# Yoking the Exotic: Influence, Identity, and the Politics of Representation in the Reconstruction of Historic New Orleans

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## Influence, Identity, and the Politics of Representation in the Reconstruction of Historic New Orleans

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**Abstract**

*How is a specific version of history codified through the built environment and accepted by future generations? This paper surveys politics of representation and identity portrayal amidst districting and changes in the built environment during Reconstruction-era New Orleans and established research in Charleston, South Carolina to elucidate the mechanisms of social memory construction during contentious times. Through analysis of archival maps, policy, and historical personal accounts and observing the political maneuvering seen with redistricting and aesthetic rules, I argue that the values, ideals, and identity of the elite or policy-activists can be interpreted as they are represented within the built environment. By examining the strategies social groups have enacted to codify certain values, this paper will review how the implications of these value systems can be seen in the cultural constructs and institutions that have been used over time to generate revenue, spawning local industries of historical tourism to both justify and codify these views as history.*

## Introduction

As history and culture are translated through the urban landscape, social habits, and within the art and literature of the time, it is important when attempting to understand the modern composition of a city to analyze the visual choices made by historical agents. As our conception of history often remains an incomplete version of the past, it becomes important to have a complete view of the circumstances that forge these pasts and the conditions in which they are transmitted through both time and space within society. Post-war recovery provides a testing ground for the construction of these dominant historical narratives, as societies are rebuilding

both their identities and their surroundings, and often this process leads them to be representative of one another. The Reconstruction-era after the Civil War in American Southeast witnessed the rebuilding of many war-torn urban centers and a desired re-branding of nation, individual, and group identity. Industrial and capitalist-driven economic forces propelled much of the western world into a complicated and idealized modernity represented by technological innovations, such as automobiles and webs of power lines. This was an era characterized with major class upheaval as a multi-ethnic middle class became increasingly more vocal and powerful. Reactions ranged around the country from actively embracing the new system to longing for a less chaotic social order, and the politics of the time reflected the varying positions. In many of these examples, it is possible to see periods of willful manipulation of these visual elements to solidify within public memory an imagined urban history embodying the ideals established by a small group of elite citizens. These aesthetic choices in art, architecture, and social customs are often established during urban renewals resulting from periods of economic depression and social unrest, and they are traced from their historic roots through the people who codified them as the desired reflection of their urban ideals. Situating these aesthetic changes within the social and economic context of the time reveals networks of regional propaganda successfully constructed and marketed to perpetuate the status quo, revitalize urban development, and alter a region's perception of history.

As an example of this, Yuhl (2005) examines how the institutions surrounding heritage preservation in Charleston, South Carolina shaped the future of the city, both in aesthetic design and political and economic values. Building on this research, this model of inquiry exposes social values written on the landscape in both Charleston and New Orleans, Louisiana. Additionally, by using methodology exploring map interpretation put forward by Foucault

(1980) and Orlove (1991), I examine and interpret chronologically differing maps of New Orleans are examined and interpreted. The following pages are an examination of how urban identities can be constructed through conscious aesthetic choices to demonstrate and codify a prescribed culture deemed valuable by a various empowered social actors. This paper is a part of a larger project that is a comparative analysis of the adaptive reconstruction strategies of Charleston and New Orleans, with the addition of Atlanta, Georgia, and will expand on these themes and extend further into anthropological space-place theory including the modern-day use of space.

## Theory and Method

In a two pronged approach, the built environment is interpreted in this paper through both historic maps and through institutional reforms, the former inspired by the works of Foucault (1980) and Orlove (1991) and the latter expands on the work of Yuhl (2005) in Charleston, South Carolina. Combining these insights leads provides a more complete view of the urban changes over time and the agency of certain society members.

### *Landscape and Power*

Landscapes, both urban and rural, are rich in history and cultural meaning; the way that they are bounded, used, and designed can be unpacked to reveal the values and intentions of empowered actors related to the space. Power dynamics of control and socialization can be construed in the forms and functions of landscapes. Through analyzing how individuals or groups in power choose to project their visions onto the form of space over time reveals their conception of the space, whether as ownership, a form of display, or through restricted access. In Rotenberg's (1995) study of power relationships represented in urban landscapes, Vienna,

Austria represents a class struggle and hierarchy imposed upon the landscape, also reflecting the changing values of the centuries, such as freedom, structure, and control. The historical background of Vienna offers a good template for following the changes in use of space aesthetically and functionally over time to represent dominant ideals, both politically and for the public. Form matches function in Vienna gardens, but they also create a constructed reality within the built environment, designed to establish an embodied feeling and a nationalism that is experienced through the constructed terrain. Rotenberg asserted that contemporary agreement of values could be construed through spatial access, "[b]y looking at the historical debate over various kinds of publicly accessible landscapes, we can discover the values around which consensus was built" (Rotenberg 1995: 9). This same logic can also be applied to the built environment, through the changes in form and function, and through the conscious actions of empowered agents.

Through Foucault's (1977; 1980) identification of implicit and explicit power relationships embodied within space, the idea is explored of the many ways in which power can be codified and identified within the landscape. These representations within the landscape are viewed as communication tactics to proclaim power and preserve control. The internalized process of this dialogue adds to the insider understanding of the language of the landscape leading to strong bonds of social classes being reified through demonstrations of power. Through looking at the power representations seen in the creation of the penal system, Foucault highlighted the implicit power associated in the structure of the panopticon, a structural form of a prison consisting of a central tower propagating a 'gaze' that is ever-present upon the prisoners whether the tower was occupied or not. This constant manifestation of power over the inmates affected their behavioral patterns to reflect the wishes of the prison overseers (Foucault 1977).

As the success of this form of architecture became broadly known, it became widely used in factories and schools to increase focus and productivity, utilizing a building to disseminate behaviors valued by those in power. These ideas are not just evident in panoptic structures, but can be seen in any form of landscape manipulation where the representations of power are employed to alter the behaviors of others.

