that you see in today's French Quarter is actually thanks to the ordinances established by the Spanish in the 1790's and largely maintained in the French Quarter to this day.

The Spanish home across the street also exhibits some particularly Spanish characteristics. It is less ornate than the French structures that predate it. Most notably the home has a flat roof, very common to Spanish construction in the arid Mediterranean region or the arid areas of the vast Spanish empire. However, this is New Orleans, the second wettest city in today's United States. Flat roofs in such a wet region are a terrible idea; and most of Spanish structures throughout the French Quarter have been adapted to include pitched roofs to better cope with the massive amount of precipitation we receive. The home across the street remains the only example of a New Orleans Spanish structure that has maintained its flat roof through the centuries.

The forty years of Spanish governance of New Orleans were some of the more successful decades in the city's history. Spain instituted competent governance, pragmatic policies, and building codes that established the beautiful, walkable French Quarter that we enjoy today. Spain turned a struggling, muddy French colonial outpost into a bustling international port city.



Fig. 8: Tour stop at Creole Cottage, 731 Dumaine St. The Free People of Color.



Fig. 9: Examination of the bousillage construction technique on the Creole Cottage

The previous couple of French and Spanish colonial architecture are relatively rare in today's French Quarter, across the street we I would like us to look at the very common Creole Cottage. Earlier we discussed what it means for a person to be considered Creole. Creole architecture is quite similar. Creole architecture is the mixture of building styles from European, African, and Indigenous cultures that are adapted to use in this harsh subtropical climate.

Like most Creole architecture, the Creole Cottage is rather simple and practical. It consists of no hallways, simply four utilitarian rooms that could each serve a variety of purposes as the season's change and the family's needs change. These cottages are always side gabled with their roof running parallel to the street. Rather than entering the home through a front door, families almost always entered their home through a side alley and a door on the back of the house. Most early Creole Cottages were built using the brick between posts building technique that you can see here. This building technique was acquired from the local Indigenous population and is very rare to be seen anywhere outside of south Louisiana.

While the construction technique on New Orleans Creole Cottages originated from our Indigenous population; the building style, was a Creole building style that evolved in the French colony of modern-day Haiti. The large number of immigrants from this French colony is responsible for the widespread popularity of this building style. While New Orleanians of European ancestry certainly built and lived in them, Creole Cottages were most closely associated with the large number of Free People of Color, and more specifically the Free Women of Color, that emigrated from modern-day Haiti.

New Orleans was the only city in what would eventually become the United States to have a large population of legally free people of African descent. At many points during the French and Spanish administration of New Orleans, Free People of Color outnumbered the number of white people in the city. The French Code Noir, which was later liberalized by the Spanish, made the presence of Free People of Color possible. Unlike the British colonies on the East Coast, enslaved people could earn outside money and purchase their freedom.

During the Spanish administration rights for Free People of Color were expanded, and under these rights a remarkable class of people flourished within New Orleans society. The Spanish permitted enslaved people to earn their freedom by becoming priests or soldiers. Interracial marriage became practically legal under the Spanish, and Free People of Color could inherit property from their white fathers. Free People of Color bought and sold enslaved Africans and enslaved mixed-race Creoles. One third of all Free People of Color in New Orleans were the owners of enslaved people.

The numbers Free People of Color in New Orleans increased even more dramatically during the revolution of modern-day Haiti from the French in 1791. At one point during the lengthy revolution, a full half of New Orleans population was a Haitian refugee. Many refugees settled in the French Quarter, many more settled in one of the city's earliest neighborhoods outside the French Quarter, the Tremé, established in 1798.

As sister French colonies, with large numbers of enslaved West Africans and Free People of Color, Haiti and New Orleans were closely connected, and share remarkably similar, present-day cultural traditions. Many of the New Orleans cultural traditions that you will enjoy like brass bands, second line parades, and Mardi Gras Indians, can be seen

in a very similar fashion for those that happen to visit modern-day Haiti. These traditions generally trace their roots to the African homelands of the Blacks that cultivated these traditions over generations in Haiti and New Orleans.

By the turn of the century in 1800 Free People of Color in New Orleans had developed a large, yet distinct society, from the white population of New Orleans. Free People of Color, while culturally viewed as a lower class of citizen, enjoyed the same legal freedoms that their white neighbors. Free People of Color held most any professional position their white counterparts held: doctors, artists, musicians, craftsman, plantation owners, educators, writers, bar owners, vendors, butchers, prostitutes, moneylenders, brokers, poets, or seamstress. In fact, over 90% of Free People of Color held positions that were considered to be skilled jobs. People of Color outnumbered Whites in New Orleans at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, with slightly more People of Color being enslaved rather than free. Free *Women* of Color are particularly noteworthy and were particularly successful in navigating New Orleans society. Free Women of Color actually owned more property than Free Men of Color during the period.

But the Americans are coming to New Orleans, and the heyday of the Free People of Color would soon draw to a tragic end.



Fig. 10: Tour stop at Creole Townhouses, 835, 839, and 841 Bourbon St. Creole New Orleans.



Fig. 11: Sidewalk view into the courtyard of 835 Bourbon St.

At the turn of the century, Napoleon insisted that the Spanish return Louisiana to the French, as it was indispensable to his desire to eventually invade the United States. However crushing losses of French soldiers in the Haitian revolution, created an opportunity for the United States to purchase Louisiana from the French.

In 1803 at a ceremony in the Cabildo building near where we started our tour, the final transfer documents for the Louisiana Purchase were signed, and the United States flag was raised over the square. The thousands of Creoles gathered to witness the momentous occasion wept or cried out in anger.

New Orleanians could scarcely think of a new national administrator that was more dissimilar from New Orleans than the United States. Americans were largely Protestant, and comparatively tolerant of other religions. New Orleans was an exclusively Catholic city. New Orleans was a diverse, largely mixed race, cosmopolitan city with a thriving class of Free People of Color. Americans, like the British that governed before them, viewed slavery as a permanent condition and were aghast that New Orleanians of African descent could acquire their freedom, much less a place of stature in society. Thousands of Free People of Color quickly left New Orleans and largely fled to Spanish colonies that would continue to recognize their wealth and rights.

The Creoles were prideful, and many liked to think of themselves as descended from French or Spanish royalty. The Creoles viewed Americans as provincial, lacking class and culture. For nearly ninety years New Orleans had provided a place that enslaved Western Africans, former Parisian prostitutes, or an unskilled mixed-race laborer, could re-invent him or herself, acquire skills for new professions, and create a false sense of nobility. Creoles took great pride in their elevated positions in New

Orleans society. This class structure, while creating opportunities, provided far few opportunities for women and people of color.

Creoles were cultured and social. They opened their first theatre in 1792, their first opera in 1796, and held their first concert in 1805. In contrast, New York City did not have opera until 1830. For the entirety of the 1800's New Orleans would offer the best opera anywhere in the United States. Just like their French origins would suggest, the Creoles loved to drink, loved to dance, and loved life. The Creoles were comparatively open about their carnal lives, with prostitution being largely acceptable through the French and Spanish periods. Beginning in 1789, the French revolution began forcing many accomplished French chefs to flee their homeland, with a number finding a new home in New Orleans, further enhancing the city's reputation for good food. The Creoles had a reputation for being fun loving, and spending much of their disposable income on entertainment, drinking, and enjoying New Orleans restaurants.

These values and this lifestyle help explain the relatively modest grouping of three Creole Townhomes that we see across the street. Again, these homes are an example of Creole architecture: a unique blending of traditions originating in Europe and Africa and evolving in the Caribbean colonies. Just like Creole architecture in the Caribbean, New Orleans Creole architecture evolved in response to our specific climate and the natural resources available for building. Creole architecture also evolved to facilitate the lifestyles of the families that lived in these homes. Creoles largely were not interested in investing their resources in upscale housing. Creoles generally chose more modest housing. In a society that valued the living of life, rather than acquiring

possession, modest housing conserves the money needed for bars, restaurants, theatre shows, parties, and other creole entertainments.

Creole Townhomes were modest, utilitarian, and efficient. They began to be constructed after the fire in 1794. Vacant lots in the French Quarter were subdivided into narrower lots, homes got taller, and population density increased. Food was increasingly produced on farms outside the city, and less city land was required to supplement this food production. Just like the Creole Cottages, Creole townhomes did not waste square footage by including hallways.

Perhaps most interestingly, we are looking at the rear of these properties facing the street. Just like the Creole Cottages, Creole Townhomes originally did not have doors located on the sidewalk side of the home. Residents and guests of Creole Townhomes entered through the alley, which led to the courtyard seen in front of you. As rough as our New Orleans streets are today, they were far worse in the early 1800's. French Quarter streets were not paved, they were muddy, full of horse manure, and human waste from the chamber pots dumped directly onto the street each morning. No one would want to enter his or her home directly from a French Quarter street. These courtyards provide residents and guests a place in which they could remove their shoes or boots and clean up before entering their homes. While New Orleans Creole Townhomes are distinctive, similarities can be found with such home in the historic colonial core of cities throughout the Caribbean, Central America, and South America.



Fig. 12: Tour stop at American Townhouse, 819 Bourbon St. The Americanization of New Orleans.

Here is an example of American architecture that began to be built in the decades following the Louisiana Purchase. While this is a beautiful historic home that recently sold for \$2.4 million, this type of architecture is anything but unique to New Orleans. Greek Revival Townhomes such as this began in Philadelphia in the 1820's and began sweeping the United States of America in the 1830's. Greek Revival architecture was particularly popular in part, because it spoke to the aspirations of this young United States democracy. The architecture is modeled after architectural elements found in Greece, the original Republic. This home is significantly more ornate, inside and out. Unlike the Creole homes, American homes had front doors that opened directly on to the sidewalk. As a result, traditional New Orleans courtyards are less commonly found in American-style homes.

As different as Creole and American architecture might have been, the rest of their differences were even more extreme. The Americans that traveled down the river after the Louisiana Purchase soon began to despise the Creoles as much as the Creoles despised the Americans. While the Creoles found Americans to be stiff, uncultured, and racists; the Americans found Creoles to be lazy, debauchorous, and eccentric. Americans were particularly suspicious of the Creole's Catholicism. The Creole culture was a significant departure from the American protestant work ethic they saw themselves embodying.

The divisions between Creoles and Americans were physical, legal, and cultural. In 1812 a large coalition in the United States Congress attempted to block the admission of Louisiana as the 18<sup>th</sup> state because of our large population of Free People of Color.

Congressmen argued that if Louisiana were admitted as a state, that one day there could be people of African descent serving alongside white men in the United States Congress.

As more Americans moved down the river, New Orleans became an increasingly segregated city. But not segregated as in black versus white, segregated as Creole versus American. This dividing line lies seven blocks to your right, the wide boulevard of Canal Street. On the other side of Canal Street, you can see New Orleans bustling Commercial Business District, and area you likely refer to as a downtown. In New Orleans this side of Canal Street is downtown and includes the French Quarter and other historic neighborhoods that were largely populated by Creoles and recent immigrants to the city. It includes the Marigny, the Creole neighborhood five blocks to your left that in 1805 joined the Tremé as one the original suburbs of the old city. It includes Esplanade Avenue, the grand avenue of the Creoles, and the dividing line between the French Quarter and the Marigny. This exclusive avenue was home to the wealthiest Creoles. But since the Creoles had Esplanade Avenue, the American had to build St. Charles Avenue and the Garden District on their uptown side of town.

You see you could almost guarantee that anytime something new was developed on one side of New Orleans, there would soon be some facsimile of it replicated on the other side. If the Creole side of town built a new Opera House, the Americans would build a new Opera House on the other side of Canal Street. The divisions and hatred between Creoles and Americans would eventually become so rancorous; in 1835 the city asked the Louisiana State Legislature to divide New Orleans into separate municipalities. The hatred between Creoles and Americans had grown so intense that they could no longer tolerate sitting together in the same City Council chambers. As you can see today

by the large commercial building and skyscrapers on the American side of town, this game of tit for tat would eventually play itself out to the benefit of the Americans.

