

BIENVILLE'S
DILEMMA

Bienville's Dilemma
A Historical Geography of New Orleans
by Richard Campanella

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A
HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY
OF NEW ORLEANS

RICHARD CAMPANELLA

CENTER FOR LOUISIANA STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA AT LAFAYETTE

2008

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To My Wife, Marina

To My Parents,
Mr. and Mrs. Mario and Rose Ann Campanella
Brooklyn, New York

and

To Marina's Parents,
Sr. and Sra. Ernesto López and Porfiria Morán de López
San Juan Trujano, Oaxaca, Mexico

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*I begin to understand the town a little...
and a curious town it is.*

—Benjamin H. B. Latrobe, 1810

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Introduction

dilemma (də-'le-mə), *n.* a problem involving a difficult or unpleasant choice [which] will bring undesirable consequences

—*Merrill-Webster and Oxford English dictionaries*

Human experiences often play out as a sequence of greater and lesser dilemmas in which every difficult choice engenders unknowable consequences. Could making a painful investment now relieve our children of far greater expenditures in the future? Or might treating today's minor inconveniences spawn major crises tomorrow? Should a settlement be built on the safest site, despite its inconvenience? Or should we exploit the most strategic situation, despite its risk? Should we remain in eroding marshes and continue centuries of tradition, or end our way of life and move inland so that aggressive coastal restoration may begin?

Dilemmas are as fascinating as they are distressing. Dilemmatic places—cities, for example, that are important yet costly, strategic but dangerous, triumphant and tragic—are among the most intriguing locales on Earth.

What better place to contemplate the notion of historical and geographical dilemma than New Orleans and coastal Louisiana? Described by geographer Peirce Lewis as the “inevitable city in the impossible site,”¹ New Orleans comprises a litany of polemical decisions and dramatic transformations. Here, the full spectrum of the human experience seems to manifest itself vividly in daily life and everyday cityscapes. A city once routinely predicted to rank among the world's greatest is now foreseen by some, in the wake of Hurricane Katrina and in light of eroding coasts, sinking soils, and rising seas, to have no future whatsoever. If two words characterize all of southeastern Louisiana now,” reflected environmental law scholar Oliver Houck, “they would be total uncertainty.” So why would so many people fight to remain? “[B]ecause it's such a damned joy to live here.”²

Bienvenue's Dilemma presents sixty-eight articles and essays on the historical geography of New Orleans. Not intended to be a traditional history of political figures and legislative acts, the book seeks to answer key questions guiding the discipline of geography: What is the shape, form, and origin of the physical landscape? How have humans transformed the landscape, and vice versa? How are phenomena distributed spatially, why, and how have the patterns changed through time? What distinguishes places from each other? How do people perceive place? What clues do we see in the present-day cityscape reflecting these questions? And how can geographical knowledge be used to restore and improve disturbed places? Most writings are new to this volume; others are updated derivations of my earlier research over the past thirteen years.

As often happens when writing about historical geography, the researcher must make certain structural decisions. Should time (history) serve as the volume's organizational vertebrae? Or should space (geography)? One must also choose between

breadth (comprehensiveness) and depth (analytical detail and approach).

I decided to organize the topics by the transformations and implications they wrought upon the landscape: formation, settlement, urbanization, population, manipulation, humanization, devastation, and restoration. I chose also to take an in-depth episodic approach rather than a comprehensive one that touches lightly on everything. Scores of “mine-wide if not deep” books about New Orleans currently buckle bookshelves; what is lacking are focused, critical, in-depth studies. Relinquishing comprehensiveness means many important topics must be left out. To atone for the sins of omission, *Bienville's Dilemma* begins with an extensive timeline of historical events of geographical significance, intended to “fill in the blanks” left among the volume’s articles. But this too falls short of a comprehensive chronology of local history: the timeline records selected historical events and trends that helped create the urban landscape we see today.

Emerging repeatedly throughout this volume is the theme of dilemma. It first appears in Bienville’s momentous decision regarding where to establish New Orleans. It continues with the stories of levee construction, canal excavation, urban expansion, coastal erosion, and the myriad blessings and curses accompanying the transformation of a dynamic, fluid deltaic landscape into a rigid, controlled cityscape. It appears again in the dramatic story of Manuel Marquez, who found himself on the horns of a classic “lifeboat dilemma” as he and his family rode out the Great Storm of 1915. “Bienville’s dilemma,” metaphorically speaking, persists throughout New Orleans and coastal Louisiana society today, as citizens contemplate saving the place they love in the face of undeniable geological truths. Anyone who, since Hurricane Katrina, has grappled with rethinking, considered moving out, contemplated moving in, debated either divesting or investing in New Orleans, or otherwise pondered the city’s future, shares in Bienville’s dilemma.

Problems end with solutions; dilemmas end with choices. Southeastern Louisiana must make excruciating choices regarding people, culture, and place if it is to survive. Entangled in those decisions are problems involving coastal restoration, economic diversification, environmental sustainability, social equity, and learning to live with risk. As a geographer, I believe these problems are solvable, so long as citizens muster the will to tackle them and the courage to confront the dilemmas underlying them.

It is my hope that the requisite willpower and valor will be summoned through the realization that these problems are not only solvable, but worth solving, and that the world would be a lesser place without New Orleans.

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My deepest gratitude goes to my wife Marina Campanella; my parents, Mario and Rose Ann Campanella; brother, Thomas J. Campanella; and uncle John Tambasco for their many years of love, support, and guidance.

Finally, I am grateful to New Orleans, for the way it enriches and inspires the world.

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Timeline

Historical events of geographical significance in the New Orleans area

Prehistoric Indigenous people occupy Mississippi deltaic plain and explore and exploit networks of ridges, bayous, and bays. Knowledge of labyrinthine deltaic geography includes discovery of key shortcuts and portages between Gulf of Mexico and Mississippi River.

1519-1543 Spaniards Alonso Álvarez de Pineda, Pánfilo de Narváez, and Hernando de Soto explore lower Mississippi region; efforts lead to no lasting claims or settlements, but augment European knowledge of Gulf Coast/Mississippi River region. European diseases decimate indigenous populations following De Soto's expedition.

1632 Nine years after Marquette and Joliet's exploration of upper Mississippi, French Canadian René-Robert Cavalier, sieur de La Salle sails down Mississippi to Gulf of Mexico, confirming relationships among Great Lakes, river, and sea. His claim of Mississippi watershed asserts French dominion over one million square miles of North America, setting stage for foundation of French colonies near river's mouth. La Salle's attempt to return in 1634 ends in confusion and disaster, leaving France's Louisiana claim idle for fifteen years.

1672 Le Moyne brothers Iberville and Bienville explore Gulf Coast and lower river region and establish Fort Maurepas in present-day Ocean Springs, Mississippi. Expedition to found and colonize Louisiana signifies France's renewed interest in La Salle's 1682 claim, in large part to keep it out of hands of English (via migration from northeast and invasion from gulf) and Spanish (via Mexico and Florida).

1699 Bienville rebuffs English sloop *Carcina Gale* from entering French Louisiana. Incident (which gives "English Turn of Mind" name) demonstrates English interest in lower Mississippi Valley and convinces Iberville of need to establish fort on Mississippi River, in addition to coastal settlements. Natives show Frenchmen various shortcuts among gulf, lakes, and river, one of which Bienville later selects for New Orleans site.

1700 Bienville founds Fort de la Bouteille (Fort de la Boulaye) near present-day Phoenix in Plaquemines Parish. First European settlement within present-day Louisiana gives French experience in settling Mississippi deltaic plain.

1702 Seat of colonial government is moved from Fort Maurepas to new Mobile settlement, located north of present-day Alabama a city of the same name. European population of lower Louisiana totals about 140 subjects, strewn out

between Mobile Bay and Mississippi River.

1708 Some Mobile colonists are granted land concessions at Bayou St. John. Wheat crop near bayou's headwaters fails, but effort puts area "on the map" as first European settlement in future New Orleans proper.

1711 Mobile relocated to present-day site on bayou marks troubled era in early Louisiana history, with failed settlement, disease, and death matched by failing interest on part of French government.

1713 Disillusioned with Louisiana and preoccupied with other matters, French crown cedes colony as commercial monopoly to financier Antoine Crozat. Effort strives to discover gold and silver mines, raise tobacco on plantations, and trade with Spain. All three aims fail; Crozat retrocedes Louisiana to crown in 1717.

1715 King Louis XIV dies; five-year-old great-grandson Louis XV ascends to throne. Philippe, duc d'Orléans acts as regent of France.

1716 King issues edict regulating land grants and establishing *arpent* system in Louisiana (one *arpent* equals approximately 192 English feet), whereby riverine land is surveyed into long, narrow lots perpendicular to waterway. French "long lots" later influence formation of New Orleans' radiating street network, and demarcate much of southeastern Louisiana landscape to this day.

1717 Crozat's failure to develop Louisiana commercially opens opportunity for Scottish merchant financier John Law to propose elaborate land-development scheme. Befriending Philippe, duc d'Orléans, Law acquires monopoly charter for commercial enterprise in Louisiana, establishes Company of the West, and launches brazen marketing campaign across Europe to lure settlers and investors. Law's involvement reverses European perceptions of Louisiana as a burdensome New World backwater; colony is now the talk of Europe.

September 1717 Directive to found New Orleans issued in Company of the West ledger: "Resolved to establish, thirty leagues up the river, a burg which should be called Nouvelle Orleans, where landing would be possible both either the river or Lake Pontchartrain." Name of settlement honors Law's royal patron, Philippe, duc d'Orléans.

1718 In late March and early April, Bienville's men clear canebrake for foundation of New Orleans. Bienville's site exploits Bayou St. John/Bayou Road portage between Lake Pontchartrain and Mississippi River, shown to him by Indians nearly two decades earlier. Located on elevated natural levee and angled to confront approaching ships, site—present-day French Quarter—is highly problematic but superior to most in deltaic plain.

1718-1722 Bienville's founding of New Orleans is called into question by rival colonists,

who debate relocating settlement to Bayou Manchac site (south of present-day Baton Rouge). Other suggested sites for company headquarters include Natchez, English Turn, Lake Pontchartrain shore, Natchitoches, Biloxi, Mobile, and Pensacola.

1719 Spring floods. Low work on New Orleans. Headquarters of Louisiana colony relocated from Mobile back to Biloxi area; Bienville, an advocate of New Orleans remaining at its present site, reluctantly returns to Biloxi to build new fort.

1719 First large group of Africans arrives in chains, commencing fourteen decades of slavery in Louisiana. Over 5000 people, mostly from West African Senegambia region, are imported during 1719-31, first of two major waves directly from Africa. Racial subjugation through slavery, codified in 1763 *Code Noir*, profoundly influences New Orleans' social and urban geography. Compared to Anglo-America, racial identities and relationships become more complex and fluid in Caribbean-influenced French Louisiana.

1719-1721 Law's Company recruits thousands of French citizens (many from society's bottom rung), as well as German and Swiss farmers to settle Louisiana, representing first major wave of Europeans to region. New Orleans by 1720 boasts houses for governor and director, company store, hospital, over 100 employees, and 250 concession-holders ready to work their land. But settlement is haphazardly laid out; disease takes its toll; and commercial effort struggles financially.

1720 "Mississippi Bubble" bursts; John Law's highly speculative development scheme for Louisiana fails.

1720s Germans settle *Côte des Allemands* upriver from New Orleans and help feed struggling New Orleans with their agricultural productivity. Teutonic population later absorbed into French-speaking white Creole society, but retains some German ethnic identity for over a century.

1721 Adrien de Pauger, assistant to Chief Engineer Le Blond de La Tour, arrives to New Orleans and promptly adapts La Tour's designs for new Biloxi capital to New Orleans site, creating today's French Quarter. Pauger's impressive plans cast New Orleans in a positive light; primitive outpost grows into *bona fide* town.

1721 New Orleans population 519 (326 whites, 171 black slaves, twenty-one Indian slaves, one free black).

1721 On December 23, Company of the Indies official transfers headquarters of Louisiana colony from Biloxi to New Orleans, exposing New Orleans' chances of surviving and prospering at its present location.

- 1722** September hurricane wipes away New Orleans' primitive structures and shoddy cityscape, serendipitously allowing Pauger to survey his planned street grid unimpeded. Present-day French Quarter bears most of original blocks, dimensions, and street names. Forty years after La Salle first sailed past site, foundation of New Orleans is complete.
- 1722** First substantial artificial levees erected. Started by La Tour and Pauger, levee by 1727 measure eighteen feet wide, three feet high, and one mile long, representing initial attempts to control Mississippi. Anthropogenic river control ultimately succeeds in preventing annual floods but inadvertently starves delta plain of critical sediments and fresh water, helping cause catastrophic land loss by late twentieth century.
- 1723-1727** Capuchins, Jesuit, and Ursuline religious orders arrive to city, playing major role in instilling Catholicism. French culture, education, care for orphans and infants, and other civilizing aspects to frontier outpost. Ursuline Nuns are particularly influential in the education of girls and other activities, remaining active in city's spiritual culture to this day.
- 1726** New Orleans population 901 (793 whites, seventy-eight black slaves, thirty Indian slaves)
- 1727** New Orleans population 938 (729 whites, plus 65 enlisted men, 127 black slaves, 17 Indian slaves)
- 1729** Natchez Indian uprising at Fort Rosalie kills 250 colonists, sending shock waves through region. New Orleans responds by constructing primitive rampart and moat around street grid. Fortification remains in altered forms until early American years, affecting urban development of adjacent areas. Angles of old fort line remain visible today in certain parcels and building shapes between Barracks Street and Esplanade Avenue.
- 1731** Company of the Indies relinquishes Louisiana to king; era of private development ends after nearly twenty years of consistent under-performance. France therefore views Louisiana population around 7,000, as a disappointment at best and burdensome failure at worst, unworthy of renewed commitment.
- 1732** New Orleans population 1,224 (1,023 whites, 254 black slaves, nine Indian slaves, eight free blacks).
- 1736** Hospital founded. "Charity Hospital" later relocates four times to sites along backswamp edge, reflecting tendency to locate objectionable and threatening phenomena to "back-of-town." Final site (1833) marks location of present-day Charity structure and explains origin of today's Tulane Avenue medical district. Hurricane Katrina's floodwaters end "La Charity's" history and leave structure's future in question.

- 1737** New Orleans population 1,748 (759 whites, 963 blacks, and sixteen Indians). City becomes majority-black in 1730s and remains so until 1830s.
- 1745** Ursuline Convent designed and built (1749-53) on present-day 1100 block of Chartres Street. Edifice, no longer a convent but still operated by Catholic Archdiocese, stands today as sole surviving complete structure from French colonial era; oldest documented extant building in Mississippi Valley and a unique plain and outstanding example of French colonial institutional architecture.
- Circa 1750** Claude Joseph Villars Dubreuil excavates canal to power sawmill immediately below city. Waterway eventually establishes trajectory of Elysian Fields Avenue (1805) and Pontchartrain Railroad (1831), which influences layout of numerous street grids and neighborhoods between river and lake over next 200 years.
- 1754-1763** French and Indian War ("Seven Years' War" in Europe) pits France against England over claims in Ohio Valley; conflict draws in various European states and spreads around world. Defeat of France radically redefines colonial world: French North America, including Louisiana east of Mississippi, is ceded to England. Areas west of river, including New Orleans (thought to be an island, in account of Bayou Manchac distributary and lake), avoid English possession, having been secretly ceded by King Louis XV to the Treaty of Fontainebleau to his Spanish cousin King Carlos III in 1762. City gains unwelcome new neighbor to north—British West Florida—to which many Anglo settlers migrate over next twenty years.
- 1755-1785** British exile French settlers from Acadia (present-day Nova Scotia). Thousands of displaced Acadians eventually find their way to Louisiana during 1764-85, drawn by French culture and geographical accessibility. Most Acadians settle west of New Orleans, forming agricultural and natural-resource-based rural society separate from but important to, urban New Orleans. Corrupted local pronunciation of *Acadien* produces term *Cajun*.
- 1762-1763** Dominion of New Orleans passes from France to Spain in stages: secretly in 1762, publicly in 1764, politically in 1766, and militarily in 1769. Population remains largely Francophone in culture.
- 1763** New Orleans population 2,524 (1,045 whites, 826 black slaves, thirty-three Indian slaves, nineteen free blacks)
- 1775-1783** American Revolution fought mostly along Eastern Seaboard; Spanish in Louisiana seize British outposts in lower Mississippi and Gulf Coast region, with no immediate consequence to New Orleans, but war's outcome adds major new player to political geography and destiny of North America—and New Orleans.

1776-1781 Six hurricanes strike New Orleans area and cause extensive damage. One, in 1779, was experienced by William Dunbar, who later reported his meteorological observations in *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*—among first to document cyclonic nature of tropical storms.

