



Queen of the South: New Orleans, 1853-1862

Thomas K. Wharton

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"Queen of the South is a selected edition of the journal of Thomas Kelah Wharton, superintendent of construction for the New Orleans Custom House. His journal entries tell the story of daily life in antebellum New Orleans from 1853 to the outbreak of the Civil War.

For nine years, Wharton faithfully recorded and sketched in his journal contemporary reports on epidemics, luxurious Mississippi River steamboats, thundering sermons, society balls, moneymaking, architecture, and such technological breakthroughs as gaslights and piped river water.

He loved the city like a native even during the scorching heat of its six-month summers. Wharton wrote about an extraordinary time in the city's history, a time when fortunes were made and multiplied, the population doubled and redoubled, mansions and grand hotels were built, yellow fever raged, and armed men took to the streets during elections. It was a time of splendor and prosperity for New Orleans, a true golden age that ended abruptly with the outbreak of the Civil War and the capture of the city by the Union fleet. It was the end of an era. *Queen of the South* invites the reader to walk the unpaved streets of nineteenth-century New Orleans, to marvel at a white Lamarque rose blooming in winter, to pass doors adorned with crepe for yellow-fever victims, and to look downriver at Federal ships approaching to claim the city.

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