For all the disruptions to New Orleans' Creole culture, the stripped freedoms of the Creole Free People of Color, and the inefficiencies created by nearly two-decades of operation as separate municipalities, the arrival of Americans and their "protestant work ethic" and plantation system was a boon for the New Orleans economy. Beginning with the arrival of the Americans, sugar and cotton production began to replace tobacco and indigo as the largest agricultural commodities for the region. New Orleans population began to explode in the 1820's, as more than just Americans moved down into New Orleans. The Catholic roots of the city, made New Orleans an appealing destination for the Irish fleeing their famine in the 1820's. In fact, by 1850, one in every five New Orleanian was an Irish immigrant. In 1850 New Orleans was more Irish than Boston. The 1850's also brought a massive wave of German immigration. New Orleans gained a well-deserved reputation as America's melting pot. In addition to over a century's worth of immigration and mixed-race children being born, in the 1850's over 40% of New Orleanians were recent international immigrants to the city. These recent immigrants faced filthy living conditions and dangerous working conditions. They were generally looked upon by the Americans, with even greater disdain than they held for the Creoles. This racially diverse population of American Indians, Blacks, Latinos, mixed-race Creoles, and White Creoles, along with the rapidly growing vulnerable immigrant population, presented particularly extraordinary opportunities for the wealthy, white American class to exploit and abuse these lower classes of people.

The growth in agricultural production, the endless supply of immigrant labor to support growing industries, and the increasing importance of the Mississippi River for transportation, led to New Orleans becoming the wealthiest city in the United States of America. In addition to be the wealthiest city, New Orleans became the nation's third largest city, and exported twice the tonnage from our Port of New Orleans than did the ports in New York City.



Fig. 13: Tour stop at the intersection of St. Ann St. and Dauphine St., looking up St. Ann St. toward Armstrong Park and Congo Square. The Enslaved People of New Orleans.

During our last stop we discussed the importance of sugar and cotton production to the economy of New Orleans during the first half of the nineteenth century. But they were not the biggest moneymakers, slavery was. Enslaved human beings were the most valuable property in New Orleans. Enslaved people were more valuable than all the cash in the banks; they were more valuable than all the land, more valuable than all the buildings. Enslaved people were the most valuable “property” in New Orleans.

Enslaved people were some of the earliest residents in New Orleans, and for the first 100 years since the city’s French founding, enslaved people always outnumbered white people in the city. Enslaved people during the French and Spanish colonial periods came from other colonies, as well as being abducted and brought directly from West Africa. The French Black Code mandated that enslaved people not be required to work on Sunday, and Sunday’s quickly became a great source of strength and support for the enslaved New Orleanians. As we look down the street, you will see the large sign for Louis Armstrong Park. Within this modern park, lies the most sacred ground for people of African descent in New Orleans: Congo Square. Congo Square was the public space just outside the French Quarter where enslaved people would gather after mass to connect with each other and their African culture. Every Sunday afternoon they gathered to play traditional African music, engage in traditional African dancing, share cultural foods, and sell goods and produce.

The American purchase of New Orleans in 1803, impacted the lives of enslaved people to an even greater extent than the lives of Creoles or Free People of Color. The Black Code that had governed the treatment of enslaved people under the French and Spanish administrations was soon replaced with state laws that eliminated the very few

humane protections that had previously existed. Additionally, in 1808, the United States banned participation in the transatlantic slave trade. The United States government did not ban the institution of slavery, or the breeding of enslaved people, just the capture and importation of enslaved people from Africa.

This had a uniquely dramatic impact on New Orleans, as southern Louisiana had become the only part of the United States that required the importation of enslaved people to sustain their agricultural production. The large cash crop for the rest of the South was cotton, and enslaved people on cotton plantations were experiencing longer life spans, a balance in females and males, and subsequently many babies born into slavery.

The life of an enslaved person on a Louisiana sugar plantation was significantly harsher than lives on cotton plantations. From the day an enslaved person arrived on a Louisiana sugar plantation, their life expectancy was only seven years. While many aspects of sugar production take a greater toll on the human body than cotton production, the early day processing of sugar cane created noxious chemicals, and heat that was nearly impossible to survive for more than a few years. Enslaved persons on sugar plantations were also treated far more brutally and violently than in the rest of the U.S. Refugees from the Haitian Revolution not only brought this comparatively more brutal sugar plantation system to Louisiana, but they also brought with them large numbers of enslaved People of Color that had witnessed a successful revolution in which enslaved people destroyed the brutal sugar plantation system in Haiti. The wealthy feared these enslaved refugees from Haiti would sow seeds of discontent and spread revolutionary ideas of freedom, and they did. Building upon many small uprisings, in 1811 up to 500

enslaved revolutionaries made their way down river, burning five plantation homes and significant property, before being stopped 15 miles short of New Orleans. Later known as the German Coast Uprising, it was the largest revolt of enslaved people in American history.

In order to maintain the massive profits from sugar production, New Orleans plantation owners had to continually purchase new enslaved people to provide labor for the plantations. Since the United States banned importation from Africa, New Orleans plantation owners purchased the excess enslaved people from cotton plantation throughout the rest of the South. This caused the primary market for slave trading in the United States to shift from Charleston, South Carolina, to New Orleans. Between 1808 and 1860 1.2 million people were “sold down the river” and moved from the Upper South into southern Louisiana. There were over 50 slave-selling locations on the east bank of New Orleans. These were both auction and retail stores that held 500 slaves at a time. As we walk around the French Quarter recognize that many of the retail stores that you walk past, were once retail stores with human beings chained to walls and available for purchase.

Slavery touched every aspect of life in New Orleans. Enslaved people provided most of the domestic labor for families of any means in New Orleans. Almost every structure that we will marvel at today that was built before 1860, was built using slave labor. The horrors of plantation slavery created the wealth that literally built this city.



Fig. 14: Tour stop at Italianate Townhome, 831 Orleans Ave. The Civil War and Reconstruction.

Across the street I would like you to pay attention to the grey, two-story townhouse that has been owned by the same family since it was built 160 years ago. This home is of later construction than the Greek Revival Townhome we examined back on Bourbon Street, though it has similarities. This townhome exhibits Italianate architectural elements with particularly tall windows, a simpler entryway than the Greek Revival architecture. Unlike several of the previous townhomes which would have had their cast iron balcony railings added decades after their construction, this Italianate Townhome was constructed in 1860, during the popular craze of installing cast iron railings on New Orleans balconies.

The year this home was constructed also happens to be the year Abraham Lincoln was elected President of the United States. This was particularly impactful to New Orleans, the nation's center of commerce for the exchange of enslaved people, because Mr. Lincoln was elected on a platform of restricting the spread of slavery into additional states. As we discussed at our last stop, between 1808 and 1860, the institution of slavery had absolutely become the foundation of the New Orleans economy. Lincoln was viewed as such a threat to the economy of New Orleans and the State of Louisiana, that he did not even appear on the 1860 Presidential ballot in Louisiana. Nevertheless, Lincoln swept the electoral votes of non-slave holding northern and west coast states to win the 1860 election.

In 1861 Louisiana, along with 10 other southern states votes to leave the United States of American, and soon form a new nation, the Confederate States of America. Despite New Orleans being the largest, wealthiest, and arguably most strategically important city in the newly founded Confederacy, the elected and military leadership of

the Confederacy did not commit the resources to adequately defend this city. Instead most New Orleans' soldiers were sent east. The flamboyant, General Pierre Gustave Toutant Beauregard, was among them, and in fact ordered the very first shots fired on Fort Sumpter, which began the American Civil War. New Orleans, for its size and strategic importance to the Confederacy was left lightly defended by home guard soldiers.

Enthusiasm for the war quickly dimmed among New Orleanians. With the exchange, import, and export of goods at the heart of New Orleans' economy, the Union blockade of ships in the Gulf of Mexico and further up the Mississippi River, largely stopped the exchange of goods with any place other than the Confederate States. Prior to the war, New Orleans was averaging \$550 million per year in commerce. In the very first year of the war, that total plummeted to \$50 million, an economic drop of over 90%. The economic crisis deepened in year two of the war, and by 1862 the United States blockade of the Mississippi River was starving the city.

In April of 1862, Union Admiral David Farragut, cruises up the Mississippi River with 24 ships. After bombarding the two forts defending New Orleans for ten days, the forts fell, and Farragut's ships sailed unencumbered to the city. Farragut and his men entered the city where we began our tour at Jackson Square, and the U.S. Flag flew over the city that very day. Unlike countless southern cities caught in the Civil War, the fact that New Orleans itself was so lightly defended, spared it from the kind bombardment and destruction that was inflicted upon Atlanta, Columbia, and Richmond.

This capture began 15 years of tense Federal occupation of the city by the United States military. The remainder of the Civil War under occupation as well as the

Reconstruction years, was extremely hard on the city. New Orleans would never be the same, economically, or socially. The United States Military's Reconstruction process essentially sought to enforce Civil Rights on the city at gunpoint. But once the U.S. troops finally left the city in 1877, the New Orleans white population began to subject the city's black population to animosity and prejudice that far exceeded the increasingly racist attitudes that had evolved in New Orleans prior to the Civil War. This diverse, cosmopolitan port city that once prided itself on a relative sense of tolerance and acceptance of free people of color's position in society, now began to appear indistinguishable from other southern cities regarding the dominant white population's views on race.



Fig. 15: Tour stop at intersection of Dauphine St. and Orleans St., looking up Orleans St. toward Faubourg Tremé. Civil Rights in New Orleans.

The continuing economic collapse of New Orleans after the Civil War impacted the French Quarter more significantly than any part of the city. With freedom granted to enslaved people, the largest asset in New Orleans vanished, the means of production of sugar and cotton were in disarray, and the value of real estate plummeted to pennies on the dollar. Most French Quarter residents with some intact wealth, fled the French Quarter to live in newer neighborhoods. Vice became even more prevalent, with prostitution and gambling being some of the few sources of income for desperate, impoverished people.

The large French Quarter homes were subdivided into smaller tenements where Sicilians and newly freed slaves lived. From 1890 to 1910 a ship line traveled between Palermo, Sicily and the New Orleans bringing tens of thousands of immigrants. The French Quarter became known as “Little Palermo” or the “Sicilian Quarter”. In 1905 of the population of the French Quarter was 50% Sicilian, 40% black, with the remaining 10% being generational Creole families that refused to abandon their French Quarter. While the conversion of grand single-family homes, to tiny rental units, negatively impacted the condition of the properties in the French Quarter, the need to house recently freed slaves and the flood of Sicilian immigrants created an economic purpose for the buildings and kept them from being torn down. Racial tensions continued to increase. The racism of the dominant white Anglo population toward blacks and Sicilians, translated into an increasing disdain for the home of so many blacks and Sicilians, the French Quarter.

As you look over my shoulder and down the street, you will see the beginnings of the Tremé neighborhood. This neighborhood, from its earliest beginnings in 1725, was

always a neighborhood with large number of people of color. In fact, the Tremé is the United States' oldest African American neighborhood, and a hotbed of Civil Rights activism over several centuries. The Tremé was home to many highly educated Free People of Color all the way back to the 18th Century. Free People of Color that particularly worked as attorneys or newspaper publishers and knew how to lead, manipulate public opinion, and utilize the courts to fight against the further erosion of liberties for Free People of Color.

One of their descendants was a shoemaker by the name of Homer Plessy, who likewise lived in the Tremé neighborhood over my shoulder. Plessy's great grandmother was black, while the rest of his family was French-speaking Creoles that came to New Orleans during the Haitian Revolution. Despite being an Octoroon, or 1/8 Black, Plessy was legally considered black under the Jim Crow laws that legally established segregation throughout the South following Reconstruction. Plessy was active with the local "Citizen's Committee", a Civil Rights organization challenging Louisiana's segregationist laws. In 1892 they devised a plan to challenge the Louisiana Separate Car law that required white and black train car riders to sit in separate cars. Homer Plessy boarded a white's only train car a little over mile from here, downriver in the Marigny neighborhood. He was promptly arrested and charged under the state Jim Crow law. He was convicted, and over a four-year period appealed his conviction all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, where in 1896 the landmark Plessy vs. Ferguson decision laid out its "separate but equal" legal doctrine that cleared the way for legalized racial segregation in the United States for the next 58 years.



Fig. 16: Tour stop at Victorian Eastlake Shotgun Houses, 826 and 830 St. Peter St. Shotgun Architecture.



Fig. 17: Another view of Eastlake Shotgun homes on St. Peter St.

Now we have a chance to visit about my absolute favorite type of New Orleans architecture, the Victorian Shotgun. The term shotgun describes a long, narrow home that sits perpendicular to the street.

