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## INTO THE BIG LEAGUE

### Conventions, Football, and the Color Line in New Orleans

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This article examines the relationship between the struggle for African American civil rights and efforts to expand tourism, conventions, and spectator sports in New Orleans, Louisiana, between 1954 and 1969. Drawing on previously neglected archival sources and personal interviews, it considers how the pressure to maintain New Orleans's progressive image as an urbane tourist destination required abandoning Jim Crow customs and embracing the growing national commitment to racial progress. It argues that an unlikely coalition of civil rights activists, tourism interests, municipal officials, and a small segment of New Orleans's old-line social establishment adopted a tourism-related rhetoric to counter the city's dominant discourses of racist resistance to change. By the late 1960s, New Orleans's white leaders agreed that they could no longer countenance overt racial discrimination if New Orleans was to maintain a favorable tourist image.

*Keywords:* tourism; civil rights; New Orleans; professional sports; race relations

**New Orleans had long appealed** to the white traveler in search of the romance of the South. Shaded by moss-draped live oaks, laced with black iron galleries, and lighted by flickering gas lamps, the Crescent City's historic homes conjured in tourists' minds vivid pictures of the Old South's greatest city. The pageantry of Mardi Gras and profligacy of Bourbon Street, combined with the strains of jazz and the aroma of simmering Creole food wafting through the languid air, completed the city's romantic but gritty image. African American cultural contributions underlay most aspects of the tourist experience in New Orleans, but in the French Quarter, white promoters cast blacks merely as supporting actors who furnished service and amusement in a tourist-oriented tableau. Blacks cooked famed Creole delicacies in French Quarter restaurants, sold pralines in the French Market, carried flambeaux in night

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parades, threw coconuts from the Zulu floats, blew horns for second-line processions, conjured spells in voodoo demonstrations, and drove mule-drawn tour buggies around Jackson Square. It would not be a stretch to argue that New Orleans's distinctive tourist image, right down to the bricks and mortar of the celebrated French Quarter, was built on the backs of African slaves and their descendants.

Ironically, while much of the city's peculiar charm sprang from Afro-Caribbean roots, blacks were seldom beneficiaries of their own contributions. On the eve of World War II, even the recognition of jazz had largely abandoned the art form's originators. The Crescent City painstakingly tended its image as a genteel, cosmopolitan city while clinging tenaciously to segregation. For many years, white New Orleanians could afford the luxury of racial proscription without worrying about the loss of tourist dollars. Even in the 1950s, when many northerners began to question Jim Crow practices, New Orleans easily held on to old ways because its tourist trade continued to cater primarily to white southerners. As late as World War II, the modern tourism industry was in its infancy. With its balmy climate, rich cultural heritage, celebrated hedonism, and flamboyant Mardi Gras, New Orleans could bank on a steady influx of tourists with only scant inducement. However, after the war, leisure travel and the convention business quickly gathered momentum, and no city could afford not to compete for its share of the trade. As black civil rights moved to center stage in the postwar years, it gradually became essential to drop Jim Crow practices to maintain a progressive image. Conventions and professional sports teams, increasingly coveted by cities seeking to enter the "big league," could go wherever their backers wished, and by the 1960s, an increasing number blacklisted cities that failed to integrate racially.

Historians have seldom addressed the role of the tourism, conventions, and spectator sports in exerting pressure on cities to desegregate public accommodations.<sup>1</sup> Throughout the nation, black activism and federal legislation ultimately delivered American cities from Jim Crow. In New Orleans, the desire to develop the tourist and convention trade and professional football also played an important role in conditioning white political and business circles, making them more receptive to increasingly resolute demands from African American civil rights leaders once it became clear that segregation was hurting the city's national image.<sup>2</sup> To a greater extent than in most cities, then, the Crescent City's effort to impress visitors colored the struggle over accommodations. This article considers the interrelationship between concern over national image and the black struggle for equal access to public accommodations, schools, and jobs, demonstrating not only tourism's impact on the direction of racial change but also the importance of that change to the continued vitality of what was on its way to becoming the city's leading industry.<sup>3</sup>

### NURTURING NATIONAL IMAGE IN A SEGREGATED CITY

In New Orleans, where blacks had constituted a majority in the early nineteenth century and had since fallen to much lower levels for several decades, the Second World War brought a new upsurge in the city's black population. The pull of bustling war industries and the centripetal effects of agricultural mechanization in the rural Deep South converged to push the Crescent City's black population from less than one-third of the total in 1940 to nearly half by 1970. The rising black population meant that by the latter date, the city's politicians had to grapple with black voting power and could no longer deny demands for legal equality.<sup>4</sup>

Prior to the 1960s, however, New Orleans's leaders contented themselves with reaping the benefits that arose naturally from the city's being both a well-situated seaport and a rich repository of history, food, music, and illicit pleasures. For many years, the "City that Care Forgot" filled its hotels and famous restaurants with tourists and conventioners with only minimal promotional efforts. Commercial interests flocked to its river wharves for the simple reason that the Mississippi River was there. Natural advantages bred a certain degree of complacency among the city's leaders. Even when World War II and the subsequent election of progressive mayor deLesseps S. ("Chep") Morrison ushered in a decade of aggressive international trade promotion and massive infrastructure improvements such as new ship terminals, roads, bridges, an international airport, and a central train station, the city's establishment remained firmly entrenched and self-satisfied.<sup>5</sup>

Reliance on shipping and tourism as the two chief pillars of the urban economy proved highly compatible with the maintenance of the social status quo in New Orleans. Jim Crow customs—mostly unwritten but widely understood—and the city's long-standing effort to attract white visitors dictated strict racial separation in tourist facilities and attractions. Mayor Morrison explained the city's segregated public accommodations to a prospective tourist in 1948: "These laws are an outgrowth of unfortunate experiences during and after the Reconstruction Era, and are deemed advisable by most Southerners in order to prevent conditions leading to racial intermarriage."<sup>6</sup>

Especially before the city began to open up in the 1960s and to a lesser extent for many years thereafter, black tourists experienced New Orleans very differently than did whites. While whites flocked to the world-famous French Quarter, most blacks had no interest in going to what they viewed as a white attraction or did not wish to risk harassment by the New Orleans police. For the local black community, the Vieux Carré was a place where blacks worked as cooks, dishwashers, porters, bellhops, musicians, and domestics—not a place to spend leisure time.<sup>7</sup> The epicenter of black entertainment and leisure lay beyond the periphery of the French Quarter, where Orleans and North Claiborne avenues crossed in the city's rough and tumble Sixth Ward.<sup>8</sup>

Prior to the 1960s, many African Americans found it too expensive, unpleasant, and even dangerous to take vacations, particularly in the Deep South. Unless one could afford to take the train, it was necessary to drive through some of the most racially intolerant areas in the United States. One could reach “America’s Most Interesting City,” which lay in the midst of swamps, bayous, and lakes, only by passing through the Delta or Piney Woods sections of Louisiana and Mississippi, where it was exceedingly difficult to find roadside services catering to blacks but all too easy to find mean-spirited whites. Under such circumstances, most blacks who traveled to New Orleans did so to visit family and friends. The dearth of hotels catering to blacks reflects the tendency of sojourning African Americans to stay either with family or friends or in rooming houses.<sup>9</sup>

The Crescent City even posed problems for visiting African dignitaries, whose position barely won them any special dispensations in a city trained to view people as either white or black. In June 1954, just weeks after the U.S. Supreme Court’s *Brown v. Board of Education* decision to force school desegregation, the visit of Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie and his all-black official delegation to New Orleans presented Mayor Morrison with a delicate situation. The Roosevelt Hotel (now the Fairmont), which billed itself “The Pride of the South,” agreed to lodge Selassie and his entourage but vehemently refused to allow the black officials to enter the hotel’s bar, restaurant, or Blue Room supper club. City leaders kept the visitors occupied on a harbor cruise and at dinners and receptions so they would not have time to see the ugly face of the city’s racial prejudice. Morrison’s public relations director personally sat in the Roosevelt lobby one night until 3 A.M. to see whether the Selassie party would attempt to venture into the French Quarter, where they surely would have faced overt discrimination. Municipal leaders operated under extreme pressure, trying to invite leading local black citizens but not so many that white leaders would be offended. In the end, both blacks and whites were offended. In the wake of the difficult balancing act, the Morrison administration emerged not with a realization that the city’s public accommodations should be open to all but instead with a great reluctance to invite black luminaries in the future. The time had not yet arrived when concerns over the city’s image could facilitate social change.<sup>10</sup>

The controversy over school desegregation and the influx of rural blacks in the postwar years contributed to the breakdown of the mitigating effects of interracial permissiveness on the absoluteness of Jim Crow custom in New Orleans. Between 1954 and 1956, following the *Brown* decision, bitter Southern politicians defiantly passed many draconian race statutes that further codified long-standing de facto Jim Crow customs.<sup>11</sup> In a reactionary show of massive resistance to what they deemed federal meddling, Louisiana legislators ratified twenty-three new constitutional amendments in December 1954, including measures that made black voter registration more difficult and proscribed civil servants who associated with any organization that advocated

racial equity, such as the Urban League or the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). African Americans found the July 1956 statute forbidding race mixing in social and sporting events particularly offensive. Effectively barring all interracial contact in any form of public accommodations, this law portended far-reaching, ill consequences for New Orleans, a city with a cosmopolitan, open tourist image to uphold.<sup>12</sup>

The segregationist measure put a crimp in the city's budding jazz revival by barring the long-standing practice of black and white musicians sharing the stage in the city's bars and clubs. When enforcing the Jim Crow law against integrated bands, New Orleans policemen concentrated on the French Quarter, the area most visible to white natives and tourists. In January 1957, they arrested black trumpeter Ernest "Punch" Miller and five other men, both black and white, allegedly for disturbing the peace following a performance at a Quarter bar. When they appeared in court, the judge dismissed the case and warned the black jazzmen, "Don't mix your cream with your coffee."<sup>13</sup> African American trumpeter and New Orleans native Louis Armstrong, whose sextet included blacks, whites, and a Hawaiian of Filipino extraction, scorned the 1956 law and vowed not to perform in his hometown until the state repealed it. The musician, who had boarded a northbound Illinois Central passenger train for a Chicago-based jazz career in 1922, lamented, "They treat me better all over the world than they do in my own hometown—that even includes Mississippi."<sup>14</sup>

The law also gave license to police raids of bars and clubs that welcomed a mixed clientele. While African Americans usually preferred not to venture into the French Quarter's nightspots, where they were clearly unwelcome, some of the more intrepid white tourists journeyed to black clubs in dilapidated wards beyond the tidy precincts of the Vieux Carré. There they hoped to experience New Orleans entertainment in a less programmed setting.<sup>15</sup> They flocked to the Dew Drop Inn and the Snowflake to catch jazz gigs, or to the Caldonia Club, where drag queens danced on the bar under purple lights.<sup>16</sup> By the latter half of the 1950s, they risked arrest for straying across the color line, although the periodic raids in black neighborhoods still left more room for interracial contact than was possible under authorities' watchful eye in the Quarter. In one of the more notorious raids, the New Orleans Police Department bagged Hollywood actor Zachary Scott and his party at the Dew Drop.<sup>17</sup>

More injurious to New Orleans promoters' hopes of expanding the city's tourist trade was the new law that banned all interracial contact at Louisiana sporting events, affecting both athletes and spectators. Of particular concern was the city's Mid-Winter Sports Carnival, whose Sugar Bowl football match ranked second only to Mardi Gras among the city's special events in the number of visitors it attracted. In the two decades since its 1934 inception, the Sugar Bowl had become one of the nation's leading intercollegiate postseason football games.<sup>18</sup>

The opening salvo of racial contention surrounding the Sugar Bowl was fired several months before the state legislature launched its legal barrage. In late 1955, the Mid-Winter Sports Association (MWSA) invited the University of Pittsburgh and Georgia Tech to square off in the New Year's gridiron battle. In the interest of economic gain, the organization prepared to accommodate Pittsburgh's one black player and even allowed the university to sell its share of tickets on a nonsegregated basis. When Georgia Governor Marvin Griffin attempted to bar Georgia Tech from participating in the "integrated" game, the University System of Georgia's Board of Regents upheld Tech's Sugar Bowl bid but agreed to bar all future participation by state-supported schools in integrated sporting events.<sup>19</sup>

Conservative Sugar Bowl backers raised no organized outcry against the mixed sports ban until it was essentially too late. After both houses of the Louisiana legislature voted to bar interracial sporting events, however, the MWSA made a frenzied effort to persuade Governor Earl K. Long to veto the bill. Like his brother Huey, Earl relished any opportunity to stick it to the Crescent City. The bowl leaders noted that the stands had always been segregated according to custom and needed no help from the state. They urged Long to give "serious consideration" to the bill's effect on the state economy, but the governor signed the measure.<sup>20</sup> The chamber of commerce also failed to provide any voice of moderation that might have countered the racist maneuvers of Baton Rouge politicians. Beset by internal disagreement, the chamber failed to take an official stance on the issue. After affirming his belief in segregation, New Orleans Hotel Association president E. Lysle Aschaffenburg told fellow chamber members that New Orleans should show some respect for how the rest of the nation saw the race issue, if only to salvage the city's tourist economy. Reminding his colleagues that the U.S. Naval Academy had already cancelled its football game against Tulane, Aschaffenburg urged them to write Governor Long in lieu of an apparently unlikely unified chamber response.<sup>21</sup> In the wake of the statute's passage, Sugar Bowl officials allocated a paltry seventy-five seats to African Americans in the eighty-two-thousand-seat Tulane Stadium.

