Our French Heritage

There are many definitions of Créole in South Louisiana but one thing is certain: Créoles — black, white and brown — have played a major role in making us who we are.
Farmers delayed introduction of slavery
First colonists were looking for riches, not good crops

Even though French ships regularly shipped black Africans to the New World in the 1600s, most of them were sent to the West Indies. In fact, the institution of African slavery was not introduced into Louisiana for more than 20 years after the colony’s founding. The main reason was that the first French settlers in Louisiana came to find gold and silver and had no interest in agriculture. They didn’t need slaves to till the land because they didn’t intend to do much farming.

According to Grady W. Kilman’s essay, “Slavery and Agriculture in Louisiana: 1699-1731” in the “Atakapas Gazette” magazine, “All North American colonies suffered many hardships when they were first founded. The French colony of Louisiana suffered more than most. The climate was mild during the winter, but extremely hot in the summer. The colonists struggled with mosquitoes, snakes, and other natural hazards in the coastal marshes. Away from the marshlands, the soil was fertile, but densely covered with forest. The immense tracts of timber had to be cleared before... colonists could plant... crops.

“The problem was further compounded by the fact that the majority of the colonists sent to Louisiana were not suited to an agricultural life, especially one set in a wilderness. The majority of these people had no agricultural experience whatsoever.”

Historian Jerah Johnson agrees. In his essay, “Colonial New Orleans: A Fragment of the Eighteenth-Century French Ethos,” Johnson writes, “The colonists France sent to ‘settle and farm’ the new area, including the famous forced immigrants from prisons and workhouses, proved (unsuited) to the job. The overwhelming number... came not from agricultural families, but from urban artisan and unskilled labor backgrounds. Two-thirds of the settlers recruited for the colony emigrated as craftsmen. Of one group of 624 workers sent (from France)... for example, only 84 had any former experience as farmers.”

But Kilman says that an even greater problem was that “... the French colonists were not interested in agriculture. They (came) to the New World for a variety of reasons: to escape prison, the galleys, or their parents, or to follow in the footsteps of the Spaniards in the discovery of gold and silver deposits. Hence, the very first settlers sent to Biloxi Bay, the earliest settlement, were interested in mining. This combination of undesirable factors — the laborious agricultural tasks, the ill-suited colonists, and the preoccupation with mining — delayed any extensive pursuit of agriculture.”

Johnson adds to the litany the fact that farming would have been nearly impossible, even if the colonists knew what they were doing.

“The simplest food crops had to be planted on a seasonal schedule and took several months to mature,” he reports, “and arrivals of immigrants seldom coincided with the beginning of the growing season. Moreover, fearful of the treacherous sandbars at the mouth of the Mississippi, ships’ captains continued even after the founding of New Orleans in 1718 to deposit their cargoes of colonists at French installations on the Gulf Coast, principally at the original 1699 settlement on Biloxi Bay. Adjacent lands, mostly swamps, marshes, dense woodlands, or sandy... beach soils, proved notably unsuited to farming.”

Kilman says that the difficulty and consequent delay in establishing agriculture in Louisiana produced two effects: First, it kept Louisiana completely dependent on France for food, clothing, and other essentials; and, second, it delayed the introduction of black slavery into Louisiana. Black slaves were not even needed to work the Louisiana gold and silver mines, because there was no gold or silver to find.

From the earliest times of the settlement, the French did try to use Indian slaves, mostly women, who did the little farming done by the local Indian tribes. Most of the men were hunters. But a more important consideration, Johnson points out, was that “... the great numbers of female Indian slaves proved too tempting for the mostly male colonists to resist. Governor Artoine de Cadillac complained of local men’s infatuation with Indian women, whom they prefer to French women,” upon his arrival in 1713, and a few years later another observer noted that “all except Sieur Blondel and the new arrivals have Indian women as slaves who are always with child or nursing.”

However, most historians agree with Kilman that “Indian slavery was never a satisfactory solution to the (labor) problems.” To begin with, the French needed Indians as their allies, and enslaving them was not the way to accomplish a friendly alliance. Second, the Indians of French North America were hunters, not farmers. Most of them knew about as much about farming as the Frenchmen did. Third, because they were hunters, the Indians knew the woods. It was easy for them to run away.

According to Kilman, Jean Baptiste de Bienville, who was governor of the infant colony, proposed in 1708 to French officials “that Louisiana be permitted to exchange Indians for Negroes in the West Indies. Realizing the relative value of Indians to Negroes, he offered to exchange three Indians for every two Negroes. Bienville argued that the Indians would be

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Free people of color stood between social classes
'There is no spot where the man of color has been of such importance'

Many of the free people of color who came to Louisiana, particularly after the slave insurrections in Saint-Domingue, were fine craftsmen and artisans who established reputations as being among the finest of the silversmiths, furniture makers, wood workers, master tailors, and masters of other crafts of the genteel era. Others were poets, dramatists, and artists of the first order.

As the Jesuit priest Charles O'Neill points out in his introduction to a translation of "Our People and Our History," written in French in 1911 by Rodolphe Lucien Desdunes, "The pen of many a historian and novelist has sketched the portrait of the French-speaking Louisiana gentleman. ... What is not so well known is that many a French-language writer of 19th-century Louisiana was partly of African ancestry. They shared neither the privilege nor the master class nor the degradation of the slave. They stood between — or rather apart — sharing the cultivated taste of the upper caste and the painful humiliation attached to the race of the enslaved."

O'Neill says that free people of color were found in Louisiana as early as 1725, when Raphael, a free black man from Martinique, married Marie Gaspart from Bruges in Flanders. On Nov. 27, 1927, Jean Mingo, a free black man, married Thérèse, a slave belonging to a M. de Cantillon, with permission of the plantation manager.

"From then on church records and civil archives mention the presence of the free persons of color," O'Neill writes. "Some entered the colony as free people, some were freed in recognition of merit and loyalty. Some had been slaves, but had been given freedom by their white lover or parent; some had purchased their freedom by extra work during leisure hours."

"During the Spanish regime, easy emancipation prevailed and the free population of color continued to grow. The census of 1788 showed 1,701 free Negroes in a total population of 43,111 in Louisiana and West Florida."

Indeed, during the Spanish era, free men of color enjoyed what O'Neill calls "a lively social life in New Orleans." According to his research, the city's first theater had mulatto stars.

"The average white accepted this middle layer of society between himself and black slaves, and dealt with its members," the Jesuit continues. "Yet the white population had two complaints. They suspected that the free mulatto might promote slave discontent and revolt. They admired the beauty of the cafe-au-lait quadroons and octaroons, but felt that the liaisons constantly undermined the morals of young white males."

Throughout Louisiana history, free black men were used in the military. On several occasions, the French gave freedom to slave volunteers in exchange for military service against the Indians. The Spanish government of Louisiana organized a militia company composed entirely of pardos y morenos, free men of color. They participated in the capture of Baton Rouge and Pensacola during the campaign led by Gov. Bernardo de Gálvez against the British during the American War for Independence. During the War of 1812, Louisiana's Battalion of Free Men of Color was unique in the United States as what O'Neill describes as "the only Negro volunteer militia with its own line officers." Andrew Jackson welcomed black troops during the Battle of New Orleans.

But, O'Neill says, "Valor and prowess in the field did not win expected American rights in the constitution and legislature of the new state. Only 21-year-old white males could vote and be elected representatives."

Nonetheless, "several persons of color amassed outstanding fortunes, particularly in real estate," O'Neill reports, and "without ever accounting political equality (to them) the Louisiana Supreme Court steadily protected the middle position of the free persons of color against the more militant whites."