They are a modest type of working-class housing that generally contain no hallways. You would enter the front living room, pass through someone's bedroom, pass through someone else's bedroom, before arriving at the kitchen, which you pass through to make it to the bathroom. For people trying to construct homes as efficiently and cost-effectively as possible, hallways were viewed as wasted space. While you notice a tremendous amount detailing and ornamentation on the front of the house, if you look to the side, you will notice very simple economical materials. Largely built during the Victorian era, homebuilders splurged on the façade to make very modest homes, look a little fancier. Most shotguns were built as duplexes, or what we call double shotguns. Though some shotguns are single, side hall, or even camelback with a second-story component toward the back of the home. As these modest homes in working class neighborhoods aged, many New Orleans Shotgun neighborhoods in the 50's, 60's, and 70's evolved into impoverished, blighted neighborhoods, and many viewed the homes with derision. It has only been within recent decades that historic preservationists have widely embraced this quirky, modest type of architecture.

It is commonly believed that the name "shotgun" came from the ability of someone to stand at the front door, and shoot a shotgun all the way through the house and out the backdoor without any pieces of buckshot hitting a wall. However, architectural historians largely label that a myth. Our most sophisticated historical research today points to the origin of the Shotgun house coming from the Yoruba tribe of West Africa.

This tribe builds a very similar narrow home, and was captured, enslaved, and brought to present-day Haiti to work on the French plantations. Shotgun houses built in the 1700's exist in Haiti today, and after the refugees fled during the revolution, we began to see these types of houses built in New Orleans in the early 1800's. However, their popularity did not begin to take off until decades later, with most New Orleans shotgun being built between 1875 and 1910.

The Shotgun building type can be seen with a variety of architectural styles and ornamentation placed on them, depending on when they were built or remodeled. The earliest shotguns were a very simple vernacular type, followed by Greek Revival Shotguns, Italianate Shotguns, Victorian Shotguns, Neoclassical Shotguns, and finally Craftsman Shotguns. The two double shotguns in front of us right now, were built in 1890, and are late Victorian Eastlake Shotguns. Victorian Eastlakes are known for having overly elaborate ornamentation that many refer to as "ginger bread".

To this very day, Shotgun homes are the most common type of home found in New Orleans. Shotguns are more common than contemporary homes, ranch homes, or mid-century homes. New Orleans has dozens of historic neighborhoods in which virtually every single home is a Shotgun. New Orleans is not the only city with Shotgun houses, in that they are fairly common other river port cities like Memphis, St. Louis, and Cincinnati. But nowhere in the world is the Shotgun building type as synonymous with a city as in New Orleans.



Fig. 18: Tour stop with numerous Victorian Bracket-style Shotgun houses at the intersection of Dauphine St. and St. Peter St. looking toward Rampart St. The Storyville Red Light District.

Here I present to you what I believe is one of the most beautiful streetscapes in all the French Quarter, a block dominated by our unique, quirky shotgun houses. The backside of the French Quarter, where we currently stand, has always been a lower income part of the French Quarter, and thus an area where we are more likely to find Shotgun houses. These Shotguns were all built in the 1880's and 1890's and have their facades adorned with Victorian ornamentation.

The Victorian period was a particularly uncomfortable period for New Orleans. Across the United States it was a time of increasingly conservative social values and striving for an air of respectability. And while New Orleans was perhaps not as errant and debaucherous as during its French, Spanish, and Creole days, the American Anglos had failed to eradicate the decadent French spirit of the city. New Orleans could not have been further from the Victorian definition of "respectability". New Orleans business leaders believed that the city's sinful and carnal reputation, made northern investors leery of doing business in New Orleans. In 1897, to at least create a facade of respectability, the New Orleans City Council voted to create a vice district that would segregate prostitution to the specific geographic district that would become known as Storyville. This district sat a block from here, on the other side of Rampart Street.

Prostitution was a common part of New Orleans society and economy from its very earliest days. Sex workers were far less stigmatized in French and Spanish culture, than in English and American culture. Free Women of Color and White women engaged in the profession as one of few ways early New Orleans women could accumulate wealth. When the United States purchased New Orleans in 1803, and Anglo Americans began to relocate and visit the new American city, the demand for sex work increased

dramatically. Nowhere else in the United States were such carnal transactions so readily accessible. During the couple of centuries prior to the creation of the Storyville red light district, the technical legality of sex work ebbed and flowed. Often, sex work existed as a low priority for prosecution or a business that could be shielded from law enforcement with occasional bribes.

The creation of a legal red-light district came with strict prosecution of sex work outside the district, but fully legitimized sex work within Storyville. This legal certainty created an environment in which investors became comfortable pouring outlandish sums of money to create some of the most gaudy, opulent mansions ever constructed in the city. There were bordellos available for virtually any customer's taste and budget, with the higher end houses being located closest to the French Quarter. On a nightly basis over 2,000 sex workers operated in 230 houses in Storyville. While Black men were prohibited from anything but the exclusively Black brothels, White men could choose from White, mixed-race, or Black sex workers. The brothels were segregated, with the more lucrative White or Octaroon brothels along Basin Street, while Black sex workers were left with far less compensation in the back streets of Storyville. Mixed-race, White, and Black women, including madams like Lulu White and Josie Arlington, owned most of the brothels in Storyville. Many madams of Storyville accumulated great wealth, while owning and operating risky, sophisticated businesses.



Fig. 19: Tour stop at Craftsman influenced homes, 636 and 640 Dauphine Street. The Birthplace of Jazz.

In these impoverished Black and Sicilian backstreets of the French Quarter, turn of the century New Orleans was a desperate time. The city's economy had been depressed for four decades, and the most marginal in society generally suffered the most. It is common for desperate times to produce new traditions that help people cope with their traumas. It was in these impoverished backstreets of New Orleans that some of the most marginalized New Orleanians developed one of our City's most recognizable inventions: Jazz.

Jazz was invented by Blacks and Sicilians; it was a mixing of European, West African, Caribbean, and 100 years of distinctly New Orleans musical traditions. It grew out of old school New Orleans dance bands, ragtime, blues, and gospel. It emphasized individuality, improvisation, and emotion, to produce "good time music that you dance to."

Early jazz greats include Buddy Bolden, Kid Ory, Freddie Keppard, King Oliver, Nick Larocca, Toney Jackson, Jelly Roll Morton, Sydney Bechet, and of course Louis Armstrong. These musicians represented diverse ethnicities and cultures. Some were mixed race, descended from Creole Free People of Color. Others were recent Sicilian immigrants, while others were the Black grandchildren of people that had been enslaved only a few decades earlier. Many of these stars would eventually escape the oppressive, prejudiced, strictly segregated, Jim Crow New Orleans. Most took off to live in Chicago and New York, comparatively less segregated northern cities, where our Jazz artists established vibrant Jazz scenes that would eventually carry the art of New Orleans Jazz worldwide.

The two homes behind me were built during this early New Orleans Jazz age, which coincided with the Arts and Crafts movement and Craftsman architecture. The movement was a rebellion against machine-made, mass-produced overly ornate goods, and rather emphasized the use of natural materials found locally. It was largely a rejection of the Victorian era's façade, both socially and architecturally. Just like Jazz, Craftsman architecture emphasized individuality in construction, originality, craftsmanship, and creative expression. Now a century old, Craftsman architecture is the most modern architectural style you will find in our historic French Quarter.



Fig. 20: Tour stop at Greek Revival home at 521 Dauphine St. The Tango Belt.

This striking Greek Revival Center Hall home was built in 1852 for a wealthy Spaniard businessman. He made his wealth being the primary New Orleans importer of Cuban products, such as cigars, coffee, and tobacco. Prior to the Cuban trade embargo of the 1960's, New Orleans and Havana maintained an incredibly close relationship, economically and socially. The Spaniard importer later sold the home, and it served as the Spanish Consulate from 1871 to 1877.

As the French Quarter began to decline after the Civil War, this grand home would become one of the French Quarter's better-known gambling halls. It was known as the Lion. As the French Quarter became increasingly impoverished and crime ridden, this gambling hall's clientele became increasingly rough. City authorities eventually shut the gambling hall down, labeling it a "disreputable hell". You know a place must be rough when even the City of New Orleans is willing to shut it down and refer to it as disreputable. In 1892 this home sold at Sheriff's Auction for grand total of \$39.80.

These back streets of the French Quarter became increasingly rundown and crime ridden, until the closure of Storyville, gave these streets a new lease on life. In 1917 we were in the midst of the First World War, and the U.S. Navy Secretary was becoming increasingly concerned at how the rampant spread of venereal diseases was impacting the military readiness of his sailors. To curb these sexual infections, the Navy Secretary implemented a policy that the U.S. Navy would no longer operate any Naval Bases within five miles of an area of legalized prostitution. With New Orleans having several Naval Bases, some within the five miles of Storyville, the Navy Secretary traveled to New Orleans and informed the Mayor that he could either shutdown Storyville or the Navy Bases would be forced to relocate. Mayor Behrman laughed aloud at the Navy

Secretary, and nonchalantly conceded he would close Storyville. Mayor Behrman told the Secretary, “You can make it illegal, but you can’t make it unpopular.” Mayor Behrman knew the carnal and debauchorous side of his city very well, and especially knew with tens of thousands of young sailors passing through his city, that sex work would continue, whether legal sanctioned or not. But the City complied with the Navy Secretary’s request, completely shut down Storyville and technically criminalize sex work in New Orleans.

Beginning in 1917 sex work simply moved back underground, spread across the city, but concentrated primarily on these back streets of the French Quarter where we are standing now. These decaying grand old homes in the back of the Quarter suddenly found a new economic life. Through the 1920’s this part of the Quarter was referred to as the Tango Belt, referencing the seductive Argentinian dance craze was sweeping the nation. These old homes became jazz clubs, saloons, and of course brothels. The businesses, just like most all businesses in Jim Crow New Orleans, were racially segregated spaces for patrons. For over forty years these few back streets of the French Quarter served as the center of sex work in the city. Shrewd business owners, often women, such as the famous madam Norma Wallace, helped develop a sophisticated system of bribery and blackmail that included officers, police chiefs, District Attorneys, and usually the Mayor himself. This flow of cash and extortion almost consistently kept the brothels open for business. These entrepreneurial women accumulated great wealth and through creative means found great success in a culture that greatly limited opportunity for women.



Fig. 21: Tour stop at Hermann-Grima House, 820 St. Louis St.

This is a quick stop does not necessarily fit into our story's timeline, but I cannot pass this distinctive home without pointing out a bit of its history. The home is known as the Herman Grima, and was built in 1831 for a German-born cotton broker and his Creole wife. It was built in the Federalist Georgian Style of architecture, a rather uncommon style for New Orleans. During the Civil War the home served as the home for several of the highest ranked Union Officers. Today it operates as a house museum and provides a sober portrayal of the lives of the cotton broker that owned the home, as well as the enslaved people that worked as his property. If you have time, I highly recommend that you come back for this tour.



Fig. 22: Tour stop at 441 and 501 Bourbon Street. Burlesque and the Birth of Bourbon Street.

Welcome back to Bourbon Street. Before 1940, Bourbon Street was the most desirable, quiet residential street in the French Quarter. New Orleans began to boom with the United States entry into World War II. In addition to being the home of a number of Naval Bases, New Orleans was home to eight Higgins Industries plants that were responsible for producing over two thirds of all the vessels used by the United States Navy during World War II. This helps explain why New Orleans is home to the National World War II Museum. This enormous six-acre museum over in the Central Business District is one of our city's top tourist attractions, and in fact was recently ranked the #2 Museum in the entire world by Trip Advisor.

Beginning during World War II, Bourbon Street began to evolve into its status as a world-famous attraction. With the booming economy and the influx of tens of thousands young workers and sailors, the city could now support a new nightlife destination. This stretch of Bourbon Street became famous for its density of nightclubs presenting exotic dancers and risqué singers backed by jazz bands. Along a five-block stretch, each night over fifty burlesque acts were performed. Bourbon glowed with bright neon lights. It was a glitzy, opulent street where White men and White women dressed up for a fancy night out. People of Color were prohibited from patronizing the Bourbon Street clubs, although Black people were permitted to perform.

Behind us are the locations of two of the most very famous clubs: Leon Prima's 500 Club and the Casino Royale. These clubs featured performers in which fans would wait in lines stretching an entire block long. The women were fiercely competitive. They developed imaginative acts with creative outfits, extravagant themes, glittering accessories, theatrical lighting, and customized music. While most burlesque stars were

White, some Black women did find success by promoting their “exotic” beauty. The most successful women employed their own managers, agents, choreographers, and stylists. The burlesque stars socialized with Hollywood stars, and some Bourbon Street dancers found spots in Hollywood films.

