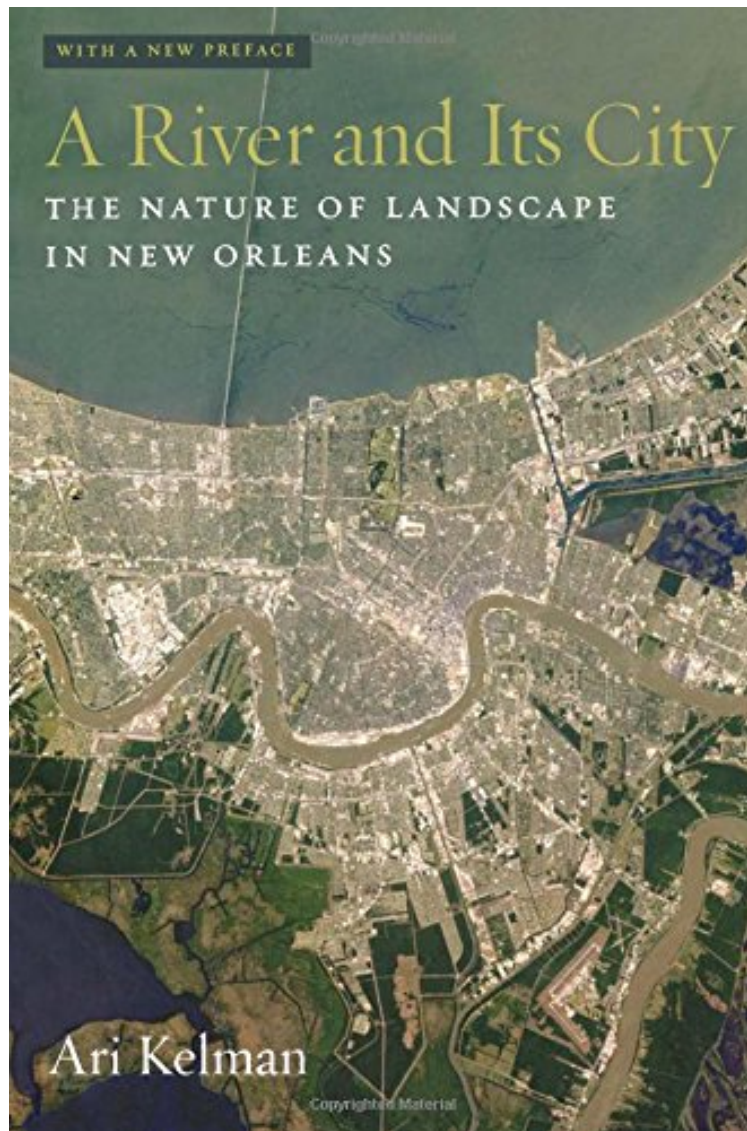


(Mobile book) A River and Its City: The Nature of Landscape in New Orleans

## A River and Its City: The Nature of Landscape in New Orleans

*Ari Kelman*

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#1093458 in Books Ari Kelman 2006-05-01 2006-05-01 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.00 x .75 x 6.00l, .94 #File Name: 0520234332308 pages A River and Its City The Nature of Landscape in New Orleans | File size: 44.Mb

**Ari Kelman : A River and Its City: The Nature of Landscape in New Orleans** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A River and Its City: The Nature of Landscape in New Orleans:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. The River Rules By James E. Swinnen The subject matter of this book is inherently interesting to anyone who lives in or loves New Orleans, or who is concerned about our always