The abolitionist movement did as much to undermine the status of gens de couleur libres as any other social movement. "The fear of slave rebellion was ever present," O'Neill writes and the free Negro was in the mind of (whites) the most likely leader of any such uprising. Thus between 1830 and 1860, social pressure and legislative action increased against emancipation, against immigration of free Negroes, and in favor of colonizing free black people who were already here outside of the state.

"In the Reconstruction era, education and savoir-faire led the free persons of color into leadership posts ahead of the newly freed slaves. Active in politics and the press, these leaders surpassed their counterparts in other states," according to O'Neill. But the campaign for disenfranchisement and for segregation that came after Reconstruction brought what the Jesuit calls "a tidal wave of emotion and laws" that undid the position of gens de couleur libres along with those of men who had been slaves.

About Louisiana, O'Neill writes, "Two decades after the wave had struck, black historian Dunbar-Nelson wrote: 'There is no State in the Union, hardly any spot of like size on the globe, where the man of color has lived so intensely, made so much progress, been of such historical importance, and yet about whom so comparatively little is known.'"
Most Louisianans slaves came from Senegal

According to Thomas Fiehrer’s essay, “The African Presence in Colonial Louisiana,” France was one of the leading slave trading nations in the late 1700s, bringing some 250,000 slaves to the New World in the years before the French Revolution. “Such harbor towns as Nantes, La Rochelle, La Havre, and Bordeaux developed conspicuous wealth from this trade,” according to Fiehrer. Most of the French slave trade was with the West Indies, although significant numbers were also brought directly to Louisiana. In later years, during the Spanish regime and early in the American regime, many of the West Indian slaves were also brought to Louisiana, particularly when the Louisiana sugar industry was in its formative years and their expertise was needed.

According to research done by Gwenda Mayo Hall, “There was only a handful of black slaves in Louisiana before the first slave-trading ship arrived from Africa in 1719. Between 1719 and 1731, 28 of 23 slave ships that came from Africa while French ruled Louisiana arrived. Between June 1719 and January 1731, 16 slave-trading ships arrived in Louisiana from the region that is now the western African country of Senegal, which borders the Atlantic Ocean. The slave trade from Senegal intensified after 1725. Between February 1726 and January 1731, 12 slave ships from Senegal landed 3,259 slaves at Balze at the mouth of the Mississippi River. During the same period, ships from Senegal discharged 964 slaves at the same port. The only other slave-trading ship that came from Africa to Louisiana while the colony was under French rule arrived in 1743 and was from Senegal.

According to Hall’s research, two-thirds of the slaves brought to Louisiana under French rule came from Senegambia (the region between the Senegal and Gambia rivers), and they included a strong and influential contingent of Bambara tribesmen who lived along the banks of the Gambia River between Bambun and Macina. The French had been trading in Senegambia since at least 1664 and established a series of trading posts there, particularly on the Senegal River.

According to Hall, the French slave trade to Louisiana focused on Bambun because, in 1720, the Company of the Indies, formed by John Law and others in France as a scheme to colonize Louisiana, was given trade monopolies in both Louisiana and Senegambia.

“The Senegal concession was the only place on the African coast where the company held exclusive trading rights,” Hall writes. “Between 1726 and 1733, almost all the slave-trading voyages organized by the Company of the Indies went to Senegal. Thirty slave ships landed there during these years. All but one of them left from Senegambia, which was the source of two-thirds of the slaves brought to French Louisiana, 3,947 out of 5,977.

According to Hall’s book, “Africans in Colonial Louisiana,” “The slave trade to Louisiana was organized by the Company of the Indies, a private company licensed by the King of France that controlled, administered, and held directly the trade monopoly in both Senegal and Louisiana during the years of the African slave trade (to Louisiana). Its home port in France was Lorient (at the top of the Bay of Biscay in Brittany), and almost all of the slave trade voyages to Louisiana originated from and returned to that port. Ties between Senegal and Louisiana were quite close.

Officials of the Company of the Indies in Senegal and in Louisiana were well informed about developments in both concessions. News and dispatches from the two concessions were carried back to France by way of the slave-trade ships returning to Lorient.”

According to Hall, the Company of the Indies’ trading area in Senegal stretched from Arguin Island on the north to Sierra Leone on the south. Fort St. Louis, the headquarters of the company in Africa, was located on an island near the mouth of the Senegal River, but sandbars made it difficult to load and unload slaves there.

Hall writes, “The island of Gorée, near the present city of Dakar, was the best port in Senegal. ... It was the main warehouse of the slave ‘merchandise.’ Slaves were brought to Gorée from all of the trading posts of the Senegal concession to await ships departing for America. ... The slaves were called captives. They were not referred to as slaves until they were sold in America, probably a legalistic fiction justifying their enslavement as captives of war. ... The men who held the captives until a slave ship came for them were called capturers.

In addition to trade considerations, Hall says, “The most important kingdoms of Senegambia maintained a tight control over which people could be enslaved and sold to Europeans. Those sent to Louisiana were mainly captives taken during the wars arising out of the founding and consolidation of the Segu Bambara Empire established (in western Africa) by Marmarui Kuhulai (who reigned from about 1712 to about 1753).”

“The slave trade from Senegal intensified between 1726 and 1729, the Company of the Indies, which ruled between 1720 and 1731, was attempting to establish a prosperous tobacco colony at the Natchez settlement, the present site of Natchez, Mississippi. Many of the newly arrived Africans were sent to Natchez. They played a prominent role when the Natchez Indians rose up against the French and wiped out their settlement at Natchez on November 28, 1729. At the time of the uprising, the settlement consisted of 200 French men, 82 French women, 150 French children, and 280 black slaves. Before they revolted, the Natchez...”

Nonetheless, some of the blacks remained loyal to the French. When the French and their Chocataws attacked the main Natchez village in January 1730, 15 blacks were armed by the French and fought with them. Gov. Perier wrote afterward that they “believed with surprising valor. If these soldiers were not so expensive and so necessary to the colony, it would be better to use them than our soldiers who seem made especially for Louisiana, they are so bad.” The blacks were given their freedom.

Some of the blacks sided with the Natchez Indians and about 50 of them were captured by the Chocataws, who were allied with the French. According to the French accounts, three of the black leaders who had joined with the Natchez were “burned alive with a degree of cruelty which has inspired all the Negroes with a new horror of the Savages, but which will have a beneficial effect in securing the safety of the Colony.”

Code Noir opened opportunities found only in Louisiana

By 1724, there were enough slaves, free men of color, and people of mixed blood in the Louisiana colony that Gov. Jean Baptist Bienville found it necessary to enact special legislation for them. The regulations were called the Code Noir, and they generally followed the slave code then in effect in Saint-Domingue.

The code dealt mainly with slaves but it also restricted the activities of free Negroes, ordered all Jews out of the colony, and forbade "the exercise of any other religion than Catholic." It required that all slaves be baptized in the Roman Catholic faith and that slave marriages be performed according to the sacraments of the Church. In all other matters, slaves were without rights. Their property belonged to their masters and they could not be witnesses or otherwise participate in legal trials, except in cases where they had violated the slave code or Louisiana law. The code also limited the rights of masters to free slaves. Freedom could be granted only with the approval of the Superior Council.

