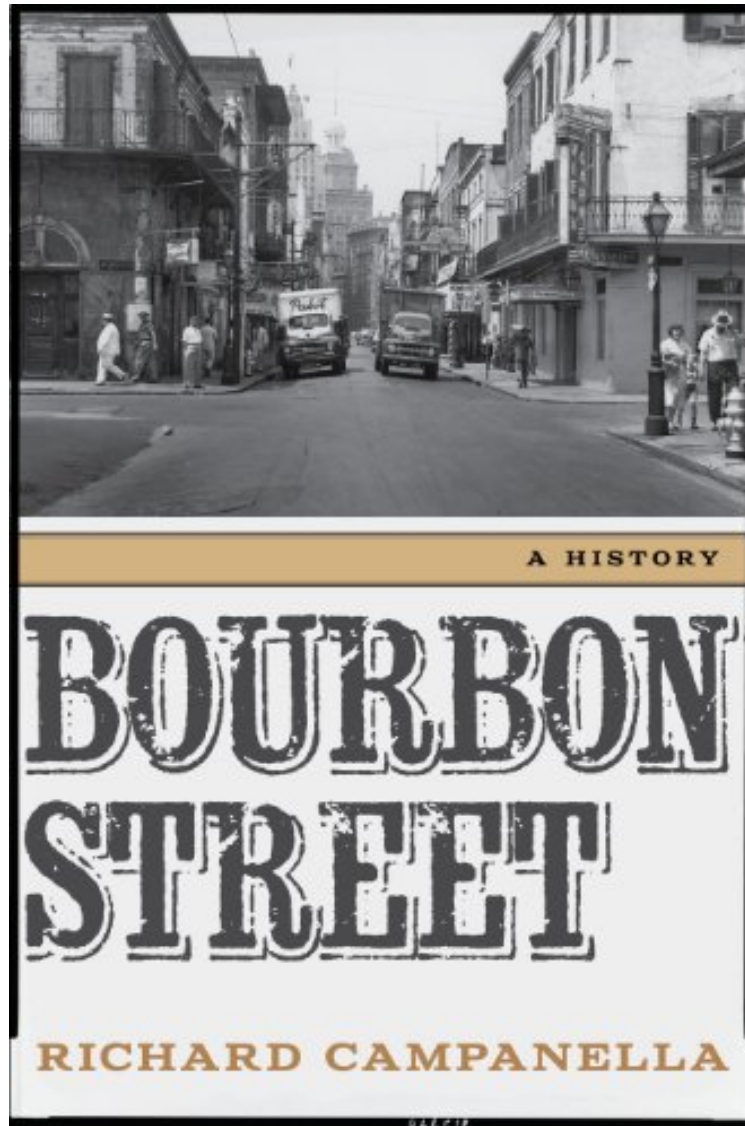


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Bourbon Street: A History

Richard Campanella

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New Orleans is a city of many storied streets, but only one conjures up as much unbridled passion as it does fervent hatred, simultaneously polarizing the public while drawing millions of visitors a year. A fascinating investigation into the mile-long urban space that is Bourbon Street, Richard Campanella's comprehensive cultural history spans from the street's inception during the colonial period through three tumultuous centuries, arriving at the world-famous entertainment strip of today. Clearly written and carefully researched, Campanella's book interweaves world events -- from the Louisiana Purchase to World War II to Hurricane Katrina -- with local and national characters, ranging from presidents to showgirls, to explain how Bourbon Street became an intriguing and singular artifact, uniquely informative of both New Orleans's history and American society. While offering a captivating historical-geographical panorama of Bourbon Street, Campanella also presents a contemporary microview of the area, describing the population, architecture, and local economy, and shows how Bourbon Street operates on a typical night. The fate of these few blocks in the French Quarter is played out on a larger stage, however, as the internationally recognized brands that Bourbon Street merchants and the city of New Orleans strive to promote both clash with and complement each other. An epic narrative detailing the influence of politics, money, race, sex, organized crime, and tourism, *Bourbon Street: A History* ultimately demonstrates that one of the most well-known addresses in North America is more than the epicenter of Mardi Gras; it serves as a battle-ground for a fundamental dispute over cultural authenticity and commodification.

"Persuasive. . . gleefully subversive. . . Campanella writes in a straightforward, unadorned style, combining a historian's scrupulousness, a sociologist's attention to demotic sources, and a geographer's fascination with the influence of terrestrial conditions on culture, politics, and development."--Nathaniel Rich, *New York of Books*"The smartest book I've read this year about American cities. . . . A fascinating account of how urban cultures persist and evolve and are perceived."--John King, *San Francisco Chronicle*"Campanella's vividly told, fact-packed account of the French Quarter entertainment strip couldn't be more topical. It should be required reading for anyone who wants to discuss New Orleans crime, economic development, the value of historic preservation, the business of vice, and the touchy subject of 'authenticity' in a city that celebrates its past."--*Times-Picayune*"A fantastically in-depth examination of what may be the most famous street in America."--*New Orleans Advocate*"Campanella... juggles statistics, geography, demographics, analysis, history and storytelling with brevity and wit... will make even the staunchest enemies of [Bourbon Street] reexamine his/her biases.... An informative joy."--Leigh Checkman, *Antigravity*"Weaves together history, geography, and culture to explain how Bourbon came to exist... fascinating... both amusing and informative."--Walter Isaacson"Richly researched... [Campanella] shows how Bourbon Street has constantly evolved." --S. Frederick Starr

About the Author Richard Campanella, a geographer with the Tulane School of Architecture, is the author of seven books about New Orleans, including *Bienville's Dilemma* and *Geographies of New Orleans*. A two-time winner of the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities Book of the Year Award, Campanella has also received the Williams Prize for Louisiana History and the Monroe Fellowship from Tulane's New Orleans Center for the Gulf South.