

from Manhattan to Mississippi

by SCOTT NAUGLE | photography by JAMES EDWARD BATES

Marriage is a life-altering event. For Daisy Karam-Read, it also entailed a 1,000-mile shift in geography from her cosmopolitan lifestyle in New York City — museums, Broadway shows, and concerts — to the idyllic and steadfastly Southern Mississippi Gulf Coast.

An Austrian by birth, Karam-Read was born into an artistic family. Her father performed professionally as a concert violinist. World War II affected her family's economic status and they became "impoverished gentility," as Karam-Read recalls, "so we moved to New York to begin again."

A serendipitous union with a Southern gentleman was formalized in a small, private wedding ceremony in June of 1998 at Green Oaks Bed & Breakfast in Biloxi. After her marriage and relocation to the Coast, Karam-Read began daily journals to record her experiences, hoping to eventually pen a weekly newspaper column about her life as a transplanted Yankee.

Both the journals and her Ocean Springs home were lost in Katrina. The idea of a book formed for Karam-Read as she "saw how the people here bonded during a disaster. Folks endured losses and still looked for ways to help one another."

The result is "From Manhattan to Mississippi," a commentary on our Southern lifestyle, including manners, dress, religion and cuisine. The tone is warm and conversational; the pages turn without effort as comparisons are presented on what are often apples and oranges lifestyles between North and South. The Mississippi Gulf Coast fares well.

Asked to describe the Gulf Coast in three words, Karam-Read responds unwaveringly in a voice now inflected with traces of a Southern lilt, "Gracious, hospitable and resourceful."

Sounds like Daisy Karam-Read is here to stay.



Daisy Karam-Read has a publishing agreement with Quail Ridge Press to release 'From Manhattan to Mississippi' in October.



Karam-Read was married June 20, 1998, at Green Oaks Bed & Breakfast in Biloxi.