The MWSA's sluggish response to the quickening of racial proscription in Louisiana reflected the long-standing social and economic conservatism of the city's blue bloods.<sup>22</sup> Whites and blacks had historically lived in close proximity to one another in New Orleans. The checkerboard residential pattern resulted from the confinement of development to the narrow stretch of high ground near the river as well as from a gradual subdivision of plantations and estates in the nineteenth century. Slaves' and servants' quarters had stood very close to the homes of the city's elite, and the two races continued to live near each other well into the twentieth century. In the absence of physical separation by race and class, prominent New Orleans families carved out a realm of privilege revolving around preferred schools, churches, social clubs, and especially Carnival organizations. Cloistered in mansions surrounded by manicured lawns

on oak- and palm-lined boulevards in the city's Uptown section, the Carnival elite were comfortable with fortunes amassed by their ancestors in shipping, freight forwarding, cotton brokering, warehousing, and plantation agriculture. Many had by the twentieth century moved into key positions of influence in law and high finance and formed an interlocking directorate on the boards of such powerful entities as Whitney National Bank, New Orleans Public Service, Inc., the New Orleans Dock Board, and the chamber of commerce. From their lofty perch, these men exercised an inordinate degree of control over the city's economic direction. With the exception of a handful of civic-minded and progressive individuals such as Darwin S. Fenner, president of the local Merrill-Lynch brokerage, and Richard W. Freeman, president of the local Coca-Cola Bottling Company, most of the old elite quietly supported the conservation of their own static, privileged position in New Orleans society.

Into the leadership void left by a generally complacent, self-satisfied elite rushed those New Orleanians who had little stake in integrating their city into the national economy. Such men often belonged to the Citizens' Council of Greater New Orleans, an outspoken branch of the segregationist Jackson, Mississippi-based Citizens' Councils of America that exerted considerable pressure against racial progress as late as the early 1960s. This umbrella organization had sprung from the original Citizens' Council, formed in 1955 in Sunflower County, Mississippi, as a vehicle of massive resistance to the *Brown* decision. In New Orleans, the Citizens' Council strongholds lay in the city's newer middle-class districts such as Metairie, Lakeview, and Gentilly that had risen from the drained swampland abutting Lake Pontchartrain. The Citizens' Council strove to influence municipal government officials, who were torn between maintaining racial customs and opening the city to national influences.<sup>23</sup>

### TRADITION VERSUS IMAGE IN THE CIVIL RIGHTS STRUGGLE

While more moderate municipal and business leaders already understood that New Orleans could not retain a nineteenth-century racial order and still fulfill its aspirations to expand commercial activity and the tourist trade, only gradually did they begin to invoke a protourism, probusiness rhetoric in opposition to the more rabid white supremacy manifested by the Citizens' Council. A series of events in the 1960s slowly galvanized an unlikely coalition of black civil rights leaders, city officials, tourism interests, exceptional members of the old elite, and a rising, restless business class drawn from outside the old establishment.<sup>24</sup>

In the postwar years, a burgeoning international tourist trade suddenly made it essential to work to maintain New Orleans's enviable position in the face of rapidly growing competition. As the American racial climate transformed in the postwar decades, it became increasingly important to embrace change to



avoid being labeled backward. The events of the 1960s unfolded in an increasingly tourism-conscious milieu in New Orleans, one that affected the complexion of the race issue.<sup>25</sup>

On November 14, 1960, as little Ruby Bridges walked to the William Frantz School, one of the two initial New Orleans schools chosen for token integration, angry white women, some holding small children, spewed invectives and hurled rotten eggs. The white crowd, whom local writer Harnett T. Kane seemingly hoped came from rural Mississippi rather than his beloved New Orleans, shouted, “Two, four, six, eight, we don’t want to integrate!” and “Glory, glory, segregation” to the tune of the *Battle Hymn of the Republic*. Although New Orleans police arrived by midmorning, they made no concerted effort to disperse the hate-filled mob.<sup>26</sup> Day after day, the jeering and occasional violence persisted.

As the days became shorter with the onset of another mild South Louisiana winter, it became apparent that the city’s people were of several minds regarding the disorder. The city’s old elite, including its unofficial mouthpiece, the *Times-Picayune*, provided little direction. As corporate attorney Harry B. Kelleher later recalled, the New Orleans uptown Carnival establishment remained mostly silent as a segregationist governor and legislature in Baton Rouge and a recalcitrant local Citizens’ Council dominated white discourse.<sup>27</sup> Leander Perez, the ruthless political *caudillo* who in effect ruled neighboring Plaquemines and St. Bernard parishes as kingdoms of white supremacy, provided a stark contrast to New Orleans’s carefully cultivated image as a permissive, tolerant, fun-loving, European-minded city. While more responsible leaders kept silent, Perez struck fear into a dutiful, pro-segregation crowd, estimated between sixty-five hundred and eight thousand, that assembled in the city-owned Municipal Auditorium on November 15. Following a skit in which several white children—some in blackface—kissed and hugged each other to suggest the interracial trysts that were sure to follow integration, Perez raised the crowd to a fever pitch when he bellowed, “Don’t wait for your daughter to be raped by these Congolese. Don’t wait until the burr-heads are forced into your schools. Do something now!” The next day a mob of some two thousand white youths roamed the downtown streets, attacking blacks and throwing bottles, forcing the fire department to turn fire hoses on them and leading to about two hundred arrests.<sup>28</sup>

However, those New Orleanians with interests inextricably tied to the city’s favorable national image, including Mayor Morrison, tourism leaders, and some other observant business leaders, began to see the maintenance of law and order as more critical than upholding racial apartheid. They feared that the Crescent City would become another Little Rock in the national mind. Following the street violence, Morrison appeared on television and warned that rioting would kill New Orleans’s reputation.<sup>29</sup> Indeed, New Orleans received horrendous publicity in the two months following “D-Day.” *Time*, *Life*, *Newsweek*, the *New York Times*, major television networks, the wire services,

and a host of other national media descended upon the city, which, one observer said, with a considerable dose of hyperbole, appeared ripe for something on the order of a “South American revolution.”<sup>30</sup> Morrison called the national press outside agitators and even accused them of staging the ongoing standoff outside the Frantz School. The mayor made a personal appeal to a visiting *New York Times* correspondent to call for a moratorium on unfavorable press coverage of the Crescent City because it created the “impression” that “New Orleans is a sea of turmoil and violence.” He complained that the city was “suffering completely without fault on our part” and claimed to have received more than one thousand letters and telegrams about the situation, of which “no more than one dozen are unfavorable.”<sup>31</sup>

Contrary to Morrison’s claims, numerous angry letters from around the United States and Canada flooded the mayor’s office in November and December 1960. A number of would-be tourists claimed they had reconsidered their plans to visit the city, some out of fear and others out of indignation. One Missouri physician wrote that never again would he vote that a medical convention be held in New Orleans.<sup>32</sup> A number of writers called attention to the disparity between the city’s gracious image and the reality of pervasive bigotry.<sup>33</sup> Others wrote that New Orleans’s brutal excesses would become fodder for Soviet and Cuban propaganda mills.<sup>34</sup> In Morrison’s form letter response to the letters his office received, he emphasized that fewer than 100 of the city’s 627,525 residents had taken part in the hostility, but clearly their actions reflected a much more widespread mentality.<sup>35</sup>

A few responsible voices made themselves heard over the strident chorus of intolerance. On December 14, 105 leading business and professional men signed a full-page advertisement in the *Times-Picayune* calling for a change in local attitudes toward integration. Tellingly, only Darwin S. Fenner and a very few others from the city’s Carnival elite signed the manifesto. A week later, the Greater New Orleans Tourist and Convention Commission issued a statement that urged restraint and care to safeguard the economic benefits of tourism.<sup>36</sup>

The ample publicity produced direct, negative consequences for New Orleans. The hotel and restaurant trade reflected the national backlash, with November sales tumbling more than 30 percent below those of the previous November. Maison Blanche department store on Canal Street reported a nearly 40 percent drop, and even Bourbon Street business and taxicab fares sagged. During the week preceding the Sugar Bowl game, a number of French Quarter restaurants reported empty tables, and hotels still had vacancies.<sup>37</sup> One swamp tour operator warned that the tourism business was suffering and noted that he had heard a national radio bulletin urging that Mardi Gras visitors exercise caution because a minor incident could trigger a “bloody race riot.”<sup>38</sup> As Mardi Gras neared, Morrison penned a letter to the editor of the *New York Herald Tribune* in which he promised that visitors would find New Orleans the same “traditionally hospitable, courteous and charming city,” but the celebration that followed appeared muted in comparison with previous years.<sup>39</sup> The ill effects

of the school crisis lingered through 1961. One prominent New Orleans hotelier told Victor Schiro, Morrison's protégé and successor as mayor, that during his extensive travels in the summer of 1961, he detected a sea change in attitudes toward the city. Whereas in the past the mere mention of New Orleans "worked like magic," he wrote, "now I find that everywhere I go I am on the defensive and the great image that New Orleans projected everywhere has certainly been badly hurt."<sup>40</sup>

After a tidal wave of negative publicity surrounding the school desegregation crisis in the fall of 1960, municipal leaders became very protective of the city's wounded urbane image. Indeed, the bitter memory of the school crisis remained fresh in their minds for years. When NBC's *TODAY* show contacted the chamber of commerce in 1963 about its plans to film a week's worth of programs in New Orleans during the Mardi Gras celebration, New Orleans business leaders expressed mixed feelings. The editor of the *Times-Picayune* remarked to the chamber president,

You may remember that in 1960 NBC covered the "demonstrations" when several schools were desegregated in a way which some of our citizens considered gave a distorted picture of the real situation in New Orleans and seriously damaged the good name of the city.

