PEOPLE OF LOUISIANA

October 1, 1972 - January 31, 1973

BAYOU DE LA FOURCHE—ATACAPAS, AND OPELOUSAS.

About 25 leagues from the last mentioned place on the west side of the Mississippi, the creek or Bayou of the Fourche, called in old maps La Riviere des Chitamanches, flows from the Mississippi, and communicates with the sea to the west of the Balise. The entrance of the Mississippi is navigable only at high water, but will then admit of craft of from 60 to 70 tons burthen. On both banks of this creek are settlements, one plantation deep, for near 15 leagues, and they are divided into two parishes. The settlers are numerous, though poor, and the culture is universally cotton. On all creeks making from the Mississippi, the soil is the same as on the banks of the river, and the border is the highest part of it, from whence it descends gradually to the swamp. In no place on the low lands is there depth more than suffices for one plantation, before you come to the low grounds incapable of cultivation. This creek affords one of the communications to the two populous and rich settlements of Atacapas and Opelousas formed on and near the small rivers Teche and Vermillon which flow into the bay of Mexico. But the principal and swiftest communication is by the Bayou or creek of Plaquemines, whose entrance into the Mississippi is seven leagues higher up on the same side, and 32 above New Orleans. These settlements abound in cattle and horses, have a large quantity of good land in their vicinity, and may be made of great importance. A part of their produce is sent by sea to New Orleans, but the greater is carried in batteaux by the creeks above mentioned.

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