The coming of settlers to the vicinity of Carencro probably occurred before settlers came to Lafayette. In the year 1770, two men, John and Marian Mouton, traveling over the territory where the village of Carencro now stands, decided upon this spot as being a suitable one for settlement. The land was fertile and well drained. They were later joined by Traville Bernard, Rosemond Breaux, and Ovignac Arceneaux. These people first engaged in raising livestock, employing sons of the remaining Indians as herders.

Signs of growth sprang up as new settlers from other parts of the country came and settled in this region. They were mostly of Acadian descent and came with the first influx of those people from Acadia (Nova Scotia) to Louisiana. There were also some who came directly from France and Spain.

There are three theories applicable to the origin of the name “Carencro” none proven. It is said that in Indian days a huge mastodon died in the vicinity of “Beau Basin,” a tract of land extending to Vermilion Bayou. A great many carrion crows, large birds of prey, also known as turkey buzzards, came to feast, and it took them so long to devour the carcass that the place was named “Carencro,” French for buzzard.

Another theory would have the name derived from the Spanish “Carnero,” meaning bone pile, a word which in French usage soon became Carencro. The third theory is that there once lived here a tribe of Indians by the name of Karaulcrow.

“Because the name Carencro does not have a particularly pleasing aura, an effort was made to change the name in 1874. According to Louisiana, A Guide to the State, Pierre Cormier donated ground for a church to replace the chapel on the condition that the name ‘Carencro,’ which he deemed offensive, be changed to St. Pierre (in honor of his patron saint). The villagers agreed but in a short time they drifted back to the use of the more familiar appellation, which it bears to this day.”* 

For many years Carencro was only a village. The town was first laid out by a Mr. Milau, a surveyor, in 1779. In 1880, when the building of Morgan's Louisiana Railroad was assured, a charter was applied for but the town did not receive its charter until 1905.

Mr. Jacque Crouchet opened the first store in the little community in the year 1808. He was also the first postmaster.

The first cotton gin was built in 1876 by Mr. Ovignac Arceneaux. It had a capacity of from four to six bales a day, and today there are three gins capable of ginning over 50 bales a day.

The growing of sweet potatoes is one of Carencro's chief agricultural developments. There are several kilns as well providing work for many people. Carencro ranks second in the world in the shipping of sweet potatoes.

Today, Carencro is a typical rural South Louisiana community which has a predominating French influence. The residents of Carencro seem happy and satisfied with their community and proud of the progress they have made.

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In conjunction with the Lafayette Centennial, this history of Carencro is the third of a series of articles published weekly on the pasts of the communities of Lafayette Parish.