These classy striptease shows provided steady work for some of the era’s biggest Jazz stars, including Pete Fountain, Al Hirt, Papa Celestine, George Lewis, and Sharkey Banano. In fact, Al Hirt opened his own club in what was the Casino Royale, and performed there for nearly 35 years until his death in 1999.

The 1940’s and 1950’s were the glamorous heyday of Bourbon St. The era ended in 1962 with the election of the infamous Jim Garrison as District Attorney. He campaigned on a platform to “clean up Bourbon”, and upon his election he intimidated and shut down all of the Burlesque clubs. Eventually the heavy-handed enforcement ended, but the Burlesque never came back to Bourbon. Later in the 1960’s, clubs returned but cut costs by hiring go-go dancers and strippers that were more flesh than flash. Most clubs replaced their live jazz bands with records and eventually DJ’s. Ironically, Jim Garrison helped turn Bourbon Street, into precisely what he campaigned against when wanted to “clean up Bourbon”.

For 40 years classic Burlesque was largely a lost art, until a renaissance emerged in New Orleans about 15 years ago. And while today’s Burlesque is a far cry from the 50 shows a night on Bourbon Street, Burlesque shows are available just about any night of the week.



Fig. 23: Tour walks down Bourbon St.

We are going to spend the next few minutes just walking down Bourbon Street, without any commentary. Very few tours wonder down Bourbon Street, but regardless of whether this a part of New Orleans where you will choose to spend part of your vacation, this stretch certainly gives you a sense of what the city's commercialized debauchery has evolved into in contemporary times. Even during this PG rated time of day on Bourbon, the atmosphere will create too much noise for you to be able to hear me. So just enjoy the block stroll, and when you get home you can tell your kids and grandkids that you hung out on Bourbon Street.



Fig. 24: Tour stop Preservation Hall, 726 St. Peter St., and Pat O'Brien's, 718 St. Peter St. Civil Rights, Jazz, and New Orleans Cocktail Culture.

Regardless of the occasion, be it a holiday, a funeral, a business lunch, or a kid's birthday party, New Orleanians frequently add two ingredients: music and alcohol. Locals are raised with a reverence for alcohol and an understanding of how to drink in moderation. If you see someone drunk in the French Quarter, the odds are highly likely they are a guest of our city, not a local New Orleanian. On this block, I would like to point out a couple of landmarks that epitomize our city's relationship with music and alcohol.

In the early 1930's a young Pat O'Brien was traveling home to Alabama when he stopped through New Orleans for the first time. He is a young, single man, and initially planned to just visit of a few days. But those few days turned into weeks, then a few months, then a few years. Pat O'Brien never returned home to Alabama. Instead he opened a bar in this location in 1938. It initially became popular with the creative bohemians in Quarter, then caught on with the tourists. Today they claim that Pat O'Brien's sells more alcohol per year than any bar in America. Their signature "Hurricane" cocktail was invented right there in the 1940's. The Hurricane joins a long list of cocktails invented in our city, including the Sazerac, Pimm's Cup, Vieux Carré, Ramos Gin Fizz, Brandy Milk Punch, and even the Hand Grenade.

Behind me you will notice the understated, but world-famous Preservation Hall. Its origins began in 1961, with a New Orleans honeymoon by a couple of traditional jazz enthusiasts from Philadelphia. Alan and Sandra Jaffe fell in love connecting over their mutual love of traditional jazz, and so a New Orleans honeymoon seemed fitting. Upon arriving in New Orleans, they were horrified to find that by the 1960's performing opportunities for the founders of jazz were becoming increasingly scarce. They found

some jazz greats bussing tables and hauling trash in the French Quarter, rather than sharing their art. The Jaffe's committed to establishing a venue that would rectify this.

These predominantly African American Jazz musicians were living through a time of significant racial tensions in New Orleans. In 1957 the precursor to Dr. Martin Luther King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference was formed right here in New Orleans. In 1960, federal marshals first enforced integration of New Orleans segregated schools, and in that same year Civil Rights activists began demonstrations through sit-ins at segregated lunch counters on Canal Street. The protesters faced violence and arrest for over two years, and were unable to persuade the diners to hire African Americans. By 1963 local Black church leaders were organizing larger protests, most notably a City Hall protest march of ten thousand activists demanding an end to police brutality and segregation. City Hall stubbornly conceded to some of the demands, but it was not until the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964 that many New Orleans businesses were forced to end segregation.

Amid this civil unrest and racial tensions, the Jewish honeymooners from Philadelphia committed to opening an integrated performance venue. Since opening in 1961, Preservation Hall has served as a shrine to traditional New Orleans jazz and a sanctuary for the genre's elder statesmen. Founded by a group of enthusiasts, and led by Alan and Sandra Jaffe, the spartan, unamplified performance room has featured a jaw-dropping roster of legends through the decades, many of whom were born before the word "jazz" was invented. In addition to several of the jazz greats I have already mentioned in this tour, Preservation Hall has played host to George Lewis, Punch Miller,

Sweet Emma Barret, Danny Barker, Irma Thomas, Jerry Lee Lewis, Lil' Wayne, and Mahalia Jackson.

The hall stands as a musical mecca for the thousands of pilgrims from around the world who visit each year to hear what New Orleans jazz is really about. Now run by the Jaffes' son, Benjamin, Preservation Hall remains a devoted torchbearer of the New Orleans jazz tradition while looking ahead to the future.



Fig. 25: Tour stop at Tennessee Williams' apartment, 634 St. Peter. Dixie Bohemia and Historic Preservation.



Fig 26: Looking up St. Peter St. from the Tennessee Williams apartment toward Bourbon St., location of the historic Desire Streetcar line.

On this third story balcony, in 1946, Tennessee Williams wrote his famous play “A Streetcar Named Desire”. Williams spent his mornings with a typewriter and cigarettes writing, and spent his afternoons and evenings with other creatives experiencing the gritty culture and decaying architecture of the city. Williams drew tremendous inspiration from this city. As he spent his mornings on the balcony, typing, he could hear the clanging of the historic streetcar that once upon a time rumbled down Bourbon Street. The streetcar line went through the French Quarter, Marigny, and all the way down to the Bywater neighborhood where it terminated at a street literally named “Desire”. Thus, where the streetcar line received its name, and thus where Tennessee Williams drew inspiration for the title of his play.

Tennessee Williams was just one of thousands of playwrights, authors, musicians, artists, poets, and other creatives that flocked to New Orleans in the first half of the 20th Century. New Orleans attracted so many creatives to our city, that we earned the moniker of the Dixie Bohemia. In the early 1900’s, the Sicilian immigrants that dominated the French Quarter for 40 years, climbed the economic ladder and began to find more desirable housing in newer parts of New Orleans. This successful immigrant story created cheap-rent vacancies, in a gritty, distinctive, fun-loving neighborhood, with a European spirit. As creatives began to settle in the French Quarter, it became an increasingly tolerant neighborhood that attracted more creatives.

Two blocks upriver from where we stand now, you may have noticed an enormous white marble Beaux Arts – style building that is sited far from the sidewalk and takes up an entire city block. Its material, style, and scale are completely out of line with any other structure in the French Quarter. An entire city block of historic buildings

was demolished to make way for that State Supreme Court building. But that demolition and its construction, provided the motivation necessary to put in place some of the earliest historic preservation protections of any city in the country.

During the first decades of the 20th Century, New Orleans city and business leaders began serious work on plans that would block by block demolish the French Quarter. It was an early form of Urban Renewal rooted in prejudice and racism. Many in the city saw the French Quarter as an impoverished, decaying neighborhood full of Blacks, Sicilians, Gays, and generally groups of marginalized people that the dominant class would prefer did not exist. They operated under the premise that if they eliminated the affordable housing that these communities relied upon, they would get rid of the people themselves.

A coalition of the newly arriving creative class in the French Quarter along with the long-term multi-generation Creole women that continued to reside in the French Quarter organized to pass an amendment to the State Constitution that in 1921 created only the second historic preservation protections in the country. Women did then, and women continue today, to play an outsized leadership role in historic preservation efforts. Over the last century the New Orleans historic preservation community has won and lost battles. Preserving these historic structures can be expensive, and we have lost several that collapse or been torn down essentially through demolition by neglect. However, the Vieux Carré Commission has some of the broadest authorities of any historic preservation commission in the country, and has won far more battles than we lost. In fact, looking towards Jackson Square, you can see one of the greatest victories, and rejoicing that you do not see and hear the traffic from an eight-lane elevated interstate

that Robert Moses was designing for the City of New Orleans in 1946. The threats to historic neighborhoods in desirable areas are relentless, and historic preservationists have tended to be White, thus creating far more historic preservation victories in White neighborhoods. The 1946 Robert Moses highway was built, but rather than built through the historic French Quarter, it tore through the city's most successful Black commercial district in the historic Tremé neighborhood. Despite the racial inequities, and varied record of wins and losses, today our city is generally quite proud of those historic preservation pioneers with the vision to preserve so much of what makes New Orleans unique.



Fig. 27: Tour stop in Jackson Square. Pictured is the St. Louis Cathedral and the Presbytere.



Fig. 28: Pontalba apartment building on the down river side of Jackson Square.



Figure 29: Cabildo building located on the backside of Jackson Square.



Fig. 30: Jackson Square's St. Louis Cathedral and statue of General Andrew Jackson.

We conclude our tour by standing in front of the most iconic images that most people possess of New Orleans. The Jackson Square that you see today is essentially the Jackson Square that you would have seen after its renovation and restoration with the wealth of the antebellum 1850's.

The most prominent landmark around Jackson Square is obviously the St. Louis Cathedral. A Roman Catholic Church has sat on the site since the city's founding by the French in 1718. Numerous replacements and major renovations took place for the church's first 130 years, but the St. Louis Cathedral you see today has essentially looked the same since it was completed in 1850.

The buildings flanking each side of St. Louis Cathedral are the Cabildo to the left and the Presbytere to the right. The cores of each building are wonderful examples of civic Spanish architecture, and were built in the 1790's. However, as part of the Jackson Square makeover of the 1850's, the Cabildo and Presbytere both had French Mansard roofs with dormers added to the buildings. This creates a slightly awkward mix of Spanish colonial and French renaissance architecture.

The Cabildo is certainly the most historically significant of the two structures. "Cabildo" is a Spanish term for place of government, and the New Orleans Cabildo served as the home of Spanish municipal government until the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. It was in that very building that the final transfer documents were signed, formalizing the Louisiana Purchase, and transferring 530 million acres, or parts of 15 modern-day states, from France to the United States. In the years since, the Cabildo has served as City Hall, the State Supreme Court, and since 1911 has been the home of the Louisiana State Museum.

The Presbytere, to our right, has a slightly less significant history. It was built to house the clergy of St. Louis Cathedral. However, for much of its early years, it served a commercial purpose, until it became the State Supreme Court in 1834, and finally became part of the Louisiana State Museum in 1911.

The red brick buildings on each side of Jackson Square were constructed by the Baroness Micaela Almonester Pontalba in 1851, and thus are called the Pontalba Buildings. The Baroness spared no expense in building these Parisian-style row houses. Restaurants and shops occupied the ground floor, while the upper floors housed some of New Orleans most well to do residents. The Upper Pontalba was eventually sold to the City of New Orleans, who maintains and rents the spaces to this day. The Lower Pontalba, where we began our tour, was donated to the State of Louisiana, on the condition that one unit of the row houses would forever serve as a house museum. That house museum is the 1850 House where we began our tour. If you have not already, I would encourage you to tour the museum and gain a better understanding of the lives of the people that were able to afford to live in one of the city's most desirable and fashionable residences.

For me personally, the iconic imagery of Jackson Square takes me back to the evening of September 15th, 2005, when President George W. Bush address the nation from this very spot. It was 17 days after Hurricane Katrina, the most destructive natural disaster in United States history hit New Orleans and the Gulf Coast.

The location of Bush's speech was not an accident, not only is this location iconic, but it is also one the highest points in New Orleans, a full 10 feet above sea level. While President Bush spoke from this spot, one of the highest elevations in the city, a full

80% of our city was still under water, 17 days after Katrina hit. In the few years after the storm, the population of the city dropped to half of what it was before Katrina. In the 15 years since, we've gain half that back, but to this day our population is still 1/4 smaller than before Katrina, and Black New Orleanians that were displaced, have been less likely to return.