1777-1778 Spanish census enumerates 2,809 residents in New Orleans proper in 1777, and 3,059 in 1778, a six-fold increase since first French census in 1721. The 1,552 whites, 240 free people of mixed race, 105 free blacks, 213 mixed-race slaves, and 947 black slaves live throughout sixty-eight “isles,” or blocks, comprising nearly the entire city proper.

1777-1783 Spanish government recruits residents of Granada, Malaga, and particularly the Canary Islands to settle in Louisiana, aiming to populate the colony's militia for possible war with English, augment agricultural production, and render Louisiana more culturally Spanish. Over 2,500 Canary Islanders (“Isleños”) settle in present-day eastern St. Bernard Parish; others settle west of New Orleans, from Maricopa area to New Iberia. Island community remains in St. Bernard Parish today, where surnames such as Rodriguez, Nunez, Torres, and Hernandez abound.

1780 City's first food market, a small pavilion for butchers, opens; later evolves into French Market (1791) and becomes one of New Orleans' most famous features.

1780s Second major wave of slave importations arrives directly from Africa, the first occurring in 1720s.

1780s-1790s With settlers trickling into Ohio and Mississippi valleys, river traffic begins to flow southward toward Spanish Louisiana. Primitive frontier vessels of late 1700s develop, by early 1800s, into steady stream of flatboats (for downriver travel) and keelboats (for returning upriver), delivering commodities and merchandise in and out of interior New Orleans, begins to benefit from nascent agricultural production in its distant hinterland.

1788 Population of New Orleans 5,328 (about 50 percent white, 25 percent enslaved black, and the remainder free people of color). Population of colony is over 25,000.

1788 Good Friday fire destroys 856 buildings in New Orleans, leveling 80 percent of city's structures and leaving about 70 percent of population homeless. Most original French colonial structures are lost. One of last examples of old French Creole house type, “Madame John's Legacy,” is built on Dumaine Street immediately after conflagration.

1788 New Orleans' first suburb, Faubourg Ste. Marie (later called Faubourg St. Mary, now Central Business District) is surveyed upon former Gravier plantation above city proper, in response to population pressure and ruins of recent

fire. Old plantation boundaries influence layout of emerging street network, as would transpire in many other areas.

1789 St. Louis Cemetery is laid out behind city, reflecting tendency to locate objectionable land uses to back-of-town. New cemetery embodies Spanish tradition of above-ground tombment; replaces old French subterranean burial ground of Burgundy and St. Peter. Still in operation today, “St. Louis No. 1” is resting place of many great local historical figures.

1791 French Market is founded along lower city riverfront. Municipal market, originating from 1784 decision by Spanish Cabildo to centralize retail food vendors, displays city’s multicultural face to amazed visitors throughout 1800s. Vending opportunities help launch generations of poor immigrants to financial independence, including Sicilians in early 1900s, who settle nearby. Market is also birthplace of American tropical-fruit industry; serves today as major node in tourist landscape and economy.

1793-1795 Eli Whitney invents cotton gin (1793); Jean Etienne de Boré successfully granulates Louisiana sugar (1795, near present-day Audubon Zoo). These technological breakthroughs help launch Southern cotton and sugar plantation economy, replacing old colonial-era crops such as tobacco and indigo. Both commodities enrich New Orleans into mid-twentieth century; also entrench slavery in region and play major roles in economic and cultural geography of city and South.

1794 Second major fire in six years—and second disaster in four months, following late-summer hurricane—destroys additional 212 structures in New Orleans. New Spanish building codes enacted after blaze phase out traditional “first-generation” Creole building styles. Structures built afterwards reflect Spanish colonial traits, often with local embellishments (“second-generation” Creole architecture). Village-like appearance of French New Orleans gives way to solid, walled, brick-and-stucco Spanish cityscape.

1794 Governor Carondelet directs excavation of canal from rear of city to Bayou St. John. “Carondelet Canal” supplants Bayou Road as route to Bayou St. John and Lake Pontchartrain; now shipments can be delivered efficiently by water from coast and lake directly to rear of city. Canal, which also serves as early drainage system, provides convenient right-of-way into downtown, used by railroads into twentieth century.

1795 Spain and U.S. sign Treaty of San Lorenzo, granting Americans open navigation of Mississippi River and right of deposit at New Orleans for three years.

1791-1804 Slave revolt in Saint-Domingue (present-day Haiti) threatens and eventually overthrows French regime.

- 1796** First significant yellow fever outbreak strikes New Orleans. Spread by *Aedes aegypti* mosquito (probably introduced from Africa through slave trade), yellow fever kills over 100,000 Louisianians and nearly 40,000 New Orleanians over next century. Plagues deeply influence economics, human geography, seasonal migration patterns, public image, and everyday life of city throughout nineteenth century.
- 1800** Apprehensive about United States' increasing interest in Louisiana, Spain, an empire in decline, secretly retrocedes Louisiana to militarily powerful France. Word of transfer soon reaches U.S.; alarms President Jefferson, who views New Orleans as critical to western expansion.
- 1802** Napoleon sends 20,000 troops to control situation in Saint-Domingue. Yellow fever decimates troops; slave revolt intensifies and eventually expels French regime, creating Latin America's first independent country (Haiti). Loss of extremely valuable sugar colony diminishes Napoleon's interest in France's cumbersome and problematic Louisiana colony.
- 1802** Spain rescinds American right of deposit at New Orleans (permitted since 1795), exacerbating tension between U.S. and colonial powers. President Jefferson launches effort to purchase New Orleans; threat of war emerges, with England casting eyes on Louisiana prize as well. Once perceived as a beleaguered backwater destined for failure, New Orleans is now coveted by three nations.
- 1803** Wary of overextending its colonial empire, in need of money, and in light of impending war, Napoleon decides to sell not only Isle of Orleans but entire Louisiana colony to U.S.; treaty signed April 30. Formal hand-over of Louisiana, from Spain to France and thence from France to United States, occurs in Cabildo on December 20, closing colonial era. New Orleans, now in progressive American hands, is foreseen to become one of richest and most important cities in nation, hemisphere and world.
- 1803** New Orleans population 8,056 (3,948 whites, 2,773 slaves, and 1,335 free people of color) residing in roughly 1,000 dwellings. Another 2,000 people live nearby.
- 1803-1840** New American city of New Orleans grows dramatically in population while also rising steadily in rank relative to other American cities' populations (see graph, "Tracking New Orleans' Ascent and Decline, 1790-2007").
- Early 1800s** Shifting river channel deposits sediment immediately above New Orleans, forming "batterie" along Faubourg Ste. Marie riverfront. Geological formation instigates legal controversy regarding public versus private ownership of valuable new riverside land, reflecting differing Creole and American legal philosophies. Complex court case involves President Jefferson and lasts

for decades; area is eventually incorporated into urban grid; includes today's Warehouse District. Laws regarding bature ownership remain complex and convoluted to this day.

1804-1825 Three attempts to improve public health through sanitation and nuisance-abatement regulatory boards arise and fail. Due to minimal government support and commercial opposition to quarantines, New Orleans becomes nation's filthiest, least healthy, and most death-prone major city for much of nineteenth century. Fact oftentimes denied or covered up by city's commercial interests.

1805 New Orleans is incorporated as a municipal entity, legally establishing city government, mission, duties, privileges, and boundaries. Charter ends colonial-era notions of city management and makes New Orleans "official" American city. Process of Americanization is underway.

1805 Lower plantation of Bernard Marigny is subdivided for urban development. Faubourg Marigny becomes city's first expansion on natural levee in down-river direction. Neighborhood, known as the "poor Third" [municipality or district], becomes home to mostly working-class Creole and immigrant population during nineteenth century.

1806-1810 Upper plantations of Delord-Sarpy (Duplantier), Saulet (Solet), Robin, and Livaudais are subdivided for urban development. Faubourgs Duplantier, Solet, La Course, and L'Annunciation expand New Orleans onto wide natural levee in upper direction; area is developed with working-class housing near river and grander homes inland. Neighborhood (today's Lower Garden District) becomes home to mostly American and immigrant population during nineteenth century.

1807 Act of Congress clarifies ownership of disputed lands in new American city; influences development of commons between the old city and Faubourg Ste. Marie. Act also reserves canal right-of-way planned to connect Carondelet Canal with river, paralleled by sixty-foot-wide public highways. Canal is never built; corridor instead becomes 171-foot-wide "Canal Street." Additionally, act confirms most land titles of settlers from colonial times, preserving old French *arpent* land-division system.

1809 Over 9,000 Saint-Domingue (Haitian) refugees arrive in New Orleans via Cuba. Refugees, roughly evenly divided among white, free people of color, and enslaved black, double city's population and revive city's Francophone culture. They integrate into Creole neighborhoods and society, adding new layers of ethnic complexity.

1809 Faubourg Pontchartrain planned at headwaters of Bayou St. John. Area promises to develop into attractive faubourg, but developers stay away until late

1800s, after settlement of complex Myrna Clark Gaines lawsuit, one of longest in U.S. history.

1810 New Orleans population reaches 17,224 (6,316 whites; 5,961 black slaves; and 4,950 free people of color), seventh largest among American cities.

1810 Plantation of Claude L'Émé is subdivided for urban development. "Fourbourg Tremé" spreads New Orleans toward backswamp, exploiting Esplanade Ridge, Bayou Road upland. Neighborhood, known for its black Creole and immigrant population, is described today as America's oldest black neighborhood but was actually quite mixed.

1812 Louisiana admitted to Union as eighteenth state.

1800s-1860 Despite institutionalized social and economic oppression, enslaved black population is residentially integrated with whites in "classic Southern" urban settlement pattern of enslaved living in abodes adjacent to those of their master. Free people of color reside mostly in lower city; emancipated blacks live mostly in poor back of town.

1812 First Mississippi River steamboat docks at New Orleans, having departed Pittsburgh in late 1811, evading the Great Falls of the Ohio, witnessing the Great Comet of 1811, and encountering recent devastation of the New Madrid earthquake in Missouri. Successful demonstration of emerging steam technology promises efficient upriver-bound transportation, replacing slow-moving keelboats for travel against current. "Steamboat era" begins in earnest by early 1820s, after technological, logistical, and legal barriers (namely monopoly granted to owners Robert Fulton and Robert Livingston) are surmounted. With city in American hands and hinterland under intensive cotton, sugar, and grain cultivation, new steamboat transportation puts New Orleans in strategic position to become principal Southern city.

1815 On January 8, local militia under command of Maj. Gen. Andrew Jackson defeats advancing British troops at Chalmette. Battle of New Orleans terminates English threat to young nation, brings city's society to national attention, and helps integrate isolated, once-foreign outpost into national fold. Anglo-American emigration increases, as does foreign immigration.

1816 Crevasse at Macarty's Plantation in present-day Carrollton floods backswamp to rear streets of city. Water damages city infrastructure and crops, but coats land with layer of sediment, building up elevation and helping enable early development of Carrollton. Flood actually saves lives by cleaning city and reducing death rate by over half.

1810s-1870s City expands steadily, mostly in upriver direction, on relatively broad natural levee in present-day uptown. Expansion occurs through piecemeal

subdivision of old long lot sugar plantations, and through political annexation of Lafayette (1852), Jefferson (1870), and Carrollton (1874). Plantations subdivided into up town faubourgs during nineteenth century include Faubourg Nuns (des Religieuses), Panis Plantation (Faubourg Lafayette), Faubourgs Livaudais, Delassize, Plaisance, Delachaise, St. Joseph, Boulogny, Avaré, Iberville, Hurstville, Boomingdale, Burnsideville, Foucher Tract (Audubon Park and University campuses), Greenville, Triburg, and Macarty Plantation (Carrollton).

Late 1810s In response to War of 1812, U.S. War Department begins building “Third System” forts along Atlantic and Gulf coasts, including key waterway in and near New Orleans. Military later acquires riverfront land for barracks and naval bases, recognizing strategic location and vulnerability of city, which becomes one of nation’s most fortified. Military presence increases with twentieth century world wars; remains big local employer today.

1820 New Orleans population reaches 27,176 by some accounts, +1,351 by others (19,247 whites; 14,946 black slaves; and 7,188 free people of color). Inclusion of adjacent areas may account for difference.

Early 1800s Travelers from Europe and eastern seaboard visit New Orleans and marvel at booming port’s social and physical distinctiveness, particularly its ethnic diversity. National perceptions about New Orleans as a unique and exotic city, or alternately as a wicked “Sodom and Gomorrah,” begin to form.

1822 According to *The New-Orleans Directory and Register*, city and suburbs count “1,436 brick, and 4,401 wooden dwelling; 1,258 brick and 1,567 wooden warehouses, workshops, &c., 28 brick and 15 wooden public buildings, making in the whole 8,705 buildings of every description. New buildings are daily rising particularly in the upper part of New Orleans.”

1824-1828 First Jewish congregations founded in New Orleans, notably Congregation Sha’arai Chessed (Gate of Mercy) in 1828, predecessor of Touro Synagogue. Later-arriving German Jews form small enclave at foot of Jackson Avenue, which would migrate to uptown/University area by turn of twentieth century. This older, established Reform Jewish population lived separately from Eastern European Orthodox Jews who settled near Dryades Street in late nineteenth century.

1823-1836 First true municipal water system, designed by Benjamin H. B. Latrobe, replaces various makeshift efforts. Located at foot of Ursulines Street, system uses steam pump to draw river water into three-story pump house, where it is stored in raised reservoirs and distributed to residential households through network of cyprus pipes.

1825 Erie Canal in upstate New York connects Great Lakes with Hudson River. Wa-

terway gives New York City access to western frontier, suddenly challenging New Orleans' monopoly on Mississippi Valley trade. Conservative New Orleans business community fails to diversify economy during ensuing decades, focusing instead on booming river trade. Seed for New Orleans' decline is planted, but not sown amid antebellum prosperity. Erie Canal spawns rampant waterway excavation elsewhere: more bad news for New Orleans.

1825-1830 Louisville and Portland Canal completed to circumvent waterfalls in Louisville, Kentucky, an obstacle to Ohio River navigation. Canal benefits New Orleans by providing fast, uninterrupted shipping to Pittsburgh, even as Erie Canal draws traffic away from New Orleans.

1828 and 1831 Abraham Lincoln guides flatboat down Mississippi to New Orleans, probably landing at Faubourg St. Mary wharves in today's Warehouse District. Tradition holds that sight of local slave markets makes lasting impression on young Lincoln.

1830 New Orleans population reaches 49,826 (21,251 whites; 16,639 black slaves; and 11,906 free people of color), fifth largest among American cities.

1830s Esplanade Avenue is extended from river to Bayou St. John. Avenue is designed in French manner and developed as garden suburb for wealthy Francophones departing old city. Corridor exploits upgraded Esplanade Ridge and forms axis of orthogonal street network of Sixth and Seventh wards, but does not replace its prehistoric predecessor, Bayou Road, which wanders across Esplanade at an angle all its own.

1830s Black population in New Orleans, majority since 1730s, falls into numerical minority as Irish and German immigration augments city's white population. Urban slaves are often replaced by immigrant servants and laborers, contributing to steady decline in absolute number of black New Orleanians from 1840 to emancipation. City remains majority-white until late 1970s.

1831 Pontchartrain Railroad built to connect river and lake. Early railroad establishes Elysian Fields Avenue trajectory through backswamp a century prior to area's urban development. Railroad serves as ingress/egress for passenger traffic between New Orleans and Gulf Coast cities.

1832-1838 At cost of thousands of mostly Irish lives, New Basin Canal is excavated between rear of Faubourg St. Mary and Lake Pontchartrain, giving city (particularly uptown Anglo business community) improved access to lake trade. Waterway competes with circa-1790s Carondelet Canal and new Pontchartrain Railroad, both of which draw lake trade to Canale lower city. Canal and turning basin influence development of back-of-town and lakefront into mid-twentieth century.