Often, places of significance within the urban built environment, such as government buildings, monuments, or the homes of elite residents, tend to encode within their structure messages of power or prestige based on the values of the culture that created and used them. Understanding the potential for space to be analyzed as social display, these significant places could be interpreted as extensions of these cultural ideals. As cities are created by people, they are entrenched within the cultural network of symbols and images meaningful to the people who create and use them (Geertz 1973). Through the use of 'representational architecture', elites express their social and economic restrictedness, often molding the city layout to their needs (Dal Lago. 2001). This is a phenomenon found reoccurring throughout time in older cities plagued with frequent destructive disasters that creates opportunities for massive rebuilding projects often dominated by a small percentage of the population (Dal Lago 2001, Yuhl 2005). This concept also plays into the idea of elite social spectacle proposed by Debord (1992[1968]), taking Geertz's (1973) notion of a city as a collection of images and symbols and extending it into a social relationship of dynamic rituals of performance. The representation of social activity, according to Debord's notion of the spectacle of society, has replaced the lived experience as a symbol that cannot be argued with or logically contested. Symbolic action becomes another way of reifying the status-quo and existing power relationships established and desired by the elite (Debord (1992[1968]). The elites' alterations of the cityscape, both by zoning and aesthetic

creation, is a social act of displaying the illusion of unity displayed in Debord's spectacles and reinforcing their own status.

*Interpreting Maps and the Built Environment*

In his study of the politics of representation through map analysis, Orlove (1991) chose to document individual conceptions of shared landscape through an analysis of the maps used in a political discourse concerning reed harvesting around Lake Titicaca. These maps were created by two institutions (the inhabiting peasants and the established government) in an attempt to communicate ownership and usage rights of the region surrounding reed beds in the lake, primarily in the Puno Bay and the Ramis Delta region. One of the attempts in the creation of a political dialogue involved asking local reed harvesters to sketch a map of their territory when registering for a government issued permit. These maps revealed the inhabitants mental construction of their land, and comparing these to the government maps made for the same purpose, much is revealed in the representational tactics and understandings demonstrated by these two separate groups.

Orlove compares these maps in several ways: production, or "maps portray notions of the relations that social groups, categories, and institutions have with one another and with specific territories" and consumption, the "ways in which social actors use maps in social interactions, especially conflicts"(Orlove 1991:4). The analysis of form, or production, involves the inclusion and exclusion of features, the classification of features, and the relations between features. The analysis of practice includes the viewers and involves the "ethnography of viewing" and how maps are categorized (Orlove 1991:5). The implicit and explicit audiences of the maps are also analyzed on the basis of representational encoding. Iser's (1978) studies of implied audience for printed materials reveals many of the inherent assumptions regarding the landscape held by both

state and citizen. By understanding that the "implied reader" and the "actual reader" of a printed work are not always the same, assumptions about print representation become visible for analysis. In this case, the both the government and peasant maps were requested by the government as a form of dialogue and begs the question of whether peasants would have created their own maps without government involvement. The visual language of the maps revealed it to only be fully understood by other government leaders, revealing that "implied reader" of the maps was for the other party, through the "actual reader" in both cases was the government. Government maps tended to focus on types of roads (often driving conditions are an issue for officials), resource locations (reeds), and major cities. These maps are professionally drafted, oriented north, and 'to-scale', designed to be read by other officials and included in official reports. Villages are generally not included on these maps. Looking at the maps drawn by the inhabitants, focus is generally on the villages' relationships with the topography with no large towns or major borders present. They are hand-drawn and do not represent a particular scale. While the 'peasant' maps do include flags acknowledging the government on their maps, peasants are invisible on the maps made by officials. The maps of the state are also chronological in both reading and production, revealing changes and details over time whereas the 'peasant' maps represent no temporal order or changes.

Utilizing these differences in the conceptions of representation of this contested landscape, Orlove (1991) seeks to understand the continuation of conflict in the region. The misunderstandings of space and time are a result of the cultural understandings demonstrated through the mapping of the landscape. When the act of map categorization is itself analyzed, these political assumptions are made visible for analysis. The linguistic reasons for undervaluing the 'peasant' maps also becomes apparent (Orlove 1991:25). This elucidates some of the

assumptions inherent within the printed format in an invaluable way to this study. Utilizing these theoretical underpinnings, chronological maps throughout the political history of New Orleans are analyzed in a later section of this paper including how the production and representation of space has acted as a framework for identity and the survival of selected cultural values, and these have translated into historical understanding with the aid of similar methodology put forth through research in the Southern town of Charleston, South Carolina.

*Historical Background*

The Civil War through the Industrial Revolution produced a shift in the production values of the American economy away from the labor-intensive agrarian system, embodied within the Southern plantations. This move towards manufacturing and mechanization disempowered the long-standing Southern elites entrenched in the 'plantation system'. Elite social status transferred to Northern bankers and industrialists, often from working or middle-class backgrounds, often seeking to legitimize their aristocratic claim through an association with past greatness (Yuhl 2005). As Europe's borders were closed to wealthy tourists from these new-moneyed elite at the onset of World War I, the fashion for domestic driving tours to warmer climates became the custom (Yuhl 2005). Additionally, national values altered as a result of war and economic depression, promoting cities as destinations for both tourists and residents to claim excitement and opportunity. This shifted the fashion of travel from elites touring the healthy fresh air of the country to a nationalistic- minded middle class attracted to urban stability (Stanonis 2006). This new urban tourism brought economic opportunity south, but during the first few decades of the twentieth century, little value was associated with historical artifacts of the South from the industrialist eyes of the dominant North (Yuhl 2005). This view was partially justified by the moral implications associated with the Civil War, namely that the system existed

through the injustice and exploitation of slavery. As a result, many families were forced to sell their ancestral heirlooms such as furniture, art, and property, liquidating many important local artifacts away from their context both socially and historically.

