



Women Pioneers of the Louisiana Environmental Movement

Peggy Frankland, Susan Tucker

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Women Pioneers of the Louisiana Environmental Movement provides a window into the passion and significance of thirty-eight committed individuals who led a grassroots movement in a socially conservative state. The book is comprised of oral history narratives in which women activists share their motivation, struggles, accomplishments, and hard-won wisdom. Additionally interviews with eight men, all leaders who worked with or against the women, provide more insight into this rich--and also gendered--history.

The book sheds light on Louisiana and America's social and political history, as well as the national environmental movement in which women often emerged to speak for human rights, decent health care, and environmental protection. By illuminating a crucial period in Louisiana history, the women tell how "environmentalism" emerged within a state already struggling with the dual challenges of adjusting to the civil rights movement and the growing oil boom.

Peggy Frankland, an environmental activist herself since 1982, worked with a team of interviewers, especially those trained at Louisiana State University's T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History. Together they interviewed forty women pioneers of the state environmental movement. Frankland's work also was aided by a grant from the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities. In this compilation, she allows the women's voices to provide a clear picture of how their smallest actions impacted their communities, their families, and their way of life. Some experiences were frightening, some were demeaning, and many women were deeply affected by the individual persecution, ridicule, and scorn their activities brought. But their shared victories reveal the positive influence their activism had on the lives of loved ones and fellow citizens.

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