- 1832** Cholera epidemic kills thousands, particularly newly arrived Irish immigrants.
- 1830s-1850s** Main era of Irish immigration to New Orleans sees Irish settle in dispersed pattern throughout periphery of city, particularly along riverfront and back-of-town, while generally avoiding costly inner city. English-speaking Catholic churches are founded to serve this population.
- 1830-1930s** Sugar handling and trading creates "sugar landing" on upper French Quarter batture, riverside of present-day North Peters, from Touloume to Iberville. Area develops into "Sugar District" in 1870s, with high-rise processing plants, storage sheds, shipping facilities, and exchange. Sugar processing moves to St. Bernard Parish in 1910s, but industry continues to use French Quarter riverfront until 1930s. Most facilities have since been demolished; area, now occupied by parking lots, is often eyed for new development.
- 1830s** Capt. Henry Shreve and State of Louisiana alter hydrology of Mississippi/Red/Atchafalaya region in central Louisiana, not foreseeing consequences. Shreve cuts off meander loop near Red-Mississippi juncture (1831) to aid navigation; severed section silts up ("Old River") in one part and sends Red River into Mississippi in another portion. Immense logjam prevents water from escaping down Atchafalaya distributary, but also retards navigation and development in south-central Louisiana. Shreve and state clear logjam during 1830s, unknowingly providing Mississippi with shorter path and steeper gradient to sea. Cleared logjam sends steadily increasing flow down Atchafalaya rather than Mississippi. Fearing catastrophic channel jump, engineers build Old River Control Structure in 1950s-60s to preserve lower Mississippi River channel—and New Orleans.
- 1833** City of Lafayette founded immediately above New Orleans. Jefferson Parish community draws German and Irish immigrants to its densely populated riverside blocks (present-day Irish Channel), and wealthy, mostly Anglo families to elegant garden suburb in its interior blocks (today's Garden District).
- 1834** First successful gas company brings new fuel to city for lighting and other purposes. Gas works are soon constructed near present-day Superdome, illustrating how back-of-town was used for operations too sprawling and objectionable to be located in front-of-town. Gas works remain in this area for over a century.
- 1835** New Orleans and Canton Rail Road installed on Natchez Street, present-day St. Charles Avenue. Streetcar plays important role in developing uptown New Orleans and enabling surveying of new streets. As old long-lot plantations are subdivided for residential blocks. Now oldest continually serving rail line in the world (excepting two-year post-Katrina interruption), St. Charles streetcar represents first component of an urban rail system that would grow stead-

ily until the 1920s, then decline back down to its original line after 1964.

- 1835** Joseph Holt Ingraham publishes *The South-West by a Yankee*, writing “I have termed New-Orleans the crescent city...from its being built around the segment of a circle formed by a graceful curve of the river....” “Crescent City” catches on and becomes city’s premier nickname for well over a century.
- 1835** New Orleans Barracks constructed as U.S. military post in lowermost corner of Orleans Parish. Complex of outstanding Greek Revival structures within turreted walls forms landmark for visitors sailing upriver; serves as jumping-off point for troops in Mexican War and other operations. Renamed Jackson Barracks in 1866; installation is now home to Louisiana National Guard.
- 1836** Anglo displeasure with Creole political control and other ethnic tensions lead to creation of essentially three separate cities within New Orleans: lower First and Third municipalities are mostly Creole and immigrant; upper Second Municipality is mostly Anglo and immigrant. “Municipality system” is inefficient and divisive, but influential in ethnic geography of city, producing perception of Canal Street as dividing line between Creole and American cultures. City reunifies in 1852.
- 1836-1853** Municipal market system begins steady expansion. Public markets open above (Poydras Market, St. Mary’s Market) and below (Washington Market) old city, while original French Market, established by Spanish administration, enjoys its own expansion. New Orleans municipal market city grows steadily to thirty-four units in 1911, becoming largest such system in nation.
- 1837** Panic of 1837 and ensuing depression interrupts city’s economic bustle; many wealthy citizens lose fortunes.
- 1837** Strong hurricane hits New Orleans, damaging structures and flooding marshes adjacent to Lake Pontchartrain.
- 1837-1840s** Opulent “exchange hotels,” built in First and Second municipalities, combine lodging, dining, parking, and conference space under one roof. St. Louis Exchange Hotel opens in predominantly Creole First Municipality; domed St. Charles Exchange Hotel opens in predominantly Anglo Second Municipality. Each becomes nuclei for competing Creole-Anglo interests, and are described as among most splendid hotels in America. Both cater to extended-stay guests during wintertime business season.
- 1830s-1840s** New American aesthetics affect built environment: Creole architecture peaks and begins to decline in French Quarter; replaced by Greek Revival, which first arrived here in 1808 from Northeast. Stylistic shift reflects larger cultural changes in politics and society, from Creole to American.
- 1840** New Orleans population reaches 102,193 (59,519 whites; 23,448 black slaves;

and 19,226 free people of color). City is third-largest in nation, the highest ranking it would ever achieve.

1840 New Orleans is rated... as the fourth port in point of commerce in the world, exceeded only by London, Liverpool, and New York.”³

1840 Antoine’s opens in French Quarter. French restaurant represents new national phenomenon (first seen in New York City in 1830s) of “eating out” as delectable, high-end entertainment rather than mere necessity for hungry transients. Relocated to present-day St. Louis Street site in 1866 and now city’s oldest continually operating enterprise, Antoine’s represents culinary artifact of mid-nineteenth-century French cooking.

1840s De Cadehan Canal dug to connect Mississippi River with Bayou de l’Arataria and Arataria Bay. Canal helps develop West Bank; is expanded as “Harvey Canal” with modern locks in 1907 and widened as part of Gulf Intracoastal Waterway in 1924.

1840s-1910s New Orleans continues to grow in population, but declines in rank relative to other American cities. Increasing railroad and canal competition for Mississippi Valley trade partially explains why New Orleans begins to fall behind other cities (see graphs, “New Orleans’ Meteoric Rise... and Relative Decline, 1810-1860” and “Tracking New Orleans’ Ascend and Decline, 1790-2007”).

1840s War with Mexico breaks out following U.S. annexation of Texas. New Orleans plays prominent role as jumping-off point for troops and munitions; local *Picayune* newspaper becomes major source of war reporting for nation. Involvement symbolizes era (particularly 1830s-50s) when New Orleans served as favored site for launching campaigns of adventurism and intrigue into Latin America.

1840s-1850s Main era of German immigration to New Orleans. Like Irish, Germans settle in dispersed pattern throughout city periphery, particularly in Lafayette and Third Municipalities. Somewhat better educated than Irish, not burdened by language barrier, Germans infuse rich cultural and institutional traditions into New Orleans society.

1840s-1850s Retailers migrate from narrow Royal and Chartres streets to commodious Canal Street, until now a mostly residential thoroughfare. Canal Street becomes South’s premier downtown shopping destination until 1960s.

Mid-1840s After seven failed attempts since Louisiana Purchase, New Orleans launches a professional, staffed Board of Health to understand and improve city’s terrible public-health crisis. Hard data and honest assessments of deplorable conditions are finally documented, yet death rate increases in ensuing decade, in part because of official complacency.

- 1848** Illinois and Michigan (I & M) Canal is completed across hundred-mile-long "Chicago Portage," providing waterborne passage between Great Lakes and Gulf of Mexico watersheds. New western commerce opportunity fuels development of Chicago, while diminishing New Orleans' once-monopolistic control of Mississippi River shipping traffic. I & M Canal is supplanted in 1900 by larger Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal.
- 1849** Crevasse in levee at Sauv e Plantation in Jefferson Parish diverts river water into lowlands between natural levee of Mississippi and Metairie/Gentilly ridges. Water fills backswamp and inundates city from rear, to within blocks of riverfront, submerges 220 blocks, damages 2,000 structures, and displaces 12,000 residents. City infrastructure is rebuilt with funds from special tax. "Sauv e's Crevasse" ranks as New Orleans' worst flood until Hurricane Katrina levee failures of 2005.
- 1845-1856** Decaying *Place d'Armes* and surrounding buildings are renovated magnificently. St. Louis Cathedral and twin Pontalba Buildings, constructed, Cabildo and Presbyt re renovated with Mansard roof and cupolas; Andrew Jackson statue installed; newly fenced and landscaped plaza renamed Jackson Square. Outstanding work transforms dusty commons into place of splendor, completely intact today. Cast-iron galleries on Pontalba Buildings instigate local fashion craze and forever change streetscape of French Quarter, as iron-lace galleries are added to numerous townhouses and storefronts.
- 1847-1858** Yellow fever outbreak in 1847 claims lives of over 2,300 New Orleanians; commences era of terribly costly epidemics killing at least 22,500 in upcoming twelve years, disrupting nearly every aspect of life in New Orleans. High death tolls are a product of poor municipal sanitation, perfect habitat for invasive *Aedes aegypti* mosquito, and large numbers of vulnerable residents, primarily Irish and German immigrants.
- 1850** New Orleans population reaches 119,460 (91,431 whites; 18,068 black slaves; and 9,961 free people of color). Despite growing population and booming economy, city drops in rank from third-largest in nation in 1840 to fifth-largest in 1850.
- 1850** New telegraph lines speed city's communication links with adjacent cities and points downriver.
- 1850** 3,700 miles of canal are completed in U.S. since Erie Canal opened in 1825. Waterway excavation in North further threatens city's grip on Mississippi and Ohio Valley trade. But busy traffic on river obscures growing threat on horizon; New Orleans' merchants focus on short-term opportunities and prosper during antebellum "golden age."

- 1850s** New railroads in Northeast give East Coast cities additional access to trans-Appalachian region, even when canals freeze in winter. Railroads further weaken New Orleans's command of Mississippi Valley trade; there are now numerous ways to get resources and cargo in and out of North American interior. Transportation costs decline for Western commodities in Eastern urban markets; city dwellers thus spend less on food and more on manufactured goods, fueling industrialization in North. Complement business leaders in New Orleans are late in bringing railroads and industry to city, viewing traditional river transportation as salvation.
- 1853** As slavery becomes most divisive issue in nation, racial tensions in Creole locally and rights of free people of color are curtailed. City's traditional Caribbean-influenced three-tier racial caste system begins to give way to two-tier (white/black) nation favored in rest of nation. Some free Creoles of color respond by departing for Mexico, further diminishing city's nonwhite population in late antebellum years.
- 1852** 52,011 immigrants arrive to New Orleans, almost equal to number arrived to Boston, Philadelphia, and Baltimore combined. City is primary immigration port in South and second in nation (behind New York) for most years between 1837 and 1860.
- 1852** Municipality system (1836) is abandoned; Lafayette incorporated into New Orleans. City emerges from municipality era with new Anglo-American ethnic domination and momentum toward urban expansion. City's political and economic epicenter, including City Hall, is relocated from old city to Faubourg St. Mary. Old house numbering system and ward boundaries are updated.
- 1850s** Local publishing industry shifts its base from Chartres Street in old city to Camp Street in Faubourg St. Mary, reflecting increasing influence of American side of town. "Newspaper Row" remains in and around 300 block of Camp Street until 1920s.
- 1850s** "Cotton District" forms around Gravier / Carondelet intersection. Cotton factors and merchants form busy financial district in heart of Faubourg St. Mary, nerve center of Southern cotton economy. District survives into 1950s.
- 1853** City's worst yellow fever epidemic claims at least 8,000 lives, probably closer to 12,000 (one-tenth the city); Irish and German immigrants suffer disproportionately. City streets are nearly deserted during summertime months. While local press notoriously underreports stories of plague to avoid affecting commercial interests, newspapers in rival Northern ports, particularly New York, document New Orleans' yellow fever miseries enthusiastically. Subsequent epidemics in 1854-55 continue suffering for city's underclass.

- 1855-1858** Three prominent national churches arise in former city of Lafayette, now Fourth District of New Orleans. Predominantly Irish St. Alphonsus Church (1855-58), German-language St. Mary's Assumption (1858-60), and Franco-phone Notre Dame de Bon Secours (1858) are erected in close proximity, symbolizing multiethnic nature of uptown New Orleans in late antebellum era. Similar situation prevails in Third District. Many of these geographically proximate church parishes are merged around turn of twenty-first century due to limited resources.
- 1856** Hurricane strikes coastal Louisiana, soaking New Orleans and destroying utterly hotel resort on Isle Dernière ("East Island"). Death toll of over 200 includes many prominent New Orleanians.
- 1857** Krewé of Omnis formed by men from Mobile; help transform celebration of Mardi Gras from private ball and disorganized street mayhem to public parades, fanciful royalty, and elaborate civic rituals. Mardi Gras, celebrated in Louisiana since 1699, soon develops into premier outdoor cultural trait distinguishing New Orleans from other American cities.
- 1858** Another 4,800 New Orleanians perish to yellow fever, city's second-worst plague. "Yellow jack" death toll declines nearly to zero during Civil War years, due in large part to sanitation efforts under federal occupation.
- 1860** New Orleans population reaches 174,491 (142,063 whites; 14,484 black slaves; 10,939 free people of color). Despite growing population, New Orleans' rank among American cities declines, from third-largest in 1840 to fifth-largest in 1850, to sixth-largest in 1860. Last antebellum year also marks city's highest ratio of whites to blacks: nearly six-to-one. By 2000, blacks outnumber whites by more than two-to-one.
- 1860** Thirty-five-thousand miles of railroad track crisscross U.S.; railroad and canal competition continues to cut into New Orleans' command of river trade.
- 1860** Three hurricanes buffet coastal Louisiana within two months, causing widespread damage and crop loss.
- 1860s** Barges replace flatboats on the riverfront. Old flatboat landings replaced by new docking facilities for powered barges; picturesque Mississippi flatboats from frontier era disappear from waterfront, except for coal transport. "Probably we will never again see the old days of flatboats revived."⁴
- 1861** Louisiana secedes from Union. Local Gen. P. G. T. Beauregard fires opening shots at Fort Sumter. Civil War begins.
- 1862** New Orleans, weakly defended by Confederates, succumbs peacefully to federal troops executing "Anaconda Plan" to encircle South by seizing Mississippi River. War ends early for New Orleans as federal troops occupy city; South

loses premier metropolis and critical grip on lower river. Region's slave-based plantation economy, which enriched white New Orleanians since colonial times, collapses forever; era of human slavery in New Orleans draws to a close after 143 years.

1862-1865 South and Southern agriculture devastated; shipping commerce to New Orleans interrupted; federal presence and post-war racial tensions alter social landscape.

1860-1890 New social and urban factors affect built environment. Cottages, often with slave quarters and courtyards, diminish in popularity in French Quarter; replaced by shotgun houses, which peak in popularity during turn-of-century era. Individually crafted vernacular structures give way to quasi-mass-produced "cottage" houses.

1864-1866 Small but prominent Greek community founds first Eastern Orthodox Church in Western Hemisphere. Holy Trinity Church becomes religious center for Greek New Orleanians for century to come. Sixth Ward neighborhood around church's 1222 North Dorgenois site becomes geographical nucleus of Greek community.

1865-1871 Nine tropical storms and hurricanes batter Louisiana coast. Region causing varying amounts of damage.

1856 Violent riot breaks out at Mechanics Institute, in which mostly ex-Confederate white Democrats and their allies engage black Radical Republicans and their supporters, assembled for Louisiana Constitutional Convention. Tragedy claims dozens of lives (mostly black), injures over 100, and presages heightened racial tension and violence in Reconstruction era Louisiana.

1866-1867 With city back under civilian control and no longer subject to military-enforced sanitation, public health troubles return. Cholera strikes twice in 1866; yellow fever outbreak in following year claims over 3,000 lives.

1867-1871 Sugar planters, seeking replacements for emancipated slaves, import Chinese workers from Cuban plantations. Effort fails, but brings small number of Chinese to city, some of who eventually settle in Third Ward and form "Chinatown" around 1100 block of Tulane Avenue. Others start family-owned laundries dispersed widely throughout city.

1868 Enterprise on Delachaise Street successfully manufactures and sells ice, one of first in nation. Year-round availability of ice allows corner grocers to carry perishables, previously limited by law (for health reasons) to city-controlled markets. Corner grocers, often run by Sicilian immigrants, appear throughout expanding residential areas. Parallel development of refrigerated shipping in this era enlarges meatpacking and other food industries from local to national scale, and expands list of commodities transhipped at New Orleans.

- 1868** New state constitution is among most progressive in nation, extending suffrage to blacks while calling for integrated public schools and accommodations. But entrenched racial order from antebellum times eventually trumps constitution's aims, as racial tensions increase and federal troops depart in subsequent decade.
- 1869** State legislature takes action against public health nuisance created by city's livestock and meat-processing industry. New law treats butchering as public utility, creating monopoly and centralizing and isolating slaughterhouse activities away from city population. Outraged independent butchers sue; "Slaughterhouse Case" arrives to U.S. Supreme Court, which decides in favor of state monopoly in 1873. Locally, court's decision consolidates stockyards and slaughtering to Orleans/St. Bernard parish line; nationally, it sets commercial precedent limiting interpretation of Fourteenth Amendment.
- 1870s-1870s** Railroads are built across eastern marshes, connecting city with big ports, St. Louis, many Parish, Mississippi Gulf Coast, Mobile, and points east. Speedy new transportation option unites New Orleans with coastal areas and diminishes passenger steamboat traffic to Port of Poydras and Elysian Fields Avenue lakefront. Recreation spots, summer escapes, fishing camps, and bedroom communities for early commuters develop along railroad, particularly in Bay St. Louis area.
- 1870s** International architectural styles begin to modernize cityscape. Creole architecture disappears almost entirely, as do antebellum American styles (particularly Greek Revival). Italianate facades, here since 1850s via English "Picturesque" movement, rise in popularity.
- 1870** New Orleans population reaches 191,418 (ninth largest in nation). Emancipated slaves migrate to city in droves, doubling 1860 Black population to 50,456 (26 percent of total 1870 population). Most settle in back-of-town; demographic pattern remains to day, though back swamp is drained.
- Late 1800s** Settlement patterns change since antebellum years. Expanded streetcar networks allow affluent families, who traditionally lived in inner city, to move to new garden ("trolley") suburbs, once occupied by poor Irish and German immigrants in antebellum times. Move opens up housing opportunities for poor in inner city, where jobs also exist. Throughout late 1800s and early 1900s, immigrants settle mostly in ring of inexpensive, conveniently located working-class neighborhoods immediately surrounding CBD, the "immigrant belt."
- 1870s** New Orleans annexes Jefferson City, on uptown east bank, and Algiers, across from French Quarter on West Bank, in 1870; Carrollton joins city in 1874. Wards and municipal districts are adjusted to incorporate new city land. By 1880s, modern shape of Orleans Parish emerges.