He suggested that the chamber should think twice before offering any assistance to *TODAY*.<sup>41</sup>

The chamber understood that the television program also had the potential to encourage would-be tourists to visit New Orleans. The example of Key West, Florida, remained fresh in officials' minds. One month earlier, in the midst of the Cuban missile crisis, the Florida Keys appeared destined for one of its worst tourist seasons. After *TODAY* broadcast from Key West, with the close assistance of the chamber of commerce, municipal and state leaders, and the Florida Development Commission, the town enjoyed a sudden resurgence of tourist interest.<sup>42</sup> Accordingly, the New Orleans chamber embraced the show and implored NBC producers to focus on the city "from a business and tourist standpoint" and to avoid any mention of the racial situation. It allocated to NBC thirty thousand dollars raised from members, local utilities, downtown merchants, and tourist businesses.<sup>43</sup>

The careful, behind-the-scenes negotiations between the city's establishment leaders and NBC producers to portray New Orleans as the city of Carnival, food and music, French heritage, and gracious Old South homes did not sit well with African American civil rights activists. Black leaders learned to employ a rhetoric of tourism in their efforts to end segregation in New Orleans. One wrote *TODAY* anchor Hugh Downs, deploring the show's neglect of the Crescent City's jazz tradition and reminding him that blacks could not join whites in the city's leading restaurants, hotels, movie theaters, and Carnival balls. "Are you aware," he inquired,

that the *Today* program is being used as part of the Great Whitewash of the South; that it is being used to propagandize the Great Myth of New Orleans as a Cosmopolitan City when actually it is a city with a wall separating freedom and liberty from tyranny and despotism which is thicker and higher than the Berlin Wall?<sup>44</sup>

Amid the wrangling over the city's image in the three years after the school crisis, civil rights activists busied themselves struggling to erase the color line in other public accommodations. Although much of this activism initially focused on lunch counters, these early struggles helped set up an atmosphere of impatience with the status quo that led to subsequent efforts to desegregate more tourist-oriented facilities. More immediately, they also led both sides to claim, for different reasons, that the sit-ins would damage the local tourist trade. Following the student sit-in demonstrations in Greensboro, North Carolina's downtown lunch counters, collegians staged the first New Orleans sit-in on September 9, 1960, at F. W. Woolworth at the corner of Canal and Rampart streets in one corner of the French Quarter. Two of the seven protesters were white, all were members of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), and all either were or had been students at Dillard University, Louisiana State University of New Orleans, Southern University, or Tulane University. After police arrested the students for criminal mischief, another contingent of four expanded the sit-ins to McCrory's five-and-dime store the following day.<sup>45</sup> The sit-ins continued intermittently, and by the end of the following year, store managers had grown very confrontational. At McCrory's, employees dumped mustard, grease, ammonia, and even chocolate all over the counter where the students sat quietly awaiting service. Store-hired thugs even poured unknown solvents over the heads of some demonstrators and burned one activist's CORE cap, while the manager waved a pistol and shouted obscenities.<sup>46</sup>

White reaction to the lunch counter sit-ins in New Orleans did not yet exhibit the rift that became apparent within a couple of years between those who held a stake in the national economy and those who could afford to adhere to prevailing Southern opinion. The Citizens' Council, as usual, provided the shrillest cries against change. Its members vowed to boycott any business that integrated its eating facilities and increase patronage of those that upheld Jim Crow. One of the organization's leaders announced that its members would stage a "paper-bag brigade" by bringing sack lunches in lieu of ordering food at the lunch counters.<sup>47</sup> The Greater New Orleans Citizens' Council even initiated what became known as the "Freedom Rides North" movement, a perverse imitation of CORE's "freedom rides" in which Citizens' Councils in several Southern cities (including Shreveport, Louisiana; Montgomery, Alabama; and Macon, Georgia) offered to buy one-way bus tickets to any Northern city for indigent African Americans who felt unwanted in the South. Although the project probably transported fewer than 250 blacks out of the South, it symbolized the complete disregard of a considerable segment of the city's white population for black economic power and the benefits to be gained by aligning New

Orleans's practices with national ways. And it affixed the ugly emblem of bigotry on the "Paris of the South" in the national eye.<sup>48</sup> WDSU-TV, owned by the liberal-minded Jewish civic leader Edgar B. Stern and a rare voice of responsibility in the local media, berated the idea of "a small band of extremists who are attempting to drag Louisiana back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century."<sup>49</sup>

Another weapon in the Citizens' Council's arsenal was issuing dire warnings that racial mixing would harm the Crescent City's tourist economy. The idea that segregation threatened tourism had not yet taken root among the city's municipal and business establishment. If the school crisis of fall 1960 had pointed to the impact that Jim Crow could have on tourism, that fear centered not upon segregation itself but instead on the prospect of civil disorder. The same mentality continued during the sit-in movement, as chamber of commerce officials bemoaned the bad publicity the city received while thousands of tourists were in town for the Sugar Bowl and considered developing some *modus operandi* for coaxing the press toward stories that depicted the city's "progress."<sup>50</sup> Until city leaders began to view segregation as an impediment to the city's nationalization, white supremacists would continue to find an audience for the notion that Southern indignation made integration bad business. In the midst of the lunch counter sit-ins, Shelby Gillis, a board member of the New Orleans branch of the Citizens' Council, warned that desegregation would create a "great big monster." He told fellow Citizens' Council members that he fully expected blacks to target the city's famed restaurants once they had forced their way into downtown lunch counters. As soon as that happened, he predicted, tourism would decline.<sup>51</sup>

At the request of the NAACP, dominated locally by the city's influential but hardly militant light-skinned creoles of African American descent, CORE agreed reluctantly to suspend sit-ins in favor of negotiations with white merchants beginning in March 1962.<sup>52</sup> After exactly two years of hard-fought campaigns against Canal Street merchants, the New Orleans branch of the NAACP successfully negotiated a settlement with the storeowners, and on September 11, 1962, almost exactly two years after the sit-ins began, some forty stores, including Katz and Besthoff (K&B) drugstores, D. H. Holmes and Maison Blanche department stores, and Woolworth's and McCrory's five-and-dime stores, opened their lunch counters to blacks.<sup>53</sup>

With the city's leading downtown lunch counters desegregated, attention turned to hotels. As late as 1963, the small but powerful New Orleans downtown hotel oligarchy dominated by Seymour Weiss exercised no leadership in helping the Crescent City adapt to evolving national standards. Unwilling to temper his pro-segregation attitude, Weiss told the chamber of commerce that New Orleans's loss of considerable convention business as a result of racial discrimination made it essential that the business community concentrate on attracting more all-white convention groups to the city. In a press interview, he added, "I'm not advocating any change. I'm merely stating the facts as a realist."<sup>54</sup>

New Orleans's effort to attract a National Football League (NFL) expansion team required that the city demonstrate that it could handle players, press, staff, and spectators without regard to race. The NFL remained primarily a northern and western league even in the 1960s. No blacks played in the NFL from 1933 to 1946. The formation in 1944 of two leagues that accepted blacks—the United States Football League (USFL) and the All-America Football Conference (AAFC)—exerted great pressure on the NFL to drop its racial barrier. Miami, Florida, once said to be the most “nazified [*sic*] of all the cities in the world on matters of racial equality,” proved it could handle biracial sports when it started the Seahawks, an AAFC franchise, in 1946.<sup>55</sup> A dozen years later, Houston, Texas, began pursuing a major league baseball team and found that the demands of professional sports necessitated easing Jim Crow restrictions. To win the support of black voters, whose backing was crucial to pass a second bond issue for a state-of-the-art domed stadium plagued by cost overruns, Houston's mayor, Roy Hofheinz, and oil and real estate magnate R. E. Smith negotiated a deal with black leaders to open the facility on an integrated basis in return for their assistance in drumming up black support. The dome integration opened the way for the desegregation of other accommodations, for it quickly became apparent that Houston's leading downtown hotels would need to accept black athletes as guests. Mayor Hofheinz worked with John T. Jones, whose syndicate owned four of Houston's leading convention hotels. Jones not only agreed to desegregate but also brought pressure to bear upon other hoteliers, who also integrated in April 1962 in time for the first Colt .45s (later the Astros) game.<sup>56</sup>

If the promise of professional sports brought the smooth integration of Houston's public accommodations, it did not work the same magic in the Crescent City, where the realization of open access to tourist facilities proved much more gradual and contentious. The domination of the hotel market by a few old establishments, especially the Roosevelt, whose restaurants, parlors, and cocktail lounges had built a stable, loyal clientele of white southerners and local uptown luminaries, made it exceedingly difficult to persuade hoteliers of the potential for future losses if they did not open their properties to all people.<sup>57</sup> One city official warned Mayor Morrison in 1959 that New Orleans needed “more tourist spectator attractions—the road to which is narrowed, if not blocked by the racial law.” He added,

We have champion fighters that have to either fight out of their class here or go out of town. We can't have Major League baseball games, because every Major League baseball club has Negro players. . . . I have just come back from a baseball excursion to Florida where I saw three good games. . . . I saw jai-alai in the Miami Fronton and passed up three dog tracks[,] all of which are doing good business. . . . So, at the moment, I question that it is timely for New Orleans to spend a lot of money, trying to attract tourists in competition with places like Miami . . . until we have more to offer. We are getting the added hotel rooms—now we have to change a law, and then build additional attractions.<sup>58</sup>

In the Crescent City, even sporting events remained segregated one year after rival Houston had integrated both its baseball stadium and its leading hotels.

In 1963, David F. Dixon, a forty-year-old businessman, decided that a professional sports team would confer big-league status on New Orleans, which was by that time sagging economically despite its Sunbelt ambitions. Dixon understood well the potential damage that segregation and bigotry could inflict on New Orleans's football hopes. Dixon's effort grew out of a 1962 American Football League (AFL) exhibition game organized by Jack DeFee and other business leaders and held in City Park Stadium. At that game, which featured the Houston Oilers and the New England Patriots, state regulations confined African American spectators to a small section. Despite the appearance of Billy Cannon, a Heisman winner from Louisiana State University who had signed with the Oilers, attendance proved lackluster.<sup>59</sup>

Believing that New Orleans should attempt to attract an NFL franchise instead, the following year Dixon hired public relations guru David M. Kleck, who suggested that a fully integrated double-header exhibition game played in the prestigious Tulane Stadium would be the best way to curry favor with the NFL. Dixon understood that Tulane would be thwarting the state statute banning all interracial sporting venues. Fearing possible embarrassment to the university and to the city should an ugly racial incident result, Dixon decided to try to get the mixed sports law repealed. After failing to impress upon white attorneys the need to overturn the statute, Dixon and Kleck met with seventy-five black leaders at Peter Claver Hall on Orleans Avenue, including thirty-four-year-old attorney Ernest N. ("Dutch") Morial, an NAACP field secretary and one of the city's most prominent creole leaders. The black leaders were sympathetic but told Dixon they had other priorities. Dixon recalled later that he had eight thousand dollars cash with him that day, and when Morial said he might speed up the process for a two thousand dollar fee, Dixon said he would have to think about it. Wishing to avoid Morial's knowing he had been prepared to pay four times that amount, Dixon retired to a restroom, where he carefully separated two thousand dollars into another pocket of his suit. He returned a few minutes later and paid Morial his requested fee. Morial filed suit in federal district court, resulting in the repeal of the mixed seating ban within three months.<sup>60</sup>

Dixon next had to convince Tulane University's board of administrators to allow the game in the school's stadium. He got William Ford, owner of the Detroit Lions football team, to write a letter to the board, asking them to integrate their stadium and noting that the Ford Foundation—a major source of funding for institutions of higher learning—would look favorably on such an act. The board appeared unlikely to consent until Joseph Merrick Jones and Darwin Fenner stepped forward and suggested that New Orleans would be hopelessly mired in provincialism unless civic leaders took positive steps on the race issue, whereupon the board agreed to sell all tickets on a non-segregated basis. As with other integration coups in public accommodations,

no one announced the decision, but news traveled by word of mouth. The double-header, which pitted the Dallas Cowboys against the Detroit Lions and the Baltimore Colts against the Chicago Bears, was perhaps the most integrated professional football game ever held before or since in the South, with more than 30 percent black attendance. The only tense moments came when a sudden thunderstorm sent fans running for cover beneath the stands. Dixon later recalled,

I had a vision of blacks and whites hammering each other under that overhang, the media reports that would result, the end of my dreams of an NFL franchise. . . . I was so scared I was shaking and I rushed down from the press box to try and stop the carnage. But when I got there, everyone was laughing. They were brought together by their discomfort.