Many of the articles of the code protected slaves, providing that they must be fed and clothed, cared for in sickness and old age, and that they "could not be shackled or tortured in any way. It also forbade slaves owned by different masters to assemble, forbade them to carry weapons or carry whips, and required that they have permission from their masters to sell or hire themselves. But the final article of the Louisiana code set it apart from others. It read in part, "We grant to manumitted slaves the same rights, privileges, and immunities which are enjoyed by freeborn persons. It is our pleasure that their merit in having acquired their freedom shall produce in their favor, not only with regard to their persons, but also to their property, the same effects which our subjects derive from the happy circumstances of their having been born here."

Louisiana’s black code reinforced a three-tiered social
Events in France touched off uprisings in Caribbean

The French Revolution of 1789 not only propelled Europe into a war, but it also touched off slave uprisings in the Caribbean. On Saint-Domingue, the gens de couleur began the chain of rebellion when French planters would not grant them full citizenship as decreed in the Declaration of the Rights of Man.

A bloody, 13-year revolution followed. It was a complex web of wars between slaves, whites, and free people of color, and it involved France, Spain, and Great Britain.

Violent conflicts between white colonists and black slaves were not uncommon in Saint-Domingue. From early times, bands of runaway slaves known as maroons entrenched themselves in the island's mountains and forests and regularly harried white plantation owners. As the number of slaves on the island increased, so did the number of runaways, and these guerrilla bands sometimes numbered in the thousands. But these attacks were mostly unorganized forays without central organization and leadership.

The first major rebel was François Macandal, whose six-year rebellion beginning in 1751 left some 6,000 people dead. He was a reputedly a voodoo sorcerer and drew from African traditions and religions to motivate his followers. The French banished him at the stake in 1758.

The attacks by the maroons were the first revolts against French rule and the slaveholding system in the Caribbean, but the maroons were not able to put together a continuing, broad-based insurrection. Although they were led by the regular attacks, colonial authorities were able to repel them reasonably easily, often with the help of les gens de couleur, who hoped that their cooperation would bring equal footing with the white colonists.

When the French Revolution began, the National Assembly in Paris ordered the Colonial Assembly in Saint-Domingue to give the vote to gens de couleur who owned land and paid taxes.

The Colonial Assembly refused and open rebellion erupted. The 1790 revolt was led by Napoleon Oge. As with early outbreaks, this uprising was put down by the white militia and by a corps of black "volunteers."

The slave rebellion that finally toppled the French government in Saint-Domingue began in August of 1791. According to accounts that have been recorded through the years, François-Dominique Toussaint L'ouverture helped to plot the uprising, but it was not one of its first leaders. Among the first leaders were Boukman, a maroon who was a voodoo priest; Georges Bissou, who later made Toussaint his aide; Jean-François, who subsequently commanded forces, along with Bissou and Toussaint, under the Spanish flag, and Jeanmot, who was said to be the bloodthirstiest of them all.

These leaders sealed their pact with a voodoo ceremony conducted by Boukman in early August 1791. The uprising began a little more than a week after the ceremony, on Aug. 22. According to contemporary accounts, bands of slaves in the northern part of the island slaughtered every white person they found. Tales of the rebellion describe widespread burning of property, fields, factories, and anything else that belonged to slaveholders. It is said that the inferno burned almost continuously for months.

When news of the slave uprising reached Cap Français in the south, reprisals against non-whites were swift and equally brutal. The white colonists at Cap Français were outnumbered, but they were well armed and fought from fortified positions. The first uprising of what would become a continuing rebellion left an estimated 10,000 blacks and 2,000 whites dead. More than 1,000 plantations were sacked.

Even though the rebels failed to overrun Cap Français, mulatto forces under such capable leaders as André Rigaud and Alexandre Pétion continued to clash with white militiamen. Loyalties and sympathies stirred by the events of the French Revolution muddled things even more. When the National Assembly in Paris finally gave equal rights to the gens de couleur, whites in Saint-Domingue (who had little use for the king until then) suddenly became ardent royalists. Throughout the colony, black slaves rebelled against white colonists, mulatto battled black people who were forced to fight for the white cause, black royalists fought both whites and mulattoes who did not support the king, and republicans of every color fought royalists of every color.

Given this political turmoil, it was only a matter of time before Spain and Great Britain, who were enemies of France, decided to take advantage of the situation. Some historians believe that the two countries had an informal arrangement to divide the French colony between them. It certainly was an opportunity for the countries to strike a blow against France. British forces besieged Port-Au-Prince and took it in June 1794. The Spanish launched a two-pronged offensive and occupied most of the northern part of Saint-Domingue.

But the black leaders in Saint-Domingue were not fighting to trade one master for another. They wanted independence, not simply to give up French rule to be governed by Spain or Great Britain. And, in 1794, commanders such as Rigaud, baying by French republican promises of freedom for the West Indian slaves, actively fought against the British and Spanish. Other historians, notably Jean-François and Bissou, thought that allegiance to a king would be more acceptable than allegiance to the New French Republic, and accepted commissions from France. Toussaint, who began commanding his own forces in February 1793, also took up a Spanish banner for a while, but changed his mind in May 1794.

After sending his family to safety, Toussaint pledged his support to France because it appeared that it was the only country that was willing to do away with slavery in the islands. The National Assembly voted on Feb. 4, 1794, to do away with slavery, while the Spanish showed no sign of keeping their promise of emancipation, and the British had reinstated slavery in the areas they occupied.

In March 1796, Toussaint rescued the French commander, Gen. Etienne-Jean Berthélemy, from a mulatto-led effort to depose him as the leader of the French government in Saint-Domingue. In gratitude, Laveaux appointed Toussaint lieutenant governor of Saint-Domingue. Toussaint accepted the position of governor, even though he believed that Saint-Domingue needed leadership in the hands of black men such as himself. But now, working from a position within the government, he began to consolidate his political and military power, and to undercut the French administration.

In 1797, Toussaint was made commander in chief of the island. He tried to ally himself with Rigaud, but Toussaint's predominantly black army clashed with Rigaud's mulatto forces. As commander in chief, Toussaint wrote to John Adams, president of the fledgling United States, and promised that if the Americans helped his cause he would make certain that France could never use Saint-Domingue as a base for operations in North America (where there was agitation for Spain to return the vast Louisiana territory to French control). Adams sent enough arms and ships that Toussaint's black forces outfought Rigaud's army in what has come to be called 'The War of the Castes.' Rigaud fled the colony in late 1800.

Followed by the defeat of Spanish and British forces, Toussaint began moving toward independence from France. With Toussaint as its governor for life, Saint-Domingue was still technically a French colony, but was acting as an independent nation. Napoleon Bonaparte, who had come to power in France, wanted the territory of a former slave who planned to govern a French colony without acknowledging Bonaparte as overlord. Moreover, Bonaparte regarded Saint-Domingue as one of the keys to a French empire in North America. In 1802, Bonaparte sought to restore slavery to the West Indies through political guile and military force. In January, he sent his brother-in-law, Gen. Charles Victor Emmanuel Leclerc, and between 16,000 and 20,000 men to Saint-Domingue.
Toussaint claimed heritage from African king

Reading and riding were his early lover

According to legend, Toussaint Louverture, the leader who helped to bring about the liberation of Haiti, was the descendant of an African king. His real name was François-Dominique Toussaint. He was given the name Louverture while leading the slave revolt. L'Ouverture means "opening," and he seemed always to be able to find the opening in the enemy's defenses.