- 1870s** Sugar planters start recruiting peasants out of Sicily to work on Louisiana plantations in place of emancipated slaves. Sicilians, long part of New Orleans' tropical fruit trade, come by thousands between 1870s and 1900s. Most settle in Lower French Quarter ("Little Palermo") and predominate in and near French Market until around World War II.
- 1870s** Private company excavates drainage canals in lakeside marshes. Although project eventually fails, canals are later incorporated into successful municipal drainage effort of 1896-1915, and remain in service today as the 17th Street, Orleans, and London Avenue outfall canals. All three waterways contributed to catastrophic flooding following Hurricane Katrina in 2005.
- 1871** Crevasse at Bonnet Carré sends river water into Lake Pontchartrain; June winds prevent lake's normal outflow to gulf, allowing water levels to rise in adjoining New Basin drainage canal. On June 3, levee breaches at Magan Avenue and inundates area between Old Basin and New Basin canals up to Ximpart Street. Worst flood since Soulvé's Crevasse, the Bonnet Carré Crevasse deluge illustrates how man-made navigation canals threaten population by bringing lake and gulf water into heart of city.
- 1872** Metairie Cemetery is laid out on former racetrack; becomes most famous of numerous cemeteries on Metairie and Gentilly ridges. Topographic features also host parks, ballgrounds, and other large-scale public land uses which require well-drained land and proximity to city population, but need too much acreage to be located in city proper.
- 1874** Violent riot between Democratic White League and Republican Metropolitan Police at foot of Canal Street represents flashpoint of post-war racial tensions. Conflict involves thousands and produces over 100 casualties. Monument to "Battle of Liberty Place" later dedicated at site becomes controversial reminder of racial discord in modern times; obelisk is eventually relocated and covered over with message of racial reconciliation.
- 1870s-1890s** Orthodox Jewish people mostly from Poland and Russia settle between Dryades Street and St. Charles Avenue. The immigrants and their descendants form "Dryades Street neighborhood," New Orleans' only popularly recognized Jewish neighborhood, distinct from established Reform Jewish community of uptown. Jewish-owned shops on Dryades, and residential and religious institutions riverside of Dryades, remain into 1960s-70s.
- Late 1800s** Emancipation and post-war racial tensions polarize Louisiana's historically fluid sense of racial identification into exclusive white/black categories. Creole identity is redefined by white narrative historians as exclusive domain of white descendants of French and Spanish colonialists, despite ample historical use of term for Franco-African-American community. Writers of the "local

color" tradition romanticize city's history and Creole society; New Orleans mythology is born and survives to this day.

1875-1879 With sedimentation of river channel delaying shipping traffic at mouth of Mississippi, Capt. James Eads constructs parallel jetties at South Pass. Structures construct waterway, increase velocity, mobilize sediment, and deepen channel, allowing ocean-going vessels to enter river promptly. Coupled with development of barges, growth of local rail road network, and improving economic conditions, Eads' jetties help city rebound from post-war slump. But engineering effort also diverts sediment away from Louisiana coast and onto edge of continental shelf, rather than building up marshes of bird foot delta.

1877 Federal troops withdraw; New Orleans' turbulent occupation and Reconstruction ends.

Late 1870s Garbage, waste, and excrement, traditionally dumped into Mississippi at various "laisance wharves" along riverfront, are now loaded onto barges and dumped in the middle of river below city limits. Service is provided not by city but by private voluntary Citizens' Auxiliary Sanitary Association (1879), which also installs river pumps and pipes to flush out city streets.

1878 Worst yellow fever outbreak since 1850's claims over 4,000 lives.

1875 T. S. Hardee and Auxiliary Sanitation Association publish *Topographical and Drainage Map of New Orleans and Surroundings*, most accurate city map of era. 1879 version includes first comprehensive elevation measurements of city, at one-foot contour interval.

1879 Federal government creates Mississippi River Commission, ending era of local and state levee projects and commencing modern era of federal authority over flood and navigation control of Mississippi River.

1880 New Orleans population reaches 215,090; Black population 57,617 (27 percent). By one account, city's ethnic mix comprised "some 70,000 French and Creoles, 30,000 Germans, 60,000 Negroes and mulattoes... 10,000 Mexicans, Spanish and Italians [and] 80,000 or 90,000... Anglo-Americans," including Irish.⁵ City is now tenth-largest in nation, dropping steadily from rank of third in 1840.

1880 Growing city boasts 566 miles of streets, of which only ninety-four miles are paved. Of those, cobblestones cover 35 percent, pulverized oyster shells overlay 25 percent, stone paving blocks cover 24 percent, and the remainder are treated with stone fragments or planks.

1880 Railroads now link New Orleans to Cairo, Illinois and points upriver, to Mobile and points north and east, to Morgan City and points west, and to Donaldsonville across levee (via ferries). Network of tracks complements city's shipping

industry but pales in comparison to those connecting emerging Midwestern cities with northeastern metropolises.

Late 1800s-early 1900s Remarkable era of innovation, particularly in electrification, transportation, and communications, transforms cities and alters political and economic geographies. Progressive voices nationwide actively promote cleaning up cities, installing improved water, sewerage, and drainage systems, and creating city parks and playgrounds. Transformations foster development of Central Business District as non-residential inner core of high-rise office buildings, equipped with telephones and elevators. Office workers relocate to garden (“trolley”) suburbs and commute on electrified streetcars and, later, automobiles. Globally, era witnesses swift in geo-political and economic power from one based on sea to one based on land. New Orleans, founded for its river/sea position and overly dependent on waterborne transportation, is ill-prepared for modern era.

Late 1800s-early 1900s “Local color” literary tradition flourishes in city. Writers such as George Washington Cable, Kate Chopin, Charles Gayarré, Grace King, and Lafcadio Hearn help mythologize New Orleans in public mind, forming foundation of modern-day tourism economy.

1882 Chinese Mission, founded on South Liberty Street, draws Chinese immigrants to Third Ward back-of-town; Chinatown forms around 1100 block of Tulane Avenue and survives until 1937.

1884-1885 World’s Industrial and Cotton Centennial Exposition held at Audubon Park. Exposition fails commercially, but succeeds in helping develop semi-rural uptown into prosperous trolley suburbs with outstanding urban park and university campuses. Event also offers national and international venue for Louisiana artists and writers, who gain prominence afterwards.

1885-early 1900s First local cookbooks published, documenting city’s foodways and helping form national cognizance of distinctive New Orleans cuisine. Publications coincide with rise in tourism, fueled by World’s Industrial and Cotton Centennial Exhibition in Audubon Park, rising leisure class, railroad travel, and “local color” literary genre. Now a major source of local identity, city’s food heritage is pillar of modern tourism industry.

1888 Strong hurricane, worst since 1837, strikes New Orleans; causes extensive structural damage, floods some areas with rainfall, and downs recently installed telephone and electrical lines.

1890 New Orleans population reaches 242,039, twelfth largest in nation. Black population is 64,421 (27 percent).

1890-1891 Murder of Police Chief David Hennessy blamed on Sicilian mobsters; eleven Sicilians held at Parish Prison are lynched in retaliation. Incident leads

to international crisis between Italy and U.S.; leaves deep scars in Sicilian community, contributing to its social isolation in "Little Palermo" (lower French Quarter) at turn-of-century.

1890s-1900s Arabi subdivision develops upon old Le Beau plantation immediately below New Orleans, bringing upper St. Bernard Parish area into urbanized area.

1890s-1920s Former Fourier tract and Allard Plantation landscaped into Audubon Park and City Park, respectively.

1891-1909 "Residential parks" created uptown along St. Charles Avenue. Roka Park, Audubon Place, and other exclusive residential streets represent early form of zoning and "gating" of communities.

1893 Extremely powerful hurricane devastates coastal Louisiana and Gulf Coast, killing over 2,000.

1893-1895 City council empowers new Drainage Advisory Board to study and solve city's age-old drainage problem. Board collects vast amount of scientific and engineering data, develops large-scale topographic map, and proposes plan to drain water off natural levee to low point in central city, then pump it through canals into adjacent lakes. Construction begins in 1896 and progresses substantially following 1899 bond issue.

1894 Tulane University relocates uptown, after sixty years downtown as antecedent institutions. "University area" formerly Loyola University moves next door in early 1900s. Twin campuses impart vital character to uptown, helping form affluent neighborhoods with highly educated residential population, many from out-of-town.

1894 Erratic 1852 house-numbering system is replaced with logical system in use today, in which addresses increment by 100 per block, with odd numbers indicating lakeside or downriver side. Effort reflects Progressive Era's sensibilities of improved municipal service.

1890s-1900s Research conducted at Audubon Park refines methods for purifying river water for residential use. Shortly thereafter, purification and distribution plant is constructed in Carrollton, bringing city into modern age of municipal water systems. Carrollton site provides appropriate riverside location and elevation to draw water from Mississippi, remove sediment, add lime and sulfate of iron for softening, purify it with chloride gas, and store it. High-lift pumps then distribute water to city residents everywhere except Algiers, which is served through similar West Bank system.

1890s-1900s Steel-frame construction and concrete piers are introduced to New Orleans; first generation of high-rises erected in CBD and upper French Quar-

ter transforms city's skyline.

1893-1898 Streetcar lines are electrified throughout city.

1895 Conflagration destroys much of Algiers, last of great city fires. Algiers rebuilds in era of late Victorian architecture, giving modern-day Algiers Point neighborhood a quaint, turn-of-century ambience.

1896-1915 Following two years of research and design (and financing in 1897) a world-class drainage system is installed to remove runoff and standing water in low-lying backswamp. System radically alters geography of New Orleans: swamp and marshes disappear; urban development begins to spread toward lake; middle-class whites move off natural levee and into new lakefront suburbs (which explicitly exclude blacks through deed covenants). Crescent-shaped historic New Orleans gives way to modern twentieth-century metropolis.

1896 St. Augustine Catholic Church parishioner Homer Plessy tests post-reconstruction Jim Crow laws by sitting in whites-only train car (1892). Legal case regarding his arrest backfires in historic 1896 Supreme Court decision: *Plessy v. Ferguson* establishes "separate but equal" legal precedent, entrenching segregation in South for next half-century. Public facilities in New Orleans, from streetcars to schools to department stores, are legally segregated by race. Case is viewed as the concluding chapter of the Americanization of New Orleans' Caribbean-influenced system of racial identity.

1897 Alderman Sidney Story sponsors ordinance to ban prostitution throughout city, except in fifteen-block neighborhood behind French Quarter. Subsequent ordinance creates second zone along nearby Gravier Street. Laws succeed in controlling prostitution, but inadvertently create vibrant and conspicuous red-light districts, dubbed "Storyville" and "Black Storyville" respectively. Storyville becomes nationally notorious and helps affirm New Orleans' ancient reputation for debauchery while also incubating some of city's musical genius. Storyville closes in 1917 by order of U.S. Navy; forming "sporting houses" are demolished around 1940 for Iberville Housing Project.

1899-1902 Sicilian-born Vaccaro brothers and Russian-born Samuel Zemurray independently start importing bananas from Central America through New Orleans. Vaccaros' firm grows into Standard Fruit; Zemurray's Cuyamel Fruit later merges with United Fruit. Banana companies tighten city's grip on nation's tropical fruit industry, attained in antebellum times via shipping routes with Sicily. Companies establish close ties between city and Central American republics, particularly Honduras, deeply influencing political and economic landscape of Central America for years to come. Hondurans immigrate to city in modest numbers throughout twentieth century, giving New Orleans one of largest transplanted *Catracho* populations. Many currently reside in Kenner, Metairie, and Mid-City.

Turn-of-century Jazz musical style emerges from myriad local and regional influences; soon diffuses nation-wide and worldwide with help from Tin Pan Alley music industry and nascent recording technologies. Jazz becomes “sound track” of Western world from 1920s to World War II and is commonly recognized as New Orleans’ most significant cultural contribution.

1900 New Orleans population reaches 287,104; black population 77,714 (27 percent). City remains twelfth-largest in nation.

1900 Race riot erupts following violent exchange between police officers and back-to-Africa advocate Robert Charles. Incident, which occurs in poor, isolated back-of-town area settled by emancipated slaves, is often described as city’s last major race riot, attesting to relatively peaceful race relations here. But neighborhood, present-day Central City, remains troubled to day.

Early 1900s Steam-powered riverboats are gradually replaced by tug barges and other petroleum-powered vessels for freight shipping. Sights and sounds of steamboats crowding riverfront disappear from Mississippi River, except for excursion vessels, many of which carry local jazz bands to interior cities.

1901-1920s Dock Board modernizes port facilities, constructing riverside warehouses, grain elevators, canals, and new docking space.

1901 Louis Armstrong born in back-of-town, as jazz era emerges. New Orleans’ most famous soul greatly enhances city’s image in eyes of world, but city fails to embrace Armstrong until years after his death, even demolishing his neighborhood in 1950s for new City Hall complex.

1904-1920 and 1926 Algiers resident Mayor Martin Behrman oversees important civic improvements, including modernization of drainage, sewerage, and water systems; expansion of city services and public education; and creation of Public Belt Railroad.

1905 Over 400 people die in city’s (and nation’s) last yellow fever epidemic. Poor Sicilian immigrants living in crowded conditions in lower French Quarter are blamed for outbreak. After *Aedes aegypti* is identified as vector, new drainage and potable-water systems (eliminating mosquito-breeding puddles and cisterns) finally end century-old public health problem.

1905-1910 New home construction commences in recently platted Lakeview subdivision, drained from marsh only a few years earlier. Lakeview develops mostly during 1910s-40s, becoming comfortable and stable middle-class inner suburb. Deed covenants restrict home ownership to whites only, affecting city’s racial geography, as middle-class white families “leapfrog” over black back-of-town to settle in drained marshes.

- 1906** Continuing spirit of municipal improvements ongoing since 1890s, Olive Stallings establishes city's first playground for neighborhood children. Stallings leads new Playgrounds Commission in 1911 and eventually wills a portion of her estate to city's public playgrounds and pools, leading to birth of New Orleans Recreation Department.
- 1910** New Orleans population reaches 339,075; black population 89,262 (26 percent). City drops to fifteenth-largest in nation.
- 1910s** Architectural styles change: Creole cottages and shotgun houses decline in popularity, replaced by Craftsman, City Beautiful, and California-style bungalow. Three-story townhouses give way to "catalog" framehouses, villas, and other structural typologies and styles.
- 1910s-1940s** Gentilly is developed on an isolated near Gentilly Ridge topographic feature in Seventh and Eighth wards. New suburb, with non-native architectural styles and spacious green surroundings, expands city toward newly drained lakefront. Deed covenants restrict sales to whites only.
- 1910s-1940** New Orleans continues to grow in population, while stabilizing in rank relative to other American cities at around the fifteenth largest city in U.S. (see graph, "Tracking New Orleans' Ascend and Decline, 1790-2007"). Shipping and industrial activity relating to two world wars help explain suspension of city's steady decline in national ranking.
- 1911** City's thirty-fourth municipal market opens but proves to be last, as competition from ubiquitous corner grocery stores takes toll on old centralized stall market. Automobiles, supermarkets, franchises, suburbanization, and globalized food production and distribution render system obsolete by mid-twentieth century.
- 1912** St. Charles Hotel launches national marketing campaign billing New Orleans as "The City Care Forgot." Effort helps instill slogan into national lexicon.
- 1914-1918** World War I rages in Europe; city benefits from war-related increase in river traffic. Local German community is devastated by stigma of enemy association; most German cultural institutions and public traditions in city are permanently silenced.
- 1915** Hurricane strikes New Orleans region, damaging 25,000 structures, causing flooding, inflicting \$13 million in expenses, and killing 275 Louisianians, including twenty-four in tragic Rigolets incident. Eleven major churches lose their steeples or towers. Antebellum landmarks Old French Opera House and former St. Louis Hotel are heavily damaged; latter is subsequently demolished.
- 1917** Xavier University founded. Nation's only black Catholic institution of higher

learning reflects New Orleans' distinct Creole heritage.

