



Everything New Orleans

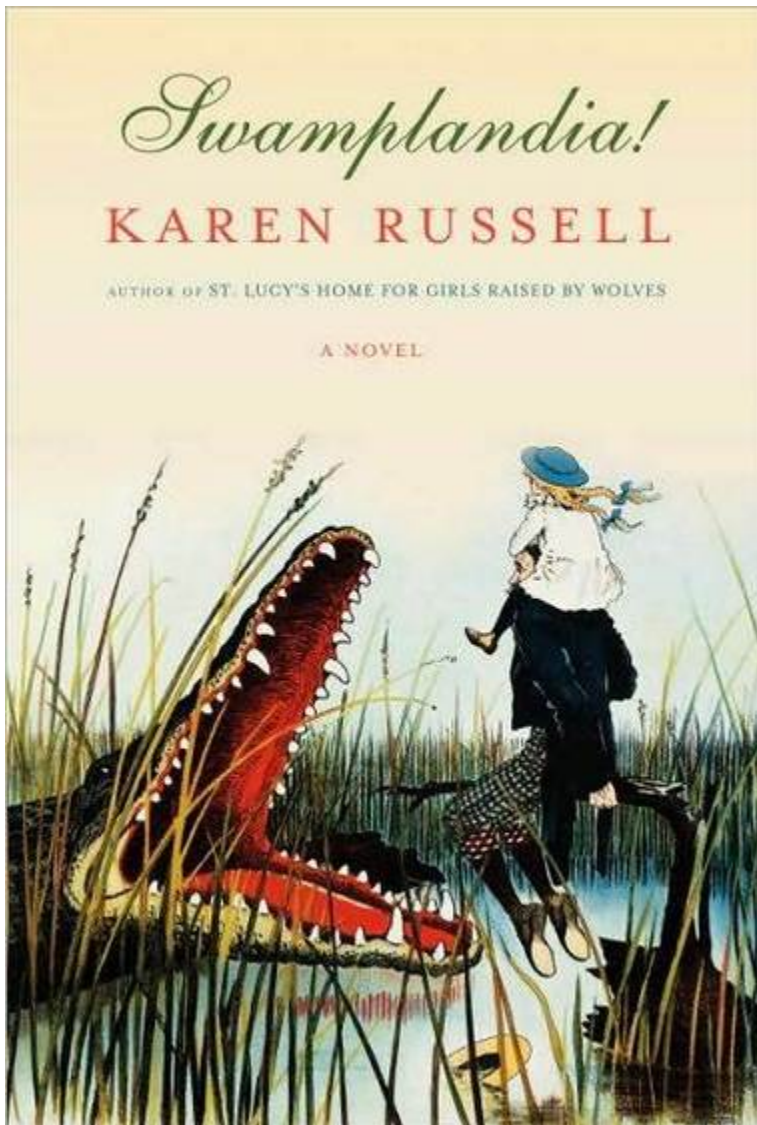
Hot Reads: Historians, novelists and a New Orleans architect eye the South in 2011 books

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By **The Times-Picayune**

For those with an interest in Southern history and literature, 2011 was a banner year. The winning titles range from a debut novel to a fresh examination of the Civil War.



Swamplandia!

By Karen Russell

Knopf, \$24.95

Set in a failing Everglades theme park, this gripping magic realist novel helps to explain why Russell has been singled out as a rising star by The New Yorker, Granta and other bellwether publications.

The Chitlin' Circuit: And the Road to Rock 'n' Roll

By Preston Lauterbach

Norton, \$26.95

Clubs, promoters and a host of black

performers — from B.B. King to Clarence “Gatemouth” Brown — all get their due in this rich, anecdotal history of the segregated music scene that spawned rock and roll.

Long, Last, Happy: New and Selected Stories

By Barry Hannah.

Grove, \$27.50

Linguistic exuberance, a taste for outrage, and a mordant comic sense define the style of this Mississippi fiction star who died March 2010.

New Orleans Observed: Drawings and Observations of America’s Most Foreign City

By Errol Barron

Tulane School of Architecture, \$20

Working with pencil and watercolor, a noted Louisiana architect distills the key elements of local streets and landmarks in a monograph that retain the freshness of a sketchbook. Currently available through independent bookstores and museums.

A World on Fire: Britain’s Crucial Role in the American Civil War

By Amanda Foreman

Random House, \$35

Looking beyond the battlefields, this detailed and dramatic history describes the backroom, diplomatic

maneuvers — and the changing attitudes of British bankers, politicians and businessmen — which helped shape the course of the Civil War.

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