



# Building the Devil's Empire: French Colonial New Orleans

*Shannon Lee Dawdy*

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*Building the Devil's Empire* is the first comprehensive history of New Orleans's early years, tracing the town's development from its origins in 1718 to its revolt against Spanish rule in 1768. Shannon Lee Dawdy's picaresque account of New Orleans's wild youth features a cast of strong-willed captives, thin-skinned nobles, sharp-tongued women, and carousing travelers. But she also widens her lens to reveal the port city's global significance, examining its role in the French Empire and the Caribbean, and she concludes that by exemplifying a kind of rogue colonialism—where governments, outlaws, and capitalism become entwined—New Orleans should prompt us to reconsider our notions of how colonialism works.

"[A] penetrating study of the colony's founding."—*Nation*

"A brilliant and spirited reinterpretation of the emergence of French New Orleans. Dawdy leads us deep into the daily life of the city, and along the many paths that connected it to France, the North American interior, and the Greater Caribbean. A major contribution to our understanding of the history of the Americas and of the French Atlantic, the work is also a model of interdisciplinary research and analysis, skillfully bringing together archival research, archaeology, and literary analysis."—Laurent Dubois, Duke University

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