

# NEW ORLEANS STILL A CITY OF CONTRASTS

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Present day New Orleans is a city of contrasts. It combines the rich and poor, great thriving industries and small cob-webbed markets, the old world and the new.

It was very evident that New Orleans did not welcome the McPherson College student caravan. There was but a single tourist camp in this city of four hundred fifty thousand people. Arriving late, we had difficulty in learning of any space where we might set camp for the night.

Finally, after darkness and fog had been with us about three hours, we were directed to a grove of trees near the city park, and here we staked canvas. The next morning, however, we were greeted with a delegation of neighborly women and the speaker for the group demanded the reason for our trespassing act. Explanations and arguments followed. At length our hostile visitors left us with the decisive remark that if we were not gone from that grove by nine o'clock the New Orleans police force would be there on the grounds to see that we moved—and the joke of it was that the tower clock had already tolled ten times when the delegation head uttered this threatening

statement.

On St. Charles street we found the finest of the old type southern mansions. They were mammoth buildings with round windows like port-holes, high up in the gables and freshly painted green shutters on every window. There was always a spacious verdant grass carpet between the massive white columns of the double-decked porches and the picket fence near the streets. The lawns were well landscaped, with shrubs beside the flagstone walks and spreading moss-draped magnolia trees nearly hid the great white houses from view.

Then in another section are rows of rickety negro huts with loosened boards flapping in the strong winds. Rough brick or adobe fireplaces rear themselves on the exterior, beside the weather-worn or white-washed walls as the case may be. A substantial soap box serves as a door step, there is no glass in the window openings and the shingles are green with age.

One sees hurrying, vivacious men in the seething cotton exchange or at work behind mahogany desks in the New Orleans skyscraper buildings. Folks of identical rank are swaggering about the city streets with derbies and canes. Many tuxedoed gentlemen lounge about in the parks and city squares or plazas. The hundreds of manual laboring white men and the sweaty negroes are toiling busily along the wharves, dry docks, in the sawmills or the numerous factories. And other men of their kind are loafing at the markets, dangling barefeet and fishlines into the muddy Mississippi, or sprawling about in dirty suburban hovels.

At the wharves of this second largest seaport in the United States, the visitor sees constantly the loading and unloading of sugar, lumber, bananas, cotton and coffee cargoes. Not being present in the rush cotton season, the banana industry was most interesting. Millions of huge bunches, both yellow ripe and green, were ascending the long rollers and being carried to waiting cars during eight hours of the day. At five o'clock, the long line of workers would file by the paying window to obtain the silver rewards for their day's work. Seventy-five to one hundred cars of bananas were shipped from the New Orleans wharves every day.

Excellent avenues and beautiful boulevards are common in this Mardi Gras city. We have seen no wider traffic way in a business district than Canal street. The Metairie and St. Charles Avenues are bordered with perfect rows of giant live oaks, the branches of which dove-tail together overhead to form a marvelous triumphal archway miles in length.

And unexcelled scenic drives wind about over all the city by the beautiful, well-kept cemetery grounds, with all graves above ground, and the universities and through the numerous parks and finest residential section. But by the river side and in the old French quarter, we found narrow one-way channels that are covered with tons of smelly oyster shells. Dingy, rough bricked streets lie parallel with the water front and many worn cobblestone alleys form outlets of the historic dwelling sections.

And both in comparison and contrast to the fine old mansions, dirty negro huts and camper's cottages on stilts by the Mississippi's banks, we think of the crumbling Creole houses. When driving down Frenchman or Rampart or Gentilly roads, we see tiny cottages of a quaint type and an Old World tinge. There is much fancy woodwork under the eaves and fret work decorates the shuttered windows. There are stairs always of three steps leading from the elevated porchless dwelling fronts to the sidewalk. Even crescent moons and leaf designs are cut out of these wooden stairs. The larger Creole houses have wrought iron bannisters on the propped up entrance ways and fancy iron embroidered balconies or window guards. And of evenings every little three step stairway in the old French quarter holds a number of jabbering children or fleshy French women who exchange the latest gossip.

The visitor notices these striking contrasts at every turn while in New Orleans. He is continually making comparisons. Every section of this southern metropolis is decidedly different from every other. Each opposite and contrasty element seems to continue side by side and still in obvious peace and harmony. The city of New Orleans is interesting.