While this may feel disheartening to hear a major American city still struggling to recover from a natural disaster fifteen years later, it is important to recognize the tremendous amount of work, resources, and faith that has been required just to get to this point. During President Bush's speech in September of 2005, he said, "And to all who question the future of the Crescent City need to know: There is no way to imagine America without New Orleans, and this great city will rise again." Between the administrations of President Bush and President Obama the Federal government has invested over \$75 billion in the Katrina recovery of New Orleans. Unfortunately, the resources were not invested equitably, and African American neighborhoods have struggled to recover and many Black New Orleanians were displaced through post-Katrina gentrification.

Today our economy is highly reliant on visitors like you, spending your hard-earned tourism dollars in our economy. In the average year, we attract over ten million visitors. However, the Covid-19 pandemic has severely reduced those numbers, and today our economy is struggling mightily. However, just like through the vast majority of our history, trade continues to be the heart of our economy. While the means of transportation has evolved, and the commodities imported and exported have evolved, our Port of New Orleans today, is the largest port system in the entire world.

Never again will we be the wealthiest or one of the largest cities in the United States. That chapter in our 300-year history has past. But today's New Orleans is comfortable in our own skin. We are not everyone's cup of tea, and we are okay with that. We always love to welcome adventurous, open-minded tourists such yourselves. We will always welcome the newcomer that maybe wants to stay awhile, and is looking for a good time or maybe just looking to find themselves. Because you see as a friend of mine says, if you want to live in New York, you need to make a lot of money. If you want to live in Los Angeles, you need to beautiful. But if you want to live in New Orleans, you just need to be yourself.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSIONS

This conclusion will provide an evaluation of the public history project presented in the preceding chapter. It will provide critical analysis, both personal and external. The conclusion will provide pointed guidance to other students or practitioners of public history on the strength and failings of the walking tour and attempt to share lessons learned through the process.

It is only after this thesis process that I can provide a substantive critique of the public history project. Prior to the initial development of my tour in 2018, my foundational knowledge of the methods of presenting public history walking tours was largely based on my rather extensive personal experience in not only participating in dozens of New Orleans walking tours but also being engaged with similar presentations of public history from the time of adolescence. Preceding the development of the tour I took a graduate level Public History course and Museum Studies course at Oklahoma

State University under Dr. Bill Bryans. While these courses offered a scholarly approach to the practical problems of public history, they certainly did not provide much in the form of theory or methodology specifically for walking history tours.

This more granular information would be achieved through the course in which this public history project was developed and the process of research and revision for this thesis. The Friends of the Cabildo Walking Tour Guide course offered a broad template for how other students had been able to most successfully construct their tours through the years. Given the condensed and intense nature of the one-month course, the instructors did not forbid the level of creativity I utilized in deviating from their template, but it was certainly discouraged. Through the process of evaluating my public history project through this thesis, I became familiar with a far broader scholarship and examples of innovative tours being presented around the country. While I did not possess this broader scholarly knowledge as I developed the tour, it has allowed for revisions to the original script which are more closely aligned to current scholarship within the academy.

The thesis development and revision process has produced a script that is distinct from the script originally developed in the spring of 2018 and distinct from any tour that I have actually given. It should be noted that the Friends of the Cabildo suspended walking history tours in March of 2020 due to Covid-19 pandemic. At this time, it is not knowable when the opportunity will arise to be able to present the new tour script in its intended context for the Friends of the Cabildo Walk Tour program. The critique that follows will be a hybrid analysis of the script as presented in this thesis written in 2020 and the tour as it was presented in the field from 2018-2019.

The distinctions between the thesis tour script and what is generally presented in the field are not dramatic, but the distinctions are note-worthy. Perhaps it is worth noting that any script for a lengthy walking tour will almost always be presented differently than it was written. In fact, prior to the development of this thesis for my public history project, a written script of the tour did not exist. I, like many presenters, was trained to work most effectively with notes and bullet points to create a mental roadmap for the sequence in which to present the historical facts. Notes are never used in the actual presentation of the tour but can be reviewed prior to the tour as needed. This allows for a natural, conversational presentation of the material rather than a regurgitation of a memorized script. This however naturally leads to certain historic details from the notes or the script being omitted in every tour. Omissions result from normal memory lapses and strategic omissions to be able to maintain the attention of the group and conclude the tour within the 2-hour timeframe. These omissions may simply be truncated versions of the material at a particular stop in which it is clear the audience is simply not connecting with the material or they might involve shortening the route and omitting stops towards the end of the tour.

The tour script has been bolstered through the thesis revision process by additional details on the violence towards and oppression of Black New Orleanians and the subjugation of historically marginalized populations such as women and immigrants. Stories of violence, racism, and oppression were a part of the original tour development and have been a part of each tour presented in the field. The thesis revision process revealed some of the ways the tour approached these topics with too much subtlety and provided valuable insights on eras of the city's history in which racism and oppression

were not properly highlighted in the original script. These additions can be particularly found in the narrative of post-Reconstruction New Orleans, in which the revised script now more persistently and pointedly reminds tour guests that New Orleans continued to be a place of oppression for Black people prior to the Civil Rights movement and remains a place of significant inequality for Black New Orleanians to this day.

The addition of this scholarly rigor to the narrative creates some tension with the constraints on the presentation of the script. The tour as written in this thesis would likely require at least 2 hours and 45 minutes to present in the field. This is not possible within the constraints of the Friends of the Cabildo 2-hour format. The other significant constraint is the audience for the tour. The Friends of the Cabildo distinguishes its tours as being entertaining, yet historically accurate. The program gives no indication that guest will be confronting stories of racial violence and the oppression of marginalized people. Historically my tour presentation has experimented with the limits that Cabildo audiences will tolerate when confronted with stories of racism and violence. The more scholarly revised thesis script will provide opportunities to more aggressively test whether how an audience seeking entertainment responds to more hard-hitting history. Being a fully license guide in the City of New Orleans, I certainly intend to provide 3-hour private tours that can allow for the presentation of the more scholarly rigorous narrative. Such private tours would also allow me to specifically market the experience to tourist as one focused less on entertainment and more on challenging, scholarly rigor.

Length and the quantity of material covered have been some of the most consistent critiques of the tour. From the earliest drafts submitted to my Friends of the Cabildo adviser and the course leaders, I was strongly cautioned that they felt the tour's

route was too lengthy and too informationally dense for a 2-hour walking tour. And while the FOC's lack of a guest evaluations policy means that I do not have systematized feedback, I do have some indications. They are somewhat mixed, even paradoxical. Anecdotally, my guests do occasionally convey that the amount of information presented is a bit overwhelming. Ironically the amount of material covered in such a condensed timeframe is also the most regular praise received at the conclusion of tours.

The approach of attempting to cover the city's critical history over its full 500-year timeline certainly has drawbacks and should not be attempted by every tour guide. Presenting a large quantity of information, without utilizing stories of individual New Orleanians to effectively convey the history, requires a particular style of presenter. It requires a presenter with an ability to present relatively dense information with clarity and a passion that conveys to the audience. I concede that storytelling of individuals in history is generally the most effective way of allowing an audience to personally engage with the history. For most styles and abilities in guide narration, the sharing of stories of individuals from history will work best. Indeed, as this thesis has discussed, this style of storytelling is central to the Friends of the Cabildo tour guide template and recommended in countless pieces of public history scholarship. However, sharing such stories of individuals tends to be incredibly time consuming. It would not be possible to even begin to approach the breadth and depth of my narrative if refracted through the lens of a series of historic figures. Thus, for a smaller subset of tour guides with a particular presentation style and motivation to present a broader and deeper narrative in the same condensed timeframe, this thesis presents a worthwhile alternative approach to consider.

A noteworthy strength of the tour is its ability to present a historically broad and deep narrative in a chronological fashion. As has been discussed previously in this thesis, walking tours that attempt to present a chronological history are exceedingly rare. It is rare that the built environment presents enough useable opportunities to construct a chronological narrative. Chronology is certainly not essential for most tours, particularly well-done thematic tours. But for a tour such as my own, which attempts to cover a broad swath of history, a chronological presentation is essential to help the audience remain engaged as a substantial amount of material is presented.

The attempt to cover so much material in a two-hour walking tour has drawbacks that I grapple with. These are my own critiques of the tour, ones that I have rarely heard externally. But I would like to give space to them because they have broader implications that public history tour guides might find useful to consider. To begin, one of my great regrets is that I am unable to fully engage on a personal level once the tour is underway. To explain why that is the case, “time” is a simple answer. The amount of material within the narrative does not allow time to get to know the guests, question the audience, and have them share personal reflections on some of the information presented—a common interpretative practice that is explored in the provocation subsection of Chapter 4.

The amount of material covered also does not allow time for me to offer my own reflections, including what I am willing to share about myself and my own perspective. Some of that is intentional on my part. When setting up this tour, I sought to style myself as an objective historical arbiter. I did not want the tour to seem polemical or political. Nor did I want the tour to be too personal—about me and “my” New Orleans. I wanted

the tour to be about the city. I still think the approach has merit. That said, in the process of writing this thesis, I have begun to realize that there is a flipside. In striving to give an “objective” tour, I have neglected to realize that a certain positionality is embedded within that. As a white male American, it is my privilege that allows me to suggest that I am narrating an objectively factual history; it is questionable if a young Black woman or a second-generation Latino would assume the same authority or be given it by guests. Second, by keeping myself largely out of the tour script, or not naming my own narrative as just that—my own interpretation—I might be obscuring the voice of someone who really wants to make a difference in New Orleans today: me. That is because I do, of course, have my own views, and they are embedded within the script. Walking this fine line—between academic argument, effective public interpretation, and outright social activism through heritage tourism—is a balance that I continue to struggle with.

Related to my own personal invisibility in the script is the fact that I do not have much time to let my audience find their way in either. I generally do not encourage the asking of questions, as they inevitably lead to portions of the narrative being omitted in later parts of the tour. Questions are generally answered to individual guests who pose them as we walk between stops, and thus those questions do not generally impede the tour narrative. It is also not uncommon to have a tour in which as many as half the guests on the tour wish to stay at the conclusion of the tour and pose numerous questions and engage in a robust conversation about the material presented. I am always willing to share as much time with them as they like, and in numerous instances have spent an additional hour in engaging historical conversation with my guests at the tour’s conclusion.

Such conversations have allowed for an anecdotal understanding of what the guests of this tour learn and take away from the two hours together. Given that I generally approach the presentation of New Orleans history from the exceptionalists camp, it should be no surprise that guests gain an understanding of the particularities of the city's history in comparison to other U.S. cities. The guests regularly comment that the understanding of this distinctive history is helpful for them to better understand why the New Orleans that they are experiencing seems so distinctive. The tour guests consistently take away that the city's most distinctive aspect of its history is its tortured relationship with race and inequality, and that the city's port history and its significant role as a hub for commerce (including slaves) is largely responsible for the diversity of people that have populated New Orleans.

The more perceptive guests often pick up on a few subtler through-lines of the tour. The city's role as a port city, in which so many easily marginalized people came willingly or through enslavement, creates more significant opportunities for the wealthy to oppress immigrants and enslaved people vulnerable to continued subjugation. Guests of the tour who come with a sense of the dominant tourist narrative of the city also tend to leave questioning that narrative. This experience most often takes place at the stop describing the city's central role in the domestic slave trade. This contradicts the common tourism narrative that because of the city's French and Spanish colonial roots and its cosmopolitan nature as a port city, People of Color had far preferable experiences to Blacks in other parts of the slave-holding South. The tour attempts to highlight when and why the experiences of People of Color in New Orleans differed in comparison to the rest of the South, while not losing sight that, in many instances, the city was central to

enslavement, segregation, and racial oppression. In fact, in many chapters of the city's history, the New Orleans record on enslavement, violence and racial oppression exceeds that of many of its contemporary southern cities. It is not the image that the New Orleans tourism bureau sells. It is not the take-away that most Cabildo tourists sign up for. But it is the truth, it is the history of New Orleans, and I think that the public is ready to hear it.

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## APPENDICES

### *Tour Notes of Original Tour, as presented March 2018 – March 2020*

#### **1. Introduction**

Good morning, my name is Ryan and welcome to New Orleans. I'm sure each of you've already recognized that life is different down here. The air smells different, the music sounds different, the people talk different, the houses look different, and the food certainly tastes different. New Orleans neighborhoods are different, each separated by a distinct history and a distinct combination of ethnicities that create distinct neighborhood cultures and identities. This morning we're going to talk about a few of those neighborhoods, and spend a couple of hours walking around the city's oldest neighborhood, the French Quarter.