In her biography of Toussaint, "This Gilded African," Wenda Parkinson gives this account of his ancestry: "Two leagues from Le Cap there lay the sugar estate "L'habitation Brea", owned by the Comte de Noël ... on the outskirts (of which) lived, among the 1,000 slaves who worked the estate, a man who was privileged above the rest, a man who had been singled out by his master ... He was the second son of an African king, King Gouă-GOU of the Aridas tribe. As a young man he had been taken in a tribal battle and sold by his captors ... to a Portuguese slave trader. ... The young prince's inherent authority must have made (an) impression on the Comte (who bought the slave in Saint-Domingue). ... He granted him immediately the "liberte de savanne," a partial freedom that allowed the slave, although still the property of his master, liberty within the confines of the estate to live his own life. The young prince was apportioned a parcel of land and given five slaves of his own to work for him. In the enclosed world of the sugar estate he was a man of some position.

The prince accepted his new life and, with the encouragement of his master, decided to take a wife. He chose a girl from his own tribe who was beautiful, lively, and intelligent. ... The new bride, Pauline, bore his husband five children (including) Toussaint ... born on May 20 perhaps in 1743 or 1746, for the birth of slaves was usually recorded.

"By the time he was twelve (Toussaint) was already famous for his horsemanship. ... He was to become known throughout the colony as the 'Centaur of the Savanne.' He rode tirelessly, at one with his mount, and even in middle age he could ride 125 miles and more a day and dismount with the same light agility as he had when he leapt into the saddle."

According to Parkinson, his godfather, Pierre Baptiste, had a major influence over the young Toussaint. "Baptiste worked in the hospital run by the Fathers of Charity. One of the priests, a Father Luxembourg, was impressed by his intelligence and encouraged (Baptiste) to learn to read and write, thereby breaking an unwritten law in the colony, where it was thought not only sensible but essential to maintain a slave's ignorance. The priest also instilled in him a devout belief in Christianity. Baptiste in turn passed on his knowledge to Toussaint who quickly learned to read, although he never learned to write purely French. Writing to the end of his life in phonetic Creole. He devoured any book available. ... The most well-thumbed book (in his own library in later years) was Epictetus, who was also born a slave."

Toussaint was apparently something of a womanizer in his youth. He did not marry until he was nearly 40. His bride was Suzanne Simone Baptiste, the daughter of his godfather. According to Parkinson, "His love for Suzanne lasted all his life; although he was not faithful to her he loved her tenderly. She was an abiding anchor in his life; her calm simplicity and lack of pretension sustained and satisfied him."

Toussaint was nearly 50 when the slave revolution began on Saint-Domingue, and nearly 60 when he was finally forced into a French prison and to his death by Napoleon Bonaparte's army.

France finally abolished slavery in its colonies in 1848
Assembly called practice ‘attack on human dignity’

In 1848, when France became a republic, the nation claimed an overseas empire extending from the Americas to Africa and the Indian Ocean.

The sugar islands of the Caribbean were gone, and Louisiana had been sold, but France still held the islands of Saint-Pierre and Miquelon off the coast of Newfoundland, the islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe in the West Indies, and the vast territory of Guyane on the coast of South America.

In the Indian Ocean, France possessed La Réunion, the island of Mayotte in the Comoros chain, and bases in Sainte-Marie and Madagascar. France also controlled some areas of India, held trading posts still in Senegal and on the Guinea coast, and in Algeria.

In the Pacific France had held a protectorate over Tahiti since 1842, as well as some of the Society Islands and the Marquesas chain.

The revolution of 1848 made the colonies into territories of the republic and gave them representation in the national assembly. But the greatest achievement of the 1848 revolution for the colonies was the final abolition of slavery. It had been abolished in French possessions once before, in 1794 but was reinstated by Napoleon Bonaparte. On April 27, 1848, the French assembly adopted a decree declaring slavery as "an attack on human dignity," and emancipated more than 250,000 slaves, most of them in the plantation colonies in the West Indies and La Réunion.

However, before the emancipation decree reached the Caribbean, slave revolts had broken out in Martinique and Guadeloupe, and the governors of these colonies abolished slavery on their own authority on May 23 and May 27, respectively.

Here is the text of the decree adopted on April 27, 1848, by the French assembly:

3RD ARTICLE: Governors and general commissioners of the Republic are laden with applying all the measures, appropriate to ensure liberty in Martinique (sich), Guadeloupe, and its "dependences," Reunion, Guyana, Senegal and other French settlements of the African's occidental cost, "Mayotte" and the dependencies, and Algeria.

4TH ARTICLE: Old slaves who were destined to misdemeanors or personally entitled this punishment for facts which, ascribed to free people, shouldn't have entailed free punishment, are freed. People who were deported by administrative measures are recalled.

5TH ARTICLE: The National Assembly will settle the quota of the indemnity which will be granted to the colonists.

6TH ARTICLE: The Colonists purged from bondage and the Indian possession will be represented at the National Assembly.

7TH ARTICLE: The principle that the French ground liberates the slave who reaches it applies to the Republic's colonies and possessions.

8TH ARTICLE: In the future, even in foreign countries, it is prohibited for French people to possess, buy, sell slaves or participate either directly or indirectly in all that kind of traffics or exploitations. All infractions of these decisions will entail the loss of French citizenship.

9TH ARTICLE: The Minister of the Navy and the Colonies and the Minister of the War are laden with (each in what they are concerned) the execution of the present decree.
Louisiana felt effects of revolutions in France, Haiti

At the time of the French Revolution, Louisiana was a Spanish colony, with a French population and close commercial ties to France. As in France, the Revolution divided and the ideals espoused by the French revolutionaryaries. Their political views fell along class and economic lines. The leading planters and merchants rejected notions of equality and decried efforts by republican France to end slavery.

When the revolutionary ideals spread to the French Caribbean, planters in Louisiana wanted to keep those slaves "infected" with the ideas of freedom from coming to Louisiana.

According to Hangar, "(Louisiana) officials, many of them planters, urged the Spanish governor and crown to ban such importation, initially from the Caribbean, but later from Africa as well. They endeavored not only to check knowledge of and experience with rebellion, but also to decrease the slave to master ratio, and they looked to a stronger, centralized Spanish government to provide stability and protect their interests.

"On the other hand," Hangar continues, "several French persons in Louisiana voiced private and public support for liberty, equality and called for the reinstatement of French rule in (Louisiana). Some of them even went so far as to conspire with United States invasionary forces and rebel slaves in order to achieve their goals."

Historians such as Bennet H. Wall agree that the French Revolution threatened the stability of Louisiana society.

"As a monarchy, Spain could not countenance a revolutionary France, so supporters of the French Revolution among the inhabitants of Louisiana posed a problem for Gov. Hector de Carondelet," Wall writes in "Louisiana: A History." "These supporters were inspired by the democratic spirit of the new government in France and they sought a similar regime in Louisiana. The situation reached near-crisis proportions in the mid-1790s when revolutionaries clubs were founded in Natchitoches and several other locations in the colony. There were public demonstrations in New Orleans and an attempted slave revolt in Pointe Coupee. Carondelet decided to take the hard line. He forbade the singing of French revolutionary songs and threatened to discipline those who openly showed sympathy to the French Republic. These measures worked, probably because many prominent citizens supported the governor."

T. Harry Williams gives more detail in his text, "Louisiana: A Narrative History."

"In 1793 ... two events occurred which inflamed the Creoles of Louisiana—the execution of Louis XVI and the declaration of war between France and Spain," Williams writes. "Now they marched through the streets of New Orleans yelling 'Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity' or 'Hang the aristocrats,' and singing 'Marseillaise,' 'La Marseillaise,' and other French revolutionary songs. Carondelet issued a proclamation forbidding the reading of 'public writings, printed matters or papers relating to the political affairs of France' and prohibited meetings, gatherings, or even conversations in which the French Revolution was discussed. Those who violated the proclamation were to be imprisoned at Havana or fined 200 pesos. ... Copies of the proclamation were distributed throughout the colony ... and 'anyone who finds the observance of this order too rigorous may withdraw from the colony with all his effects to where he pleases, as the government does not care to admit or retain any subjects other than those who come to enjoy the peace, union, immunities, and advantages that form the basis of its prosperity."