An explosion of regionalism and nostalgia engulfed America countering the rise of a post-war modernism and sweeping social change towards a middle class (Kammen 1990). Several elite social groups, including preservationist societies, banded together politically with ideas to integrate their culturally and historically important property into the landscape by turning to historical tourism (Stanonis 2006; Yuhl 2005). These notions established a tourist experience of stepping into the past, living within the historic culture and landscape of a bygone era. In Charleston, this historic ideal was codified by a genteel, polite society of elite, white Americans. Charleston's contributions to the Revolutionary War were pushed to the forefront, bringing with it the colonial-style of that era seen around the city (Yuhl 2004; Zierden 2010). The treatment of the history of the enslaved and of the African-American residents of city during its renewal further reveals this whitewashing of the town's Civil War involvement. New Orleans also found historic tourism to bolster the economy in the interwar years by embracing its exotic history and reputation for decadence. From its French colonial foundation to its short but influential Spanish occupation, New Orleans embodied the anthropological 'other' in America offering an exotic escape for tourists within their own country.

***The Example of Charleston, South Carolina***

Charleston's importance as a cultural center peaked during the eighteenth century. Its success as a commercial port, market, and plantation farming, derived heavily from the Slave Trade, created many landed wealthy elite (Del Lago 2001). Once representing a major cultural center for the colonies and then new nation, misfortunes, including extensive war damage, a

cotton-killing boll weevil infestation, major hurricanes and earthquakes, left the city's infrastructure broken by 1919 (Yuhl 2005). From the decaying manor homes to increasingly dangerous urban centers, by 1920 Charleston exemplified the Southern downward plight in the years after the Civil War. Though always exhibiting a strongly conservative view towards progress and technology, such as denying trains access to the city, many of the elite Charleston families maintained their plantation and city homes by moving extended family under one distinctly antebellum roof (Yuhl 2005). These families held their elite status in their bloodlines, not in their bank accounts, tracing heritage to colonial founders and through Revolutionary War heroes. The generation that reached adulthood during this depressed period of Charleston history grew up on accounts from their elders of an idealized and romanticized 'golden age' before the war, and many of these elites sought to recapture this lost imagined glory through preservation tactics (Yuhl 2005).

*Figure 1. Joseph Manigault House, built in 1803, was the first building to inspire Charleston, SC preservationists in 1920 (from the Historic Charleston Foundation website).*

*The Built Environment:*

Building upon the tradition of elite women's contribution to charity work, Susan Pringle Frost brought together a parlor of Charlstonian elites to create the Society for the Preservation of Old Dwellings (SPOD) in 1920 with the immediate goal of saving the Joseph Manigault House (Figure 1) from demolition to make way for a gas station (Yuhl 2005). Working with the Charleston Chamber of Commerce, SPOD stood as an organization prepared to engage political forces to revive the local economy and "not waging a romantic war with modernity" (Yuhl 2005:27). With the aid of Nell Pringle and other members of SPOD, Susan Pringle Frost

introduced a decidedly feminine and personal view of Charleston history, selecting an aesthetic that conformed to her values and imagined history as worthy of preservation. These preferences were built from the stories of her childhood, from the economic necessity of living with multiple generations under one roof, and they were built upon a nostalgic, folk version of history as seen through the memory of war survivors that directly contrasted the chaos of war and the fallen status of their resulting position (Yuhl 2005:8-10). The 1929 preservation campaign for the Heyward-Washington House (Figure 2) represented SPOD's first collaboration with the Charleston Museum and official politics. Formally incorporated SPOD under new male leadership, the preservationists set a goal to delineate a boundary for a protected historic district to encapsulate the area south of Broad Street that contained most of the homes of the preservationists (Yuhl 2005). Commissioned by Mayor Thomas Stoney to officially create the boundary of the 'Old and Historic District', usage of federal funding created an official office of City Planning and Zoning which in 1931 became the first nationally-supported zoning ordinance to protect around 400 buildings from destruction (Yuhl 2005). This area contained many of the homes of SPOD members in addition to several important historic buildings but was not inclusive to all of the true historic Charleston landscape

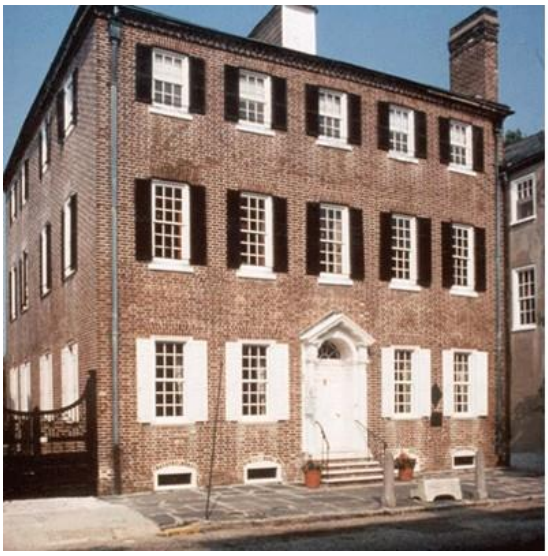

*Figure 2. The Heyward---Washington House, located in future Historic District, displaying preferred 18th Century aesthetic (from the Historic Charleston Foundation website).*