Again, my name is Ryan McMullen, and I live in the Treme neighborhood, in a little shotgun house just a few blocks outside of the French Quarter. My favorite pastime is having absolutely nothing better to do than walk around the Quarter and enjoy the beautiful, gritty, decaying buildings, rich sensual smells, sounds of street musicians, fortunetellers, poets, brass bands, and other French Quarter characters. On certain blocks I feel like I'm transported back in time, and I imagine what my city was like when my great, great (7 greats) grand parents emigrated from France in the 1750's and made their new home in this French Colonial Capitol City. So that's why I volunteer as a tour guide for the Friends of the Cabildo, to hang out in the Quarter and tell the story of my city. I am a volunteer, so every penny that you paid for this tour goes to support the non-profit organization that supports the five historic museums of the Louisiana State Museum system here in the French Quarter.

Before we go, four quick rules.

#1. You are not in Disneyland, you are not in Colonial Williamsburg, the French Quarter is an actual neighborhood, people live and work here. When we stop to look at historic buildings, please make sure to leave an open path for sidewalk and doorways. Also please don't lean against or touch the buildings.

#2. Be particular cautious of cars crossing the street. While pedestrians have the right of way at intersections, Louisiana is the home of drive-through daiquiri shops, and not all drivers are as kind and attentive as they should be.

#3. Please put your cell phone on silent.

#4. If you need to leave the tour for any reason, please me know.

And #5. This tour is about the journey as much as the destination. So while we'll make several stops and talk about buildings and people, our walk in between those stops is just as much part of your experience. I want you to take it all in. The sounds, the smells, the people, the buildings, the entire streetscape. If you have any questions about anything you see, just ask. I can't promise I'll know every answer, but I do promise I won't anything up. So let's go.

## **2. 1850 Front - Cultural Context**

Why are we different? We are different because we are the northern-most port city of the Caribbean. More of Caribbean city than an American City. More in common with Port A Prince, Havana, and Cartagena than Cleveland, Atlanta, or Salt Lake City.

Closer to Yucatan than St Louis, closer Haiti than Boston, closer Cartagena than LA

Our culture's foundation developed when weren't part of the U.S., part of colonized Caribbean, Central American, and South American region. Other than language, in many ways we're more South American and Caribbean than culturally connected to the U.S.

Colonization began when Columbus landed in the Caribbean in 1492 and claimed the region for Spain. Beginning in the late 1500's, other European countries began to capture parts of the Caribbean for themselves.

Colonies established with the explicit purpose of making money, for Europe. They would sail in, attempt to enslave or kill the native people, and bring in kidnapped, captured, and enslaved west Africans to do the work. And then Europe made money off of their colonies primarily from mining gold and silver or farming sugar and tobacco.

As these plantations and mining operations are established, communities and families are established, and children are born. That generation with European and African parents, and born in the Caribbean colonies, were called Creoles. These Creoles were a unique product of the environment and diverse cultures that surrounded them. They were sometimes, but not always, products of mixed-race relationships. It was not uncommon during those times, and widely accepted, for Spanish, Natives, French, and Africans (both free and enslaved) to produce mixed race children.

In the English colonies, both in the Caribbean and on the east coast of today's U.S., such racial mixing was taboo and not part of the English way. So keep that in mind, the French & Spanish viewed race VERY, VERY differently from the English and their British colonies, & that's a thread that is going to run through our entire history of New Orleans.

### **3. Chartres & Madison – Geography, Indians & Explorers**

300<sup>th</sup> Birthday, NO much older, history of NO did NOT begin 300, trading post settlement.

20 million Indians along coasts of the Caribbean, lower MS River Pre-European Indians were mound builders, earthen pyramids, dozens Indian languages here, extensive trade networks

The Indians chose this spot

- #1. It's along the Mississippi. World's 3rd largest, behind Amazon & Congo, drains over 40% of U.S. The Indians are traders, and the river was like their Interstate Hwy
- #2. It's relatively high ground. It's the least terrible location.
- #3. It provides a shortcut to the Gulf.

Europeans discovered the site in 1682, when French explorer LaSalle left French Canada, found the beginning of the River in today's Minnesota, floats all the way down the river, passes the NOLA Indian village, get to the mouth of the river, and claims for France. France has been in Canada for over 70 years, and now they have a way of connecting their French Canada colony to their colonies in the Caribbean.

You can claim, but you only possess what you can defend. 1699 Iberville & Bienville visit future NOLA, establish in 1718 by Bienville, for the same reasons the Indians were here.

Choctaws & Chickasaw called New Orleans: "Balbancha", the place of many languages, The river always brought together diverse peoples.

### **4. 628 Dumaine, Madame John's - French Colonial**

Quarter looked very different, French Colonial. French Colonial derived from modest/vernacular architecture of NW France (Normandy) & West Indie Creole House. Gallery from W Africans to Haiti, & thus NOLA.

French settled, began 200 years of French immigration. Early French colonists arrived slowly: France, Canada, Haiti. Initially, most had to be tricked or forced to come. Most French women were prostitutes from Paris prisons. French didn't work, needed others.

In 1721, German colonists began arriving in New Orleans and settling just up river on the German Coast to farm lands and supply food to New Orleans. Plus Indians.

Work done by Free Black Creoles and enslaved west Africans, brought from French Caribbean colony in Haiti. Code Noir / Black Code in 1724. Catholicism mandated. Permitted outside work and to purchase own freedom. Very different than the British colonies to the east. The French Black Code served as the basis for race and slave treatment until the 1820's when LA adopted codes from Southern States.

Most French colonists were men, had few marriage options, intimate relationship with Indian & Enslaved women. Creating large mixed race population.

Fragile existence, only survived because of enslaved Africans, friendly Indians, hardworking German farmers.

“The feeling, the flair, and style of the city always were and still are French. The love of balls, celebrations, and holidays is a large part of its lifestyle. The lack of restraint shocked the Spanish and surprised the Americans.

### **5. 707 Dumaine, De La Torre House – Spanish Colonial, LA Purchase**

1750s France loses war to England, gives LA to Spain in 1762. LA hasn't been profitable, France can't defend it, but Spain can. Spain views LA as a buffer to protect Mexico, their crown jewel

Local are pissed, go to Paris begging to be taken back. France doesn't, then 500 French, German, Africans, & Indians revolt, kicks out Spain. Within a year, an Irishman serving Spain, Alejandro O'Reilly leaves Cuba with 2000 troops retakes NOLA, and executes 6 French leaders on Frenchmen.

Spanish leaders maintained French laws and customs, just more competent. More French came during the Spanish, than during French period.

Colony still largely Indians, then Africans, growing mixed race population, then whites. Spain wanted catholics from anywhere. Brought in Acadians, & Spanish from Canary Islanders, Mexico, Cuba, and Chile. Colony was becoming more prosperous.

1788 & 1794 fires. The French Quarter before 1788 was haphazard with ramshackle shacks, some yards, some on the streets, total disorganized development. New building codes, today's FQ thanks Spain

Spanish Colonial House, fire proof, flat roof. The roof served a similar purpose as balconies and galleries. Women washed & ironed, and men socialized and hopped from roof to roof. Flat roof's eventually replaced, 2<sup>nd</sup> wettest city in U.S.

Spain turned a struggling, muddy French colonial outpost into a bustling international port city.

## **6. 731-33 Dumaine, 1820 Creole Cottage – FPOC, Haiti**

Previous architecture rare, now we look at common architecture.

Define creole. Creole cottage, 4 room, brick between post, stucco covered, side gabled, no halls, roof parallel to street. Typically entered from the back. Brought from Haiti, frequently owned by FWOC.

Only part of today's U.S. with free Africans. Several points, FPOC population equaled whites. FPOC arrived in earliest days, Code Noir, totally unlike America, could work & earn money for freedom, first slave freed in 1740's.

Spain treated slaves even better, further liberalized slave laws, could become priests or soldiers and earn freedom, numbers of enslaved buying or given freedom skyrockets under Spanish, interracial marriage practically legal, FPOC children could inherit property from white fathers, FPOC could buy and sell enslaved Africans & enslaved Creoles, 1/3 of FPOC were slave owners.

Haiti revolted in 1791, refugees began to come. In 1809, some 10,000 Saint-Domingue (Haitian) refugees arrived in NOLA, doubling our population. About one-third were white elite, one-third were free people of color, and one-third were enslaved. Many settled in FQ, many more settled in Treme, established in 1798.

Haiti & New Orleans had close early connections as sister French colonies: Brass Bands, Second Line Parades, Mardi Gras Indians. Those traditions are still particularly alive in Treme neighborhood today.

FPOC professions were similar to whites: doctor, artists, musicians, craftsman, plantation owners, educators, writers, bar owners, vendors, butchers, prostitutes, moneylenders, brokers, poets, or seemstress. Less than 10% FPOC had an unskilled job. FQ build by FPOC, and enslaved.

But the Americans are coming, and the heyday of the FPOC would soon end.

## **7. 835, 839, 841 Bourbon, 1833 Creole Townhouse**

Napoleon wanted LA back, Haiti disaster, LA Purchase, Creoles wept. One thing we all had in common (All Creoles) is we hated the British. Americans are just white trash British, that happened to win their independence. Thought Americans provincial, lacked class & culture. They also had very different views on race. A number of FPOC left NOLA after the Americans took over.

Creoles were prideful, and thought of themselves descended from French royalty, even though they likely came from criminals or lower class early settlers. New Orleans presented an opportunity to create false nobility and false classes.

Creoles were cultured and social. First theatre in 1792, first opera in 1796, first concert in 1805. NY didn't have opera until 1830. For the entirety of the 1800's NOLA offered the best opera in the U.S. They loved to drink, loved to dance, and loved life.

Creole fun-loving, parties, culture, dancing, theatre, opera, eating, drinking. Because of French Revolution, many French chefs lost their employment, and many immigrated to the U.S.

Creole architecture: a unique blending of traditions originating in Europe and evolved in the Caribbean colonies. Like its West Indies source, NOLA architecture evolved in response to climate & natural resources, & the traditions of diverse cultures to produce and architecture, and consequently lifestyle, that is distinctly New Orleans.

Courtyard townhouses developed after '94 fire. Lots were subdivided, got narrower, density increased with food produced outside city,

City wasn't segregate black versus white. Largely segregated American versus Creole. Americans went upriver. Creoles stayed in FQ, and settled Marigny in 1805, wealthy along Esplanade.

Canal St, neutral ground, 1835-1853 City divided into 3 municipalities

## **8. 819 Bourbon, 1850 Greek Revival American Townhouse, Antebellum Period**

Americans didn't like Creoles: FPOC, Catholic, culture, lazy, Americans were formal, industrious, made tons of money  
Mansions on St. Charles

Structure: Greek Revival began in Philly and began sweeping the nation in the 1820's and 1830's. The young democracy of the U.S. liked to think of themselves like Greece, and it was very formal, serious time for the young country.

Antebellum Period

In 1800 sugar & cotton replace tobacco & indigo

1840 = 100k, 3<sup>rd</sup> largest city, wealthiest U.S. city, tonnage double NYC,

1820's Irish began coming from famine. NO appealed due to its Catholic roots and economic opportunities. By 1850, one in five New Orleanians were Irish, next to NY most Irish city in U.S.

Lots of German came in 1850's

We were the nation's melting pot, with 40% of our city being immigrants.

## **9. St. Ann & Dauphine, Congo Square, Slavery**

Last stop we talked of sugar and cotton. But they weren't the biggest money makers. Slavery was. Enslaved people were most valuable property, more than land, more than buildings.

Slaves were some of first residents, and always outnumbered for the first 100 years. Colonial slaves came from other colonies, and west Africa. Congo Square, Sundays, market, dancing, music.

In 1808, US bans transatlantic slave trade. Between 1808-1860 1.2 million people were "sold down the river" moved from the Upper South to the Lower South. There were over 50 slave selling locations on the east bank of New Orleans. These were both auction and retail stores that held 500 slaves at a time.

Why? Cotton slaves' lives are brutal, but... The lifespan for a sugar slave was only 7 years. Slaves up river lived longer and had babies. When African captives were cut off, LA sugar plantation needed a new supply.

New Orleans is the largest slave market during the domestic slave period.

Lots of runaways happened in New Orleans because this where they were sold and transferred, separated from families, and had opportunities to escape.

Urban slaves, are doing a very broad range of jobs. Typically very skilled. Access to support networks: Congo Square, St. Augustine Church. Educated, multi-lingual. They were peddlers, musicians, nurses, played the clarinet.