"Early in 1795," Williams continues, "even greater disorder broke out. The populace of New Orleans compelled orchestras to play revolutionary songs, secured communications and

Slaves did rebel against La. masters

There were a number of instances of slave rebellion in Louisiana, but historians note that the fear of rebellion here was always more prevalent than the actual fact. In 1793, a slave named Samba led an abortive rebellion that resulted in the torture and execution of several of the rebels.

In 1795, slaves on Julian Poydras' plantation in Pointe Coupee plotted to murder their masters. These plans were revealed to a planter and widespread hysteria ensued. Twenty-three slaves were hanged, although an investigation by Gov. Hector de Carondelet failed to produce conclusive evidence of a conspiracy.

In 1811, the largest slave revolt ever to take place in the United States broke out on a plantation located near the community of Noreco in St. Charles Parish.

Bennet H. Wall, writing in "Louisiana: A History," reports, "We do not know nearly as much about this affair as we would like to know because the leaders were either killed in the fighting or executed almost immediately afterward. We know that a mulatto named Charles Deslonde and an angry man named Jupiter were two of the leaders. We know that the rebels may have numbered as many as 500. We know that they were organized into companies, perhaps into larger units, and that the leaders were mounted on horseback. We also know that they were very poorly armed, most with agricultural implements, as they started marching downriver toward New Orleans. Very few whites were killed, most seem to have been warned in ample time to escape to New Orleans ahead of the rebels."

A detachment of U.S. troops stationed in Baton Rouge marched toward the rebellious slaves in one direction. Militia from New Orleans marched up river from the other direction. At the same time, a group of settlers who lived on the west bank crossed the river and attacked the slaves.

"The poorly armed blacks were quickly defeated, and those who were able fled into the fields and swamps," Wall reports. The dead on the field reportedly numbered 67. Sixteen supposed leaders who had been captured were taken to New Orleans and immediately tried by court martial. After they had been executed by a firing squad, their severed heads were put on poles up and down the river as a warning to others.

According to Wall, "This was the last slave revolt in Louisiana history. They were later plots and conspiracies, but they involved only a few slaves and all of them were exposed before an actual uprising took place. Rumors of insurrection were even more common, but they always turned out to be ungrounded. The whites of Louisiana never ceased to fear another revolt, however, so long as slavery existed."
People of color formed cipière communities

The cypress industry grew in importance under Spanish rule in Louisiana

In his essay, "Colonial New Orleans: A Fragment of the Eighteenth-Century French Ethos" in the book "Creole New Orleans," Jerah Johnson writes: "... It was during the Spanish period that Louisiana's free people of color achieved sufficient numbers and a political importance that enabled them to mature into a community. Natural increase, but more important, the greater ease with which manumission could be accomplished under Spanish administration and the influx of free blacks from Saint Domingue, raised the 165 or more free people of color in the colony at the end of the French period to almost 1,500 by the end of the Spanish period.

"For most of the period more than half of the free people of color lived not in New Orleans but on small farms or as tenants outside of town. (But by 1803) the overwhelming number lived in the city, close to 1,200 of the 1,500 or so.

"Because of their unique social and legal standing midway between the free and slave sectors of the population and recognized as such in law, the free people of color developed the most nearly free status of any of the several such groups in colonial Louisiana society. Acutely conscious of their legal rights and their group's interests as well as the tenous and fragile nature of their position, they tended to act with an exceptionally high degree of cohesiveness. At the same time, individual members of the group freely associated with the European colonials, the African slaves, and the Indians, both free and slave. Work, service, trade, and plácage, the developing institution of formalized manumission-keeping, brought them into contact with the same white community, while cultural and family bonds tied them to the slave and Indian communities. Except for recently arrived islanders, there were few freemen of color who did not have relatives, often immediate family members, among the African slaves and not infrequently among the Indians.

"According to Gwenendolyn Mello Hall, escaped black and Indian slaves also formed communities in the backwaters around New Orleans which she calls "maroon settlements". The communities began in the swampy areas surrounding New Orleans, especially to the south and east, where small bayous led into Lake Borgne and the Rigolets and thence to coastal trading centers along the Gulf of Mexico, became the center of these... communities. They were the refuge of families rather than single migrants. They were populatd almost entirely by Louisiana cypress slaves, although by the 1780s large numbers of African slaves had been imported into the colony. The maroons were well supplied with guns and ammunition to hunt for food as well as to defend themselves against raids organized by the slave owners and the colonial militia.

"The maroons did not seek to withdraw from the economy of New Orleans but actively engaged in trade in the city. They cut and sold squared cypress logs to white sawmill owners and cypress troughs and tubs for processing indigo. They made and sold baskets and sifliers from willow reeds. They fished, trapped birds, collected berries, and grew corn, sweet potatoes and squash.

Magic was an early ingredient of Creole slave culture

African religious beliefs came to Louisiana with the first boutched of black slaves. Included among those beliefs were the use of charms, spells, incantations, and other spiritual devices.

"According to Gwenendolyn Mello Hall, who has extensively researched the origins of African slavery in Louisiana, most of the black people brought to Louisiana by the French were Bambara tribemen, and ... all adult Bambara males knew how to make charms.

"Indeed, long before Europeans found and enslaved them, the Bambara developed complex cosmological and religious views that were passed from generation to generation among the old and wise. According to Hall, "Bambara religion is based upon fundamental principles known only by priests, heads of families, and the old of both sexes versed in "the science of things of the exterior.""

Siméon Le Page Du Pratz, who was an early chronicler of life in Louisiana, wrote of the slaves, "They are very superstitious and attached to their prejudices and to charms which they call gris gris.

"According to Hall, "Charms ritually fabricated and worn for protection, as well as charms intended to harm others, have kept their African names to this day. Zinzin, an amulet of support or power in Louisiana Creole, has the same name and meaning in Bambara. Gris gris, a harmful charm, comes from the Mande (African) word gorregera. The words zigziga and zigziga are still widely used in New Orleans by speakers of English as well as Creoles. Although ouanga may have been a word borrowed well after the establishment of the creole language. Gris gris and zinzin, Mande terms, were likely introduced into Louisiana by the earliest contingent of slaves."

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Hall found discussion of many of the charms in documents dealing with the investigation of a slave conspiracy on the Caribbean island of Saint-Domingue. "These documents discussed various types of charms, their names, and how they were made. They were charms that gave power and protection to the bearer in the form of strength in combat, luck in gambling, or success in running away. Charms were used for protection against the master. They were tied to the foot of the bed where the master slept or to the table upon which the master worked, protecting the slave from being beaten by the master, blinding the master to the slave's faults, (and) making the master's heart 'soft as water.' ... It was explained that only sorcerers of the first order could create these charms, which were given various names. The charm named ouanga was specifically a poison used against an enemy or rival. One of the poisonous substances in the ouanga was the ground-up roots of the fig tree, which was evidently brought over from Africa and which still grows throughout the French West Indies. These ouanga packets also contained bones from a cat, tooth, nails, ground-up roots of the banana tree, holy water, holy candles, holy incense, holy bread, and crucifixes. The sorcerer pronounced the word Alla Alla several times, invoking the protection of the Islamic God, then invoked the Christian God and 'Jesus Christ,' and finally pronounced the words, "Bon dieu donne qui ca me fou faire," and "Bon dieu, bon dieu donne qui ca me fol faire." (God gives me what I do, God gives them what they ask.)"
Baratarian smugglers were also driven from West Indies

One of the Frenchmen who came to Louisiana from the French islands of the Caribbean about the time of the slave uprisings in Saint-Domingue was a pirate named Jean Lafitte. He made a name for himself as a gentleman in New Orleans society and as a patriot by fighting in the Battle of New Orleans. But he made his fortune primarily by smuggling black slaves into Louisiana and selling them to the highest bidder.

