



The Free People of Color of New Orleans: An Introduction

Mary Gehman

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Antebellum New Orleans was home to thousands of urbane , educated and well to do free blacks. The French called them les gens de couleur libre, the free people of color; after the Civil War they were known as the Creoles of color, shortened today to simply Creoles. Theirs was an ambiguous status, sharing the French Language, Catholic religion and European education of the elite whites, but also keeping African and indigenous American influences from their early heritage. This is their story, rarely mentioned in conventional histories, and often misunderstood today, even by some of their descendants. The book is an easy read that lays out the chronology of events, laws and circumstances that formed the unique racial mix of New Orleans and much of Louisiana. Includes end notes, suggested bibliography, index, and a listing of family names of free people of color that appear in the early years of the Louisiana Territory. A must-have for genealogists, historians, and students of African-American history.

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