- 1918-1923** Dock Board excavates Inner Harbor Navigation Canal ("Industrial Canal") on old Ursuline Nuns holding in Ninth Ward; canal and locks connect river and lake, providing shortcut to gulf and opening up new deep-water wharf space. Much port activity shifts to Industrial Canal by mid-1900s, but returns to river by turn of twenty-first century. Canal benefits port but isolates Lower Ninth Ward from rest of city, while dangerously introducing surge-prone waterways into urban interior.
- 1919** Immense base for Army Quartermaster Corps is constructed at foot of new Industrial Canal, changing face of Ninth Ward riverfront and augmenting military presence in New Orleans. Base serves as Port of Embarkation during World War II. Army transfers base to Navy in 1966; Navy prepares to depart in 2009. Future of Naval Support Activity is currently under discussion.
- 1919** Old French Opera House burns. Demise of Bourbon Street landmark built in 1809, symbolizes end of centuries-old cultural exchange between France and New Orleans; helps launch appreciation for decaying French Quarter.
- 1920** New Orleans population reaches 387,219, seventeenth largest in nation; black population is 100,950 (26 percent).
- 1920s-1930s** Writers, artists, and intellectuals are drawn to Quarter's bohemian ambience and cheap rents; many live within a few blocks of each other, fostering intellectual interaction. Together with "local color" era of late nineteenth century, "French Quarter Renaissance" puts New Orleans on map as great literary city.
- 1922** New Orleans Public Service Inc. gains control of all streetcar lines, electrical service, and natural gas distribution in city. Decade of 1920s marks apex for streetcar system, with over 220 track miles spanning from West End to Lower Ninth Ward and on nearly every urban river-parallel street between Dryades and Tchoupitoulas. Lasting forty years see gradual transition to rubber-tire buses and termination of 90 percent of mileage.
- 1922** Association of Commerce Convention and Tourism Bureau begins promoting New Orleans as "America's Most Interesting City," to counteract languid, anti-business connotations of "City that Care Forgot."
- 1926-1934** Ambitious Lakefront Project protects city from storm-driven lake and gulf surges while creating high, scenic acreage for residences, parks, facilities, and airport. Project radically alters shape and topography of city; accelerates movement of population toward Lake Pontchartrain.
- 1926-1935** With modern technology enabling road construction through swamps, new Airline Highway antiquates historic River Road as main terrestrial con-

nection between New Orleans and Baton Rouge. Highway soon draws old riverfront communities away from Mississippi, but itself is superseded by I-10 forty years later.

1927 Great Mississippi River Flood inundates 26,000 square miles from Cairo to gulf, kills hundreds, displaces half-million, and threatens New Orleans. City is spared from river flooding, but controversial dynamiting of levee in St. Bernard and Plaquemines parishes to ensure metropolis' safety creates lasting ill-will between city dwellers and rural neighbors. Nation's worst natural disaster transforms federal river-control policy (through Flood Control Act of 1928) from "levees-only" to one of massively augmented levees, floodwalls, spillways, control structures, reservoirs, canals, revetments, and other devices throughout Mississippi Valley. Profoundly influential act puts federal government in flood control business, mandating federal financial and engineering responsibility for controlling Mississippi and other rivers, but immunizing government from liability should these systems fail.

1923-1940 Old Basin (Carondelet) and New Basin canals, rendered obsolete by railroads, highways, and barges, are incrementally filled in, opening up valuable ingress/egress corridors to downtown. Former bed of New Basin Canal later becomes Pontchartrain Expressway right-of-way.

Late 1920s Highway 11 Bridge erected over eastern Lake Pontchartrain increases automobile access to Slidell and points east. New bridges over Chef Menteur and Rigolets passes speed up trip to coastal Mississippi.

1929 St. Charles Avenue between Lee Circle and Jackson Avenue is zoned for light industrial use, leading to demolition of old homes. Twenty-four years later, area is rezoned to eight-story commercial district, encouraging construction of large-scale edifices. Zoning changes alter character of once-elegant lower St. Charles to motley mix of retailers and open lots amid occasional old homes.

1930 New Orleans population reaches 458,762; black population 129,622 (28 percent). City is sixteen-th largest in nation.

1930-1941 New Deal agencies Works Progress Administration and Public Works Administration execute numerous projects citywide, renovating historic structures, rebuilding aging infrastructure, and documenting city's past.

1934-1938 Public Works Administration renovates French Market, restoring circa-1813 Butchers Market, reconstructing Bazaar Market, remodeling Vegetable Market, demolishing Red Store, adding Fish Market, and razing Gallatin Street for new Farmers Market and Flea Market pavilions.

1935 Huey P. Long Bridge, first across lower Mississippi River, links east and west banks of Jefferson Parish. Built for both railroad and automotive traffic, bridge ends era of twin ferries and sparks development in semi-rural Jefferson Parish.

Hair-raising “Huey P.” later proves inadequate for modern vehicular traffic; is currently undergoing widening.

1936 State constitution authorizes city to preserve French Quarter. Vieux Carré Commission guards nation's second legally protected major historic district (after Charleston); buildings deemed architecturally and historically significant are preserved and held to certain standards. By saving city's iconic neighborhood, effort creates bedrock of future tourism industry and helps inspire protection of other historic areas.

1937 Chinatown at 1100 Tulane Avenue is razed; small Chinese merchant community relocates to 500 block of Bourbon Street, where it survives in remnant form into 1980s.

1937-1943 Housing Authority of New Orleans (HANO) clears selected historic neighborhoods to construct subsidized housing projects. Six expansive areas, including former Storyville and portions of Tremé and the French Quarter, are leveled, isolated from street grid, and rebuilt (1940-43) with garden apartments to be rented at subsidized rates to the poor. Those on higher elevation in the front-of-town are reserved for whites only; those on lower spots in the back-of-town are black-only. Later populated almost exclusively by the city's poorest African-Americans, the Iberville, River Garden (St. Thomas), Lafitte, Guste (Melpomene), C. J. Peete (Magnolia), E. W. Cooper (Calliope), St. Bernard, Florida, Fischer, and Abundance Square (Desire) public housing projects radically influence geographies of race and class in the late twentieth century. Viewed by many as “warehouses” for poverty and vice, some projects are demolished and rebuilt with mixed-income New Urbanist designs in early 2000s.

1940 New Orleans population reaches 494,537, black population 149,034 (30 percent). City is fifteenth-largest in nation, gaining slightly in rank due to Depression-era migration from rural regions, WPA-related job opportunities, and employment in industries relating to impending war.

1940 Moisant Airfield is established in isolated truck-farming community of Kenner, to supplant Lakefront Airport. Owned by City of New Orleans, Moisant begins commercial service in 1946 and is renamed New Orleans International Airport in 1960. Connected with city by Airline Highway, airport fuels growth of Kenner before East Jefferson Parish develops. Gap fills in entirety with completion of I-10 and Veterans Boulevard by 1970s. Airport is renamed Louis Armstrong-New Orleans International in 2001, but code MSY (allegedly “Moisant Stock Yards”) remains. Airport's runway orientation and small size are now seen as obstacles to air traffic; new airports sites west and east of city are proposed in 1990s-2000s.

1941-1945 As nation fights World War II, New Orleans plays disproportionately sig-

nificant role in war as a major ingress and egress for matériel and troops, base for ships and aircraft, and manufacturing center for Higgins landing craft (used during D-Day and other amphibious assaults). Navy commissions Naval Air Reserve Air Base on recently constructed lakefront, making area beehive of activity during war years. Troops on leave in city help transform Bourbon Street from bohemian night spot to world-famous red-light district.

1940s Federal government encourages development of petrochemical refining capability in region. Bienville River Road between New Orleans and Baton Rouge transforms from agrarian landscape of decaying antebellum homes to one of petrochemical refineries and industrial facilities. Region today is “Industrial Corridor” to some, “Cancer Alley” to others.

1940s Black Creoles begin migrating to war-related jobs in Jim Crow-free California. Railroad connections between New Orleans and Los Angeles give latter city a significant population of New Orleans Creoles (as well as Louisiana Creoles), which remains to this day.

1942 German U-boat sinks *Robert E. Lee* near mouth of Mississippi, killing twenty-five, before it too is destroyed. Other enemy subs disrupt shipping in Gulf of Mexico and bring war to Louisiana coast. As in colonial days, New Orleans’ position on river makes it valuable, but also vulnerable.

1944 G.I. Bill, passed in anticipation of millions of returning veterans, provides low-interest loans toward purchase of new homes. Housing shortages in most American cities lead young families to settle in new peripheral subdivisions driving initial wave of post-World War II suburbanization. Infrastructure and commerce follow new subdivisions, encouraging further urban sprawl. In New Orleans, most post-war subdivisions occupy low-lying terrain drained only recently of swamp water.

1945 Geographer Gilbert F. White publishes *Human Adjustment to Floods*. Influential study finds that man-made flood-control structures paradoxically tend to increase flood damage by inspiring overconfidence in the control of nature and encouraging humans to move into high-risk areas (“Floods are ‘acts of God,’ but flood losses are largely acts of man.”) So-called “levee effect” occurs throughout coastal Louisiana during twentieth century, as swamp drainage and levee construction create valuable new real estate and lure more people into increasingly risky areas.

1946-1961 Mayor de Lesseps “Chep” Morrison oversees post-war modernization of city’s infrastructure, reform of old-style political machines, and establishment of new commercial ties with Latin America. Brazilian-inspired City Hall complex, train station, airport, improved rail/street crossings, more buses, fewer streetcars, and bridges over both river and lake are among the changes of Morrison era.

- 1946** New York City building czar Robert Moses submits "Arterial Plan for New Orleans" to guide modernization of city's transportation system. Most controversial component entails connecting points east with West Bank by running elevated expressway in front of French Quarter. Funding arrives for "Riverfront Expressway" in 1964, launching bitter fight among New Orleanians for remainder of 1960s over fundamental notions of preservation and progress.
- 1946** Schwegmann Brothers Giant Supermarket opens on St. Claude and Elmerian Fields; 40,000-sq-ft grocery store is city's first modern supermarket. More follow, encouraged by increasing automobile dependence and flight to suburbs. Trends eventually spell doom for most corner grocery stores, street vendors, and municipal markets. Food retail, once micro-scale and spatially dispersed, becomes concentrated and less reflective of local food culture.
- 1947** Tennessee Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire* debuts on stage. Play infuses New Orleans mystique and sense of place into millions of theatergoers and later moviegoers; becomes most famous work of French Quarter literary community, active in 1920s-40s.
- 1947** Fourteen years after region's first offshore oil well is drilled, President Truman offers Louisiana all royalties and lease bids for near-shore waters and 37.5 percent of those farther out. State rejects offer in hope of more lucrative deal, which never comes. Decision costs state billions of dollars over next six decades; is only partially remedied when 2006 law directs 37.5 percent of future offshore royalties to four gulf states.
- 1947-1965** Upturn in tropical activity produces eight hurricanes affecting Louisiana coast, including two serious strikes to New Orleans proper.
- 1947** Late summer hurricane strikes New Orleans region while on northwestern track toward Baton Rouge. Winds of over 100 mph buffet city; small storm surge floods lightly developed eastern ramparts of metropolis as well as Jefferson Parish. Damages amount to \$100 million, fifty-one people perish. Unnamed "Hurricane of 1947," as well as subsequent September 1948 storm, inspires additional levee construction along lake shore and adjacent marshes.
- 1947-1950s** Federal Housing Act of 1949 leads to expansion of city's subsidized public housing developments. Second-generation structures lack the local designs, solid construction, and intimate settings of original circa 1940 buildings.
- 1950** New Orleans population reaches 570,445, sixteenth-largest in nation; black population 181,775 (32 percent).
- 1950** Louisiana Landmarks Society founded to preserve historically and architecturally significant structures; mission is later expanded to preserve historic neighborhoods and fight inappropriate development. Society saves many of city's famous buildings and fosters appreciation for historical architecture.

- 1950s** Cut off by Industrial Canal, low-lying “New Orleans East” remains mostly rural except for ingress/egress services along Chef Menteur Highway and citrus orchards and recreational camps along Hayne Boulevard. First modern subdivisions appear along Dowman Road and Chef Menteur in the early 1950s, followed by aggressive development in the 1960s-70s when Interstate 10 is built. Installation of drainage system precedes urbanization; unlike the circa-1900 system west of the Industrial Canal, this one is designed to store sudden heavy rainfall runoff in lagoons and open canals, thereby requiring less pumping capacity to remove it to Lake Pontchartrain.
- 1954** *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision reverses locally originated 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* ruling on “separate but equal” public schools. Ruling sets legal stage for end of *de jure* segregation of schools and public accommodations in South. During next decade and particularly after Civil Rights Act in 1964, Jim Crow gradually disappears from streetcars, buses, department stores, schools, housing, restaurants, and facilities. Change is often accompanied by protests and tensions, but rarely violence.
- 1953** All but two streetcar lines—Canal and St. Charles—are discontinued in favor of rubber-tire buses.
- 1954** Union Passenger Terminal opens near present-day Loyola Avenue. New station unifies (hence the name) numerous passenger lines and leads to closing of turn-of-century stations located throughout city, including two picturesque structures near French Quarter. Consolidation of railroad tracks within recently filled-in New Basin Canal foot-of-way leaves many old rail corridors abandoned throughout city, many still owned by railroad companies.
- 1954-1962** Old River Control Structure is built to regulate flow among Mississippi, Red, and Atchafalaya rivers, addressing circa-1830s intervention which aided navigation interests but inadvertently altered system’s hydrology. One of world’s great engineering projects, “Old River” ensures that Mississippi will not abandon channel and jump into Atchafalaya (leaving New Orleans on elongated brackish bay) by allocating flow at government-approved seventy-thirty ratio between the two rivers.
- 1955-1956** New technology of packing cargo into standardized containers and handling them in mass-production mode from ship to truck or train rapidly transforms world’s ports. Containerization ends centuries-old longshoremen culture in port cities, alters geography of urban waterfronts and allows new small ports to compete with old major ports. With containerization, great ports no longer need great port cities. Port and city of New Orleans are deeply affected by new technology.
- 1955** Pontchartrain Park subdivision, with its distinctive curvilinear street network and golf course, is built in lakeside Seabrook section of Ninth Ward. First

modern suburban-style development for black New Orleanians (funded by whites) draws middle-class families, many of them black Creoles, out of historical neighborhoods to settle in eastern lakeside section of parish.

1955 Lincoln Beach, a lakefront recreational destination for black New Orleanians prohibited through Jim Crow laws from using nearby Pontchartrain Beach, opens along Haynes Boulevard. An integral childhood memory of a generation of African-Americans, Lincoln Beach remains open until Civil Rights Act in 1964 prohibits discrimination at public facilities. A few vestiges of facility remain in ruins today.

1956 Federal Aid Highway Act is signed by President Eisenhower, commencing historic effort to build interstate highway system. New Orleans is eventually connected to nation via I-10 and I-610 plus nearby I-70, I-55, and I-59. One of world's longest causeways connects rural St. Tammany Parish with metropolitan Jefferson Parish, opening Florida Parishes to suburban expansion. "Across the lake" becomes "the north shore" in local parlance, particularly after second span is opened in 1965 and exodus increases. Region's first modern tunnels open on West Bank of Jefferson Parish, while now-infamous "Carrington Interchange" is completed near Orleans/East Bank-Jefferson Parish line. Most major modern transportation corridors are built in the fifteen years following 1956, radically altering cityscape and urban geography of region.

1958 First downtown Mississippi River Bridge opens. Bridging of river furthers West Bank development; comes at expense of scores of historic structures in Lee Circle area. Second span is erected in late 1980s, creating "Crescent City Connection" and forming new iconic vista of downtown New Orleans.

1958 Navy relocates air station from East Bank lakefront across river to Belle Chasse. Move encourages new development in bridge-accessed West Bank portions of Orleans and Jefferson parishes, and brings upper Plaquemines Parish into metropolitan fold. Belle Chasse Naval Air Station-Joint Reserve Base is now major hub of military's presence in metropolitan area.

1958-1963 Mississippi River-Gulf Outlet Canal is excavated in St. Bernard and Plaquemines parishes. "MR-GO" gives ocean-going traffic shorter alternate route to Port of New Orleans and help develop Industrial Canal as new center of port activity. But seventy-five-mile-long waterway also causes coastal erosion and salt-water intrusion, requires constant dredging, and provides pathway for hurricane-induced storm surges to reach populated areas. MR-GO plays role in flooding following Hurricane Betsy in 1965, and, not famously after Hurricane Katrina forty years later. "MR-GO Must Go" becomes battle cry of angry flood victims and environmentalists nationwide after 2005 catastrophe.