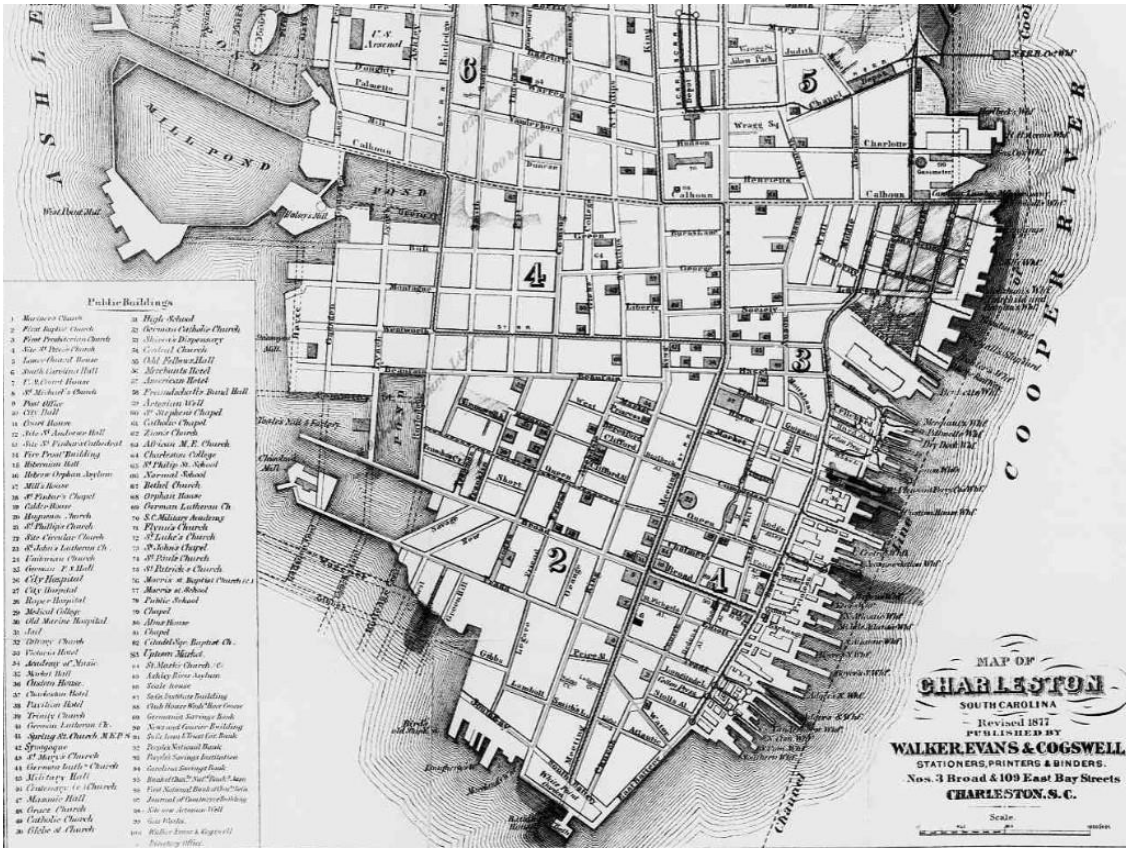


*Figure 3. 1877 Map of Charleston showing important historical buildings. Note uneven distribution compared with 'Historic District' south of Broad Street, seen just north of the 2 (modified from the Historic Charleston Foundation website).*

(Figure 3), omitting areas considered to be ethnic slums (Dal Lago 2001; Yuhl 2005). From this point, any construction or remodeling within this district then required the approval of the Board of Architectural Review (BAR), an arm of the City Planning and Zoning Commission, to maintain a desired aesthetic prescribed by architect Albert Simmons and newspaper editor Thomas Waring, BAR chairmen (Yuhl 2005). This aesthetic, just as Frost and Pringle had done, harkened back to an imagined antebellum Charleston, "privileging of the colonial, Revolutionary, and early-republican styles over later ones was based almost entirely on the personal aesthetics of the select group that directed the city's preservation program" (Yuhl 2005:45). This is the familiar style of home quickly became fused with the 'historic' area south of Broad Street, and was quickly adopted as the fashion of the day (Figure 4). The board's

aesthetic prescriptions included everything visible on the building including color, woodwork, signage, fences, fire-escapes, chimneys, and porches, and were based largely on personal preference of the BAR chairmen, specifically Simmons (Yuhl 2005:44-45). This direct seizure of control regarding a sectioning off of the city represents a show of power by the elites while simultaneously inscribing their preferred ideology upon the landscape of the city. The representational architecture valued by the BAR resurrected and reinforced the position of prosperity maintained by the elites during the antebellum years (Dal Lago 2001:377).

*Figure 4. Rows of Historic District Homes showing the ideal BAR features: 18th C. design, long porches, small alleys, and bright colors as a few (from the Historic Charleston Foundation website).*

The BAR used their power to 'reclaim' the ancestral homes from fallen elites, usually from areas that had transitioned into slums and occupied by African Americans, both immigrants and the descendants of slaves (Yuhl 2005). In an example of federal funds being used in this type of racialized political maneuvering, the city utilized New Deal funding for public housing to forcibly relocate African-American residents from this area now deemed 'historic', removing them from their rundown but historically significant homes and depositing them outside of the city and away from the increasing number of tourists passing through 'historic' Charleston (Yuhl 2005:45-48). Tourism, being the fiscal drive for politicians of the era, balanced maintaining the historical capital prized by their visitors with the modern conveniences expected in a post-industrial city. Modern innovations supported by Mayor Stoney during his two terms (1923-

1931) were aimed specifically at attracting tourism to the city, which he made a central focus of his administration (Historic Charleston Foundation Website; Yuhl 2005). By building bridges spanning the Cooper and Ashley Rivers (Figure 5), Mayor Stoney connected Charleston to the major highways and area attractions. Stoney also funded the Tourist and Convention Bureau of the Chamber of Commerce to produce and place historical markers throughout the city, paid for travel features and national advertisements for Charleston, and declared Charleston as "America's Most Historic City" (Yuhl 2005: 162) while also advocating for urban modernization that benefited commerce and trade.

*Figure 5. The 1929 construction of the Grace Memorial Bridge spanning the Cooper River (from the Historic Charleston Foundation website).*

Stoney's policies exemplified the fine line Charleston occupied between historic and modern, and he strongly believed that Charleston's historic buildings were very strong assets to revitalizing the city's economy. Interestingly, Stoney's heritage interwove through the overlapping kinship networks of the elites, making him one of the handful of influential people whose personal views of Charleston became permanently stamped upon the city (Yuhl 2005).

*Art and Literature:*

Just as Stoney, Simmons, and Frost imprinted their views of modernity and historic value upon the landscape of Charleston, movements in art and literature also shaped the cultural facade of the city. Contributing to the elite conception of an imagined antebellum gentility, Charleston artistic trends invoked soft plantation landscapes and familiar cobbled streets in the Historic District, both populated with comfortable antebellum stereotypes of polite racial interaction.

