



LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY PRESS
3990 West Lakeshore Drive
Baton Rouge, LA 70808-4684
(225) 578-8282
www.lsupress.org

BOOK NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Jenny Keegan
225.578.6453 / jenniferkeegan@lsu.edu

Imagining the Creole City

Forthcoming Book Explores the Myth of Creole Exceptionalism in 19th-Century Literature

Baton Rouge—In the early years of the nineteenth century, the burgeoning cultural pride of white Creoles in New Orleans intersected with America’s golden age of print, to explosive effect. ***Imagining the Creole City: The Rise of Literary Culture in Nineteenth-Century New Orleans***, to be published by LSU Press in November 2014, reveals the profusion of literary output—histories and novels, poetry and plays—that white Creoles used to imagine themselves as a unified community of writers and readers.

Author Rien Fertel argues that Charles Gayarré’s English-language histories of Louisiana, which emphasized the state’s dual connection to America and to France, provided the foundation of a white Creole print culture predicated on Louisiana’s exceptionalism. The writings of authors like Grace King, Adrien Rouquette, and Alfred Mercier consciously fostered an image of Louisiana as a particular social space, and of themselves as the true inheritors of its history and culture. In turn, the forging of this white Creole identity created a close-knit community of cosmopolitan Creole elites, who reviewed each other’s books, attended the same salons, crusaded against the popular fiction of George Washington Cable, and worked together to preserve the French language in local and state governmental institutions. Together they reimagined the definition of “Creole” and used it as a marker of status and power.

By the end of this group’s era of cultural prominence, Creole exceptionalism had become a cornerstone in the myth of Louisiana in general and of New Orleans in particular. In defining themselves, the authors in the white Creole print community also fashioned a literary identity that resonates even today.

Rien Fertel is a visiting professor of history at Tulane University.

November 2014
216 pages, 5.5 x 8.5, 5 halftones
978-0-8071-5823-4
Cloth \$39.95s, ebook available
Cultural Studies / Louisiana History

To request review copies or set up an author interview,
please contact Jenny Keegan at jenniferkeegan@lsu.edu.

###