With the city's primary sports venue integrated, the problem of hotels remained to be solved.<sup>61</sup>

The pressure of courting the NFL and the ongoing loss of national conventions to more open cities, coupled with increasingly insistent demands from the city's black activists and even creole elites, began to effect a change in some of New Orleans's more farsighted white leaders. By 1962, Houston, Dallas, and Miami had succeeded in opening their leading convention hotels to blacks, yet Atlanta and New Orleans establishments remained as wholly "unreconstructed" as their counterparts in small Southern towns far removed from the well-worn paths of convention bookings. Three events in particular—two lawsuits against downtown hotels and the loss of one of the nation's most coveted conventions—sped the push for discrimination-free hotels in New Orleans.

In the early 1960s, a loose biracial coalition of leaders began urging the integration of downtown hotels. Creole leaders like Dutch Morial, podiatrist and travel agent Leonard L. Burns, NAACP official Arthur J. Chapital Sr., and Urban League officer Harry Kerns joined Pepsi-Cola Bottling executive and tourist commission president Harry M. England in trying to negotiate an agreement with hoteliers. Burns later recalled speaking with Seymour Weiss, who growled that the Roosevelt would never integrate. Working closely with New Orleans black leaders, Little Rock civil rights activist Daisy Bates attempted in late 1962 to check into the Roosevelt and was told the hotel could not honor the reservations of African Americans. Hiding behind a pillar in the lobby, Burns and Morial overheard the hotel clerk's response, whereupon Morial set out to draft a lawsuit.<sup>62</sup>

Heeding a directive from Washington, D.C., Burns and other leaders decided it might prove more fruitful to delay forcing Weiss's hand and instead exert pressure on New Orleans's few hotels affiliated with national chains, which they reasoned could not afford risking their good name.<sup>63</sup> Daisy Bates next tried to register at the Sheraton-Charles Hotel (formerly the St. Charles),



which also refused her on racial grounds. Morial and other NAACP attorneys soon brought suit against the hotel's parent company, the Sheraton Corporation in New Jersey. Meanwhile, James T. McCain of Sumter, South Carolina, a prominent CORE official, failed to secure a room in the Royal Orleans Hotel in the French Quarter, leading to a separate lawsuit by CORE and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU).<sup>64</sup> The conservative *Times-Picayune* remained silent on hotel segregation until May 1963, when federal judges John Minor Wisdom, Herbert W. Christenberry, and E. Gordon West, considering the cases together, ruled the Louisiana law unconstitutional in *McCain v. Davis*. At first glance a breakthrough, in fact the courts had no jurisdiction over the hotels, leaving the decision whether to integrate up to hotel management.<sup>65</sup>

New Orleans anticipated the arrival of some sixty thousand visitors that September for the American Legion national convention. It was to be the city's first hosting of the convention since 1922. In the spring of 1963, convention planners announced they were considering moving the event elsewhere because of concerns that New Orleans hotels might not accommodate black delegates.<sup>66</sup> Creole civil rights leader Arthur Chapital called on the local American Legion host committee to demand equal treatment of blacks in the city's hotels. Rather than pointing to the demoralizing effect of the accommodations bar against blacks, Chapital invoked a protourism rhetoric, declaring, "We believe that a sincere policy of democracy in action and true [C]hristian fellowship would not only enhance tourism and the image of New Orleans and the American Legion but would benefit the economy of this area."<sup>67</sup>

If New Orleans black leaders were learning to enlist the city's tourist image in their fight for racial equality, white business leaders remained of two minds on whether to sacrifice a generations-old social custom for the economic lift that would accompany the legionnaires for one week in the "City that Care Forgot." Symptomatic of the city's leadership vacuum, no one stepped forward to assure the legionnaires that local hotels would welcome all of them unconditionally. At a chamber of commerce meeting in late April, Joseph W. Simon Jr., president of the chamber, reported having had a telephone conversation concerning the possibility that the Legion might withdraw from the city, but apparently he did little or nothing in response.<sup>68</sup> The federal court ruling in *McCain v. Davis* destroyed whatever chances New Orleans had of retaining the convention. Although the court ruled that the 1956 statute forbidding integration of Louisiana hotels and motels was unconstitutional, it implied that it would not enforce hotel desegregation. Despite chamber of commerce discussion of the imperiled convention as well as ample local press coverage, Mayor Schiro expressed surprise but demonstrated remarkably little concern. "Of course," he added, "the management of our hotels is still a matter of private enterprise and owners of these have their rights."<sup>69</sup>

By the spring of 1963, the slow pace of change accompanying the negotiation strategy of more conservative black and creole leaders incensed CORE members. Pointing to the ongoing problems with lunch counters that were

nominally integrated but often segregated in practice, New Orleans CORE chairman Oretha Castle expressed doubt that negotiations alone could bring true racial integration. In June, she demanded the desegregation of all facilities in municipal buildings within ten days as well as the lifting of the racial bar in hotels, restaurants, and theaters within thirty days, or “we will initiate mass demonstrations in the City of New Orleans.”<sup>70</sup> Although the resumption of demonstrations in the summer focused once again on lunch counters and municipal facilities rather than hotels and other accommodations, perceptive hotel operators, if not city hall, could see that change needed to come quickly.<sup>71</sup>

The cumulative effect of numerous CORE threats, convention cancellations, the court’s ruling against hotel segregation, and the crushing blow dealt by the American Legion persuaded the operators of three downtown hotels to announce they would integrate on September 10, 1963. The Sheraton Corporation and the Hotel Corporation of America, operators of the Sheraton-Charles and the Royal Orleans, respectively, ordered their New Orleans establishments to integrate. Likewise, Arthur Jung broke ranks with the city’s leading locally owned hotels and desegregated the Jung Hotel, then in the midst of an expansion that would make it the largest convention hotel in the Crescent City. Although the desegregation of three leading hotels represented a giant step forward in New Orleans, the hotels still had to abide by a city ordinance that forbade racial mixing in establishments that served alcohol unless they divided their service area with a partition. Thus, for the time being, a hungry African American guest had to venture outside the hotel or order room service. As with the federal court’s ruling earlier that year, the *Times-Picayune* studiously avoided any commentary on the watershed event.<sup>72</sup>

Other leading downtown hotels, including the Roosevelt and the Monteleone, remained committed to segregation. The Roosevelt had built a loyal clientele, especially among southerners, while the Monteleone continued its position as the dominant tourist hotel in the French Quarter. Seymour Weiss did not flinch when the U.S. Department of Defense prohibited active-duty military personnel from participating in sessions of the Adjutants General Association of the United States at the Roosevelt in April 1964. Weiss’s hotel had refused to accommodate Colonel Otho Van Exel, a black delegate from Brooklyn. New York Governor Nelson D. Rockefeller ordered the New York delegation home from New Orleans. Scarcely two weeks later, CORE pressure persuaded the Mississippi Valley World Trade Conference to abandon the Roosevelt for the Jung. Weiss seemed indifferent: “There is a Civil Rights law pending in Washington now. Until it is passed and there is a law that says I must integrate my hotel, I will continue our policy.”<sup>73</sup>

On July 4, 1964, the *Times-Picayune* reported near-total compliance with the Civil Rights Act passed one day earlier. The famous Café du Monde coffee stand in the French Market, along with leading French Quarter restaurants, served its first black patrons.<sup>74</sup> African Americans doubtless approached their newly won freedoms with considerable circumspection. Old habits died hard,

and few blacks ventured into the French Quarter, which they considered a white attraction. Bourbon Street establishments reported business as usual. A waitress at the Paddock Restaurant said she knew of no blacks seeking service in the first week after the enactment of the measure.<sup>75</sup>

Although most establishments in the French Quarter and Central Business District complied with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, New Orleans faced embarrassing compliance problems elsewhere. The local branch of the NAACP filed complaints against the Frostop drive-in hamburger stand chain and Lee's Hamburgers on Tulane Avenue in Mid-City, which continued to display a "This Window for Colored Only" sign.<sup>76</sup> Likewise, Schwegmann Bros. Giant Supermarkets, the city's dominant (and locally owned) grocery chain, resisted change. CORE testers were denied service repeatedly at Schwegmann's lunch counters that summer. While John G. Schwegmann Jr. occasionally promoted the gigantic Gentilly Road store, billed the "World's Largest Supermarket," as a tourist attraction in the local press, he understood clearly that his suburban stores drew primarily local whites. In support of Schwegmann's dogged determination to resist integration, the Citizens' Council took out a large ad in the *States-Item* that urged white patrons to shop the supermarkets and "show these Negroes who really runs the economy."<sup>77</sup>

As long as overt discrimination retreated to "back-of-town" neighborhood restaurants and bars, out of sight of visiting conventioners and tourists, city leaders could claim that New Orleans was on a march to greatness. When prejudice appeared in the city's "front yard," however, officials began to fret. On the mild winter night of January 10, 1965, Tulane Stadium stood empty, awaiting a torrent of fans for the AFL all-star game, an exhibition that Dave Dixon had lured to New Orleans to benefit the New Orleans Police Foundation and, more important, to reinforce the city's claim to the NFL that it had eliminated all racial barriers. Across town, Clem Daniels, a standout black player for the Oakland Raiders, stood with some teammates outside the Roosevelt Hotel, waiting for a taxi to the French Quarter. Although six cabs had lined up along University Place, the street that runs in front of the hotel, the drivers all left their cars to avoid serving the black players. After much frustration, Daniels recalled, "Finally, we stood in the middle of the street and a cab stopped rather than run us down." Upon reaching the famed Bourbon Street, Daniels and his friends found themselves mocked, insulted, and turned away by bouncers. To be sure, Al Hirt's and Pete Fountain's jazz clubs extended a warm welcome to the all-star players. Unlike the seedy Bourbon Street striptease clubs that could rely on the steady patronage of locals, seamen, and men seeking escape from the sexually repressed Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana hinterlands, Hirt and Fountain sought to provide first-rate entertainment for more discriminating tourists. The African American players had an even more difficult time hailing a taxicab back to their hotel. Only one driver even stopped, and he averred that he could not risk arrest for transporting the men several blocks through the heart of the city. The players ended up asking directions and

walking back to the hotel. After hearing the complaints of the twenty-one affected black athletes, the AFL shifted the game to Houston.<sup>78</sup>

Mayor Schiro deplored the football player walkout, which could not have come at a worse time. The New Orleans Pro Football Club was just then ardently courting one of two proposed NFL expansion teams. Dave Dixon expressed dismay at the unfortunate incident and commented that a taxicab driver had given his friend, a San Diego sports writer, a “filthy piece of literature discussing mixed marriages and sordid relations between the races.” Dixon added, “You can imagine the impression that this would make on a visitor to our city.”<sup>79</sup> Seemingly more concerned with stopping the bleeding than with remedying the underlying problems, the mayor argued that the black players “should have rolled with the punch. Almost all of them,” he added, “are educated college men who must be aware that you cannot change human nature overnight.” Schiro remarked that “they have done themselves and their race a disservice.”<sup>80</sup> Convinced that the whole incident was the dirty work of outside agitators “on a mission,” Schiro refused to admit publicly that even if laws could not guarantee equal treatment, they could go a long way toward dismantling a century of increasingly resolute bigotry among some southerners.<sup>81</sup>

Echoing Schiro, WWL-TV sports editor Hap Glaudi decried the breach of contract and questioned why the “mutinous Negro players” were going to Bourbon Street strip clubs in the first place. Losing sight of the fundamental issue of insidious racial barriers in one of America’s most popular sporting events, Glaudi argued that the AFL had “made a binding contract to play a football game here on January 16<sup>th</sup> . . . not to conduct a social function.” Furthermore, Glaudi ranted, the only reason the previous year’s Sugar Bowl game had passed without incident was “because the Sugar Bowl people recognized it wasn’t wise to permit the Syracuse Negro players to wander aimlessly around our town” and had taken them aside and explained where they would and would not be welcomed.<sup>82</sup>