1959 After 107 years at historic Lafayette Square, City Hall and government offices are relocated to new Duncan Plaza complex. International-style office build-

ings, built upon recently demolished back-of-town neighborhood that included Louis Armstrong's birthplace, give city government more space and air of modernity. New complex fosters growth of city, state, and federal government office district on expanded Loyola Avenue.

1959 Cuban revolution and ensuing political tensions isolate Caribbean nation from Western world. New Orleans, chief shipping port to Bautista-era Cuba, loses major trade partner and centuries-old ties to former Spanish colony. Many Cuban exiles settle in city and state, drawn in part by sugar industry. When U.S. loosens trade embargo in early 2000s, local ports resume handling significant share of exports to Cuba, continuing historic relationship between city and island nation.

1960 New Orleans population peaks at 627,525, fifteenth largest among American cities; black population is 235,514 (37 percent). Suburban Jefferson Parish population grows from 103,275 in 1950 to 208,769 in 1960. Roughly half of New Orleanians in 1960 reside above sea level, down from over 90 percent a half century earlier. After 1960, New Orleans declines in both absolute population and in relative rank among American cities.

1960s Decade witnesses profound transformations in society and infrastructure, affecting cityscape at every level. Declining population (first time since early 1700s), diminished tax base, increasing crime, suburbanization, globalization, gentrification, and other forces leave inner city with more vacant space, less public space, fewer neighborhood stores, less interaction among neighbors and greater racial disaggregation by race and class, even a *de jure* segregation ends. Traditional aspects of urban living—sidewalks teeming with shoppers, stoop-sitting, children playing in streets, bustling saal markets—diminish or disappear entirely from city experience.

1960-1964 Civil rights movement, court orders, and Civil Rights Act of 1964 hasten end of *de jure* segregation in New Orleans. Long in process but now empowered by national movement, struggle for racial equality in New Orleans comes to head with initial desegregation of public schools. Ugly street protests garner national attention, but city generally avoids violence seen in other Southern communities. "White flight" begins in earnest, setting Orleans Parish on ongoing trajectory of population decline.

1960s-1970s Hispanic immigrants, disproportionately from Cuba and Honduras, settle in working-class and middle-class areas of Irish Channel, Mid-City, and Ninth Ward. Most Hispanics live in Kenner, Metairie, and Mid-City according to 2000 Census.

1960s Petroleum industry rises; port economy mechanizes. Coastal and offshore oil brings outside investment and professionals to New Orleans; triggers construction of downtown skyscrapers and "Houstonization" of city. Container-

ized shipping technology replaces many longshoremen and sailors; requires less waterfront space and frees up riverfront for recreational use. As oil industry rises, port-related employment declines.

1963-1972 Coast-to-coast I-10 is constructed through New Orleans. Major new infrastructure gives birth to modern metropolitan area; fosters middle-class exodus and suburban growth in eastward and westward directions. I-10 also destroys famous forested neutral ground of North Claiborne Avenue ("main street of black people New Orleans") and leads to decline of old ingresses/egresses, such as Airline Highway, Tulane Avenue, and Chef Menteur Highway.

1954 Civil Rights Act outlaws segregation in schools and public places. Blatant Jim Crow segregation disappears from public facilities, ironically putting many integrated retailers out of business, particularly on South Rampart and Dryades streets. Housing projects, segregated *de jure* since their opening around 1940, soon integrate but then re-segregate *de facto* as whites leave for suburbs.

1954 Reflecting nationwide switch from rails to buses and autos for urban transportation, all remaining streetcars except historic St. Charles line are terminated. Next twenty-five years mark low point in city's history of urban rail ways; 1964 decision is later regretted and reversed at turn of twenty-first century.

1964-1959 Federal funding arrives to build Riverfront Expressway, connecting bridge and CBD traffic with points east via French Quarter riverfront and Elysian Fields Avenue. Bitterly controversial plan, originally recommended by Robert Moses in 1946, divides citizenry and motivates unprecedented and ultimately successful campaign of resistance over next five years.

1965 Hurricane Betsy strikes New Orleans region in early September, causing extensive wind damage and flooding in Ninth Ward and parts of Gentilly and New Orleans East. Disaster kills eighty-one Louisianians, injures 17,600, and causes \$372 million in damage about one third in New Orleans. Betsy prompts Congress to authorize Flood Control Act of 1965, which includes Lake Pontchartrain and vicinity Hurricane Protection Project. Judicial act puts federal government in the business of storm protection; entails improvement and construction of hurricane-protection levees, flood walls, and gates (to what is now categorized as Category-3 level storm) to protect developed areas as well as adjacent marshes. Envisioned new flood protection (never fully executed) increases real estate values and inspires new home construction in the very areas that flooded. During subsequent oil-boom years, over 75,000 homes are built in places such as New Orleans East, most of them on concrete slabs at grade level. Episode demonstrates so-called "levee effect" first identified by geographer Gilbert White in 1945: flood-control structures paradoxically increase flood damages, by luring homebuyers into flood plains. Forty years later, Katrina's floodwaters validate White's observation.

- 1966** Effort to compete with Houston and other ascendant Southern cities inspires widening of Poydras Street as “showcase” corporate corridor. Numerous historic structures are razed on lower side of street. Plan foresees need for major traffic-generating anchors at each end of Poydras: Rivergate Exhibition Hall (1967) is built at river end, Superdome (1975) at lake end.
- 1966** Simultaneous erection of International Trade Mart and Plaza Tower, city’s first modern skyscrapers, symbolizes increasing oil-related wealth and new building technology. Project sites are selected to spark competing skyscraper development on Poydras and Loyola, respectively. Poydras ultimately prevails.
- 1967** Saints NFL franchise brings professional football to New Orleans, making it a “big league city” mentioned in sports media in same breath as Dallas, Houston, Atlanta, and other competing cities. But a smaller market, declining population, and low per-capita income make city struggle to maintain “big league” perception. In early 2000s, Saints threaten to relocate to San Antonio or Mississippi Gulf Coast—unthinkable in earlier years. Team nevertheless remains wildly popular with regional residents, particularly after Hurricane Katrina.
- 1968** Rivergate Exhibition Hall is constructed at foot of Canal and Poydras streets. Bold freeform design adds stunning new vista to city’s premier intersection; nurtures convention trade and fosters development of skyscraper hotels on lower Canal Street in early 1970s.
- 1968** Congress creates Nation Flood Insurance Program, pricing coverage at below-market rates to encourage participation. Program creates bonanza for real estate interests by encouraging development of flood zones, including coastal areas popular with wealthy second-home buyers.
- 1960s-1970s** Ten blocks of historic Tremé, including many early-nineteenth-century vernacular houses, are leveled for Theater for Performing Arts and Louis Armstrong Park. Controversial urban renewal project, which displaced over a thousand residents, transforms Faubourg Tremé and is now regarded by many as a mistake.
- 1968-1969** After holding steady at 40,000 annually since *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), white student enrollment at New Orleans public schools begins steady decline, while black enrollment doubles to 70,000. White exodus to suburbs and entrenchment of black underclass in Orleans Parish eventually lead to *de facto* re-segregation of New Orleans public schools. System that was one-to-one black-to-white in 1957 becomes five-to-one by early 1980s and nineteen-to-one in (ca.) 2000s.
- 1969** New hotels are prohibited in French Quarter, in attempt to balance tourist and residential use. Ban eventually encourages new hotel development on Canal Street, CBD, and Warehouse District. Attempt in 2004 to rezone parking lots

riverside of North Peters for new hotels may foretell new construction in this area.

1969 Federal cancellation of bitterly divisive Riverfront Expressway project saves French Quarter's frontage with Mississippi; makes New Orleans one of first American cities to resist nationwide trend toward elevated expressways along downtown waterfronts.

1969 Category 5 Hurricane Camille strikes coastal Mississippi, obliterating significant portion of historic Gulf Coast. New Orleans suffers some wind and flooding, but is mostly spared what might have been a catastrophe.

1970 New Orleans population declines to 593,471; black population 257,478 (43 percent). City falls in rank from fifteenth- to nineteenth-largest in nation, at the time the largest ten-year drop in its history.

1971 Jazz and Heritage Festival is held at present-day Congo Square. Created by Massachusetts-born George Wein, inventor of the modern music festival, event grows into annual New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival (Jazz Fest), now second only to Mardi Gras in the cultural-tourism economy. Festival provides important venue for local musicians and helps instill "New Orleans sound" as essential part of American "roots" music; performs similar service for Louisiana food. Event's location at Fairgrounds on Gentilly Boulevard helps expose traditionally French-Quarter-bound visitors to non-tourist neighborhoods.

1971 Friends of the Cabildo publishes *New Orleans Architecture, Volume I: The Lower Garden District*. Study inspires new appreciation for historic architecture outside French Quarter and Garden District, sets scholarly tone for local historical research and stirs modern preservation movement. Nomenclature and boundaries used in series (currently eight volumes, strong and growing) help revive historical place names and affect public's perceptions of place.

1971-1972 Galvanized by construction of out-of-scale Christopher Inn Apartments and empowered by subsequent historic district zoning (first since Vieux Carré protection in 1936), residents establish Faubourg Marigny Improvement Association. Group participates in political process, with eye toward historic preservation and neighborhood improvement; inspires residents of other historic neighborhoods, leading to both revitalization and gentrification. Old French term "faubourg" is revived in neighborhood nomenclature and adopted by real estate industry and press. Faubourg Marigny begins transforming from mostly working-class neighborhood of natives to professional-class neighborhood of transplants. Becomes city's premier gay neighborhood.

1972 One Shell Square—597 feet high and resting on 200-foot pilings—rises as tallest structure in city and lower Mississippi Valley. Symbolizes apex of 1970s oil boom.

- 1972** Last full-scale Mardi Gras parades roll through French Quarter. Increasingly elaborate Carnival celebrations, including new “super krewes” (starting 1969), create safety hazard in Quarter’s narrow streets. St. Charles Avenue becomes new route for most parades; French Quarter is left to inebriated revelry and lewdness. Neighborhood krewes gradually abandon their local parade routes and centralize along straight St. Charles route, even as parading tradition diffuses to suburbs and beyond. Beads and other “throws” grow in popularity, and now practically form a city industry (though trinkets are mostly manufactured in China). City’s Mardi Gras celebration enters modern age during 1970s as a major tourism-driven civic ritual attracting a nationwide audience.
- 1973** Second-worst Mississippi River flood on record threatens region. Old River Control Structure is damaged and later enlarged; Bonnet Carré Spillway opened to relieve pressure on levees.
- 1973-1974** Curtis and Davis architectural firm issues *New Orleans Housing and Neighborhood Preservation Study*. Landmark document identifies and delineates sixty-two official city neighborhoods, based on historical perceptions, natural geographical barriers and major transportation arteries, social and economic patterns, and census tract boundaries. Effort alters perceptions of place, space, and nomenclature in city; marks modern era of city planning. Designation of national and local historic districts starting in 1970s further trend toward perceiving neighborhoods as discrete, bounded, officially named entities with mutually agreed-upon characteristics.
- 1970s** Renovation restores historic French Market structure, transforming complex from city marketplace vending foodstuffs to locals, to festival marketplace primarily oriented to visitors.
- 1970s** Post-Patsy flood control, Interstate 10, Industrial Canal, NASA Michoud plant, and new subdivisions make eastern New Orleans hot new real-estate market, led by “New Orleans East” land development scheme.
- 1974** Preservation Resource Center is founded. Local non-profit group injects preservationist and “liveable city” philosophies into city discourse; becomes most influential group advocating adaptive reuse of historic structures and improvement of old neighborhoods.
- 1974** First “magnet schools” founded in New Orleans public school system. With fifty-fifty black/non-black racial quotas, magnet schools are designed to prevent further white flight. Relatively small number of white students tends to cluster in a few high-achieving schools, which soon become most racially integrated in city. Controversial quotas are banned in 1998 after protests; magnets later called “Citywide Access Schools.”
- 1975** Moratorium imposed on demolitions in CBL, after scores of nineteenth-

century storehouses are razed for skyscrapers or parking lots.

1975 Louisiana Superdome is completed, marking peak of city's competition with oil-rich Houston. Spectacular domed stadium transforms skyline and breathes new life into CBD. Superdome serves as venue for high-profile events, publicizing city and its attributes to nationwide audiences on a regular basis.

Late 1970s Vietnamese refugees from post-war communist Vietnam arrive to New Orleans on invitation of Catholic Church. Archdiocese settles hundreds of mostly Catholic refugees in Versailles apartments in eastern New Orleans and in spots on West Bank. Versailles settlement forms unique neighborhood, one of city's most isolated and purest ethnic enclaves, known for elaborate multi-tier market gardens and open-air Saturday market. Neighborhood functions as nerve center for Vietnamese community dispersed throughout central Gulf Coast region.

1976 Riverfront promenade "Moonwalk" (honoring progressive Mayor Moon Landrieu) opens in front of French Quarter. Signifies change of riverfront use from port activity to recreation, as containerization and Industrial Canal locks concentrate and relocate shipping facilities off Mississippi.

Late 1970s New suburban subdivisions encounter unwelcome problem in former Jefferson Parish backswamp: soil sinkage. Subsidence of recently drained hydric soils causes structural damage to thousands of new ranch houses built on concrete slabs. Issue makes headlines throughout late 1970s, particularly after some houses explode when gas lines break. New piping-based construction standards are subsequently adopted, but soils continue to sink.

1977 Lawsuit filed by environmental group successfully prevents Army Corps from building gates at mouth of Lake Pontchartrain, a flood-control measure envisioned in 1964 to prevent storm surge from entering lake. Corps later agrees to raise levee heights instead. Such an apparatus theoretically would have prevented Katrina-driven breaches on lakeshore outfall canals, though not those on eastern navigation canals.

1977 City, now majority-black for first time since 1830s, elects first black mayor, Ernest N. "Dutch" Morial, descendant of Creoles of color (like many city leaders today). Mayor Morial serves from 1978 to 1986.

Late 1970s Audubon Zoo, constructed mostly during 1920s-30s and considered an out-of-date "animal prison" by modern standards, is redesigned and expanded into national-class zoological attraction and research facility.

1980 New Orleans population declines to 557,515; black population 308,149 (55 percent). City is now twenty-first largest in nation.

1980s Cajun ethnic revival changes New Orleans tourism. Newfound appreciation

of Cajun culture is exploited by French Quarter tourism venues; Cajun dishes, music, shops, and swamp tours become standard part of visitor experience. Chef Paul Prudhomme gains celebrity status through introducing nation and world to spiced-up Louisiana cuisine.

1983-1984 Worldwide oil crash hits city; devastates Gulf Coast and other petroleum-based economies. Bust costs New Orleans thousands of white-collar jobs in subsequent years and initiates dark era of job loss, middle-class exodus, and increasing crime rates which endures until mid-1990s. Louisiana's oil- and gas-related employment plummets from nearly 95,000 jobs in 1981 to about 41,000 in 2000.

1984 Louisiana World Exposition is held along present-day Convention Center boulevard, on hundredth anniversary of World's Industrial and Cotton Centennial Exposition at Audubon Park. Like its predecessor, "World's Fair" fails financially, but helps launch economic development in downtown and reintroduces citizens to riverfront. Historic "Warehouse District" is revitalized into convention, hotel, condominium, and arts district in subsequent years, as former fair structures are converted into Ernest N. Morial Convention Center and expanded to over one million square feet. Residential population of CBD/Warehouse District climbs from under one hundred in 1980 to over 1,300 in 2000.

Mid-Late 1980s Corps raises heights of city's levee system but neglects to account for new research on increased storm strength, surge height, coastal erosion and soil subsidence. Concrete flood walls are erected along riverfront and outfall canal levees, but some are built with insufficiently long sheet piling. Corps plans for "butterfly gates" to prevent surge from entering outfall canals are opposed by Sewerage and Water Board and Levee Board, because they would reduce ability to pump rainwater out of city. Shortfalls of flood-protection system are revealed twenty years later during Hurricane Katrina.

Mid-1980s "Festival marketplaces," like those pioneered by James Rouse, open along Mississippi River. Jazz Brewery and Riverwalk further recreational/retail utilization of downtown riverfront, once reserved for maritime use. New Riverfront Streetcar (1988), first new line in decades, connects French Quarter with new attractions and Ernest N. Morial Convention Center.

1985 Unusual late-October Hurricane Jean floods coastal region, including portions of West Bank. Incident leads to raising of levees along metropolis' southern fringe.

1985-1986 New Orleans East land-development company poised to urbanize over 20,000 acres of wetlands in eastern Orleans Parish, fails amid oil bust. Land is transferred to federal government and becomes Bayou Sauvage National Wildlife Refuge, reflecting new appreciation of once-scorned marshes and

wetlands. Had area developed as envisioned, Hurricane Katrina's toll in lives and property would have been even higher.