Lafitte’s birthplace, like many other details of his life, is not known for certain. Several biographers have referred to his birthplace as Bordeaux, France, but there is also some evidence that he was born in 1782 in Fort-aux-Pierres, St. Domingue, the last of eight children of Marcus Lafitte and Maria Zona Nadrimin.

He and his brother, Pierre, arrived in New Orleans in April 1804, and quietly established themselves in the community. They apparently maintained ties to the Caribbean and, until 1810, acted as representatives of smugglers who brought a wide variety of contraband goods to New Orleans through the winding bayous leading from Barataria Bay on the southeast Louisiana coast.

According to an account by Harrett T. Kane, the Baratarians moved to south Louisiana because they were driven from the Caribbean.

"For years the Caribbean had been a lake of pirates, spotted by nests of men who preyed on the rich prizes of the Spanish Main, the newly mined gold of Mexico and Peru, and the other wealth that poured into the holds of vessels moving between Old and New Worlds," according to Kane’s book, “The Bayous of Louisiana.” "Martineque and Guadeloupe provided the main headquarters. The life was a careless, dangerous one, free of hindrance, rich in reward. But the early 1800s saw trouble for the freebooters. England captured their retreats, and they realized that they had to give up the trade or find a safe harbor. They knew where to go."

Because of the ready market in New Orleans, a good-sized colony of freelance pirates and smugglers soon sprang up in Barataria, but by 1810 they were badly disorganized and fighting among themselves. That is when Jean Lafitte stepped into a more active role and became their leader.

He built a house at Grande Terre in the spring of 1811 and became wealthy, sometimes operating himself as a pirate, sometimes merely directing the activities of the Barataria band and taking part of the profit. His brother, Pierre, also was captured. He organized regular slaves, particularly of slaves smuggled into the country, but also of other contraband. Grande Terre was an ideal place for a smuggler’s headquarters. Kane describes it this way: "On Grande Terre, across from Grande Isle to the east, was Jean’s headquarters. Here he set up a storeroom of impressive dimensions, a well-stocked slave barricue, a set of heavy fortifications. Sometimes one island was too small, and supplies were captured over to Grand Isle. Between the two places a deep and dependable natural pass. It permitted easy entrance for a vessel in flight, but the shallow winding ways inside the bay made pursuit impossible for men who did not know the labyrinth."

According to historian Edwin Adams Davis, "Jean Lafitte gathered about him strong lieutenants: his brother Pierre, his brother Alexandre Frederic who signed himself Frederic Youx but who is better known as Dominique You, the native New Orleanian Renato Beluche, Pierre Sicard, Juan Juanillo (better known as Francois Sapio), Jacinto Lobrano, and Haitians Victorino Gamble, Antonio Angulo, and Louis Chighizola. Lafitte built a retail warehouse called 'The Temple' about halfway between Grande Terre and New Orleans, and hero Louisians purchased imported goods tax-free at much reduced prices.

... The privateers prospered, for Louisians needed cheap goods and slaves. ... But the privateers became too brazen in their violation of American customs duties and in March 1813, Gov. W.C.C. Claiborne proclaimed the Baratarians "bandits" and ordered them dispersed.

The Lafites ignored the order and, in fact, had fun offering a reward for anyone who would capture the governor and bring him to Barataria. But when British invasion threatened New Orleans in 1815, Lafitte wrote to the governor and proclaimed himself "a stray sheep wishing to return to the flock." The pirate offered the services of himself and his men, and, more importantly, his arms and ammunition—which were badly needed in New Orleans.

The Baratarians fought with distinction in the Battle of New Orleans in January 1815 and were given pardons for their piracy. Lafitte moved his headquarters to Galveston and continued to smuggle slaves into Louisiana until 1821, when the U.S. Navy drove him from the Texas coast into the mists of history. Nobody knows where or how he died, although there are several stories. The one heard most is that he changed his name, lived either in St. Louis or in Illinois, and died in obscurity.

According to Davis, the other leaders of the band scattered. Renato Beluche became "El Bizarro," a noted admiral in the Venezuelan navy. You was killed in a naval battle; Louis Chighizola settled at Grand Isle under the name Nez Coope. He supposedly got the name, which means "cut nose," when he stuck his face too far into a knife fight over a woman. Pierre Sicard, Juan Juanillo, and Antonio Angulo, like Lafitte himself, just disappeared. Jacinto Lobrano settled in New Orleans, as did Dominick You, who, according to historian Jane Lucas DeGrummond, married "a beautiful blond barmaid named Babette, who came from St. Thomas and who stood a head taller than her spouse. They ran a tavern but didn’t make much money. When he died in relative poverty on Nov. 14, 1830, the New Orleans city council paid for his funeral, businesses closed, and flags flew at half-staff as he was buried in St. Louis Cemetery No. 2."

The Grande Terre island in Barataria Bay looked something like this in the days when Jean Lafitte made it his sanctuary.

Slavery

unable to escape in the islands, and that Negroes, once in Louisiana, would not leave their masters for fear of being killed by Indians." Official France declined the offer, probably because the developing agriculture in the West Indies made the Caribbean a much more profitable place to put the slaves.

According to Kilman, "Other attempts to bring Negroes to Louisiana prior to 1719 were equally unsuccessful. In 1717, there were only from ten to twenty Negroes in Louisiana.

Negro slavery for Louisiana was given official government sanction in 1716, but the first boatloads of black men from Africa did not arrive in the colony until several years later.

Kilman reports, "On June 6, 1719, the vessels Grand Duc de Maine and Aurore anchored at Dauphin Island (off the Mississippi coast). These two ships had a combined cargo of 450 Negroes. Before they were unloaded, news reached Louisiana that the French had captured Spanish Pensacola. Since Pensacola offered much better harbor facilities, the Negroes were transported to the newly acquired port where they were disembarked. This was the first of many shipments made to Louisiana. Once Negro slavery began in Louisiana, the African population steadily increased. By 1731, there were between 2,000 and 2,500 blacks in the colony."

According to Peter Kolchin’s 1993 study, “American Slavery: 1619-1877,” there were 331,726 slaves in Louisiana in 1860, on the eve of the Civil War. That was 46 percent of the state’s population.
Napoleon’s soldiers had tough time getting to Louisiana

When King Louis XVIII regained the throne after Napoleon Bonaparte’s defeat at Waterloo, he proclaimed that there would be no pardon for the men who had been closest to Napoleon.

In particular, the king named several high-ranking officers of Napoleon’s army, but he also took steps to deal with the common soldiers, reducing them all to half pay—near starvation wages. A law of amnesty was passed on Jan. 12, 1816, but it excluded high-ranking Napoleon officials and all of Napoleon’s relatives, and it gave the king two months to exile anyone he thought had been too friendly to Napoleon or his cause.

Given the atmosphere, it was not surprising that there were many takers when a charitable organization began to provide donations to help Napoleon veterans who wanted to leave France.