The AFL debacle and Schiro’s feeble efforts to justify the glacial pace of desegregation in New Orleans, even after the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, elicited a flood of editorial reactions and correspondence from around the country. One Kansas City man noted that New Orleans’s “image at one time was that of a city of warm-blooded, fun loving, joyous and happy people,” but now “prejudice and bigotry have poisoned the place.”<sup>83</sup> Another Kansas City visitor, an African American, went to the Crescent City around the time of the AFL walkout and reported facing racially motivated mistreatment. As he stood on Canal Street during a downpour, several taxicabs drove past him to collect white patrons just a few feet away. On another occasion, a clerk refused to sell him a ticket for a Gray Line sightseeing bus tour. A Gray Line porter advised that tours for blacks needed to be “prearranged,” but even then the company usually denied blacks tickets with a series of carefully worded excuses.<sup>84</sup> Some would-be tourists, appalled by city hall’s callous stance toward the players, vowed to stay away from New Orleans. An African

American man from Schenectady, New York, stationed at Jackson Barracks in New Orleans during World War II, wrote that he had liked the city very much but now felt no desire to return because of the worsening racial climate. He suggested that the untold tourist losses should prompt the mayor to spearhead the education of citizens, who “will let a Negro mind [his] children and cook [his] food” yet would not dream of sharing public accommodations.<sup>85</sup> At least one major national convention, that of the American Chemical Society, expressed serious reservations about the advisability of holding a future meeting in the Crescent City.<sup>86</sup>

A *Boston Globe* columnist summed up the thoughts of many when he wrote that no one visiting New Orleans should be forced to “roll with the punches.” He observed that Schiro might be correct in saying that human nature could not change overnight, but “in New Orleans, ‘overnight’ has extended about 100 years. . . . Why should [blacks] slink around town as second class citizens while their presence in the game’s line-up brings profit to the cabbies and the other white promoters?” He concluded that New Orleans did not deserve to win a professional football team.<sup>87</sup>

White New Orleanians and other Louisianians exhibited a range of reactions to the cancellation. As in the aftermath of the school desegregation crisis four years earlier, local white opinion had a heavily segregationist slant. A number of letters to city hall echoed Schiro’s allegation that the walkout was premeditated under pressure from national civil rights activists.<sup>88</sup> Others displayed a more virulent strain of racism. One New Orleanian charged that what “these negroes really wanted was a chance to ogle white strippers.”<sup>89</sup> Another claimed that he and his friends had no intention of going to the game “to see those negroes play our white boys” and were “glad that those black apes walked out.”<sup>90</sup>

Not surprisingly, those whose livelihoods relied purely on local rather than national connections tended to be among the more outspoken critics of the AFL action. The editor of the *Citizens’ Report*, the monthly publication of the prosegregation, Metairie-based South Louisiana Citizens’ Council, saw no need to compromise racist principles to lure a professional football team to New Orleans. In a letter to the mayor, he wrote,

Don’t you realize that every time these interracial Gladiators come to New Orleans they create a dangerous problem by insisting on sleeping in the same hotels, eating in the same restaurants, attending the same night spots, and riding in the same taxicabs as the white players?

Employing rhetoric that more squarely fit the Red Scare or McCarthy years, he contended that the city had been “harassed long enough by leftwing pressure groups, outside agitators, fifth columnists and assorted snoops.” Calling on the mayor to return to the conservative, segregationist principles on which he ran his 1962 mayoral campaign, the Citizens’ Council leader implied the majority

of white voters would forsake him in 1966 unless he mounted “a firm stand against any idea of a pro-football league.”<sup>91</sup>

Reaction to the AFL incident even found its way into French Quarter entertainment. Almost immediately after the league moved the game to Houston, three young white actors staged a comic revue at the Original Absinthe House, a popular tourist attraction and local hangout on Bourbon Street. The show, a bitter parody on civil rights, took jabs at the Freedom Riders, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and President Johnson. The act starred Billy Holliday, who one Los Angeles reporter thought was, “perhaps, more opportunistic than bigoted. He gives the people down there what they want, and he plays to packed houses every night.” Holliday used the AFL incident in his routine:

When 'em ballplayers come to town, I tole the manager, if one wants to come in heah, let him come and charge him 25 dollahs a drink. If he come back with a friend, charge 'em 50 dollahs a drink. If 'at friend come back with a friend, we charge 'em 75 dollahs. And, if they pay it, we kick all the white people out.<sup>92</sup>

While the city's old-line white elite generally remained aloof from the controversy in the manner befitting those who fancied themselves aristocrats, a few white New Orleanians expressed sympathy for the black football players. One Broadmoor woman recalled a recent taxicab ride during which her driver snarled “Animal!” as a black driver passed him. When she asked him to repeat what he had just said, the cabbie bellowed, “They are all animals.” The woman suggested to Schiro that even the alleged improvement in race relations at the 1965 Sugar Bowl game between Syracuse and Louisiana State University (LSU), the first integrated Sugar Bowl since 1956, fell far short of the mayor's glowing remarks. “Perhaps the Syracuse squad was well treated,” she allowed, “but in the stands . . . L.S.U. rooters were hollering, ‘Get those nigger-lovers.’ ”<sup>93</sup> Another New Orleanian considered it “not a matter of the AFL ‘acting hastily’ so much as New Orleans dragging its feet. . . . The AFL must compete for the best players—is New Orleans willing to compete for the ‘big leagues?’ ”<sup>94</sup>

Fortunately for New Orleans professional football backers, by 1965 the NFL was concerned principally with securing an exemption from federal anti-trust laws. Louisiana's senior congressional delegation, U.S. Senator Russell B. Long and U.S. Representative Hale T. Boggs, promised the exemption in return for the NFL's commitment to New Orleans, and the New Orleans Saints were born. Racial considerations appeared to melt away after the NFL had observed several exhibition games playing to a full Tulane Stadium.<sup>95</sup>

Local civil rights activists seized the momentum generated by the AFL incident to press city hall to ameliorate racial separatism. Black civil rights attorney Nils R. Douglas deplored the lack of courage exhibited by city leaders and the press in the football scandal and noted that blacks did not share the prevailing white notion that New Orleans enjoyed “racial harmony.”<sup>96</sup> Many African American leaders continued to employ a rhetoric of tourism to bolster their

condemnation of the city's unfortunate drift. In a statement before the New Orleans City Council, the Reverend John Baringer, president of the Community Relations Council, a Metairie-based nonpolitical, biracial association of concerned business, religious, professional, and working citizens, urged quick attention to salvage the city's image. Calling for the creation of a municipal human relations commission, Baringer reminded councilmen that "such events as Mardi Gras, the International Jazz Festival and numerous national conventions . . . will be jeopardized unless long overdue actions are taken."<sup>97</sup> F. Winter Trapolin, a black insurance broker and activist, reminded Schiro of a letter he had sent the mayor in 1963 warning that "our cures so far have been *temporary* each time the panic button was pushed." In the wake of the AFL fiasco, Trapolin urged the mayor to delay no longer in appointing a human rights council, which "would go a long way in restoring our tarnished image . . . [and] would show prospective industries and tourists, and our own citizens, we know how to handle and to prevent such emergencies."<sup>98</sup> Only in 1967 did Schiro finally create the New Orleans Human Relations Committee (HRC).

In the midst of the city's effort to woo the NFL, New Orleans's tourist image continued to suffer one setback after another, belying Mayor Schiro's contention that the AFL incident was an aberration in what was usually a cosmopolitan, open city. Just days after the AFL players packed their bags for Houston, three African Americans, including a Houstonian, failed to obtain service at Castillo's, a popular Mexican restaurant in the French Quarter. The next night, police arrested two New Orleans NAACP leaders, Llewellyn Soniat and Walter Winston, for trespassing at the Jazz Corner nightclub at 1218 Canal Street after the activists ignored the barmaid's demand that they vacate the club.<sup>99</sup> Black delegates to an AFL-CIO fund-raising dinner at the Roosevelt Hotel in November 1965 found themselves inexplicably channeled to all-black tables.<sup>100</sup>

Planners of national conventions continued to take such incidents very seriously and sometimes pulled the plug on meetings already scheduled for New Orleans. One month after the football fiasco, Seymour Weiss, a staunch segregationist until compelled by federal law to play by national rules, suddenly became an unlikely critic of taxicab segregation, a form of public accommodation not covered under the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Weiss complained to the mayor that the National Labor Relations Board called to cancel its planned meeting at the Roosevelt after learning of a black delegate to the recent American Bar Association convention who could not find a taxi to convey him from the Fontainebleau Motor Hotel to the Roosevelt for the meetings.<sup>101</sup> In June, a black delegate of a national Methodist Church convention was refused taxi service in New Orleans on several occasions.<sup>102</sup> Other black tourists experienced difficulty finding a taxicab just to go from Moisant International Airport to their hotel in the city, sometimes having to pay more than the standard metered fare.<sup>103</sup>

Racial discrimination in New Orleans's tourist businesses continued to hurt the city's image throughout the latter half of the 1960s. To be sure, the more reputable businesses in the French Quarter generally served all customers without regard to race, but Bourbon Street's numerous nightclubs remained highly popular attractions. Only gradually, in the 1970s and 1980s, would the French Quarter become more oriented to Decatur Street and cater more to visiting families. In the 1960s, as one tourism leader recalled, "You didn't bring your wife to New Orleans, and you certainly didn't bring your kids."<sup>104</sup> Bourbon Street strip clubs such as the Circus Club, Silver Frolics, Chez Patee, Club Hotsy Totsy, and Guys and Dolls, among others, continued to turn away blacks frequently, which perhaps reflected lingering racist notions of African American men as sexual beasts apt to deflower white womanly virtue (even in the form of an exotic dancer). Some of the clubs were known to quote higher cover charges, prices, and drinking minimums to blacks than to whites.<sup>105</sup> One group of black tourists from Houston tried to order food at McConnell's King of Hamburgers on Bourbon Street and wound up arrested, allegedly for disturbing the peace.<sup>106</sup> Other establishments in or near the Quarter sometimes charged blacks double for food and drink unless they opted for takeout or refused to serve them altogether.<sup>107</sup>

Just as the 1963 cancellation of the American Legion convention helped precipitate the first wave of hotel desegregation in New Orleans, pressure for a local public accommodations ordinance became more pronounced by 1969 as a string of convention incidents and cancellations plagued the city. Black delegates at the mostly black Frontiers International convention at the Roosevelt Hotel in July 1969 were informed they had entered a "private club" when they tried to order drinks at the Jazz Corner on Canal Street and two other bars on University Place across from the hotel. At the convention's closing session, the Frontiers delegates adopted a resolution calling for the city government to take immediate steps or face a convention boycott. Such a boycott not only would deny the city future Frontiers International meetings but also a host of other conventions, for among the Frontiers members were the heads of several other major organizations planning to hold conventions in New Orleans, each with between three thousand and six thousand delegates.<sup>108</sup>

The delegates to the Head Start and Child Development Conference in New Orleans complained of the menial positions blacks filled in the Jung Hotel as well as incidents in which the city's tourism businesses denied service to black delegates. The group demanded the passage of a city ordinance by January 1, 1970, threatening to contact the NFL commissioner and the players of both teams planning to play in the city's first Super Bowl. It promised to urge all organizations planning conventions in the Crescent City to revisit that decision.<sup>109</sup> Local black organizations responded very frankly to requests for information from groups considering whether New Orleans could properly handle their conventions, admitting freely that the city had considerable problems. The conservative chamber of commerce, mindful of the city's image but



oblivious to its racial problems, tried to reassure one such convention, repeating the familiar refrain from the early 1960s that “teams are repeatedly sent back to the same bar to build up a case.”<sup>110</sup>

When some white and black delegates in town for the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) conference in August 1969 attempted to test the two bars on University Place that had denied Frontiers delegates drinks, they faced the same discriminatory treatment. One barmaid allegedly remarked, “The only thing worse than niggers is whites that bring niggers in here,” while a New Orleans Police Department officer removed one black delegate for refusing to leave. In addition to passing a resolution recommending that the AFL-CIO and all of its affiliates blacklist New Orleans when considering future convention sites, the AFT picketed the two offending lounges. Thugs manning the entrance to the Topaz Bar repelled picketers by spraying an unknown foreign substance. The AFT filed a \$1 million lawsuit in federal district court against the two bars and Mayor Schiro.<sup>111</sup>