African Americans were often portrayed as field hands, domestic help, or street hucksters, with faces slightly out of focus as to proclaim their indistinctness from one another. White people were most often shown enjoying leisure activities, overseeing their land, or taking care of a herd of African American workers by graciously dolling out food or sundries (Yuhl 2005:57). Watercolorist Alice R. H. Smith embodied this ideal in her work, becoming one of the most recognized artists from the regionalist movement embodying the ideals of elite Southern gentility in her work (Figure 6). These tranquil images are still found reproduced for tourist shops, and her characteristic style is still emulated by many local artists. This wave of regionalism seen in Charleston art may have been a direct reaction to the modernist movement found in various forms of art at the time, exemplified by artists such as Georgia O'Keefe and the realists depicting realistically depressing scenes of struggle from the effects of the Great Depression. These Southern genteel, idealized versions of the past may have offered relief to the constant anxiety of the depression, both as an economic opportunity for the artist and as a visual escape for the consumer.

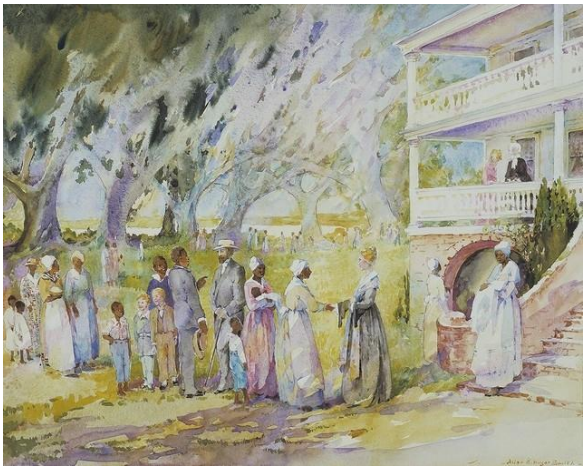

*Figure 6. Alice R. H. Smith's iconic 1935 "Sunday Morning at the Great House" reinforcing racial stereotypes (from Yuhl 2005).*

Poetry and literature also became rejuvenated in Charleston through the establishment of an elite social club, The Poetry Society of South Carolina, in 1920 (Yuhl 2005). This fostered many native writers, leading to the successes of DeBose Heyward's novel *Porgy* in 1925 and Julia Perterkin's *Scarlet Sister Mary*, which one a Pulitzer Prize in 1929 (Yuhl 2005). Porgy had a vast effect on popularizing this historic nature of Charleston, especially in its staged

incarnation, *Porgy and Bess*, which opened in New York in 1927 (Yuhl 2005). This staging brought the Charlestonian elite version of African American stereotypes to the nation, popularizing it and forever entrenching it into the cultural landscape of the gentrified South.

*Social Customs and Performing History:*

One of the most striking examples of elite appropriation and alteration of history can be found in the Society for the Preservation of Negro Spirituals (Figure 7) founded in 1922 as an exclusive social club of elite white females from former slave-owning families (Yuhl 2005). This complex act of staging race centered on members wearing the stereotypical hoop skirted antebellum costumes of Southern elite whites while singing slave spirituals, acting as a mobile performance of an idealized history. This act was often booked preferentially over African-American singers, seen by contemporary white elite groups as more "authentic" and "legitimate" due to the Society's goal of researching and preserving the tone, music, and cadence of the original negro spiritual (Yuhl 2005:127-133). This direct appropriation reinforced the dominance and control shown by the white elite, both during their slave-owning golden days and during the urban renewal of the interwar years. As the reputation of the society spread across the country, the Society took their show to the major urban centers of America, selling their version of Southern history to audiences as fact and further gentrifying the South. A version of this society still exists in Charleston today.

*Figure 7. Society for the Preservation of Negro Spirituals in 1929 on their first Northern tour (from Yuhl 2005).*

## Case Study: New Orleans

Even prior to emancipation, racial boundaries did not just delineate between white and black, but contained a vast spectrum of racial categories, each with a distinct identity representing an uncommonly complex social system for the time (Stanonis 2009). Additionally, the Carnival phenomenon of Mardi Gras began to take place in the oldest areas of town in 1857 embodying the dichotomies of celebration and abstinence, democratization and elite spectacle, life and death, and performing these as ritual on public streets (Flake 1994). By 1880, Mardi Gras became a national destination, introducing the city to the value of the tourist's dollar (Stanonis 2006). The city's reputation continued to embody exotic danger as the city moved into recovery from the Civil War. Following a similar line of inquiry to that taken in analyzing the historic renewal of Charleston, New Orleans offers many interesting insights. In addition, the changing interests and values in the city over time are exposed through Orlove's techniques of map analysis used on three historic maps.

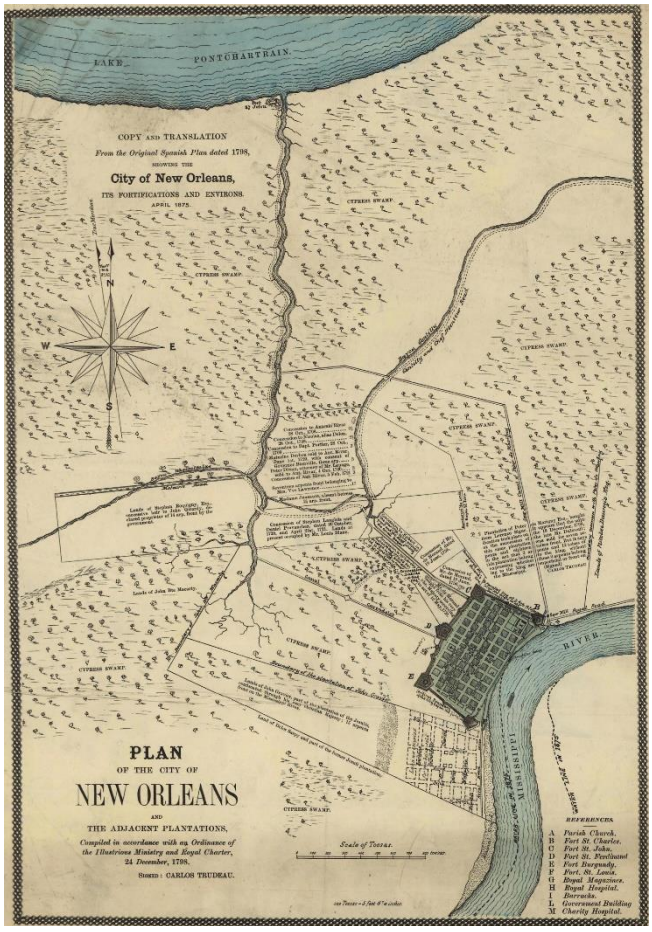


*Figure 8. Map of New Orleans from 1798 showing original city walls (from Library of Congress website).*