testy relationship with natural forces. This is really a history of the city looking in from the river, an interesting point of view. Kelman covers the city's -- and the region's -- relationship with the river thoroughly, although he has a penchant for creating boogymen called "the elites" when he needs to point fingers. While there probably were strong commercial arguments for many of the decisions made by the city's leaders, Kelman seems to frequently bundle everything up under the cover of the economic self interest of those at the top, without considering that genuine, if misinformed or wrong-headed, concern for the welfare of all of the citizens may have been an equally strong motive for the actions taken. The writer also seems to accept, without question, single source accounts that are critical of the city's leaders, as in his discussion of the Yellow Fever epidemic. While these may add color, ultimately many of them are only "one man's opinion" and are not balanced with a countervailing argument. That said, the book brings to light the relationship of the river and the city that leaves the reader wondering how long this fatal attraction can continue. It is doubtful that the Corps of engineers can continue to build the levees higher. Yet, at the most recent flooding, the river water was barely below the top of the levees at Audubon Park, just downriver from the Carrollton Gauge (the official water level for the city). When the Corps proposed opening the Bonnet Carre spillway to lower the river level, the enviros and some fishermen immediately began complaining about the effect this would have on Lake Pontchartrain. (Apparently they forget the "natural" geography and river dynamic.) Stylistically, Kelman could have used an editor to tighten up his account. He has several "verbal tics" that seem condescending, or at least become annoying, after a while. At the end of the day, we all know that the river will win. Either it will bend us to its will, or it will destroy us completely. We just remain in denial (as we did before Katrina). I was dismayed by Kelman's 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Public, Nature, and Space By Ficktion Photography This text is an in depth look about how such words as "public," "nature," and "space," have defined the very interesting city of New Orleans based on its relationship with the ever-tumultuous Mississippi River. From its inception, Ari Kelman takes us on a voyage through time, discussing how and why decisions were made in the Crescent City. The book itself was first published in 2003, two years before Katrina would hit the city of New Orleans and leave it essentially underwater. He includes a preface in this version, remorseful but still stalwart in his thesis on the relationship the city has bestowed upon the river and vice versa. Kelman argues throughout his book that the words mentioned before, in quotations at the start of this review, are up for interpretation. They are vaguely defined and often blurred. Even better, is that these concepts can be applied not only to New Orleans, but around the world. What is the public? Who are included in this? Are the homeless exceptions? What about nature? Is nature simply something that has been here before us and, therefore, excludes human beings from the natural? Are parks planted in cities not natural because they sprung from us? Is flooding natural in a landscape built to, initially, be flooded, but is now hemmed in by walls? And finally, how is space defined in an ever-changing landscape? These are not easy answers, and Kelman spends over 200 well written pages attempting to answer them. His works cited and notes consist of about 50 pages, making this a heavily cited, well researched topic. He is also very careful not to admonish the people of New Orleans for staying in such a complex, dangerous city. In fact, for someone to write so extensively on this city makes the reader believe he understands a lot of the reasoning behind staying. Relationships are often odd and complicated, but it doesn't make them any less important. This is an easy read, and despite the citations easily adhered to. If you're interested, at all, about New Orleans and the history surrounding the city and the Mississippi, then this is definitely worth your time and the space on your physical or digital bookshelf. 11 of 13 people found the following review helpful. Interesting But Uneven By A Customer This is a book by an academic for academics. That being said, this topic ached to be addressed. Kelman has done his homework concerning the first two centuries of New Orleans' relationship with the Mississippi. The third (1918-present) seems to stop with the defeat of the notorious riverfront expressway. The river is likely (according to some scientists) to shift away from New Orleans, leaving the riverfront a muddy trickle. Kelman is silent on this. The degree of pollution and the efforts to clean up the lower part of the river go unsung as well. The last parts of the book have a rushed feeling, as if the expansive early history sapped the author's resources and there was little left worth saying. Lively it's not, but the book is important and a good reference work for further research.

This engaging environmental history explores the rise, fall, and rebirth of one of the nation's most important urban public landscapes, and more significantly, the role public spaces play in shaping people's relationships with the natural world. Ari Kelman focuses on the battles fought over New Orleans's waterfront, examining the link between a river and its city and tracking the conflict between public and private control of the river. He describes the impact of floods, disease, and changing technologies on New Orleans's interactions with the Mississippi. Considering how the city grew distant culturally and spatially from the river, this book argues that urban areas provide a rich source for understanding people's connections with nature, and in turn, nature's impact on human history.

"New Orleans's Mississippi levee, as Kelman explains in this fascinating study, is more than a pile of dirt. It is the key to unraveling the historical dialectic between a great river and an essentially amphibious city. It is also the monumental space of New Orleans's past, where dark plots and heroic dreams remain forever entangled." From the Inside Flap "New Orleans' Mississippi levee, as Kelman explains in this fascinating study, is more than a pile of dirt. It

is the key to unraveling the historical dialectic between a great river and an essentially amphibious city. It is also the monumental space of New Orleans' past, where dark plots and heroic dreams remain forever entangled."Mike Davis, author of *Ecology of Fear: Los Angeles and the Imagination of Disaster*"Kelman has written a pioneering environmental history of the evolving relationship between one of the nation's oldest and most exceptional cities, New Orleans, and our greatest river, the Mississippi. For New Orleans, the river offered challenges and opportunities alike, providing the lifeblood of the city's commerce and a signature symbol of its identity even as it also brought floods, disease, and death. It is a fascinating story."William Cronon, author of *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West*"Kelman makes elegant sense of a story as tangled as the Louisiana bayous and tells his tale with a verve to rival that of New Orleans itself. A strong addition to American environmental history."John R. McNeill, author of *Something New Under the Sun: An Environmental History of the Twentieth-Century World*