### EMBRACING NATIONAL STANDARDS

By the latter half of 1969, a broad coalition of tourist interests, business and civic leadership groups, neighborhood associations, civil rights groups, and churches rallied for a public accommodations ordinance.<sup>112</sup> Local supporters of an ordinance marshaled evidence of lost tourist business and the prospect of continued problems in their campaign to convince the New Orleans City Council to act. They cited the persistent pattern of businesses relaxing discrimination during major conventions only to revert to Jim Crow when the delegates left town. Charles Keller Jr., president of the Metropolitan Area Committee, a prestigious civic organization formed in 1966 to address community problems, warned of the damage that could result if the many reported racial incidents in taxicabs and French Quarter businesses over the previous two years continued when the National League of Cities convention arrived in December.<sup>113</sup> In addition to developing a pamphlet, the HRC reminded the mayor and city councilmen of the urgent need to pass such a law before the Super Bowl game to avoid potential embarrassment.<sup>114</sup>

As the city council considered a public accommodations ordinance in December 1969, councilman Moon Landrieu, like Schiro a protégé of Chep Morrison, provided strong support for the proposal. Landrieu, who grew up in a working-class New Orleans neighborhood, had developed an understanding and sympathy for the plight of blacks. His years as an undergraduate and law student at Loyola University, where he cultivated Catholic beliefs and interracial friendships, influenced his attitude toward race. Landrieu was one of the rare Louisiana politicians who refused to cower beneath the glare of traditional leaders.<sup>115</sup> He recognized both the political implications of the city’s shifting racial demographics and the social and economic necessity of completing the

arduous process of integrating the entire city. Indeed, by 1969, New Orleans, whose African American population had reached about 45 percent, saw the full effect of black political mobilization wrought by the federal Voting Rights Act of 1965. Powerful black organizations such as SOUL (Southern Organization for Unified Leadership) in the Ninth Ward and the creole-dominated COUP (Community Organization for Urban Politics) in the Seventh Ward embraced race as a viable organizing principle for mobilizing the black electorate and inserted themselves into the city's long-standing tradition of patronage politics. Landrieu understood and exploited this new reality.<sup>116</sup>

Although Landrieu, the leading proponent of a public accommodations ordinance in the city council, had the support of the HRC and a coalition of community and business leaders, he faced narrow-minded opponents who either opposed or sought to dilute the bill. When Landrieu and Councilman Henry Curtis introduced the bill on December 16, 1969, none of their colleagues was willing to endorse it. Fellow councilmen proposed an amendment that would limit the bill's coverage to the Central Business District and the French Quarter, thereby allowing business owners to do as they pleased elsewhere in the city. The amendment represented the views of many white New Orleanians who still resented the protourism argument for integration. One letter to Mayor Schiro epitomizes this persistent mindset:

From the way new hotels are springing up in and around New Orleans I had thought that more tourists and conventions were coming to New Orleans to escape fratination [*sic*] with Negroes. . . . The most disheartening part of [the push for an ordinance] is to see spokesmen for the hotels and others not even bother to conceal their motives with high moral tones. They frankly put the dollar above public concern or public safety. New Orleans has existed very well without mixed drinking and without the Super Bowl and it is time the white majority made their feelings known.<sup>117</sup>

HRC leaders hurried to counter the amendment at a public hearing on December 23, when the council planned to vote on the measure. The HRC instructed the representatives of the many organizations supporting the original ordinance to argue against the amendment on the grounds that limiting coverage would insult local citizens; would not protect tourists who sought food, drink, or entertainment in the vicinity of Tulane Stadium or the New Orleans Fair Grounds racetrack; and would work against the Tourist Commission's efforts to encourage visitors to stay longer and see more of the city besides the French Quarter.<sup>118</sup> At least one black leader expressed disbelief that tourism could be the primary consideration in passing an ordinance that any progressive city would have done anyway for the benefit of its own citizens. However, tourist industry leaders also deplored efforts to weaken the ordinance.<sup>119</sup> On December 23, the city council unanimously passed the ordinance without amendments, which took effect January 1, 1970. Finally, after a decade of agitation, New Orleans took its place among the nation's cities.

Metropolitan Area Committee chairman Sam Israel lauded the councilmen, noting that “the public accommodations ordinance takes on added significance . . . when you realize that the change resulted from the democratic process and not from court action.” For the African American community, this victory rang hollow. By 1969, New Orleans had muddled through half a decade since the federal order to desegregate public accommodations. The *Plain Truth*, a black newspaper published by New Orleans’s Free Southern Theatre, contended that the ordinance would do little to help the plight of black New Orleanians but would bring “real and substantial benefits to the white business community . . . as a ‘guarantee’ to large conventions and the Super Bowl.” In its bitter conclusion, the editorial suggested that perhaps the ordinance had done one thing other than to give black people a right they should already have enjoyed: “Also, as a result of our experiences with the ordinance, we should now know how to exert economic pressure through outside conventions and the Super Bowl.”<sup>120</sup>

Although the public accommodations law proved almost anticlimactic, it heralded a “new” New Orleans in which a modern tourist industry could flourish. The ordinance is best seen in the context of the whirlwind of social, economic, political, and cultural change that enveloped the city in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In the span of only a few years, the Crescent City landed professional football, resuscitated its flagging Mardi Gras celebration, achieved meaningful black involvement in local politics, infused its blue-blood business community with a new breed of leaders, and laid Jim Crow to rest once and for all. If the city stood on the threshold of a phenomenal oil boom that would give its dreamers new visions of closing the gap with Atlanta, Dallas, Houston, and Miami, it also stood on the cusp of a spectacular ascendancy of the tourist and convention industry over the next three decades.

## NOTES

1. Most scholars who have examined the desegregation of tourist or sports facilities have done so only in passing. See, for example, W. Marvin Dulaney, “Whatever Happened in Dallas?” in John Dittmer, George C. Wright, and W. Marvin Dulaney, eds., *Essays on the Civil Rights Movement* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1993), 78-85; Harvey K. Newman, *Southern Hospitality: Tourism and the Growth of Atlanta* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1999), chap. 6; David Andrew Harmon, *Beneath the Image of the Civil Rights Movement and Race Relations: Atlanta, Georgia, 1946-1981* (New York: Garland, 1996), chap. 4; Donald L. Grant, *The Way It Was in the South: The Black Experience in Georgia* (New York: Birch Lane Press, 1993), 546-8; Edmund L. Drago, *Initiative, Paternalism, and Race Relations: Charleston’s Avery Institute* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1990), 277-80. A notable exception is a more extended treatment in Thomas R. Cole, *No Color Is My Kind: The Life of Eldrewey Stearns and the Integration of Houston* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1997), chap. 3.

2. On the civil rights struggle in New Orleans, see especially Adam Fairclough, *Race and Democracy: The Civil Rights Struggle in Louisiana, 1915-1972* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1995); Arnold R. Hirsch, “Simply a Matter of Black and White: The Transformation of Race and Politics in Twentieth-Century New Orleans,” in Arnold R. Hirsch and Joseph Logsdon, eds., *Creole New Orleans: Race and Americanization* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992), 262-319.

3. Edward F. Haas, "The Southern Metropolis, 1940-1976," in Blaine A. Brownell and David R. Goldfield, eds., *The City in Southern History: The Growth of Urban Civilization in the South* (Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1977), 168-72. Haas points the way for my treatment of tourism and civil rights in observing that New Orleans's tourist trade suffered from the negative publicity surrounding the city's inability to adopt swiftly a moderate plan for desegregation.

4. On black migration to southern cities, see Numan V. Bartley, *The New South, 1945-1980: The Story of the South's Modernization* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1995), 8-14.

5. On Morrison's infrastructure programs, see Edward F. Haas, *DeLesseps S. Morrison and the Image of Reform: New Orleans Politics, 1946-1961* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1974).

6. DeLesseps S. Morrison to Bernadine Cline (Jamestown, ND), December 28, 1948, Folder 13, Box 3, DeLesseps S. Morrison Collection (hereafter, Morrison Papers—Tulane), Manuscripts Division, Department of Special Collections, Howard-Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University (hereafter, HTML).

7. Harold Toomer, telephone interview by author, November 27, 2000.

8. *Crescent City Sepia Host Buyers and Tourist Guide to New Orleans*, 1956-1957 issue, New Orleans Public Library Louisiana Division.

9. In contrast to the leading white hotels, each of which had an average of about five hundred guest rooms, the largest black hostelry in the mid-1950s had only fifty units. See *Crescent City Sepia Host*.

10. Haas, *DeLesseps S. Morrison and the Image of Reform*, 250-1; Glen Douthit, Mayor's Office Public Relations Director, to Morrison, May 27, 1954, Folder "Mayoralty-Reading File, May 27, 1954," Box 52, Morrison Papers—Tulane; Douthit to Morrison, September 8, 1954, Folder "Mayoralty-Reading File, September 8, 1954," Box 53, Morrison Papers—Tulane.

11. Numan V. Bartley, *The Rise of Massive Resistance: Race and Politics in the South During the 1950s* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1969).

12. "Measures Added to Constitution: 23 New Amendments Are Now Official," *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, December 11, 1954; "Senate Passes Louisiana Bill on Segregation," *Daily Oklahoman*, July 6, 1956, Facts on Film, 1954-58, J14, 3985, Amistad Research Center, New Orleans (hereafter, ARC).

13. Tad Jones, "'Separate but Equal': The Laws of Segregation and Their Effect on New Orleans Black Musicians, 1950-1964," *Living Blues Magazine*, December 1987, 27.

14. "Why Louis Armstrong Can't Go Home Again: 'Unconstitutional' La. Law Nixes Satchmo's Mixed Band," *Jet*, November 26, 1959, 57-8.

15. Dr. Leonard L. Burns, telephone interview by author, June 14, 2001.

16. Vernon Winslow, interview notes by Jane D. Julian, April 13, 1972, Vertical File "Racism and Jazz," Department of Special Collections, William Ransom Hogan Jazz Archive, HTML.

17. "Tavern Owners File Test Suit," *Pittsburgh Courier*, February 22, 1964, Facts on Film, 1963-64, J4, 335, ARC.

18. Since the mid-1930s, New Orleans leaders had sought to extend high hotel-occupancy rates beyond Carnival by holding the sports festival in late December and early January and Spring Fiesta, a March celebration of plantations and patios modeled on the Natchez Spring Pilgrimage.

19. "Georgia Regents Back Bowl Game," *Nashville Tennessean*, December 6, 1955, Folder "Multimedia Newspaper Clippings, 1955," Preston and Bonita Valien Collection (in process), ARC.

20. "Bowl Group Urges 'Serious Consideration' of Race Bar," *Times-Picayune*, July 14, 1956.

21. Minutes of Meeting, Executive Committee, Chamber of Commerce of the New Orleans Area, July 16, 1956, Minutes, Chamber of Commerce, 1956, vol. 2, Chamber of Commerce Collection (hereafter, CCC), Department of Archives and Special Collections, Earl K. Long Library, University of New Orleans (hereafter, UNO).

22. For more on the city's old elite, see Phyllis Hutton Raabe, "Status and Its Impact: New Orleans' Carnival, the Social Upper Class and Upper-Class Power" (Ph.D. diss., Pennsylvania State University, 1973); Rosary Hartel O'Brien, "The New Orleans Carnival Organizations: Theatre of Prestige" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1973); Charles Y. W. Chai, "Who Rules New Orleans: A Study of Community Power Structure," *Louisiana Business Survey* 16, no. 5 (1972): 2-11.

23. For more on the Citizens' Council movement, see Neil R. McMillen, *The Citizens' Council: Organized Resistance to the Second Reconstruction, 1944-64* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971), 64-72, 231-4, 286-97.

24. Kent B. Germany, "Making a New Louisiana: American Liberalism and the Search for the Great Society in New Orleans, 1964-1974" (Ph.D. diss., Tulane University, 2000), 63, 74.