Slavery touched every aspect of life in New Orleans. The horrors of plantation slavery created the wealth that built the city. City slaves enjoyed greater freedoms and less hardship, but still property. Much of the FQ was built with slave labor. New Orleans could not exist in the way we exist today without enslaved peoples.

## **10. 833 Orleans, 1860 Townhouse, Civil War, Reconstruction, Slums, Sicilians, Plessy**

1860 Italiante Townhouse. Same family still owns.

In 1861 Louisiana along with 10 other states seceded from the Union based on Lincoln's election. Platform to stop the further spread of slavery. Given that enslaved people were the basis of economy at the time, joined CSA.

Largest, most prosperous, and most strategically important City in the South. CSA didn't fear Yankees invading Louisiana, so most LA troopers were sent east. Home to CSA only black troops. Flamboyant Creole PGT Beauregard order first shots fired on Fort Sumpter. Enthusiasm for War quickly dimmed. Before war we have \$550 million in commerce, after blockade that shrunk to \$50 million.

Economic crises deepens in 1862. The blockade is starving the city, yet the Confederate gov't isn't concerned about NOLA. And in April of 1862 Union Admiral David Faragaut cruises around the Gulf and up the Mississippi with 24 ships and captures New Orleans with very little blood. He hops off his ship, and he and his troops walk into the FQ right in front St. Louis Cathedral down the street. The Confederacy's incompetency saved the City. Virtually all other major southern city's were bombarded and burned during the war. The capture began 15 years of Federal occupation. War & reconstruction hard on the city. Slavery was abolished, industry decimated. New Orleans would never be the same, economically or racially. The U.S. imposed Civil Rights at gunpoint, and as soon as the Federal troops left in 1877, NOLA's white population began to subject the city's black population to animosity that was more like the rest of the south than the traditional creole views on race.

*Walk across Dauphine...*

Step back, what's going on after reconstruction? Post-war FQ declines, manufacturing and warehouses come in the Quarter. Wealthy left the Quarter, big homes were divided into tenements where Sicilians and newly freed slaves lived. 1890-1910 mostly Sicilians, on a ship from Palermo to New Orleans. FQ known as Little Palermo or the Sicilian Quarter. In 1905, 50% were Sicilian, 40% black, the rest white creoles in FQ. If Sicilians hadn't come in and rented FQ, they would have been more likely to have been torn down.

Racial & ethnic tension increase, white NOLA hates blacks and Sicilians. So they hate the FQ.

Treme is home to lots of FPOC and Haitian refugees, one of those descendents is a man by the name of Homer Plessy that lives in the Treme neighborhood.

Plessy story. 1896 – 1954, segregated nation.

## **11. 826-832 St. Peter, Victorian, Respectability, Storyville**

1890 late Victorian, Eastlake

Architectural type, Yoruba tribe in west Africa to Haiti to New Orleans, Roof ridge perpendicular to street, hipped, front gabled, on gable on hip.

Early 1800's – 1920. Peak of 1875-1910, during Victorian

Common types: single, double, side hall, camelback

Different styles place on shotgun: Greek Revival, Italianate, Victorian, Neoclassical, & craftsman

*Walk to 900 block of St. Peter. Check out the Shotguns, then talk about... Prostitution & Storyville.*

Fun, fanciful, fancy, Respectability, segregating vice. New concept for New Orleans, was legal for much of our history, and tolerated for all of it. Prevalent in the colonial times, out of necessity. When Americans came down, it exploded, because they didn't have access to it.

1897-1917. 2000 sex workers worked in 230 houses during the peak of Storyville.

## **12. 636 Dauphine, Craftsman, Jazz**

In the impoverished black and Sicilian backstreets of New Orleans, turn of the century was desperate time, and as is common desperate times produce new traditions that help people cope through the times. It was in these that New Orleanians developed one of our most recognizable inventions: Jazz. Jazz was blacks and Italians, mixing of European, west African, Caribbean, and 100 years of distinctly New Orleans traditions.

Grew out of old school NOLA dance bands, ragtime, blues, and gospel. Individuality, improvisation, emotional. "Good time music that you dance to."

Early jazz greats include Buddy Bolden, Kid Ory, Freddie Keppard, King Oliver, Nick Larocca, Toney Jackson, Jelly Roll Morton, Sydney Bechet, and of course Louis Armstrong. These musicians were mixed race, descended from Creole FPOC, 100% black folks whose grandparents were enslaved, and Sicilian whites.

Most of these stars would eventually take off to Chicago and New York, and carry New Orleans jazz worldwide.

The two homes behind me were built during our early Jazz age, which was also the Craftsman age. Explain Craftsman. The movement was a rebellion against machine-made, mass-produced overly ornate goods, and rather emphasized the use of natural materials found locally. Just like Jazz, Craftsman architecture emphasized individuality in construction, originality, craftsmanship, creative expression.

## **13. 521 Dauphine, 1852 Xiques House, Tango Belt**

1852 Greek Revival Center Hall, built for wealthy Spaniard businessman. Made his money importing Cuban products: cigars, tobacco, & coffee. Served as the Spanish Consulate from 1871 to 1877. As the FQ declined post Civil War, it became one the FQ's better know gambling hall's, it was named the "Lion". City authorities eventually

labeled it a “disreputable Hell” after the Spanish consul was murdered, and the city shut the gambling hall down. In 1892, sold at Sheriff’s Auction for \$39.80.

These decaying grand old queens in this part of the Quarter got a new life after the Navy forced Storyville’s closure.

“You can make it illegal, but you can’t make it unpopular” – Mayor Behrman

Tango Belt, 1910-1920, St. Louis & Dauphine, seductive Argentine dance, jazz clubs, saloons, & brothels, 30’s & 40’s got sleazier. Operated with bribery & blackmail from officers to police chiefs, DA’s, to mayors. Norma Wallace operated until 1960’s

**\* Mini-stop @ 1831 Herman Grima**

1831 Federalist Georgian Style of Architecture brought by the Americans after LA Purchase., built for German-born cotton broker & his Creole wife. During the Civil War, served as quarter for the Union Officers. Tours available.

**14. 441 & 501 Bourbon, Burlesque & Jazz**

Welcome to Bourbon St! Before 1940, Bourbon was the most desirable, quiet & residential street in FQ. Boomed during WW2, naval bases with tens of thousands of sailors, and major production. 92% of the entire Navy during WW2 built here. Talk of museum. #2 Museum in the World per Trip Advisor!

Beginning during WW2, Bourbon St. became world famous for its concentration of burlesque entertainment. Five-block stretch, over fifty acts, every night. Street gleamed with neon, glamorous street, people dressed in their finest.

Leon Prima’s 500 Club and the Casino Royale. These clubs featured some of the most famous performers, fans would wait in lines stretching an entire block. The performers were extremely competitive. They gained star status, with their own hairstylists, maids, assistants, agents, and managers. Mingled with Hollywood, and some had roles in Hollywood films.

Classy strip-tease shows provided steady work for some of the era’s biggest Jazz stars, including Pete Fountain, Al Hirt, Papa Celestine, George Lewis, and Sharkey Banano. In fact Al Hirt opened his own club in what was the Casino Royale, and performed there for nearly 35 years until his death in ’99.

In 1962 Jim Garrison was elected DA to “clean up Bourbon”. He intimidated and shutdown Burlesque clubs. Eventually the heavy handed enforcement ended, but the Burlesque never came back to Bourbon. Later, clubs cut costs by hiring go-go dancers and strippers. Most clubs replaced their live jazz bands with records and eventually DJ’s.

Ironically, Jim Garrison helped turn Bourbon St., into precisely what he campaigned against when wanted to “clean up Bourbon”.

For 40 years classic Burlesque was largely a lost art, until a renaissance emerged in New Orleans about 15 years ago. And while today’s Burlesque is a far cry from the 50 shows a night on Bourbon St., Burlesque shows are available just about any night of the week.

### **15. 726 St. Peter, Preservation Hall, Pat O’Brien’s**

New Orleanians care deeply about tradition and about being connected to past. And we respect the need to celebrate, console ourselves, and carry on through great challenges, almost always accompanied by alcohol and music.

Locals are raised with a reverence for alcohol and how to drink in moderation, if you see someone drunk in the FQ, odds are they are a visitor or recent arrival, not a local New Orleanian.

In the early 1930’s a young Pat O’Brien was traveling home to Alabama when he stopped through NOLA for the first time. His visit of a few days turned into weeks, then months, then years. Pat O’Brien never returned home to Alabama. Instead he opened a bar in this location in 1938. It initially became popular with the creative bohemians in Quarter, then caught on with the tourists. Today they claim that Pat O’Brien’s sells more alcohol per year than any bar in America. Their signature “Hurricane” cocktail was invented right there in the 1940’s. The Hurricane joins a long list of cocktails invented in our city, including the Sazerac, Pimm’s Cup, Vieux Carre, Ramos Gin Fizz, Brandy Milk Punch, and even the Hand Grenade.

Since opening in 1961, Preservation Hall has served as a shrine to traditional New Orleans jazz and a sanctuary for the genre’s elder statesmen. Founded by a group of enthusiasts including Alan and Sandra Jaffe, the spartan, unamplified performance room has featured a jaw-dropping roster of legends through the decades, many of whom were born before the word “jazz” was invented.

The hall stands as a musical mecca for the thousands of pilgrims from around the world who visit each year to hear what New Orleans jazz is really about. Now run by the Jaffes’ son, Benjamin, Preservation Hall remains a devoted torchbearer of the New Orleans jazz tradition while looking ahead to the future.

George Lewis, Punch Miller, Sweet Emma Barret

Danny Barker, Irma Thomas, Jerry Lee Lewis, Lil’ Wayne, Mahalia Jackson,

## **16. 632 St. Peter, Dixie Bohemia & Preservation**

In 1946 Tennessee Williams writes Streetcar, up on third floor balcony listening to the desire streetcar roll down Bourbon St. TW part of Dixie Bohemia that teamed with wealthy women to save their Quarter.

In the 20's sicillians begin to move out, and creative move in.

Supreme Court, Armstrong Park happened

1921 State Constitution authorized, 1925 VCC created,

Investments & Preservation efforts of the 1930's gentrified FQ & made it touristy

1946 Robert Moses proposes Riverfront Expressway

## **17. Jackson Square, Katrina, 5 points, NOLA Today**

Most iconic image, this is the square of the 1850's antebellum New Orleans. List 5 points.

Most well known, for Sept. 15, 2005, 17 days after Hurricane Katrina, the most destructive storm in U.S. history hit New Orleans and the Gulf Coast.

The location of Bush speech was not an accident, not only is this location iconic, but it's also one the highest points in New Orleans, a full 10 feet above sea level. As discussed earlier elevation drops from river. 80% of our city was under water. In the few years after the storm the population of the city dropped to half of what it is. Since then, we've gain half that back bet we're still 25% smaller than before Katrina.

President Bush - "And all who question the future of the Crescent City need to know: There is no way to imagine America without New Orleans, and this great city will rise again."

Feds with Bush & Obama invested over \$75 billion in NOLA recovery.

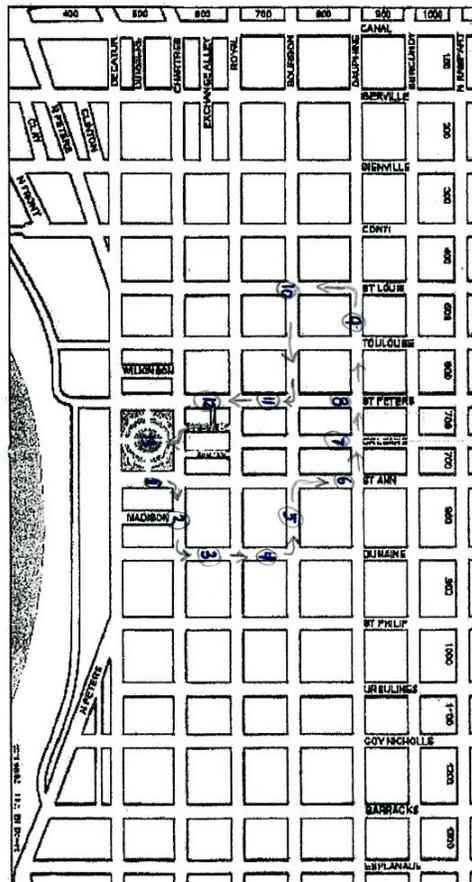
Today...

