

New Roads and Old Rivers: Louisiana's Historic Pointe Coupee Parish

By Randy Harelson

New Roads and Old Rivers captures the natural and cultural vitality of Pointe Coupee Parish, Louisiana, as seen in the stunning photographs of Richard Sexton, with text by Randy Harelson and Brian Costello. Pointe Coupee is one of the oldest settlements in the Mississippi Valley, dating to the 1720s. French for "a place cut off," the name refers to the area's three oxbow lakes, separated from the Mississippi over centuries. Edged by the Mississippi and Atchafalaya rivers, Pointe Coupee remains a land rich in Creole heritage, distinct in geographical beauty, and abounding in historic homes and farms. In 200 color images, Sexton artistically portrays the region's sights: Native American mounds, bayous and lakes, productive agricultural fields and industries, slave cabins and plantation homes, small towns, and family and civic celebrations. Photographs include most of Pointe Coupee's seventy surviving antebellum structures, along with some of its sixty-two massive trees listed on the Live Oak Society register. A timeline of key events situates the parish's history within the wider world. From the Pointe Coupee Coast -- where in the early 1700s explorers, soldiers, missionaries, colonists, and enslaved and free people of color began settling the banks of the Mississippi River -- to the Acadiana Trail -- US-190, the only four-lane highway in the parish -- New Roads and Old Rivers illuminates the history and cultural foundations of the entire state. This arresting portrait of Old Louisiana honors Pointe Coupee generations, past and present.

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New Roads and Old Rivers: Louisiana's Historic Pointe Coupee Parish Summary Details

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Review

This is a must-read for appreciating how the great Mississippi and Atchafalaya rivers continue to shape and define Louisiana's distinct history, culture, and sense of place. --Southern Living

About the Author

Richard Sexton is a noted photographer and author of books on architecture, design, urbanism, and the natural landscape. He is equally known for his fine art photographs held in museums, private collections, and galleries. His work has been published in numerous magazines in the United States and Europe.

Randy Harelson is an artist, writer, horticulturist, and educator originally from Baton Rouge, Louisiana. He has lived in New Roads since 2006.

Brian Costello's family has called Pointe Coupee home through eleven generations. He is the author of A History of Pointe Coupee Parish, Louisiana and seventeen other books. The founding archivist of the Historical Materials Collection at the Pointe Coupee Parish Library, he lives on False River with his wife, Mary.

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