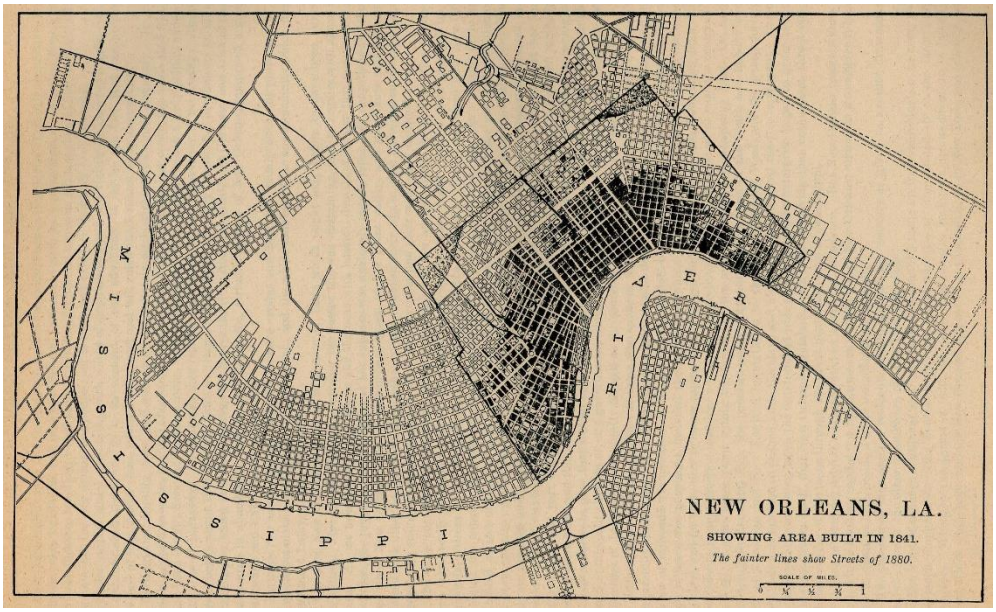


*Figure 9. Map of New Orleans showing growth from 1841 (in black) to 1880 (from Library of Congress website).*

*Built Environment:*

From a progressive analysis of historic maps of the area, it becomes apparent that the city of New Orleans blossomed quickly (Figures 8 and 9). A boom of immigrants in the decades leading up to the Civil War, primarily Irish Catholic, added to the multiethnic population and increasing social pressure between classes and the various ethnic groups by taking the population from less than 18,000 in 1810 and propelling it over 168,000 residents by 1860 (Stanonis 2009:182). This massive influx resulted in a liminal state in the identity of New Orleans and her residents, as natives were suddenly surrounded with multi-ethnic immigrants (Frink 2010). At the start of the 20th Century, New Orleans was quick to recognize the economic potential of modern production, fostering an elite social class of businessmen that sought to create a productive, efficient city (Stanonis 2006). This parallels the internal struggle Charleston faced between modernity and history in presenting its identity. The segregation of the Historic French Quarter from the Central Business District shows a distinct parceling of modernity and history.

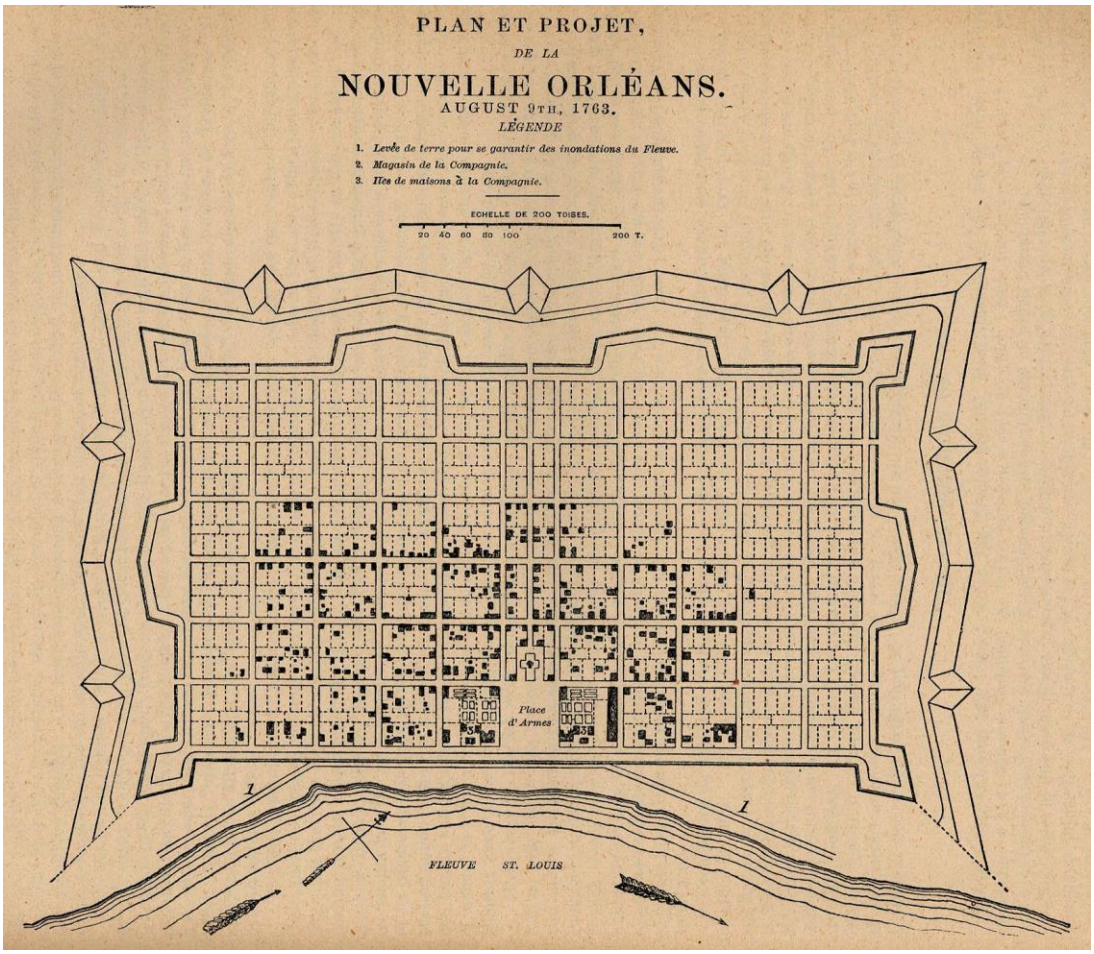


*Figure 10. French map of early New Orleans from 1763 (from Library of Congress website).*

