



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

Randy Harelson

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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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