In fact, many of them had made war on most of the countries of Europe, the place of choice for a fleeing French soldier was the United States. A good number of them liked the way of life in the newly purchased Louisiana Territory, where they soon decided that they wanted to form a settlement of their own. One of the soldiers, Col. Nicholas Parmentier, went to New Orleans to interest the local government to give the ex-soldiers a piece of land. He lobbied well, and on March 3, 1817, Congress approved the donation of four contiguous townships, each six miles square, on vacant public lands lying in the Mississippi Territory at the junction of the Black, Warrior, and Tombigbee rivers, where the soldiers could settle and begin “cultivation of the vine and other vegetable production as may appear reasonable.”

Among the leaders of the new settlement were Gen. Bertrand Clausel and a Legion of Honor winner, Gen. Charles Lefebvre-Dem. The Texas government, he officially served as president of the Société Agricole de Mécanique, as the settlement group was called, was Charles Lallemand, a man who still had fighting in his blood and wasn’t about ready to settle down to grow olives.

As Simone de la Soucière Delery reported in her book “Napoleon’s Soldiers in North America,” “He wanted adventures and men to command. The South would be good hunting ground, but not the North. It was colorful, but it would not grow vine and olive trees and where the Choctaw Indians — would be peaceful neighbors.”

Lallemand then went to the Spanish government of Texas, because he wanted to build his “asylum” or Champ d’Asile on the banks of the Trinity River. When he got no reply from the Mexican president, he decided that “no news is good news” and made plans for the colony. He organized a group of volunteers, led them about 70 miles up the Trinity River from the Gulf of Mexico, got them settled, then sailed for New Orleans on business.

It became apparent immediately that his “business” was the purchase of arms, ammunition, possibly for an invasion of Spanish Texas. It also became apparent that Lallemand had not been completely truthful with all of his settlers. Some men left Philadelphia convinced that they were heading for the Tombigbee settlement, only to find that Lallemand had bribed the captain of their ship to deliver them to Texas. Other Tombigbee settlers claimed that Lallemand forced them to sell their Tombigbee land and give him the money for the Texas Champ d’Asile.

Some of the settlers actually got to the Tombigbee, but found that all was not peaches and honey there. As Delery writes, “Several of them had brought their wives, who unpacked dainty dresses without the faintest idea of what pioneer life meant. Wooden cabins were built while a city was being planned. The men hunted, fished, and worked with moderation. At night there was a guitar or harp playing and dancing on the banks of the river. The first shock was to learn that the foundation of the dreamed city, Demopolis, had not been erected on the site provided by the United States government. New efforts were required to salvage bricks and beams and begin building anew.”

Jackson Square was the center of life in New Orleans at the time when the so-called “Foreign French” began to find a new home there.

“These men had engaged in military activities since the age of seventeen or eighteen and came from many different climates (and) knew little about vine and olive culture.”

Jackson Square was the center of life in New Orleans at the time when the so-called “Foreign French” began to find a new home there. Frenchmen who were coming from the Trinity River settlement.

As Delery tells the story, “First, they had sent relatives and friends glowing descriptions of Texas. The task of clearing the forest and setting up a camp had been performed with gusto. It was a beautiful camp, (but then) from revellers to curfew toerville the veterans (were forced to begin drilling for Lallemand’s planned Texas takeover), little time was left to cultivate the land.”

And the colonists were not the only ones to notice that the camp was taking on a military atmosphere and that crates of arms and ammunition were being sent there regularly.

“One day,” Delery’s account continues, “A troop of five hundred Mexicans marched against them. They were followed by Spanish reinforcements from San Antonio. Fearing for the fate of the women and children, General Rigaud (who was as usual, was in New Orleans) advised that they yield to the Mexican’s demands and evacuate the camp. For days, through underbrush and swamp, the disheartened and half-starved men and women made their arduous way toward Galveston. They reached it just as a gigantic tidal wave washed the island. Reduced in numbers, the group clung to bushes twisted by the wind. In the distance they saw silhouettes approaching. Through lips burned by salt and sand came the cry: ‘Au secours!’ (Help!) Then, above the turmoil, a French voice was heard shouting: ‘Tenez bon, les enfants, on arrive!’”

Humbert, a Napoleon refugee, had made a sailing expedition from New Orleans to Mexico some months before and stopped on the way back at Laffite’s headquarters in Galveston. While he was there, he found a pair of tarnished gold epaulets and a plume. Sensing the pirate’s loot, put them on, and only semi-facetiously proclaimed himself Governor of Galveston.

Now he led the Champ d’Asile refugees to Laffite’s headquarters where they were put aboard the San Antonio de Campeche after a few days’ rest and sent to New Orleans. Over the coming weeks, other Texas colonists would struggle into the city.

Some of the soldiers eventually returned to France, some stayed in New Orleans. And some, as Delery writes, “settled in homes more often poor than luxurious. Sometimes all they owned was a cabin with a judge.”

“All of the names of the exiles who scattered throughout Louisiana have not been recorded,” Delery continues, “but some of them are still remembered, either because of their descendants’ justifiable pride or because of some unusual trait or adventure.”

Among them: Louis Gustave Bezu was an accountant on an Iberville Parish plantation. Pierre Chalet made his home at Belle Alliance. Jean Julian Rossouw and Benoit Bayard settled at St. Martinville. Louis Joseph Paul Antone Garrigue de Flaugue was buried in a fancy grave in Opelousas. One story says that the town of Ville Platte was named by Napoleon soldiers because it reminded them of a flat place in Egypt. A number of the old soldiers settled along Bayou Lafourche, riding to a general store in the region to share news and stories. The town that grew up around the store became Napoleonville.”
Jewel

2,731 whites, 3,102 free persons of color, and 3,226 slaves," according to Lachance.

The Courrier de la Louisiane characterized the white refugees as "for the most part rich planters driven from their property in Saint-Domingue by a bloody revolution, who carried to Cuba the debris of their fortune, their industry, and their activity ... (who because of political problems were forced) to search again (for) a friendly shore where they might finally rest."

The slaves who came with them, according to the newspaper, were "faithful servants who preferred all the horrors of exile and poverty to the idea of separation from their masters."

Those who migrated from Cuba in 1809 chose Louisiana in part because there was nowhere else for them to go. By 1809, France had lost all of its Caribbean colonies except Guadeloupe, which fell to the British in February of 1810. France was at war with England, so that ruled out British colonies as likely places for Frenchmen to settle. Spain and her American colonies were in revolt against Napoleon, eliminating those places as havens for the refugees.

The United States Consul in Santiago de Cuba reported that most of the French inhabitants banished from Cuba looked to the United States as "the only one capable of affording them a safe and peaceful asylum."

White and mulatto planters also came to Louisiana because they hoped that a law passed in 1808 banning the importation of slaves into the United States would not be enforced in Louisiana, which had not yet been accepted into the Union. Indeed, it wasn't, and the planters were thus able to bring with them large numbers of their "faithful servants."

Until forced from the Caribbean by revolution and uprising, few slaves came to Louisiana from the West Indies. When the Company of the Indies ruled in Louisiana, slave ships sailed directly for Louisiana. According to Gwendolyn Midlo Hall's research, when the slave ships did stop in the West Indies, the demand for slaves was "so desperate" that the ships sometimes did not reach Louisiana with their cargoes intact.

"While there was some trade in the 1790s between Louisiana and the French islands," Hall reports, "it was not South Louisiana's plan to import slaves from these islands.” In fact, she says, "Serious obstacles were placed in the path of any wishing either to export slaves from the French islands to Louisiana or to emigrate from the French islands to Louisiana with their slaves."