This harkens back to the interwar years and the desire to promote both the productive economy favored by the elites and the tourism that brought money to more middle and lower---class residents (Stanonis 2006). The French Quarter Historic District was the result of the Vieux Carre Commission founded in 1925, establishing the French Quarter as an official historic district by 1936 with similar prescriptive aesthetic rules for the protection of historic buildings found in Charleston (Stanonis 2006). Though the delineation of the district was less arbitrary than its Charleston counterpart, as the original city of New Orleans was established specifically as a walled area containing these blocks (Figure 10), the decision to separate this area was also based on race and ethnicity (Stanonis 2006). Where Charleston sought to separate the homes of the elite, New Orleans separated out the areas most associated with ethnic immigration, moral

transgressions, and Mardi Gras. This interesting twist on the elite footprint on the urban landscape provides interesting insight into the motivations of the Interwar decision-makers.

*Map Analysis*

Utilizing the understanding of representation put forward by Gramsci and Foucault, Orlove (1991) suggests that an anthropological analysis of maps include an "analysis of form", or map production, and an "analysis of function", or map consumption, and it must include the viewers and the purpose, both intended or unintended (Orlove 1991:4-6). The walled port-city of French New Orleans as represented in the 1763 map (Figure 10) is clearly an institutional map denoting territory claimed and monitored by the French government, as shown by the language and standardized layout of the map. It is clearly oriented as viewed from above in the usual western political standard, and it has a compass and scale. The manufactured structures are the most centrally focused on, with extra emphasis placed on the city walls. The internal layout of the city shows ordered and designed symmetrical block system with regular streets meeting at right angles. The only identifiable or unique structural shapes on this map are that of the church and public square which seem to be the city center and the small black dots within some of the structural blocks are not explained. This extreme attention to the diligence and perfection of the grid system, in addition to the lack of landscape features beyond the city walls, also reveals the production of the map to be institutional, as these are the features valued by these producers as shown by Orlove (1991:21). The river, a useful commodity to the political structure and economy of the city, is the only natural feature listed on the map. As there is very little distinctiveness to the individual city buildings, this does not seem to be a map for use by outsiders as a specific local knowledge would have to be enacted to both locate the city within the landscape and to locate specific places within the city. As the dominate features appear to be

the enormous walls and block design of the city, it can be concluded that one intention of this map was to document ownership of the property through utilizing the man-made constructions as justification. This is very interesting when situating this map within the political climate of 1763, the year that the Treaty of Paris ceded the French colony of New Orleans to the Spanish Empire. With this information, this map can be interpreted as a military map due to its emphasis on defensive structures and ambiguous locations.

The English map from 1798 (Figure 8) offers an interesting contrast to the French map made about three decades earlier. The city is situated in the larger landscape including Lake Pontchartrain, multiple rivers, swamps, and surrounding plantations with border lines. The rights of ownership as granted by the king for the plantations are also listed within the territory making this a very informative map. Smaller parcels of land are also listed to owners including the dates and conditions of their sale. As with the earlier map, there is a clear orientation and use of both scale and compass. The locations of five forts, two hospitals, the church, and the government building are listed in a legend. The walls of the city are still emphasized, but seem more traversable than the earlier French map due to the inclusion of the surrounding landscape and the legend. Though this map was clearly produced for institution purposes, as demonstrated by the court-like documentation of ownership and adherence to standardized forms, this map makes the city more accessible to outsides through its focus on information and included references. Interestingly, the city was under Spanish control at the time the original map was made, remaining so until 1801 when the French briefly held control again, then sold to the United States by Napoleon in 1803 as a part of the Louisiana Purchase. This English version was made in 1875 and was translated from the original Spanish. It would be interesting to extend this research into earlier recopying of maps to compare the original with the translated copies

applying these same analytic methodologies. Though this map was made only a few years before the territory changed political hands as with the earlier map, the inclusions within this map seem to indicate that it was meant to be utilized in a much more direct way than the French version.

The final map in this group analysis dating from 1880 (Figure 9) shows the increase of construction in the area due to increased population between the years of 1841 and 1880. As growth is the primary focus, this map has little of the surrounding environment outside of the Mississippi River. It also does not focus on locational individualization or spatial usage. Instead, it shows in a darker color the older city area surrounded by an expansive set of lines and blocks attempting to conform to the odd angles set by the river to conjoin with the older sections of the city. A scale is present, but there is no compass, and the map looks more like an architectural draft than a locational device. As this is the first of the series representing the city under American control, it is interesting to note the emphasis on expansion and growth. Though institutional in creation, this map has a clear propagandistic purpose promoting the expansion of New Orleans during a relatively short amount of time.

*Art, Social Customs, and Performing History:*

As with Charleston, New Orleans became a literary center and home to many forms of artistic movements. William Faulkner and Tennessee Williams were both inspired, bring the city and surrounding areas to life for readers all over the world as the backdrop for several of their novels (Stanonis 2006). This national popularization solidified an idealized version of New Orleans in the minds of readers who had never ventured to the city. In the same vein of popularization and nationalization, music and ritual were also used in promoting a consumable New Orleans for tourists. Just as the Society for the Preservation of Negro Spirituals

appropriated slave culture, Jazz music struggled throughout its early history to maintain its African American heritage (Roach 1996; Stanonis 2006). Additionally, the multivocality of Mardi Gras offers a trove of cultural information combining the more European sensibility of the city with the waves of immigration, association with pagan and Catholic ritual, and expected social roles of African Americans (Flake 1994; Roach 1996). A more thorough investigation and ethnographic analysis of the performative aspects of New Orleans identity is a future goal of this study.