1980s-1990s Numerous generations-old downtown department stores and restaurants—Holmes, Krauss, Maison Blanche, Godchaux's, Maylie's, Kolb's, and others—fold. Due to middle-class exodus, growth of suburbs, crime concerns, parking crunch, and rise of tourism. Buildings are often converted to hotels, not growing hospitality industry.

1987 Pope John Paul II's visit reaffirms New Orleans' place among nation's great Catholic population centers; draws worldwide attention to city's large Catholic African-American population.

1987 *The Big Easy* movie popularizes new nickname for city, introduced around 1970 from circa-1900 origins and now more prevalent than circa 1835 "Crescent City" moniker. Loaded with clichés and stereotypes, *The Big Easy* portrays New Orleans as eccentric, corrupt Cajun outpost obsessed with food and festivity; helps stoke tourism boom of 1990s.

1989 GING Tower is constructed next to Superdome. Twenty-three years after erection of first modern high-rises, New Orleans' last office skyscraper to date (later named Dominion Tower) symbolizes declining petroleum-related wealth. Sixteen years later, following shift toward tourism, Donald Trump proposes 700-foot-high tower for Poydras Street—but not condominiums and hotel rooms, not offices. As of 2008, Trump investment is still promised but not yet commenced.

1990 New Orleans' population drops below half-million mark to 496,938, ranking as twenty-fourth largest city in nation; black population is 307,728 (62 percent). Jefferson Parish population declines for first time, from 454,592 residents in 1980 to 448,306 in 1990, due in large part to oil crash.

1990-1991 Coastal Wetlands Planning and Protection Act ("Breau Act") brings federal funds to Louisiana for coastal restoration; Caernarvon Fresh Water Diversion opens below city, first major effort to reverse salt-water intrusion and rebuild wetlands around New Orleans.

Early 1990s Race relations deteriorate amid troubled economic times. Tensions are also a product of gubernatorial candidacy of former Klansman David Duke, Mardi Gras krewe integration controversy (which motivated three old-line krewes to cease parading), protests at Liberty Place monument on Canal Street, and record-high crime rates. Problems are exacerbated by lag between decline of oil industry and rise in tourism/service economy.

1990s Formosan termite infestations explode across city and region. Accidentally imported on shipping palettes from East Asia during World War II, invasive termites threaten housing stock (particularly historical structures) and urban

trees; cost city hundreds of millions of dollars annually in control and damage costs. Threat leads to increased use of steel and aluminum in new construction and renovation.

1990s Hurricane evacuation planning transforms radically. Coastal erosion, subsiding soils, rising seas, and an upswing in hurricane frequency ends traditional notion of evacuating internally to sturdy schools and shelters within city limits. Now, citizens are urged to evacuate entire region in their own automobiles; rural coastal residents who once evacuated to New Orleans are now directed farther inland. Plans to evacuate the poor and others without cars are never fully articulated—a tragic oversight that would cost hundreds of lives during Katrina in 2005.

1990s-2000s Declining population forces archdiocese to close or reduce services at numerous historic churches, some of which are partially converted to homes for aged. Many religious elements of historical cityscape fall silent as local families relocate to suburbs and young, secular transplants move into old neighborhoods.

1992 Category-5 Hurricane Andrew, first of 1990s-2000s wave of megastorms, pulverizes southern Florida and southcentral Louisiana. New Orleans is spared, but begins to recognize augmenting threat of storm surges amid eroding coast. Andrew ends notion of “riding out” storms in sturdy, old schools; ushers in era of metropolitan evacuation. Light winds in city cause surprisingly heavy damage to live oaks, leading to discovery of extensive Formosan termite damage to urban trees.

1994 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency lists Upper Ninth Ward neighborhoods of Cordon Plaza, Press Park, and Liberty Terrace as Superfund sites. Once city’s garbage dump from 1900s to 1960s, “Agriculture Street Landfill” was later covered with topsoil, developed, and populated with working class, mostly black, families. High levels of lead and other contaminants in soil forced school closures and extensive clean-up during 1990s-2000s; many residents resisted remediation in favor of more costly solution of buyouts. Controversy garners attention of nationwide environmental justice movement.

Circa 1995 “Renaissance” begins. Worst of local recession passes; national economy heats up; convention and tourist traffic increases; crime rates begin to drop after 1994 peak. But damage is done: white-collar petroleum jobs retreat to Houston; blue-collar non-oil jobs are largely replaced by information. New Orleans becomes a tourist-oriented service economy.

1995 May 8 storm dumps up to eighteen inches of rainfall on metropolitan area; some areas get twelve inches in single hour. City’s worst rainfall floods 56,000 homes and businesses and causes \$761 million in damage throughout twelve-parish area; leads to half-billion dollars of mostly federal funds for new drain-

age projects. New Orleans increases pumping capacity with new pumps, canals, culverts, and backup generator, from three inches of rain every five hours to five inches in five hours.

1995 Amid protests, architecturally significant Rivergate Exhibition Hall is demolished for Harrah's at foot of Canal Street. Casino, opened in 1999 after turbulent construction period, is predicted to transform downtown, but eventually settles into a modest niche between traditional French Quarter tourism and emerging Warehouse District convention trade. Gambling in New Orleans falls well short of exuberant expectations of early 1990s, indicating that visitors are more interested in enjoying city's unique attributes than in increasingly ubiquitous "gaming" opportunities.

1995-Present Upturn in tropical activity makes hurricanes a matter of nearly constant public apprehension during summer months. Storm threats with partial or total evacuations occur at pace of nearly every other year during this era. Persistent sense of uncertainty—vis-à-vis eroding coast, subsiding soils, rising seas, and warming climate—leads many to ponder city's long-term viability.

1996 *Triton* vessel collides with Riverwalk Mall, causing no fatalities but demonstrating risk of converting shipping wharves to public recreational and commercial uses.

Late 1990s-early 2000s Hotel capacity, mostly in CBD and Warehouse District, skyrockets to 37,000 rooms, to accommodate nearly ten million annual visitors. Numerous historic structures in CBD and Warehouse District are remodeled into "boutique hotels."

Late 1990s-early 2000s Scientific community and press bring coastal erosion issue to public attention. Increasing numbers of New Orleanians begin to understand connection between river, coastal wetlands, and city's sustainability, society grapples with possibility of city's mortality.

1998 City narrowly averts Hurricane Georges. Reminder of inevitability of "Big One," Georges teaches lessons on evacuation, planning and street flooding in Mid-City area.

1999 New Orleans Arena opens, aiming to accommodate events too big for other venues but too small for nearby Superdome. With seating for 16,000-19,000 people, indoor arena succeeds in attracting Charlotte NBA franchise Hornets to city in 2002, plus numerous other entertainment and sports events.

1999-2005 In span of six years, dominant player in city's grocery market shifts from Schwegmann's to Winn-Dixie to Wal-Mart, reflecting transition in city's business sector from locally owned companies to regional and global firms. Televised media market saw similar transition over recent decades, from local to out-of-town ownership. Though local enterprises remain more common here

than other cities, they comprise diminishing percentage of citywide economy, showing increasing influence of national culture in local urban life. Trend is partially reversed after Katrina, as Thibodaux-based Rouses expands into local grocery market (2007) and New Orleans-born Saints owner Tom Benson buys Fox affiliate WVUE (2008).

2000 New Orleans population declines to 484,674, thirty-first largest city in nation. Black population is 325,947 (67 percent). 2000 Census finds that metropolitan areas most ethnically diverse census tract is Fat City in suburban Metairie, while least diverse tract is in inner-city Lower Ninth Ward—exact opposite of earlier times. Thirty-eight percent of New Orleanians now reside above sea level, down from about half in 1960 and over 90 percent in 1910.

2000 Day Museum opens June 6, creating critical mass of cultural venues near Lee Circle. Museum District now comprises Ogden and Civil War museums, Contemporary Arts Center, and Julia Street art galleries. Highly successful attraction, renamed National World War II Museum, undergoes massive expansion starting in 2007.

2000 One of largest mapping efforts in state history entails measurement of topographic elevation through “light detection and ranging” (LIDAR) technology. High-resolution elevation maps of city and region released to the public incrementally throughout the 2000s, dramatically illustrate effects of subsidence and coastal erosion. Datasets prove crucial in measuring depth of Hurricane Katrina flooding in 2005.

Early 2000s Federal government intervenes in city’s public-housing crisis. “HOPE VI” philosophy (sixth version of a circa-1990 U.S. Housing and Urban Development program called “Homeownership and Opportunity for People Everywhere”) entails ending concentration of poverty in isolated public-housing projects by replacing them with New Urbanism-inspired settings, while integrating poor families paying subsidized rents with modest-income families paying market rates toward homeownership. Desire, St. Thomas, Fischer, and other housing projects are demolished, to tears of some displaced residents and cheers of those who view them as incubators of poverty and crime. Relocated families carry elements of “projects culture” into residential neighborhoods, sometimes resulting in tension and gang violence. New construction, exhibiting revived historical architectural styles, begins on former St. Thomas site. Nearby Wal-Mart is subject of bitter controversy involving issues of preservation, gentrification, race, jobs, corporate subsidies, and new “tax-increment financing” (TIF) concept.

Early 2000s Popularity of downtown condominiums grows, triggering conversion of numerous historical structures and proposals for new Sunbelt-style condominium towers. Out-of-town buyers help drive up local real estate prices and in-

tensify gentrification pressure on adjacent neighborhoods. Post-Katrina woes and cooling of national housing market temper condo trend in 2006-08.

- 2001-2005** Lower Garden District riverfront sees radical landscape alteration. Saulet apartment complex, re-engineering of Tchoupitoulas and Religious streets, new Wal-Mart and River Garden development, and renovation and demolition of old warehouses make area one of nation's most transformed inner-city riverfronts. Projects reflect city's ongoing "re-discovery" of river.
- 2001** Terrorists attack American targets. Emerging homeland-security efforts view New Orleans as "top ten" potential target, for its port, petroleum facilities, and major public events. New security measures are enacted, affecting riverfront development plans.
- 2003** New Orleans population drops to Depression-era level of 469,000, representing loss of over 15,000 since 1900 (greater drop than during entire decade of 1990s). Fastest-growing parish in region is St. Tammany on north shore, which surpasses 200,000 for first time.
- 2003** Terrorists spend over four billion dollars a year in Orleans Parish, generating over 61,000 jobs. Visitors to New Orleans account for 44 percent of state's tourism economy. Oil and gas sector faces much worse: city's Exxon-Mobil office relocates to Houston, continuing twenty-year trend of petroleum industry forsaking New Orleans and Louisiana for Houston area.
- 2003** Two-hundredth anniversary of Louisiana Purchase celebrated December 20 in front of Cabildo, site of original formal transfer of Louisiana from Spain to France to United States. Visions of city's greatness from early 1800s fall with declining relative importance of waterborne transportation in America. Once strategically located at sole ingress/egress to North American interior, city now competes with innumerable transportation options. Lack of industrial development, relative isolation, Civil War, over-reliance on river (and later oil), social problems, and other factors exacerbate city's woes. Poor, undereducated, physically run-down and losing population, city relies increasingly on selling its past to visitors.
- 2004** New Orleans population declines to 462,269, barely ahead of Jefferson Parish's 453,590. City proper is now home to only 35 percent of seven-parish metro-area population, down from 60 percent a century earlier.
- 2004** Success of 1988 Riverfront line inspires reintroduction of streetcars to city's transportation system. Major new routes are installed on Canal Street (starting 1997) and Canalton Avenue, designed to circulate tourists throughout city and foster rail commuting. Much-anticipated Canal line opens in April 2004 and succeeds in invigorating Mid-City businesses. Additional lines are foreseen for other areas to jump-start neighborhood restoration. Hurricane

Katrina derails most efforts, as floodwaters damage new streetcars and rear-range priorities

2004 Major new containerized shipping facility at Napoleon Avenue wharf, coupled with environmental problems on MR-GO and bottleneck lock on Industrial Canal, returns river to position of prominence in local port industry. Opposite was foreseen in 1970s when “Centroport” was planned to shift most business to MR-GO/Industrial Canal wharves. New uptown facility also concentrates port activity and frees up antiquated downtown wharves for other uses.

2004 Category-4 Hurricane Ivan spares city but devastates coastal Alabama. New “contraflow” plan, devised after Hurricane Georges in 1998, opens up incoming interstate lanes to outgoing evacuees. Horrendous traffic jams lead to re-orientation of evacuation planning. Ivan’s sideswipe brings additional attention to urgency of coastal restoration; in retrospect, serves as “dry run” for next year’s Hurricane Katrina.

2004-2005 City holds “riverfront charrette” to gather ideas for new land uses from Poland to Jackson avenues. With port activity now concentrated in uptown containerization facilities, city and developers eye abandoned wharves for replacement with recreational/tourist use. Plan emerges in which Port of New Orleans relinquishes its maritime servitude of riverfront to city in exchange for percentage of land sales and leases. If enacted, agreement would open up over four miles of riverfront, from Bywater to Lower Garden District, for massive redevelopment, mostly for recreational use. Rejuvenated in 2007-08 as “Reinventing the Crescent,” effort now proposes \$300 million from state, local, federal, and private coffers to fund new public green space.

2005 Pentagon recommends closure of Naval Support Activity in Algiers and Bywater. Twin locations straddling Mississippi made military sense when installation was created, but proved to be costly obstacle in modern times. City’s loss of up to 2,700 jobs may be mitigated by growth of Naval Air Station in Belle Chasse and creation of “federal city” cruise terminal, and other facilities and amenities in vacated riverfront properties.

2005 Following Hurricane Ivan traffic-jam debacle, new “contraflow” evacuation plan is unveiled. With coastaloding, levees subsiding, sea level rising, and fresh memories of hurricanes Georges and Ivan, local officials and populace treat hurricane evacuation planning with paramount importance. New “contraflow plan” involves evacuating most vulnerable areas first, then diverting out-bound traffic onto in-bound lanes at four complex intersections, giving evacuees six different escape routes to safety.

July 2005 New Orleans population estimated at 452,170, down by 10,000 in a year and 32,000 since the 2000 Census.

August 23, 2005 Low-pressure system develops over southeastern Bahamas; loop current brings warm subsurface waters from Caribbean into Gulf of Mexico, where sea surface temperatures hit ninety degrees. Tropical Depression 12 becomes Category 1 Hurricane Katrina; makes landfall near Miami on August 25 and enters Gulf, where warm waters fuel increasing wind speeds.

August 27–28, 2005 Hurricane Katrina strengthens to Category 3, 4, then 5; forecast tracks edge westward, then stabilize on a New Orleans-area strike. City and region prepare for worst: residents board up homes and businesses, officials close floodgates and activate “contraflow” system; hundreds of thousands of residents evacuate. Those who will not or can not—around 100,000—remain home or take refuge in Superdome. Initial feeder bands arrive as last day of pre-Katrina New Orleans draws to close.

August 29, 2005 Hurricane Katrina, with diminishing Category 2–3 winds but an enormous residual-Category 5 storm surge, makes landfall at dawn in Barataria Basin, passes immediately east of New Orleans, and makes second landfall around 10 a.m. along Louisiana/Mississippi border. City endures fiercest winds between 8 and 10 a.m., causing extensive structural damage. Surge raises gulf levels by ten to thirty feet and lake levels by nine feet, ravaging coastal areas to east. Lakefront levees endure pressure, but lower-quality navigation and outfall canal levees and floodwalls are overtopped or overwhelmed. When winds die down in late afternoon, most people surmise that city “dodged bullet.” In fact, multiple levee breaches let salt water drown vast expanses of metropolis.

August 29–September 4, 2005 Rising deluge from levee breaches turns windy disaster of Katrina into watery catastrophe of unprecedented proportions. Filthy floodwaters engulf entire neighborhoods. Thousands of residents, mostly poor and black, are trapped on rooftops or in Superdome and Convention Center with no food or water. Looting, shooting, and fires break out citywide. Confused, delayed federal response exacerbates effects of inadequate planning at state and local levels. Shocking physical and social disintegration of New Orleans leads news stories worldwide for weeks. Supplies, buses, and troops finally arrive by weekend, bringing chaos under control and evacuating last residents. One week after Katrina, city’s population drops to trench colonial-era levels; in some neighborhoods, dead outnumber living.

September 2005 With a million citizens of southeastern Louisiana and coastal Mississippi scattered nationwide, “ghost city” of New Orleans begins long, slow process of recovery. Waters are pumped out faster than expected, electricity returns to selected areas, and some residents return at end of month, even as rescue squads discover more dead. Damage to historic district on high natural levee is mostly wind-driven and repairable; water-caused damage to twentieth-century neighborhoods near lake and eastward into St. Bernard Parish is

utterly devastating.

September 23-24, 2005 Second “storm of century” in one month, Hurricane Rita, strikes Louisiana/Texas border region, destroying communities on southwestern Louisiana coast and raising gulf and lake levels in New Orleans area. Some hastily repaired levees breach again, re-flooding Lower Ninth Ward and adjacent areas. Communities in western Louisiana suffer similar degree of destruction seen in east during Katrina. Nearly half of Louisiana’s population is directly affected by storms; economy and infrastructure is in shambles.

