



The Garden District of New Orleans

Jim Fraiser

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The Garden District of New Orleans has enthralled residents and visitors alike since it arose in the 1830's with its stately white-columned Greek Revival mansions and double-galleried Italianate houses decorated with lacy cast iron. Photographer West Freeman evokes the romance of this elegant neighborhood with lovely images of private homes, dazzling gardens, and public structures. Author Jim Fraiser vividly details the historical significance and architectural styles of more than a hundred structures and chronicles both the political and cultural evolution of the neighborhood.

The Garden District, unlike the French Quarter, evolved under the auspices of predominantly Anglo-American architects hired by newly arriving, and newly wealthy, Americans. Beyond these wealthy homeowners, the Garden District also offers a startlingly diverse and freewheeling history teeming with African American slaves, free men and women of color, French, Italians, Germans, Jews, and Irish, all of whom helped fashion it into one of America's first suburbs and most extraordinary neighborhoods. Fraiser animates the Garden District's story with such notables as Mark Twain; Jefferson Davis; occupying Union general Benjamin Butler; flamboyant steamboat captain Thomas Leathers; crusading Reverend Theodore Clapp; Confederate generals Jubal Early and Leonidas Polk; jazzmen Joe "King" Oliver and Nate "Kid" Ory; champion pugilist John L. Sullivan; local authors Grace King, George Washington Cable, and Anne Rice; Mayor Joseph Shakespeare; architects Henry Howard, Lewis Reynolds, and Thomas Sully; cotton magnate Henry S. Buckner; and Louisiana Lottery co-founder John A. Morris. In words and photographs, Fraiser and Freeman explore the unexpected evolution of this district and reveal how war, plagues, politics, religion, cultural conflict, and architectural innovation shaped the incomparable Garden District.

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