## Discussion and Future Research Questions

### Urban Identity, Memory, and Visual Culture

The famous definition provided by Geertz of culture as "a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life," (Geertz 1979:83) highlights the transitive nature of knowledge and culture. Utilizing anthropological theoretical research such as collective memory studies, identity research, and social display, in conjunction with the inferences gained through analysis of the built environment, provides greater insight into understanding the foundations of historical representation within the urban environment of these previous case studies.

*Historical Collective Memory*

The nature of how a population comes to understand its history then becomes an important factor in establishing the accuracy, meanings, and values associated with that culture's past. Many studies have been done across multiple disciplines linking collective memory and national identity including analysis of how modern societies deal with the uncomfortable parts of

their past, such as modern Germany and World War 2, the construction of Israeli history, and the American South and slavery (Kammen 1990). These modern examples can be extended further into the past, looking at how previous generations handled these same issues and understanding how these adaptations may affect our modern notions of the past. It has often been noted through time that populations tend to construct or reconstruct their history as opposed to recording it (Kammen 1990). Understanding the social functions of memory in both modern and historic contexts illustrate potential motives and manipulations of historic narrative, just as knowledge of these manipulations can shed light on the motives of those that manipulated the record.

*Identity and Historical Tourism*

History is necessary to identity. Through viewing how a city changes its urban and cultural landscape, it is possible to see the conscious and unconscious shifts in the ideological structures that aid in individual and group identity construction. With Charleston, the elites utilized the landscape to reinforce their dominance and create a genteel history that is daily lived and reified by everyone in the urban environment. New Orleans offers an example of a city constantly in flux. Historically spawned from French to Spanish to American control, the city grew through bursts of immigration. Frink's (2010) analysis of identity during this time reveals a transition from community to urban anonymity in the face of massive immigration. This 'loss' of identity created a suspicion and fear of strangers that added to the cities exotic reputation (Frink 2010). This void of communal identity opened up opportunities for the construction of an identity that serviced the needs of a section of the group. The hegemonic social elite took this opportunity due to economic necessity during the Interwar years (Stanonis 2006).

Kasfir's (2000) study on the tourist's identity, role, and space among the multiethnic backdrop of the Swahili Coast highlights the role of natives, businessmen, and tourists within a

tourist economy. The methods of balancing history with modernity are explored in the immigrant businessmen and native Samburu warriors of the Swahili Coast in a similar fashion could be applied to Charleston and New Orleans. The Swahili Coast example parallels New Orleans closely, as both have multi-ethnic origins and have benefited from the exotic and dangerous reputation that often accompanies a successful port city. Both cities have also constructed a history that is performed through natives of the area. The tourist expectation of Bourbon Street, beignets, and jazz are all mediated through 'native' and elite involvement just as the Swahili Coast hotels provide the expected African entertainment (Kasfir 2000; Stanonis 2006). In Charleston, the elites took the position of both natives and businessmen, uncompromisingly packaging their version of history and erasing subjects that did not comply with their views. They established themselves as the only legitimate heirs to Charleston, once again dispossessing African Americans from their history and identity and overwriting it with their own.

Additionally, Kasfir's (2000) understanding of the tourist occupying an uncertain space applies to the mentality seen in Charleston and New Orleans. The tourist identity occupies a liminal place, a break in the daily identities lived at home, and it adapts to the culture it encounters with the desire to display the behavior of a 'good tourist' (Kasfir 2000). In these later two examples, the notions of history are constructed and lived through the tourist's experience, recorded by their gaze. The tourist is shown an interpretation of history, and the city functions as a living museum, packaging a commodified form of history. As 'good tourists', visitors accept the interpretation given to them, reifying the hegemony of the elite.

Through a comprehensive look into the creation of Southern Historic Districts, an anthropological assessment of the assertion of white elite hegemonic power dynamics through overlapping kinship, preservation rhetoric, and performance reveals a dominant conscious elite

voice. Additionally, observing important local art and literary figures and their contributions and connections with popular movements of the time revels most of these members to be connected to the same families constructing the memory of Charleston. New Orleans provided a similar example of an economic drive toward historic tourism during the interwar years, with many key differences that could highlight various urban coping mechanisms along with elite manipulations of memory and history.

## Conclusions

Both case studies represent cities revitalized through collective civil action. In gaining a more complete understanding of history, recognizing the cultural context and representations associated with presentation of historical fact is essential. Utilizing historical records in conjunction with an analysis of the built environment, contemporary art and literature, and social action, the changes made at specific points and time have the potential to reveal social, political, and economic motivations. The interwar years between 1920 and 1940 brought social change, economic upheaval, and massive technological innovations that offered an opportunity to market nostalgia. New Orleans and Charleston both represent historic Southern port cities and currently both are associated with historical tourism. A tourist sees a historic city, beautifully preserved as though frozen in time. The creation of this image, for both cities, occurred through conscious maneuvering during the interwar years to represent an idealized view of history.

Through political districting and licensing committees, a minority prescribed their chosen version of history on the landscape. Through these maps, preservation methods, and political tactics, it is clear how a small group of elite residents projected their personal and familial associations upon the city, appropriating what they deemed a ‘usable history’ to create and sanction their imagined, romanticized past and distance themselves from the unpleasant

association with slavery. Reviewing the iconography, appropriation, and aesthetics valued and utilized by the elite paint a vivid image of how ideology and imagined history can be codified and made into a commodity, both consciously and reflectively, in a way that alters regional and national perception. These practices demonstrate the cultural values of the dominant social class, and have the potential to reveal even more cultural insight through further application of the anthropological theory discussed earlier in the paper. This line of inquiry reveals how, by packaging this history into opportunistically revisionist and easily consumable forms, these Southern elites were able to spread their version of history throughout the country and fund their continued projects through a commitment to historical tourism.

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