

Southern Historical Association

Review

Reviewed Work(s): *Madaline: Love and Survival in Antebellum New Orleans* by Dell Upton

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styles ranging from French colonial to modern. The author's clear prose and the large number of illustrations produce an exemplary handbook for novice and expert alike.

Mindful of history, Heard traces the original core of New Orleans from its roots in eighteenth-century French styles adapted to a humid, rainy climate, through its Spanish transformation (largely due to the disastrous fires of 1788 and 1794), which contributed flat roofs, brick, and stucco. After 1803, American forms blended with this creole base, producing more compartmentalized, yet distinctly New Orleanian, structures.

Aided by a remarkable range of photographs drawn largely from Tulane's Southeastern Architectural Archive, Heard portrays the French Quarter as a living entity, one that shapes people's lives even as people shape it. The influence of spatial arrangements is apparent in such architectural features as balconies and carriageways, "in-between spaces" (p. 82) that encourage social interactions as well as the ever-present "street theater" (p. 11). The changing functions of the courtyard, on the other hand, show the imprint of human intervention. The working courtyard, shown with hanging laundry, contrasts with today's leisure courtyard of tropical plants and picturesque fountains.

In keeping with this social interpretation of architecture, the author ends with a critique of the often conservative practices of well-meaning preservationists. The Vieux Carré Commission, which controls architectural changes in the historic district, essentially freezes the French Quarter in its early-twentieth-century form, ignoring the neighborhood's past ability to incorporate a variety of building types and styles to create a distinct, livable locale. Heard offers a "modest prescription" for what he views as an unhealthy stasis: allow new construction in modern styles that is appropriate in scale and spirit. This proposal seems reasonable enough, but what is appropriate for some is anathema to others and sure to produce battles.

In short, this attractive book (it will no doubt end up on many coffee tables) is a superb study of the buildings of one of America's most important historic neighborhoods, but it also serves a much broader purpose, reminding us of the potential of the architectural record to enhance our understanding of past lives.

New Orleans, Louisiana

KAREN LEATHEM

Madaline: Love and Survival in Antebellum New Orleans. Edited by Dell Upton. (Athens, Ga., and London: University of Georgia Press, c. 1996. Pp. xviii, 366. \$29.95, ISBN 0-8203-1758-6.)

Madaline Edwards, whose writings have been collected and edited by Dell Upton, was a woman who fit uneasily into the categories of nineteenth-century southern social life. She was a parentless child and a husbandless woman in a society organized around domestic patriarchy, a kept white woman in a society based on black slavery, and a devoted companion to a man who spent a great deal of his time pretending that she did not exist. By collecting the diary entries, prose, and poetry that Edwards wrote while living as a so-called kept woman between 1843 and 1847, Upton offers historians a remarkable view into one woman's effort to write herself into existence.

Madaline Edwards was born in Tennessee in 1816 and, following the dissolution of her parents' marriage, grew up in the prosperous household of one of her uncles. As Upton's introduction suggests, her later writings indicate that Edwards was initially encouraged to develop the feminine accomplishments that distinguished women of her class—reading, music appreciation, and perhaps the painting and sewing that she would use to support herself when she fell on harder times. After two broken marriages and a shadowy scandal that left her permanently estranged from her family, Edwards ended up on her own in New Orleans where she met Charles Bradbury, a married man whose work in banking, insurance, and real estate enabled him to maintain his own household as well as one where he could visit Edwards. It is from the period of her connection with Bradbury that Edwards's surviving writings date and, with a final angry exchange between the erstwhile lovers in 1847, that they end.

In her essays and poetry, some of which were published in the New Orleans *Native American*, Edwards recorded her ideas about religion and the sermons she heard in the Congregational church, about the proper roles of men and women, and about national politics, especially the annexation of Texas, of which she wholly approved. In her diaries she described her feelings of gratitude toward Bradbury when he treated her well and her loneliness when he did not, her hopes for the child she believed she was carrying during a thirteen-month false pregnancy, and her efforts to piece together an income from painting and sewing and the "gifts" she received from Bradbury.

Upton's terrific introduction to *Madaline* highlights the major themes of Edwards's writing and emphasizes the creativity of her struggle to use the rigorously conventional terms of antebellum southern culture and Christianity to make sense of her own unconventional life. The book should prove especially useful to students of nineteenth-century religion, who will profit from its firsthand accounting of one congregant's reception of her minister's preaching; to students of nineteenth-century gender and sexuality, who might learn as much from Edwards's silences about sexuality as from her outpourings of feeling for Bradbury; and to students of nineteenth-century women writers and artists, for whom Edwards is an example of a woman working to survive in a society in which she had no conventional role.

New York University

WALTER JOHNSON

Half Sisters of History: Southern Women and the American Past. Edited by Catherine Clinton. (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1994. Pp. xii, 239. Paper, \$15.95, ISBN 0-8223-1496-7; cloth, \$44.00, ISBN 0-8223-1483-5.)

Catherine Clinton has provided students of southern women's history with a useful collection of ten previously published articles in a volume designed for classroom use. Arranged chronologically from the Revolution (Jacqueline Jones, "Race, Sex, and Self-Evident Truths") through an essay on black power and feminism (Sara Evans, "Black Power: Catalyst for Feminism"), the articles