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Eberhard L. Faber. *Building the Land of Dreams: New Orleans and the Transformation of Early America.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015. xii + 441 pp. $35.00, cloth, ISBN 978-0-691-16689-6.

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In *Building the Land of Dreams: New Orleans and the Transformation of Early America*, Eberhard L. Faber has significantly improved our understanding of the complexity of early national Louisiana. In many ways Faber builds on Joseph G. Tregle Jr.'s *Louisiana in the Age of Jackson: A Clash of Cultures and Personalities* (1999) and Peter J. Kastor's *The Nation's Crucible: The Louisiana Purchase and the Creation of America* (2004) in moving beyond a simplistic understanding of Louisiana's ethnic cleavages that dominate literary and nineteenth-century historical accounts of the topic. Faber focuses on the ways in which society in Louisiana advanced economically yet still remained culturally distinctive. Louisiana, particularly New Orleans, which dominated the economy and politics of the region, benefited from its inclusion within the United States even as it resisted some elements of Americanization. Faber also pushes back against the argument so often prescribed in broader accounts of American expansion as well as in colonial histories of Louisiana that view the emerging biracial order in Louisiana as something instituted from outside by US authorities. As Faber demonstrates, however, it was often Francophone elites rather than US territorial officials who desired a harder racial line.

In the first chapter, Faber traces the development of an elite class consciousness that emerged in concert with greater economic success during the later Spanish period with American migration into the territory. This elite became committed to greater economic growth and the continuation of the slave trade. In particular, Faber stresses the importance of economic ties with the United States that Pinckney's Treaty confirmed. In many other accounts of the period, the importance of economics for the process of inclusion within the United States often becomes overshadowed by the political and diplomatic maneuvering that undergirded the Louisiana Purchase. What Faber makes abundantly clear is the cultural and economic ties that proved so crucial for the cession. This self-conscious elite under the Spanish, through institutions like the cabildo, became adept at ignoring imperial mandates from distant capitals, but cooperated fully when it came to matters of economic development and the maintenance of order as defined by that local elite. These priorities of the elite remained consistent whether Spain, France, or the United States was in control of the territory. The brief turnover to the French in late 1803 under Pierre Clément de Laussat illustrated the power of this elite to signal loyalty even as it convinced Laussat to strengthen the slave regime. With the turnover to the United States, Faber identifies a group whom he brands the "Generation of 1804," men drawn to the region after the purchase who

possessed political connections to the east and who sought a governmental position in the territory. These men differed from previous American immigrants who as merchants often readily assimilated into the local elite. The same generation also included other well-heeled arrivistes from France and Creoles from the Caribbean.

Faber traces Governor W. C. C. Claiborne's early struggles in Louisiana in attempting to create a government in the face of elite desires for an increasing slave population, fears of lower-class whites, and the opposition to the first American court system. When Congress responded to elite complaints by setting up a government for the territory based on the Breckinridge Bill, it sparked even more discord resulting in a memorial to Congress to protest the undemocratic nature of the government. Chapter 6 examines some of the accomplishments of that first government as well as the ethnic divisions within the territory, and the response from Congress in the creation of a lower house that could nominate individuals for potential selection for the upper house. Faber points to Claiborne's veto of a Creole legal bill that ultimately led to a compromise legal code designed by James Brown and Louis Moreau-Lislet. Claiborne moved closer socially to the Creole elites through his second and third marriages, but also politically given the opposition of men like William Clarke, and particularly Edward Livingston whom Faber portrays as the opposite pole of Claiborne in temperament and ideology. Chapter 8 provides a thorough account of the batture case that so alienated local elites from Livingston and illustrated a way in which Claiborne and the national administration could appeal to Creole elite loyalty. Livingston here stands for enlightenment liberalism versus republican or communitarian ideals, but Faber is careful to lay out the realities of these positions beyond ideology as self-interest played a large role as did realpolitik on behalf of the administration. The Burr expedition likewise confirmed for many Americans the putative loyalty of the Creole elite as well as doubts over that of many American opponents of the Claiborne administration who tended to focus on the abuses of power by General James Wilkinson in his use of extralegal arrests. Faber then covers the multiple crises of the French Caribbean refugees in 1809, the German Coast slave rebellion, the West Florida rebellion, and the 1810 request for statehood. These crises served to cement Louisiana's loyalty to the union and foster a greater sense of confidence in the stability of the local order, as affirmed in a state constitution that proved highly elite in its orientation.

Faber's broader argument is that culturally Louisiana could resist a blunt form of Americanization due to the class consciousness and relative openness of its elite, but he also points to federalism as providing the openness to allow that as well. Economic interests girded this process, which Faber explores more fully than other accounts of the territorial period. Faber also places the cession in a broader context by beginning in 1795 with the Treaty of San Lorenzo rather than with the Louisiana Purchase. The benefits of belonging to the American union were such that Louisiana could have its cake and eat it too, accepting a broad definition of civic American nationalism and federalism while retaining its own unique cultural aspects.

Faber's work relies on a great deal of archival research, including not only early Louisiana newspapers and the relevant published primary sources, such as the ***Territorial Papers*** and the Official Letter Books of William C. C. Claiborne (1917), but also the accounts of French observers, such as C. C. Robin, François Marie Perrin du Lac, and Pierre Berquin-Duvallon. In many ways this work expands on the interpretation laid out by Kastor but casts the argument in different terms by more fully articulating elite economic interests rather than the intersection of territorial and foreign policy. As Faber states forthrightly at the beginning of the text and in the title, New Orleans figures large in the account, but to be sure it has implications for greater Louisiana and more broadly for

the Gulf South. This work should prove of great interest to historians of the American South, Louisiana, and the colonial and early national periods.