For a period in the early 1800s, the Balize, where pilots boarded ships on Pass a l'Outre (the east pass of the Mississippi) to take them up-river, was a pretty rowdy community, a place of violence. But the Louisiana Legislature in 1837 established standards of proficiency and personal conduct for the Mississippi river pilots and "order succeeded confusion, sobriety of living followed the scenes of riot and debauchery and ... a village of comfortable and convenient houses has sprung up like bright exhalations."

So reported the committee appointed by the Legislature in 1846 to report on the Balize. The report emphasized the pleasant home life and the flower and vegetable gardens on ground which the residents had raised above the marshland by their own efforts.

DeBow's Commercial Review of May 1847, after quoting extensively from the report, added that the population of the Balize was 300 to 350 and that 50 to 60 others lived on Southwest Pass, that outlet having come into use after 1830 with the shoaling of the Pass a l'Outre route chosen for ocean-going vessels by Bienville in 1718. It said there were 47 pilots in the association and that pilot boats were constantly cruising the Gulf waters so that no New Orleans-bound ship should be delayed.

New Orleans in 1849 threw a telegraph line to the Balize, and this community grew with the increasing volume of foreign trade. Hurricanes from time to time battered it, especially the one which in 1856 wiped out Last Isle. In 1860 two such visitations blew down nearly every house in the Balize but the people immediately rebuilt, because the Balize was needed.

During the War Between the States, the commercial movement on the river dwindled but trade picked up after Lee's surrender. Nine months after this, the New Orleans Times reported on January 11, 1866, that the telegraph line to the Balize had again been opened, and on January 3, 1867, the New Orleans Crescent emphasized the importance of this service to shipping.

In 1879 the jetties of James B. Eads opened South Pass to navigation, giving it the greatest depth of water over the bar the river had ever known, nearly 31 feet. Pilottown then became the landfall for New Orleans-bound ships, and the Balize became a ghost town. Wind and water wiped it out, and now only a few tombs covered with green slime and sinking into the bottomless mud remain to mark the site. The Balize-that-was is now part of the public game preserve of the State Conservation Department.

The Balize in 1847 as shown in DeBow's Commercial Review, May 1847