October 5, 2005 Residents are permitted back into city everywhere except Lower Ninth Ward, though only those in higher areas near river have basic utilities and services.

Mid-October 2005 Army Corps pumps out last traces of Katrina’s and Rita’s surges.

Late October 2005 Hurricane Wilma, third Category-5 storm in gulf in under two months and most intense hurricane ever recorded in region, strikes Florida and Mexico. Together with Katrina and Rita, Wilma leads dramatic evidence to emerging worldwide discourse on global warming.

Late Autumn 2005 City struggles to regain footing as citizens grapple with decision to return, remain in FEMA-funded evacuation sites, or leave forever. Commissions form at local and state levels to devise plans for city’s future; scores of public meetings convene to discuss and debate ideas. Orleans Parish population during mid-autumn doubles to roughly 144,000 after Christmas, as families return during school break. City exudes atmosphere of frontier town, with small population, high male-to-female ratio, extremely few children, large out-of-town workforce, ubiquitous military presence, curfews, and cash-based economy. Whites outnumber blacks substantially, lower economic classes are nearly absent, while Hispanic immigrant workers arrive in large number and convene daily at Lee Circle to await laborer jobs. Locally owned businesses return at much faster pace than national chains; Magazine Street becomes city’s “main street.” Local count number tourists in French Quarter, which suffers financially because of cancellation of all conventions. With criminal element evacuated, once-violent city becomes one of safest in nation, while crime rates in some host cities increase. Overarching rebuilding question draws passionate debate: should city abandon heavily damaged eastern and lakeside subdivisions and rebuild primarily on higher ground, in expectation of smaller population? Or should city maintain prediluvian urban footprint under philosophy that planning for population shrinkage will only guarantee it? Despite heroic progress in clean-up and repair, New Orleans remains two cities divided topographically: higher areas near river bustle with activity; lower areas near lake remain dark, empty, and devastated.

Autumn 2005 to Present Steady stream of religious groups, college classes, students

on break, and civic and professional organizations from across nation arrange “voluntourism” visits to the city, helping gut houses, clean parks, and build homes in collaboration with local citizens. According to Corporation for National and Community Service, approximately 1.1 million visitors performed fourteen million hours of work valued at \$263 million during two years following storm, with participation increasing in second year. Remarkable phenomenon is viewed as triumph of civic spirit over bureaucratic lethargy.

Autumn 2005 to Present Expedient repair of storm-damaged I-10 “Twin Spans” reconnected New Orleans with points east; is followed by construction of new, higher levees designed to rise above massive surges on rising seas. Mostly federally funded effort is largest transportation project in Louisiana history.

2005-Present State intervenes in city's long-troubled public education system, left in disarray after storm. Most public schools are now run under state-controlled Recovery School District or as semi-autonomous charter schools; only a few remain under purview of Orleans Parish School Board. By 2008, numerous charter schools strive to attract students city-wide, forming one of the most competitive public-school markets in the nation. Nevertheless, abysmal public education continues to underlie city's most fundamental problems.

January 2006 “Bring New Orleans Back Commission” unveils initial recommendations for consideration by Mayor Ray Nagin, state's Louisiana Recovery Authority, federal officials, and public. “Action Plan for New Orleans: The New American City” recommends moratorium on rebuilding in heavily damaged low-lying areas; delineates thirteen planning districts and suggests forming neighborhood associations within each. Associations must demonstrate that at least half of households will return by May, else neighborhood would be bought out with federal help and converted to park or commercial zone. Plan also recommends “Crescent City Recovery Corporation” to oversee rebuilding, at expense of city government's authority. Proposals for light rail lines, bike trails, and parks are practically lost amid public response to potential neighborhood closures, which ranges from outrage to reluctant support. Charges of racism, gerrymandering, land-grabbing, and ethnic cleansing fly from plan opponents, while supporters speak of safety, reality and pragmatism.

January 2006 Mayor Nagin rejects key recommendations of Bring New Orleans Back Commission. Unwilling (and probably legally unable) to close down far-flung, low-lying suburbs in favor of safer, higher areas, mayor opts for *laissez-faire* approach to rebuilding: let people decide for themselves and government will follow.” Decision rejects notion of shrinking the urban footprint, recommended by experts but wildly unpopular among vocal citizens and politicians. Incident demonstrates once again that disaster victims, shaken by tumult and craving normalcy, usually resist radical change even if it promises to lower future risk.

February 2006 First post-Katrina Mardi Gras unfurls with small but enthusiastic and predominantly local crowds; festivities demonstrate city's ability to handle major functions. National and international reaction, initially skeptical, warms to one of endorsement and admiration.

2006 Civic spirit and fear of "footprint shrinkage" inspires thousands of citizens to form numerous grassroots neighborhood associations citywide. Countless meetings produce series of neighborhood plans, many highly inspired and largely without financial or professional support. Impressive level of passionate civic engagement proves to be Katrina's silver lining.

Spring 2006 Campaign for mayor and city council, postponed during chaotic autumn of 2005, garners national attention as bellwether of city's post-Katrina racial and political makeup. Over twenty candidates, mostly white, vie to replace Mayor Ray Nagin. "Footprint debate" becomes politically volatile; most candidates advocate rebuilding entire city. Mayor Nagin and Lt. Gov. Mitch Landrieu, respectively black and white, prevail in April election, in which thousands of displaced residents vote in statewide balloting locations. Despite dire warnings, election proceeds smoothly. Mayor Nagin's victory in May run-off election, as well as council and congressional outcomes, continue era of African-American leadership in local politics, contrary to expert predictions immediately after Katrina. In late 2007, however, City Council becomes majority white.

2006 Women, disproportionately from wealthy uptown backgrounds, organize groups such as Citizens for 1 Greater New Orleans, levees.org, and Women of the Storm, urging reform in levee engineering, unification of levee boards, elimination of multiple tax assessors, and congressional attention to post-Katrina New Orleans. Their success recalls women of Progressive Era who led fight for drainage, potable water, and municipal improvements a century earlier.

Summer 2006 Two surveys estimate mid-2006 population of New Orleans at 200,725 and 223,388, down from 457,770 immediately prior to Hurricane Katrina. One survey estimates new racial composition as 47 percent black (down from almost 70 percent in 2000), 42.7 percent white (up from 25 percent), and 3.5 percent Asian; those of Hispanic ethnicity (regardless of race) comprised 9.6 percent, nearly triple their relative size from before Katrina. U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey, using different methodology, determined city's racial makeup as 59 percent black, 37 percent white, 3 percent Asian, and 4 percent Hispanic of any race. Differing figures reflect "soft" nature of city's postdiluvian population, and difficulty of measuring it.

August 29, 2006 First anniversary of storm is marked with wide range of civic remem-

branches. Worldwide news outlets return for update on city's progress—likely to become annual media ritual.

September 2006 Fulton Street pedestrian mall opens off lower Poydras Street, designed to give visitors a reason to patronize Warehouse District venues and Harrah's Casino, rather than explore traditional French Quarter/Bourbon Street circuit.

Fall 2006 FEMA trailers temporarily transform cityscape of flooded region, reaching their peak numbers a year after storm. Nearly 19,000 white tin boxes dot Orleans Parish, plus over 20,000 in adjacent areas, offering flood victims a convenient but cramped place to dwell as they repair their homes. Progress in rebuilding and concerns over formaldehyde cut trailer usage in half by early 2007.

2006-2007 Army Corps erects massive closable gates at mouths of outfall canals to prevent repeat of surge-induced levee breaches during Katrina. Long recommended by Army Corps but resisted locally for fear of inhibiting canal's ability to remove runoff, gates represent significant improvement in flood protection for lakeside areas. Special by-pass pumps are installed to allow for rainwater runoff removal if gates are closed for impending storm. Industrial and MRGO canals in east remain ungated.

Late 2006-Early 2007 Overlapping and sometimes competing urban-planning efforts, led by the City Council-hired Lambert/Daizey firms and the privately funded United New Orleans Plan (UNOP), keep citizens busy with numerous neighborhood meetings and planning charrettes.

Late 2006-Early 2007 With returning citizens comes a small but extremely violent number of criminals, reworking flood-affected drug-distribution economies and gangster turf. While the city's returned population doubles between last quarters of 2005 and 2007, murders and overall violent crimes increase nearly sixfold. Murders of two particularly civically engaged citizens—a black male music teacher and a white female filmmaker—incite a massive March Against Crime on January 11, 2007.

2006-2007 Canal Street is refurbished with granite sidewalks, palm trees, and other improvements, with aim of restoring city's commerce and grandeur.

2006-2007 Storm-related bankruptcies, lack of affordable housing, and migrant-worker influx contribute to burgeoning homeless population. Closure of downtown shelters shifts geography of homelessness to beleaguered Ozanam Inn on Camp Street, "the Wall" at Elysian Fields levee, and to makeshift encampment under Duncan Plaza gazebo. Squatter colony of over 150 homeless people, camped immediately outside City Hall, forms striking statement on social problems of post-diluvian city.

2006-2008 Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Housing Authority of New Orleans (HANO) move forward on pre-Katrina plans to demolish circa-1940s C. J. Peete, St. Bernard, B. W. Cooper, and Lafitte projects for new mixed-income New Urbanist developments, similar to River Garden/St. Thomas neighborhood. Small number of extremely vociferous activists, distrustful of promises to rebuild public housing, challenge any demolition-reconstruction effort as a bid at eradicating the city of its poor African-American population. Their argument is weakened by the fact that many refurbished HANO apartments remain empty, but strengthened by city's general housing shortage and large homeless population. Agencies agree to demolish in stages, allowing some residents to return as work progresses, but insist that old-style projects represent failed policies that concentrated poverty, incubated social pathology, and produced intergenerational dependency. Controversy climaxes on December 20, 2007, when City Council, amid violent scuffles inside and outside City Hall, unanimously votes to approve demolitions.

2007 Louisiana "Road Home" Program distributes billions of federal dollars to Katrina flood victims: \$150,000 per eligible homeowner, plus insurance settlements and FEMA grants. Homeowners suffering greater than 50 percent damage opt to (1) repair or rebuild in place; (2) sell to state and purchase another home in Louisiana; or (3) sell to state and choose not to remain homeowner in Louisiana. Lengthy and slow-moving paperwork process enrages citizenry, delays rebuilding decisions, and dooms Gov. Kathleen Blanco's reelection efforts. As of storm's second anniversary, less than one-third of the 140,000 eligible applications closed on their payments.

2007 Plans for a gigantic medical complex comprising new LSU and Veterans Affairs hospitals promises economic development and health services for city, but also threatens demolition of nearly thirty blocks of historic Third Ward near Canal/South Galvez intersection. Plan stresses preservation, but opposition is muted because of universally acknowledged importance of health care to city's recovery.

Summer 2007 Population of New Orleans estimated around 273,000, with thousands more living "between places" as Road Home monies trickle into flood victims' pockets and rebuilding decisions are finalized. Other estimates put city's July 2007 population at under 240,000 to over 300,000, depending on methodology. Return rate rises from about 50 percent of population on storm's first anniversary, to 60 percent by second anniversary. Portion of New Orleanians living above sea level rises to 50 percent.

August 2007 East Bank population centroid (theoretical center of balance among the distribution of households), located in the central Seventh Ward in 2000, shifts by August 2007 a mile to the southwest into the central Sixth Ward. Westward movement reflects slower return rates east of the Industrial Canal, while

the southward movement signifies much higher return rates of the unflooded “sliver by the river” compared to heavily flooded lakeside neighborhoods.

Summer 2007 Three key entities—Army Corps, New Orleans Sewerage and Water Board, and Jefferson Parish—agree to relocate pumping stations for the 17th Street, Orleans, and London Avenue outfall canals from their historical inland locations (which marked the city’s edge when they were installed a century ago), to new, higher lakefront locations. This would keep them out of flood-prone lowlands, allow for modernization, and most importantly, enable them to continue pumping runoff into Lake Pontchartrain even when new storm gates on outfall canals are closed for oncoming hurricanes. Rare multi-agency consensus constitutes first step toward seeking funding and eventually executing new plan.

Late 2007 Localism enjoys rare victory over national and global forces as Thibodaux-based Kroger grocery chain, known for its Louisiana foods and regional supplies, takes over Sav-a-Center supermarkets. Change shifts city’s food retail industry back into local hands, a position once enjoyed by locally owned Schweigmann’s until Winn-Dixie and Wal-Mart moved into market in late 1990s-early 2000s.

2007-07-07 Army Corp. promises nearly \$1.5 billion worth of improvements to region’s flood control system over next four to five years, to ensure protection from storms with 1-percent chance of occurring in any given year. “Hundred-year protection plan” entails gating of outfall and navigation canals, raising of existing levee heights to account for rising seas and subsidence, construction of new levees, installation of pumping stations to allow for removal of interior runoff while gates are closed, and reinforcement of weak spots in existing floodwalls and levees. Project sends Army Corp. on region-wide search for hundred million cubic yards of clay needed for levee construction. If funded appropriately, effort will prove critical to future of region—but will fall short of “saving” it if not paralleled by equally aggressive coastal restoration.

2007-07-07 New housing technologies in flood-affected zone alters city’s inventory of building methods. Advanced “stick-built” (wooden frame) houses make wood more resistant to termites, mold, and wind; new poured on-site concrete walls provide additional strength and insulation; “green building” becomes trendy buzzword. Modular homes built off-site in factories and assembled rapidly on location, reduce costs but also design options while circumventing local craftsmen. Stylistically, debate rages between modernists and traditionalists on whether post-Hurricane city should exhibit latest international trends in architecture, or respect traditional local aesthetics.

November 8, 2007 Louisiana enjoys productive day in Washington. Passage of Water Resources Development Act (over presidential veto) deauthorizes MR-GO

Canal while authorizing (but not yet appropriating) about \$7 billion for Louisiana coastal restoration, levee construction, and related projects. Same-day passage of defense-pending bill allocates \$3 billion toward shortfall in Road Home monies, ensuring homeowners will be reimbursed for federally caused flood damage.

Late 2007 Voting records from 2003 and 2007 gubernatorial elections reveal that black voters in Orleans Parish declined by over 54 percent (84,584 to 38,738), while white voters declined by 27 percent (46,669 to 33,937). Studies show that New Orleans will remain majority African-American, but by slimmer margin than before storm.

2007-2008 Army Corps releases flood-risk maps showing how “hundred-year protection plan,” promised by 2011, will affect greater New Orleans. Basin-by-basin maps depict likely flood depths, produced by medium- to extreme storms under various scenarios, including before Katrina, in the present day, and after 2011, and with 0-, 50-, and 100-percent pumping capacity. Best-case scenario indicates light flooding in some low-lying suburban subdivisions; worst-case shows severe deluges in most below-sea-level areas. Most likely scenario shows marked improvements since 2005. Maps are aimed at helping residents understand that risks are not evenly distributed spatially, nor can it be eliminated entirely. Revealingly, Army Corps renames hurricane protection levee system “Greater New Orleans Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System.”

2008 Thousands of flooded properties bought out from homeowners through Road Home program face uncertain future. Properties may eventually be turned over from state to New Orleans Redevelopment Authority (NORA), which will opt to repair or rebuild for market rate or affordable housing, to convert to green space, or to enroll land in “Lot Next Door” program, in which homeowners may purchase adjacent parcels. NORA must decide similar fate for 10,000 blighted houses and possibly 15,000 additional substandard houses, putting city agency in charge of momentous decisions influencing future urban geography of New Orleans.

Winter-Spring 2008 B. W. Cooper, C. J. Peete, St. Bernard, and Lafitte housing projects are demolished and prepared for mixed-income redevelopment.

April 2008 Catholic archdiocese reorganizes its pastoral, social, and educational services to accommodate post-Katrina residential settlement patterns, incoming Latino immigrants, heavy uninsured storm damages, and declining number of priests. Reorganization leads to closure and consolidation of thirty-three parishes, some dating to antebellum times. Some congregations are merged with nearby churches, whose proximity is traceable to nineteenth-century ethnic settlement patterns.

April 2008 As Mississippi River nears flood stage (seventeen feet above sea level) at Carrollton Gauge, Army Corps opens Bonnet Carré Spillway for ninth time since its installation in 1930s, and first time since 1997.

Ongoing Hurricane Katrina story places New Orleans at center of nationwide and worldwide intellectual discourse on hotly contested topics, including global warming, urban resilience and sustainability, disaster preparation and response, appropriate role of government, race relations and poverty, and the future of old coastal cities. Countless post-Katrina symposia, conferences, journals, books, documentaries, and political dialogues render city part warning, part testbed, part metaphor, part prophet, and part inspiration.

Bienville's Dilemma
by Richard Campanella
Please order on amazon.com
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