

Tulane professor pens scholarly book on Bourbon Street

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Richard Campanella's new book, *Bourbon Street: A History*, is the first truly scholarly work about the French Quarter street that has become for millions worldwide a symbol—?for better or worse—?of the culture of New Orleans.

[Campanella](#), a Tulane School of Architecture professor, traces the history of Bourbon Street starting with the surveying of the city's street plan and following its evolution from a quiet residential thoroughfare to the object of heated [controversies](#) about local culture and the images that New Orleans ought to project.

"The first inflection point in Bourbon Street's trajectory from normalcy to deviancy occurred in the 1860s, on the heels of the Civil War," explains Campanella, "when middle- and upper-class residents departed the inner city and elements of the nocturnal entertainment scene established themselves in and around the upper French Quarter."

Then with the closure of Storyville in 1917, the nighttime scene began to shift back toward Bourbon Street. "Bourbon seized it by landing one of the first modern "nightclubs," Maxime's, which welcomed couples and parlayed perfectly into the "dating" and speakeasy scene of the 1920s Prohibition Era," Campanella says.

"The third major inflection point was World War II, when millions of war workers and troops transited through New Orleans and gravitated to the cluster of bars and clubs that had gathered on Bourbon," according to Campanella. "After WWII, Bourbon gained—and kept—national fame, and increasingly, local infamy."

"I'm intrigued that people either love or hate Bourbon Street," Campanella says. "I hope that readers come to discover, as I did, that there are some fascinating—and in my mind, vindicating, aspects—to Bourbon Street. *Places Journal* recently published an [excerpt](#) from my book, a chapter entitled "Hating Bourbon Street." In

the various tweets that circulated in response, one person wrote, "Didn't think anyone could ever sway my disdain for Bourbon Street, but @nolacampanella has managed to." I liked that."