25. Economic concerns brought white moderates into the debate over civil rights at varying rates in different southern cities. On Atlanta, see Newman, *Southern Hospitality*, chap. 6, and Harmon, *Beneath the*

*Image*, chap. 4; on Dallas, see Dulaney, “Whatever Happened in Dallas?” 78-85; on Houston, see Cole, *No Color Is My Kind*, chap. 3; on Birmingham, see Bartley, *New South*, 332.

26. Liva Baker, *The Second Battle of New Orleans: The Hundred-Year Struggle to Integrate the Schools* (New York: HarperCollins, 1996), 398-400.

27. *Ibid.*, 336, 339.

28. *Ibid.*, 414-6; McMillen, *Citizens’ Council*, 65-6. On Thanksgiving Day, Perez announced he would open the St. Bernard Parish public schools to “displaced” white children. By January 1961, about 60 percent of the students in the two affected Orleans Parish schools had accepted the offer, and another 10 percent made other arrangements.

29. Baker, *Second Battle*, 416.

30. *Ibid.*, 410.

31. Morrison to Claude Sitton, December 2, 1960, Folder “Integration School Crisis (6),” Box SPR60-3, DeLesseps S. Morrison Papers (hereafter, Morrison Papers), New Orleans Public Library City Archives (hereafter, NOPL).

32. William J. P. McVay, M.D. (St. Louis, MO), to Morrison, December 8, 1960, Folder “Integration School Crisis (6),” Box SPR60-3, Morrison Papers.

33. See Folders “Integration-1960 (1-2),” Box SPR60-2, and “Integration School Crisis-1960 (4-8),” Box SPR60-3, Morrison Papers, especially John Eggleston (Omaha, NE) to Morrison, November 29, 1960, Folder “Integration School Crisis (5),” and Jack Howard (Silver Spring, MD) to Morrison, January 3, 1961, Folder “Integration School Crisis (8).”

34. See especially Robert B. Tufts (Hastings-on-Hudson, NY) to Morrison, November 28, 1960, Folder “Integration-1960 (1),” Box SPR60-2, Morrison Papers.

35. For example, Morrison to Robert B. Tufts, December 12, 1960, Folder “Integration-1960 (2),” Box SPR60-2, Morrison Papers.

36. Baker, *Second Battle*, 434; Statement by Glen Douthit, Executive Director, Greater New Orleans Tourist and Convention Commission, December 21, 1960, Folder “Tourist Commission-1960,” Box SPR60-10, Morrison Papers.

37. Baker, *Second Battle*, 434.

38. Albert P. Blancher, General Manager, Bayou Tours, Inc., to James A. Noe, Jr., General Manager, WNOE, n.d. [December 1960?], Folder “Integration School Crisis (8),” Box SPR60-3, Morrison Papers.

39. Morrison, letter to the editor, *New York Herald Tribune*, February 1, 1961, Folder “Integration School Crisis (8),” Box SPR60-3, Morrison Papers.

40. E. Lysle Aschaffenburg, President and Managing Director, Pontchartrain Hotel, to Victor H. Schiro, August 31, 1961, Folder “Integration-1961,” Box S61-5, Victor H. Schiro Collection (hereafter, Schiro Papers), NOPL.

41. George W. Healy, Jr., to James J. Coleman, February 13, 1963, Minutes, Chamber of Commerce, 1963, vol. 1, CCC.

42. Statement of James J. Coleman, February 14, 1963, Minutes, Chamber of Commerce, 1963, vol. 1, CCC.

43. Minutes of Meeting, Executive Committee, Chamber of Commerce of the New Orleans Area, January 16, 1963, Minutes, Chamber of Commerce, 1963, vol. 1, CCC.

44. Minutes of Meeting, Executive Committee, Chamber of Commerce of the New Orleans Area, February 18, 1963, Minutes, Chamber of Commerce, 1963, vol. 1, CCC; John B. Furey to Hugh Downs, February 25, 1963, Folder “Correspondence, February 7-28, 1963,” Box 73, NAACP (New Orleans Branch) Collection (hereafter, NAACP Papers), UNO.

45. “First Organized Lunch Sit-In Staged in N.O.,” *New Orleans States-Item*, September 9, 1960; “Seven in Sit-In Here Arrested: Group Disrupts Business Nearly Five Hours,” *Times-Picayune*, September 10, 1960; “Pickets Defy Sit-In Arrests,” *New York Daily News*, September 11, 1960, Series V, no. 44, Papers of the Congress of Racial Equality (hereafter, CORE Papers), ARC.

46. CORE Subcommittee on Priorities, Summary of Activities, New Orleans, 1961, CORE Papers; Oretta Castle, Chairman, New Orleans CORE, to [recipient unknown], December 28, 1961, Folder “Correspondence-December 8-29, 1961,” Box 72, NAACP Papers; Joyce Bernadette Taylor, Ruthie Wells, George Raymond, Jr., open letters, January 7, 1962, Folder “Correspondence-January 1-29, 1962,” Box 72, NAACP Papers.

47. “Citizens Council Lashes Report, Vows Fight against Any Lunch Counter Mixing,” *Times-Picayune*, June 26, 1962.

48. George L. Singelmann, Citizens' Council of Greater New Orleans, to New Orleans Branch NAACP, April 17, 1962, Folder "Correspondence-April 13-30, 1962," Box 73, NAACP Papers; McMillen, *Citizens' Council*, 66-7, 230-1. McMillen suggests that, although its claims of having more than fifty thousand members seem exaggerated, the Council in New Orleans was a formidable voice that, in the absence of effective moderate leadership, exerted influence beyond what its numbers would suggest. Given that the New Orleans metropolitan area's population stood close to nine hundred thousand in 1960, of whom perhaps only about three hundred thousand were white male adults, it seems plausible that the Citizens' Councils of New Orleans enrolled as many as 15 percent of the area's adult white men—hardly a trifling number whose presence could be dismissed given the silence of more moderate New Orleanians.

49. Editorial, WDSU-TV, April 24, 1962, transcript, Folder "Correspondence-April 13-30, 1962," Box 73, NAACP Papers.

50. Minutes of Meeting, Executive Committee, Chamber of Commerce of the New Orleans Area, June 20, 1961, Minutes, Chamber of Commerce, 1961, vol. 2, CCC.

51. "Citizens Councils Hit Any Plans for Restaurant Mixing," *Baton Rouge State Times*, June 27, 1962, Facts on Film, 1961-62, J5, 1741, ARC.

52. Castle to [City Hall?], June 11, 1963, Folder "Correspondence-June 1-11, 1963," Box 74, NAACP Papers. Hereafter I refer to these light-skinned descendants of antebellum free people of color simply as creoles, not to be confused with the city's many white residents who called themselves creoles to denote their French or Spanish ancestry. Unlike other Southern cities, in the antebellum period, New Orleans had a large, distinguished community of free people of color, one with rich ties to Roman Catholicism and the city's affluent Seventh Ward and bonds of kinship in both the white and black communities. This "Afro-Creole" legacy continued to manifest itself socially, culturally, and politically throughout the twentieth century. On the role of creoles in the New Orleans civil rights movement, see Hirsch, "Simply a Matter of Black and White." For background on earlier creole leadership, see especially Caryn Cossé Bell, *Revolution, Romanticism, and the Afro-Creole Protest Tradition in Louisiana, 1718-1868* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997).

53. Raphael Cassimere, Jr., President, New Orleans Branch NAACP Youth Council, to Roy Wilkins, Executive Secretary, NAACP, November 7, 1962, Folder "Correspondence-November 1-15, 1962," Box 73, NAACP Papers; "Lunch Counters in N.O. Stores Desegregated," *Baton Rouge State Times*, September 12, 1962; and Hedrick Smith, "New Orleans Surprised as Stores Integrate," *New York Times*, September 13, 1962, Facts on Film, 1962-63, J8, 2600, ARC.

54. Minutes of Meeting, Executive Committee, Chamber of Commerce of the New Orleans Area, March 16, 1959, Minutes, Chamber of Commerce, 1959, vol. 1, CCC; "N.O. Held Losing on Conventions: State Segregation Law Effect Cited by Weiss," *Times-Picayune*, January 31, 1962.

55. Thomas G. Smith, "Outside the Pale: The Exclusion of Blacks from the National Football League, 1934-1946," *Journal of Sport History* 15, no. 3 (winter 1988): 255-81.

56. Cole, *No Color Is My Kind*, 76-9.

57. Ray A. Liuzza, interview by author, New Orleans, June 20, 2001.

58. Scott Wilson to Morrison, March 30, 1959, Morrison Correspondence, B4 (February 6, 1959-June 1963), Scott Wilson Papers, HTML. Note: Professor Arnold R. Hirsch located this document in the Wilson Papers prior to the processing of that collection. Thus, this correspondence file was not catalogued.

59. Allan Katz, "How Football Saved a City," *New Orleans*, January 1990, 85; David F. Dixon, telephone interview by author, May 6, 2002.

60. David F. Dixon, telephone interview by author, January 11, 2001; Katz, "How Football Saved a City," 85.

61. Dixon interview, January 11, 2001; Katz, "How Football Saved a City," 85-6. Although the Tulane Board of Administrators agreed to integrate the stadium for the NFL exhibition game, all other football games, including the Sugar Bowl, remained segregated for one more season.

62. Burns interview, June 14, 2001; Burns, interview by Kim Lacy Rogers, May 14, 1979, Oral History Project, ARC.

63. Dr. Raphael Cassimere Jr., interview by author, New Orleans, June 11, 2001.

64. "Daisy Bates Sues Louisiana Hotels," *Baltimore Afro-American*, November 10, 1962, and "Suit Seeks to Integrate La. Hotels," *Baton Rouge State Times*, December 8, 1962, Facts on Film, 1962-63, J8, 2428, ARC.

65. *McCain v. Davis*, 217 F. Supp. 661 (1963 U.S. Dist.); "Hotel Segregation Law Held Invalid: Action May End Long-Standing Custom," *Times-Picayune*, May 19, 1963.

66. "Legion Stands Pat on N.O. Site: Threatened Transfer of Convention Averted," *Times-Picayune*, May 2, 1963.

67. Arthur J. Chapital, Sr., Chairman, Legal Redress Committee, New Orleans Branch, NAACP, to Bernard J. Bagert, Chairman, American Legion Host Committee, April 19, 1963, Folder "Correspondence-April 15-30, 1963," Box 74, NAACP Papers.

68. Minutes of Meeting, Executive Committee, Chamber of Commerce of the New Orleans Area, April 23, 1963, Minutes, Chamber of Commerce, 1963, vol. 1, CCC.

69. "N.O. Gathering of Legion Off: Lack of Desegregated Housing Is Reason," *Times-Picayune*, May 21, 1963.

70. Castle to [City Hall?], June 11, 1963, Folder "Correspondence-June 1-11, 1963," Box 74, NAACP Papers.

71. Ernest N. Morial to Lolis E. Elie, Chairman, Citizens Committee of Greater New Orleans, September 4, 1963, Folder "Correspondence-September 1-14, 1963," Box 74, NAACP Papers. Remarkably, Mayor Schiro remained largely unmoved in his support of segregation despite clear signs that federal mandates and local activism would soon make his position untenable. In the summer of 1963, Dutch Morial warned Schiro that blacks would not tolerate the "spoon feeding" of their rights much longer. Schiro refused Morial's call for a biracial committee on human rights that might have helped city hall at least symbolically bridge the canyon that divided the races and also reneged on an earlier promise to integrate the city's swimming pools, closing them instead. (See Hirsch, "Simply a Matter of Black and White," 287-8.) Civil rights leader Nils R. Douglas recalled, "As it turned out, all we received [from Schiro] were empty promises." Perhaps worst of all, the city administration stood by as the black Rev. Avery C. Alexander was brutally dragged by his heels up a flight of stairs in city hall after being denied service in the basement cafeteria. (See Nils R. Douglas, [untitled manuscript], n.d., Box 1, Nils R. Douglas Collection [hereafter, NRD], ARC.)