World's largest port system, over 10 million visitor per year, we're doing alright.

Never again will we be the wealthiest or one of the largest cities in the United States. That chapter in our 300-year history has past. But today's New Orleans is comfortable in our own skin. We're not everyone's cup of tea, and we're okay with that. We'll always welcome the newcomer that is looking for a good time or just look to find themselves. Because you see as a friend of mine says, if you want to live in New York, you need to

make a lot of money. If you want to live in Los Angeles, you need to be beautiful. But if you want to live in New Orleans, you just need to be yourself.

Ryan McMullen



### FOC Walking Tour Guide Tour Planner

Stop	Location (10 stops recommended)
1	Geography
2	American Indians & Explorers
3	Colonial Period
4	Creole Cottage - FPOC
5	Townhouses, Antebellum
6	Slavery
7	Civil War, Reconstruction, Plessy
8	Victorian Period
9	Jazz, Tango Belt
10	Burlesque & Jazz
11	Pros Hall & Cocktails
12	Bohemia & Preservation
13	Five Points, NOLA Today

- NICE RANGE OF TOPICS! very different!  
But looks good.

I have never had a tour go all the way to Dauphine. If it works for time, it is interesting.

Too long trying to find it, with people along

Tour route and critique.

## 2018 FOC TRAINING CLASS---PRACTICE TEST

### True or False:

1. T Rene Robert Cavalier, Sieur de la Salle claimed Louisiana for France in 1682
2. T New Orleans was founded in 1718 by Jean Baptiste LeMoyne, Sieur de Bienville, a French Canadian.
3. T New Orleans is called the Crescent City because it is located at a crescent curve in the Mississippi.
4. T New Orleans' location has always made the city an important port.
5. F New Orleans became Spanish in 1803.
6. T The illustrious Cabildo was the Spanish municipal governing council.
7. T Galvez and Carondelet were two important Spanish governors.
8. F Almonester, a Spanish Don, built the Pontal buildings.
9. T Vieux Carre means Old Square.
10. F The buildings of the old French Quarter are all French.
11. F The iron work in the Quarter is all hand wrought iron.
12. T Jackson Square was originally called "Place d'Armes" then "Plaza des Armas".
13. T In 1803, New Orleans was first under Spanish rule, then French and finally American.
14. F From 1803 until the Civil War, New Orleans experienced little prosperity.
15. F The Battle of New Orleans was fought between the Americans and the French.
16. T In 1812 the first steamboat arrived in New Orleans and Louisiana became a state.
17. F Baton Rouge was always the Capitol of Louisiana.
18. F New Orleans was occupied by Federal troops for only one year during the War Between the States.
19. T New Orleans "Red Light" district was called Storyville.
20. T Most of the city burned in two major fires in 1788 and 1794.
21. T Metairie Cemetery was once a race track.
22. T Comus was the first organized Krewe to parade in the streets of New Orleans.
23. T New Orleans had the wealthiest free black population in the United States before the Civil War.
24. F A banquette is a large plantation party.

### Mix and Match:

- |                                |                            |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 25. <u>d</u> Andrew Jackson    | a. New Basin Canal         |
| 26. <u>A</u> Irish Laborers    | b. New Orleans Picayune    |
| 27. <u>K</u> Thomy Lafon       | c. New Orleans first Mayor |
| 28. <u>C</u> Etienne de Boré   | d. Battle of New Orleans   |
| 29. <u>J</u> John McDonogh     | e. Art Museum              |
| 30. <u>H</u> Jean Lafitte      | f. Voodoo                  |
| 31. <u>i</u> Baroness Pontalba | g. Writer                  |
| 32. <u>f</u> Marie Laveau      | h. Privateer               |
| 33. <u>B</u> Eliza Nicholson   | i. Row Houses              |
| 34. <u>G</u> Grace King        | j. Public schools          |
| 35. <u>e</u> Issac Delgado     | k. Black Philanthropist    |

**Fill in the Blanks:**

36. Pontchartrain is the body of water north of the city.  
37. During World War II the site of UNO campus was the Naval Air Station.  
38. When built, the Bentch causeway was the longest over-water bridge in the world.  
39. Since so much of the city was burned, most of the buildings in the French Quarter were built in the 19 and 20 centuries.  
40. The season of Carnival begins on January 6<sup>th</sup> of each year.  
41. Fat Tuesday is the day before Ash Wednesday.  
42. Two universities on St. Charles Avenue are Loyola and Tulane.  
43. When speaking of "the avenue", the Creoles were referring to the.  
44. "They all axed for you" at the Audubon Zoo is situated on a former sugar plantation.

**Multiple Choice:**

45. During which period did the Battle of Liberty Place occur?  
a. French Colonial  
b. Spanish Colonial  
c. Antebellum  
d. Civil War  
 e. Reconstruction
46. Mother Katherine Drexel of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament for Negroes and Indians established in New Orleans in 1915:  
 a. Xavier University  
b. St. Augustine High School  
c. St. Mary's Academy  
d. All of the above  
e. None of the above
47. Originally built for the Supreme Court of Louisiana, the building in the 400 block of Royal St. has been renovated for:  
 a. The Supreme Court of Louisiana  
b. The U. S. Supreme Court  
c. The U. S. District Court  
d. The Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries  
e. The Kansas based Caissons.

48. Both City Park and Audubon Park are on lands that were:
- a. useless swamps and marshes
  - b. sugar plantations
  - c. recreational areas for the City in the 1700's
  - d. none of the above
49. Basin Street is named for:
- a. the zinc sinks in old washrooms
  - b. the turning basin of the Carondelet Canal
  - c. the turning basin for the New Basin Canal
  - d. the engineer Joe Basin
  - e. none of the above.
50. A death mask of Napoleon Bonaparte can be found at:
- a. the police station at Royal and Conti
  - b. the Historic New Orleans Collection
  - c. Tulane University
  - d. The Amistad Collection
  - e. The Cabildo
51. The largest archives of African-American history in the world is:
- a. the Moorland-Springam Research Center in Washington D.C.
  - b. The Amistad Research Center at Tulane University in New Orleans
  - c. The Biocon Industrial Center of California
  - d. None of the above
52. A ship traveling up the Mississippi from the Gulf of Mexico to Baton Rouge will require:
- a. a bar pilot
  - b. a river pilot
  - c. a Baton Rouge pilot
  - d. all of the above
  - e. none of the above
53. The so-called "Casket Girls" arrived:
- a. with the Gray Sisters
  - b. before the Ursulines
  - c. at Ocean Springs, Mississippi
  - d. All of the above
  - e. None of the above
54. Directions in New Orleans are usually given:
- a. Uptown, Downtown, riverside, lakeside
  - b. North, South, East, and West
  - c. Yonder, there-about, over there
  - d. Left, right, nearside, farside

55. Faubourg Ste. Marie is now called:

- a. City Park
- b. Storyville
- c. Algiers Point
- d. St. Mary's Market
- e. The Central Business District

56. According to the 2007 geologic survey, New Orleans is situated:

- largely below*
- a. largely above sea level
  - b. largely at or above sea level
  - c. entirely at sea level
  - d. entirely below sea level
  - e. none of the above.

57. Louis Armstrong is buried:

- a. in New York
- b. in Chicago
- c. in New Orleans

58. The Code Noir, promulgated in 1724, provided:

- a. that Jews should not be permitted in Louisiana
- b. that slaves should not work on Sundays without pay
- c. that slaves should be baptized Catholic
- d. that manumission should be permitted
- e. all of the above

59. A man was hung by General Butler during the occupation of New Orleans. Was it:

- ✗*
- a. Tony Mumford?
  - b. William Mumford?
  - c. Tony Randall?
  - d. General Wilkinson?

60. New Orleans was named for:

- a. the city of Orleans, France
- b. the Duc d'Orleans
- c. the Isle of Orleans
- d. None of the above

61. American Indian tribes found on the lower Mississippi and near New Orleans included:

- a. Houmas
- b. Choctaw
- c. Tchoupitoulas
- d. All of the above
- e. None of the above

62. The engineer and surveyor for New Orleans in French Colonial days were:

- a. Adrian de Pauger and Le Blond de la Tour
- b. Adrian de Pauger and Almonester y Roxas
- c. Le Blond de la Tour and Pierre LeMoyne
- d. John Law and Antoine Crozat

63. The Convention Center is named for:

- a. the first black governor of Louisiana
- b. the first black general in the Civil War
- c. the first black mayor of New Orleans

Locate These Statues and Monuments:

- 64. Robert E. Lee \_\_\_\_\_
- 65. Andrew Jackson \_\_\_\_\_
- 66. St. Joan of Arc \_\_\_\_\_
- 67. Bernardo de Galvez \_\_\_\_\_
- 68. Bienville \_\_\_\_\_
- 69. P. G. T. Beauregard \_\_\_\_\_
- 70. Margaret Haughery \_\_\_\_\_
- 71. Simon Bolivar \_\_\_\_\_
- 72. Krewe of Poydras \_\_\_\_\_
- 73. Edward Douglas White \_\_\_\_\_
- 74. George Washington \_\_\_\_\_
- 75. Louis Armstrong \_\_\_\_\_
- 76. Sophie Wright \_\_\_\_\_
- 77. John McDonogh \_\_\_\_\_
- 78. Winston Churchill \_\_\_\_\_
- 79. Martin Luther King, Jr. \_\_\_\_\_
- 80. Cancer Survivors Plaza \_\_\_\_\_
- 81. The African Hut \_\_\_\_\_
- 82. Veterans of the Vietnam War \_\_\_\_\_
- 83. The Italian Piazza \_\_\_\_\_
- 84. Spanish Plaza \_\_\_\_\_
- 85. Jefferson Davis \_\_\_\_\_

- 86. Natural silt built up by the river on the outside of the levee is called the batoune.
- 87. The dates of the two large fires during the Spanish regime were 1788 and 1794.
- 88. Marie Laveau was called Widow Marie Laveau Queen.
- 89. Claiborne was the first American governor of Louisiana.
- 90. The former Mortuary Chapel is now known as Our Lady of Guadalupe.
- 91. The City of Lafayette (now known as the Garden District) was carved from the Liverdier's Plantation.
- 92. Tivoli Place was the original name for Lee Circle.
- 93. The 1884 Cotton Centennial Exposition was held in what is now Audubon Park.

94. "Every man a king" was the slogan of Governor Long.
95. New Orleans and the Louisiana Territory west of the Mississippi was given to Spain in 1763.
96. Louis Moreau Gottschalk was an accomplished Music Composer.
97. The Superdome is 27 stories tall and the roof covers 52 acres.
98. Canal Street is the widest main street in the United States.
99. Martin Behrman was the first Jewish mayor, Robert Maestri was the first Italian mayor, and Dutch Moriel was the first black mayor.
100. Clark Mills was the sculptor of the statue of Andrew Jackson in Jackson Square.

# CITY OF NEW ORLEANS

SAFETY & PERMITS • TAXICAB & FOR HIRE VEHICLE BUREAU



Permit #: 18LTG-05935  
Issued: 4/16/2018  
Expired: 4/16/2020

**TOUR GUIDE**

David R McMullen

This permit certifies that holder named on the obverse side has met the requirements established by the **City of New Orleans**, is duly registered by the **Taxicab & For Hire Vehicle Bureau** of the **Department of Safety and Permits** in accordance with Ordinance 26289 M.C.S.

Wesley Pfeiffer, Taxicab Administrator



**Friends of the Cabildo  
Certified Volunteer Tour Guide**

Name: *Ryan McMullen*  
Issued: *April 4, 2018*  
Certified: *Charles Chamberlain, VP of Education*

**Friends of the Cabildo  
Certified Volunteer Tour**



VITA

David Ryan McMullen

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Arts

Thesis: CONTEXT FOR AN UNFORGETTABLE DESTINATION: A PUBLIC HISTORY WALKING TOUR OF NEW ORLEANS

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Biographical:

Education:

Completed the requirements for the Master of Arts in History at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in July 2020.

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Experience: Community Affairs Officer, Simmons Bank, 2018-Present; State Director, USDA Rural Development, 2009-2017; State Representative, Oklahoma House of Representatives, 2004-2009; Executive Director, El Reno Chamber of Commerce & Development Corporation, 2003-2004.

Professional Memberships: National Council on Public History, Friends of the Cabildo, Preservation Resource Center, National Trust for Historic Places, Preservation Oklahoma, Urban Land Institute, and Oklahoma Historical Society.