



# Building the Land of Dreams: New Orleans and the Transformation of Early America

*Eberhard L. Faber*

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In 1795, New Orleans was a sleepy outpost at the edge of Spain's American empire. By the 1820s, it was teeming with life, its levees packed with cotton and sugar. New Orleans had become the unquestioned urban capital of the antebellum South. Looking at this remarkable period filled with ideological struggle, class politics, and powerful personalities, *Building the Land of Dreams* is the narrative biography of a fascinating city at the most crucial turning point in its history.

Eberhard Faber tells the vivid story of how American rule forced New Orleans through a vast transition: from the ordered colonial world of hierarchy and subordination to the fluid, unpredictable chaos of democratic capitalism. The change in authority, from imperial Spain to Jeffersonian America, transformed everything. As the city's diverse people struggled over the terms of the transition, they built the foundations of a dynamic, contentious hybrid metropolis. Faber describes the vital individuals who played a role in New Orleans history: from the wealthy creole planters who dreaded the influx of revolutionary ideas, to the American arrivistes who combined idealistic visions of a new republican society with selfish dreams of quick plantation fortunes, to Thomas Jefferson himself, whose powerful democratic vision for Louisiana eventually conflicted with his equally strong sense of realpolitik and desire to strengthen the American union.

Revealing how New Orleans was formed by America's greatest impulses and ambitions, *Building the Land of Dreams* is an inspired exploration of one of the world's most iconic cities.

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