72. "Four Orleans Hotels Accept Negro Guests," *Baton Rouge State Times*, September 10, 1963, Facts on Film, 1963-64, J3, 160, ARC.

73. "U.S. Officers Told to Shun Meeting: Pentagon Acts as Hotel in New Orleans Bars Negro," *New York Times*, April 28, 1964, Facts on Film, 1963-64, J3, 159, ARC; Edward J. Cocke, "CORE Requests Officials Skip N.O. Meeting," *Baton Rouge State Times*, May 12, 1964, Facts on Film, 1963-64, J3, 159, ARC; Paul Atkinson, "Trade Group to Move Last Two Sessions," *Times-Picayune*, May 13, 1964.

74. "Negroes Served in La. Cafeterias," *States-Item*, July 4, 1964.

75. William Murphy, "Bourbon Street Apparently Unchanged by 'Rights' Act," *Meridian Star*, July 14, 1964, Facts on Film, 1964-65, J2, 227, ARC. This article originated with the UPI wire service. Like many other AP and UPI stories on efforts to ensure equal access to public accommodations, this news failed to appear in the leading New Orleans dailies.

76. Raphael Cassimere, Jr., President, New Orleans Youth Council, NAACP, to Herbert Hill, Labor Director, NAACP, New York, July 26, 1965, Folder "Youth Council Correspondence-July 1965," Box 301-7, NAACP Papers; Cassimere to Lee's Hamburger, June 15, 1965, Folder "Youth Council Correspondence-January-June, 1965," Box 301-7, NAACP Papers.

77. "CORE Test Team Closes Schwegmann Cafeteria," *Louisiana Weekly*, July 25, 1964; "Sue Schwegmann Bros.," *Louisiana Weekly*, August 8, 1964; Advertisement: "Now is the Time for All White Persons to Come to the Aid of Schwegmann Bros. Giant Super Markets," *States-Item*, August 14, 1964. The grocery tycoon finally caved in under the weight of lawsuits and promised to integrate his cafeterias and hire African Americans for more than the most menial jobs.

78. "Protest by Negro Gridders Cancels N.O. All-Star Game," *Times-Picayune*, January 11, 1965.

79. David F. Dixon to Joseph W. Simon, Jr., January 19, 1965, Folder "Football Club, Inc.-1966," Box S66-8, Schiro Papers. Note: This letter was misdated 1966 and thus appears in the 1966 folder.

80. Statement of Mayor Victor H. Schiro, January 11, 1965, Folder "Race Relations (1)," Box SPR-32, Public Relations Office, Schiro Papers.

81. Schiro to F. Winter Trapolin, January 21, 1965, Folder "Race Relations (1)," Box SPR-32, Public Relations Office, Schiro Papers.

82. Hap Glaudi sports editorial transcript, January 11, 1965, WWL-TV, Channel 4, Folder "All Star Game-1965," Box S65-1, Schiro Papers.

83. Girard T. Bryant to Schiro, January 12, 1965, Folder "Race Relations (1)," Box SPR-32, Public Relations Office, Schiro Papers.

84. "Dr. E. E. Fields Reports on Racial Progress in Miami and New Orleans," *The Call*, January 29, 1965, Folder "Race Relations (1)," Box SPR-32, Public Relations Office, Schiro Papers.

85. Ernest W. Bostick to Schiro, received January 18, 1965, Folder "All Star Game-1965," Box S65-1, Schiro Papers. See also Mark S. Shapiro (Chicago) to Schiro, January 11, 1965, Folder "Race Relations (1)," Box SPR-32, Public Relations Office, Schiro Papers.

86. Schiro to Executive Committee, American Chemical Society (Washington, D.C.), February 17, 1965, Folder "Conventions-1965," Box S65-7, Schiro Papers.

87. Victor O. Jones, "Mr. Dixon's Imagination Probably Correct, and That's Okay," *Boston Globe*, January 18, 1965, Folder "Race Relations (1)," Box SPR-32, Schiro Papers.

88. Lloyd Angeron (Morgan City, LA) to Schiro, n.d. [January 1965], and Luther L. Elfer (New Orleans) to Schiro, January 11, 1965, Folder "All Star Game-1965," Box S65-1, Schiro Papers.

89. Chester A. Gauslin to Schiro, January 12, 1965, Folder "All Star Game-1965," Box S65-1, Schiro Papers.

90. H. to Schiro, January 29, 1965, Folder "Integration-1965," Box S65-13, Schiro Papers. Although the return address on the attached envelope reads 824 Canal Street, the address of the old-guard Boston Club, the writer's failure to sign his full name makes it impossible to ascertain whether he was, in fact, a member of that organization.

91. Jackson G. Ricau to Schiro, August 4, 1965, Folder "Integration-1965," Box S65-13, Schiro Papers. The persistence of vacillation among city political leaders and social elites when confronted with the new reality of federal legislation protecting black rights after 1964, I argue, discouraged a more concerted effort to promote integration and safeguard a lucrative tourist image.

92. Paul Coates, "Southern Hospitality's Wonderful—Then You Drop over the Cliff," *Los Angeles Times*, January 22, 1965, Folder "Race Relations (1)," Box SPR-32, Public Relations Office, Schiro Papers.

93. Martha L. Barkoff to Schiro, January 13, 1965, Folder "Race Relations (1)," Box SPR-32, Public Relations Office, Schiro Papers. Situated along South Claiborne Avenue, approximately midway between the Central Business District and the University Section, Broadmoor is a predominantly middle- to upper-middle-class white neighborhood with a significant Jewish population.

94. Willis Stoesz to Schiro, January 11, 1965, Folder "All Star Game-1965," Box S65-1, Schiro Papers.

95. Katz, "How Football Saved a City," 86. The New Orleans Pro Football Club, however, took no chances, commissioning public relations consultant David Kleck to produce a glossy book that touted New Orleans's many signs of economic and social progress. In reference to the role of the city's NASA facility in producing rockets for the lunar mission, the book optimistically dubbed New Orleans the "Heart of the Space Crescent." On the opening page appeared a statement from a leading black leader that extolled the city's racial progress, clearly in an effort to convince the NFL that New Orleans had turned the corner in its racial struggle. See "New Orleans, Strategic City of the South: A Pictorial-Statistical Presentation to the National Football League" (New Orleans: David Kleck and Associates; New Orleans Pro Football Club, Inc., 1965).

96. Nils R. Douglas, "AFL Incident Shows City's Lack," *Clarion Herald*, February 4, 1965, in Box 1, NRD.

97. Statement by Rev. John Baringer to New Orleans City Council, January 14, 1965, Folder "Race Relations-1965," Box 10, John J. Petre Records, NOPL.

98. Trapolin to Schiro, September 6, 1963, and January 12, 1965, Folder "Race Relations (1)," Box SPR-32, Public Relations Office, Schiro Papers.

99. "3 File Charge against Vieux Carre Eatery," *Louisiana Weekly*, January 30, 1965; John E. Rousseau, "NAACP Youth Council Officers to Fight Jazz Corner 'Trespass' Rap," *Louisiana Weekly*, January 30, 1965.

100. Edward D. Shanklin, Sr., Field Representative, AFL-CIO, to Hubert H. Humphrey, Vice President of the United States, November 23, 1965, Folder "Integration-1965," Box S65-13, Schiro Papers.

101. Seymour Weiss to Schiro, February 15, 1965, Folder "The Roosevelt-1965," Box S65-25, Schiro Papers.

102. A. W. Dent, President, Dillard University, to Glen Douthit, Executive Director, Greater New Orleans Tourist and Convention Commission, June 14, 1965, Folder "New Orleans Tourist and Convention Commission-1965," Box S65-20, Schiro Papers.

103. Folder "Complaints: Discrimination," Box 57, NAACP Papers.

104. Liuzza interview.

105. Walter M. Goodwin, Complaint to New Orleans Branch NAACP, June 27, 1967, and Mervin Williams, Complaint to New Orleans Branch NAACP, August 9, 1967, Folder "Complaints: Discrimination, May-August 1967," Box 57, NAACP Papers; Human Relations Committee pamphlet [untitled], Folder "Public Accommodations Ordinance" Box 3, Human Relations Committee General Office Files (hereafter, HRC), NOPL.



106. Zinetta A. Burney, Complaint to New Orleans Branch NAACP, October 24, 1967, Folder "Complaints: Discrimination, September-December 1967," Box 58, NAACP Papers.
107. Patrick E. Sinclair, Complaint to New Orleans Branch NAACP, April 17, 1968, Folder "Complaints: Discrimination, April 15-30, 1968," Box 58, NAACP Papers; Samuel White, Complaint to New Orleans Branch NAACP, July 8, 1968, Folder "Complaints: Discrimination, June-July 1968," Box 58, NAACP Papers; Lawrence Ellis, Jr., Complaint to Human Relations Committee, July 28, 1969, Folder "Complaints-Public Accommodations," Box 1, HRC.
108. "Visitors Complain about Service," *Louisiana Weekly*, August 2, 1969; Marcus Neustadter, Jr., Local Convention Chairman, Frontiers International, to Human Relations Committee, July 30, 1969, Folder "Human Relations-1969," Box S69-5, Schiro Papers.
109. Resolution, 1969 Head Start and Child Development Conference, n.d. [1969], Folder "Complaints-Public Accommodations," Box 1, HRC; "Convention Puts Heat on for Equal Accommodations," *Louisiana Weekly*, November 29, 1969.
110. Wallace L. Young, Jr., President, New Orleans Branch NAACP, to Dr. Kenneth O. Johnson, Executive Secretary, American Speech and Hearing Association, Washington, D.C., October 20, 1969, and Joseph W. Simon, Jr., to Johnson, October 29, 1969, Folder 13, Box 395, CCC.
111. "AFT Confab Pickets Biased Bar Near Convention Site," *Louisiana Weekly*, August 30, 1969; "AFT Files Million \$ Suit against 2 Downtown Bars," *Louisiana Weekly*, September 27, 1969.
112. Anthony Gagliano, President, New Orleans Coalition, to James A. Nassikas, President, Greater New Orleans Hotel and Motel Association, November 4, 1969, Folder "Public Accommodations (Correspondence)," Box 3, HRC; Herman J. Penn, Manager, the Rivergate, letter to the editor, *Progress* (HRC Monthly Report), December 1969, Folder "Progress-1969-1970," Box 3, HRC; HRC pamphlet, Folder "Public Accommodations Ordinance," Box 3, HRC.
113. Charlie Wicks, Chase Bag Co., to Joseph W. Simon, Jr., June 17, 1969, Folder 16, Box 47, CCC; Charles Keller, Jr., to Schiro, December 4, 1969, Folder "Correspondence-December 1-8, 1969," Box 93, NAACP Papers.
114. John A. Pecoul, Jr., Executive Director, HRC, Memorandum, November 6, 1969, Folder "Complaints- Public Accommodations," Box 1, HRC.
115. Landrieu had been the lone dissenting voice against maintaining school segregation as a freshman state representative in the Louisiana legislature in 1960-1961. As a city councilman (1965-1969), Landrieu pushed through the ordinance that created the Human Relations Committee and succeeded in removing the Confederate flag from city council chambers. See Hirsch, "Simply a Matter of Black and White," 293.
116. *Ibid.*, 288-90.
117. Randolph G. Dodd to Schiro, December 19, 1969, Folder "Complaints-1969," Box S69-3, Schiro Papers.
118. HRC Memorandum to Groups and Individuals Supporting the Public Accommodations Ordinance, December 17, 1969, Folder "Complaints-Public Accommodations," Box 1, HRC.
119. Charles L. deLay, Secretary, Studs Club, to Schiro, December 23, 1969, Folder "Complaints-1969," Box S69-3, Schiro Papers; Allan Katz, "Full Access Law Pushed by Civic, Tourist Leaders," *States-Item*, December 19, 1969.
120. Quoted in "Free Access Law," *Progress*, January-February 1970, Folder "Progress-1969-1970," Box 3, HRC.

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