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Book Review: The Booklover's Guide to New Orleans

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BOOK REVIEWS



The Booklover's Guide to New Orleans. Larson, Susan. Baton Rouge, LA: LSU Press, 2013. 249 pages. ISBN 978-0-8071-5307-9 (Paperback). \$24.95.

Former book editor of the *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, Susan Larson now hosts a WWNO public radio program. She supports and shares New Orleans literary heritage as presented in *The Booklover's Guide to New Orleans*, which is an updated version of her 1999 edition.

When I think of New Orleans I think of fantastic food, art, and music. A unique city, rich in cultural heritage, the draw of the French Quarter beckons visitors from all over the world. Larson offers a new look at the city – beyond the allure of the French Quarter – with her literary and historical tour of the Big Easy.

The Booklover's Guide to New Orleans begins with a brief history of the Crescent City from 1718 to present and its

effect on the literary community. Larson includes lists of books by New Orleans natives and on topics that relate to all things New Orleans. Her lists include a wide variety of literature including poetry, children's books, cook books, sports, fiction and a section on material related to Hurricane Katrina. Some of the authors listed include Ellen DeGeneres, Zora Neale Hurston, Emeril Lagasse and Truman Capote. There are numerous illustrations of famous authors and artists in New Orleans, places where they lived, or places that played an important part in New Orleans history. Larson also brings attention to stores, festivals and the many bookstores and publishers of the last two centuries that were based in the City. If you are a literary buff and ever wondered where in the Garden District Anne Rice lived, you can find out in this book. Did you know the most famous streetcar Desire once ran through the streets of the Crescent City? William Faulkner lived in New Orleans for a few years, which served as inspiration for several novels. The Hotel Monteleone, in the French Quarter, has been frequented by literary greats such as Tennessee Williams, Eudora Welty and Earnest Hemingway. Did you know that the Old Ursuline Convent, built in 1745 is the oldest building in New Orleans, or that the Crescent City was home for a while to Kate Chopin Homes author of *The Awakening*? Many more interesting snippets of New Orleans' literary history are contained within this work.

Susan Larson has loaded this book with a unique historical look at literature in New Orleans, and a lot of little known facts about literary giants, as well as those lesser known authors. *The Booklover's Guide to New Orleans* is recommended for public or academic libraries with an interest in Southern and New Orleans history or literature, or anyone looking for an interesting new guide to the Big Easy.

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