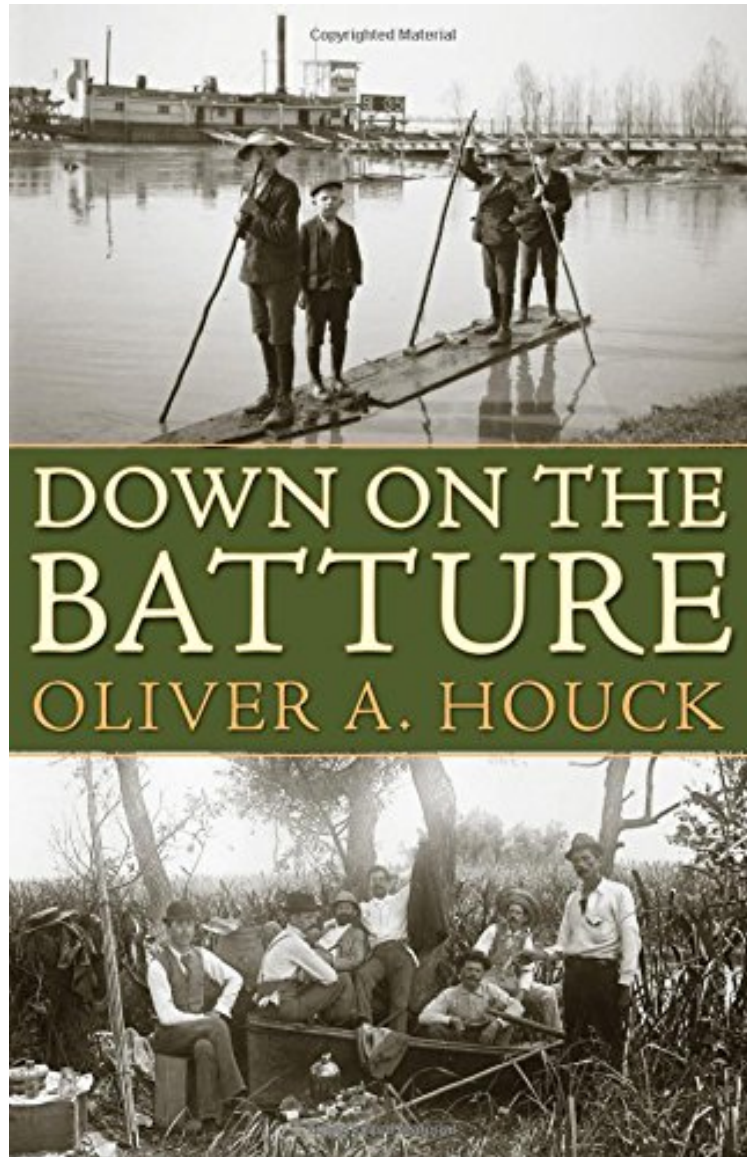


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## Down on the Batture

*Oliver A. Houck*

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#594703 in Books University Press of Mississippi 2010-04-19 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.92 x .85 x 5.80l, .94 #File Name: 1604734612205 pages | File size: 32.Mb

**Oliver A. Houck : Down on the Batture** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Down on the Batture:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Down on the Batture By Doggai I love all things about Louisiana. The enjoyment of the waters and uninhabited places along the Mississippi River comes with time spent as an equal to the habitues found there. The people of southern Louisiana, in all their guises, are the source of the flavor of the river bottoms. Rich, poor and in-between, there are more characters per square mile than anywhere else in the US. People

live, prosper, fail, get sick, and die in all gradations of happenstance on the Batture. Watching the parade of prospective stories along the river bottom is the stock-in-trade of the author, Oliver Houck. He doesn't miss much of the visual and aural seasonings developed in the daily goings-on in these locales of New Orleans. I like Houck because he is not preachy or judgemental. His observational style is likely a by-product of his daily interaction with law students at Tulane University. On his professorial pedestal Houck can spot the flaws of his Batture characters as well as his students. To get the most out of *Down on the Batture* a cup of New Orleans type coffee, that includes some chicory, is a must. It's a slow moving book, an anthology of life on the Batture, worthy of a cup of coffee and reading a chapter at a time. Then get on with your day and think about the scene, the Batture and the people. Later, plan on a trip down to that city to find the capstone of the experience. Seeing the Batture and the people.<sup>3</sup> of 3 people found the following review helpful. Very enjoyable  
By Kate Connor  
This is a collection of essays written over the past twenty-ish years about a part of Louisiana's "other" coastline. The Mississippi River rises and falls with the seasons and the space between high and low water supports an extensive and unusual collection of humans, wildlife, junk, art and vistas about which I knew nothing. Professor Houck and his dog Bear have been exploring it for all those years. He brings this area to life and gives each story a sweetness and pleasure that makes me want to explore it myself. I know New Orleans quite well, but have never managed to climb over the levee's rim at the end of Carrollton to see what is on the other side. I will make a point of it now! I really enjoyed these essays and recommend the book highly.<sup>2</sup> of 2 people found the following review helpful. A journey that everyone should make  
By Paul Bettens  
"Down on the Batture" will keep you captive and continues to do so long after you've finished it. It is a rich collection of short stories written in a fresh and punchy style. Oliver Houck invites us on several biking trips around New Orleans and along the Mississippi and canoe trips in the Atchafalaya swamps and we meet together with him people of Louisiana in past and present days (as well as a dog) and learn about the things they did and do. As a whole his great personal stories (mixed with most interesting history) consist out of a deep reflection not only on local Louisiana life. It takes you much further than that. It is about cherishing nature, the passing of time, about the constant and ever increasing destructive hits of man against the environment and what that does to us and our minds. It is fun and warm but at the same time the book - inevitably - brings along a mood of melancholy. Good to know that the ever optimistic Oliver Houck is living there in New Orleans and fighting to preserve what's still left. After you have read this book, you will want to hop on your bicycle and go bike around in search for a little adventure and beauty... wherever you live.

The lower Mississippi River winds past the City of New Orleans between enormous levees and a rim of sand, mud, and trees called "the batture." On this remote and ignored piece of land thrives a humanity unique to the region-ramblers, artists, drinkers, fishers, rabbit hunters, dog walkers, sunset watchers, and refugees from Immigration, alimony, and other aspects of modern life. Author Oliver A. Houck has frequented this place for the past twenty-five years. *Down on the Batture* describes a life, pastoral, at times marginal, but remarkably fecund and surprising. From this place he meditates on Louisiana, the state of the waterway, and its larger environs. He describes all the actors that have played lead roles on the edge of the mightiest river of the continent, and includes in his narrative plantations, pollution, murder, land grabs, keelboat brawlers, slave rebellions, the Corps of Engineers, and the oil industry. Houck draws from his experience in New Orleans since the early 1970s in the practice and teaching of law. He has been a player in many of the issues he describes, although he does not undertake to argue them here. Instead, story by story, he uses the batture to explore the forces that have shaped and spell out the future of the region. The picture emerges of a place that--for all its tangle of undergrowth, drifting humanity, shifting dimensions in the rise and fall of floodwater--provides respite and sanctuary for values that are original to America and ever at risk from the homogenizing forces of civilization.

From the Inside Flap  
An extended meditation on a lively slip of river wilderness abutting the Mississippi River  
About the Author  
Oliver A. Houck, a professor of law at Tulane University, received the Distinguished Achievement Award from the Environmental Section of the American Bar Association and has been named Louisiana's Conservationist of the Year, among other honors. He is the author of a book on the Clean Water Act and another called *Taking Back Eden: Eight Environmental Cases That Changed the World*.