According to Fiehrer, “The total influx (of refugees) doubled the (New Orleans) population and most sought immediately to find work or rural property to resume economic activity. The number who located in the rural South and center of Louisiana (is not known), but their presence is indicated in all the sugar parishes and as far out as Natchitoches. The frequency of spoken Creole in St. Maryville, Napoleonville, Henderson, and other areas may indicate aggregations of refugees. Even today, Creole surnames exceed those of any other group of French origin in the state."

At the time that the refugees began arriving in large numbers in New Orleans, new American immigrants threatened to gain the upper hand in politics, business, and the social life of the city. As a result, Fiehrer notes, "The francophone population, once in fear of economic competition from the new wave of American migration into Orleans Territory, avidly received the newcomers, and intermarriage was frequent. Local institutions like newspapers, opera, theaters, pharmacies, music schools, and the book trade all flourished for a time, and Creole political ascendency, or at least group preservation, seemed assured until the Civil War. The caste systems and civil law of Louisiana and Saint-Domingue were identical, and all racial groups were augmented by the refugees. Saint-Domingue slaves represented almost a third of the 1810 slave population of New Orleans and its precincts and 10 percent of the slaves of Orleans Territory." Fiehrer concludes that this formative 18th century, Louisiana and Saint-Domingue were interdependent, sharing everything but the island’s mountain vistas. Consequently, a large percentage of the French refugees descend to some degree from these refugees—white, colored, and black—who departed the civil war and eventually settled in our midst."

Code

system in Louisiana, with a white upper class, a black servent and labor class, and a class of free blacks in the middle who enjoyed most of the legal rights and privileges of the white class, but few of its social advantages.

As Claude Oubre and Roscoe Leonard point out in their essay, “Free and Proud: St. Landry’s Gens de Couleur” in the book “Louisiana Tapestry,” another consequence of the Code Noir section dealing with free black people was that “... only in Louisiana could a slave hope that freedom would bring full citizenship rights. Therefore, although there were free blacks in all southern states, those in Louisiana enjoyed a status not accorded to free blacks in other states.”

One of those advantages was the ownership of property, and free black people took advantage of that whenever they could. Many of them came to Acadia in the 1770s after the new Spanish government offered free land in the Attakapas, Opelousas, and Natchitoches areas.

According to Oubre and Leonard, “In order to encourage settlement of the newly acquired colony, Spanish governor Don Alejandro O’Reilly issued a land ordinance ... (under which) settlers could acquire liberal grants of land. ... (An applicant could obtain) as grant of land...”

Events

Domincing. With the help of white colonists and mulatto forces, the French were driven back to Tousaint’s army. Tousaint surrendered to Lockrre on May 5, 1802.

The French assured Tousaint that he would be allowed to retire quietly, but a month later he seized him and sent him to France. He died of neglect in prison on April 7, 1803.

The betrayal of Tousaint and Bonaparte’s restoration of slavery in nearby Martinique brought new fighting in Saint-Domingue as the rebellion continued under the leadership of Jean-Jacques Dessalines and Henri Christophe. As the battle continued, yellow fever began to take its toll among the French troops, claiming Lockrre as one of its victims.

Then, in 1803, France was at war with Britain, and Bonaparte had to concentrate his forces and his energies in Europe. In April 1803, he signed the Louisiana Purchase agreement, which ended French domination in the Western Hemisphere.

On Jan. 1, 1804, Dessalines proclaimed himself ruler of a new nation, which was called Haiti, which was a native Indian word meaning “a higher plain.”
South Louisiana has ethnic tradition like none other

Joseph Langdon moved from Chicago to the University of New Orleans and found the "melting pot in south Louisiana," unlike any other in a United States that proclaims itself a place where people of diverse origin and cultures have melded to form this unique society.

In an essay in the 1982 publication "Louisiana Tapestry: The Ethnic Weave of St. Landry Parish," Langdon remarks, "South Louisiana has a peculiar ethnic tradition. ... True, the area has attracted a diverse population that includes the French, Germans, Cubans, Africans, Filipinos, Irish, Spaniards and many others. Obviously, it differs in that respect from the rather monotonous Southern Scene of Jackson, Miss., or Macon, Ga., where contemporary population differs little in national background from the black-white stock that filled the early English colonies in North America. Despite its ethnic diversity, however, our region does not fit readily into the ethnic patterns that sociologists and historians have carefully studied in Chicago, Boston, or New York.

"The disappointments of the typical melting pot in America's northern cities such as Chicago have made us remain in South Louisiana. ... We have an unusual and strange region where something has taken place that is different from the process of acculturation in other parts of the United States. I do not mean that rapid assimilation has not affected the immigrants and their descendants who settled in this region. The 19th-century European groups that came to New Orleans, for example, are hardly discernible any longer. The Irish, Germans, Spanish, French, and the early Italians have almost disappeared as distinct groups. ... The breakdown of old world cultures is inevitable; no people, particularly in an American city, can maintain a culture very long after they have removed themselves from the setting that once created and sustained it.

"The difference in south Louisiana should not be the result, not in the process itself. Here all the factors of assimilation and acculturation has created something of inestimable value — a new public culture related to place and tradition. Nowhere else in America have new cultures of this sort developed. (We have created original cuisines which have drawn from all of the major population groups.) ... We have developed our own architectural styles which provide distinction to the places where we live and work. ... And who could ignore the music? (It) gives international recognition to New Orleans and South Louisiana. And finally, we have developed a fashionable new form of festival and community celebration that includes not only the weeks of Mardi Gras but other communal events that delight our senses.

"This public culture is not superficial. It constitutes the fabric of daily life for many people, providing continuity in a culture and satisfying our need for communal identity. It also stimulates pride of place. We can feel that pride when outsiders come to our communities.

"The public culture is open and absorbing. It becomes ours as long as we participate in it and help sustain it.

No single group can claim it as their own, and in a way many of us who have contributed to it, no matter how long their families have resided in the area ... In South Louisiana we have developed a new ethnicity from old world and new world ingredients that belong to this one place on the face of the globe.

"The original diversity of the population probably helped shape our cultural development. ... The French and Spanish colonial rulers also played a role in dealing with this diverse population. They seemed more willing to accept the difference and diversity than their Anglo-American counterparts in the colonies along the Atlantic. Indeed, the early Louisiana officials even applauded the African culture of their slaves. As a result, West African dancing, festivals, and music as well as architecture and architecture continued to survive openly without the relentless repression that occurred in British America. The French and Spanish seemed to have considered the exotic as something not only intriguing but inviting.

"Ordinary people — black and white — created our public culture. They came from varied ethnic backgrounds — not only the multitude of Europeans from Ireland, Germany, Italy, France, and Spain, but also the varied Black people from West Africa, Haiti, Belize, Virginia, and South Carolina. The blending still goes on.

"The vitality of our public culture should not, however, disguise the massive assaults against it both from within and without. Culture is a fragile

creation, it takes decades to nurture a way of life, but mindless neglect or determined effort can quickly crush its flowering. New suburbanization designed to isolate classes and races will not support the culture. Prosperity that tempts us to surround ourselves with goods, services, and recreations that have been franchised and manufactured elsewhere will seriously alter our old habits.

"To maintain our Cajun and Creole culture, we must be alert and protective. We should be careful also not to fall mindlessly into educationalfad and fashion. It pays, for example, to learn of our old world backgrounds in France, in Canada, in Africa, in Italy, in Ireland, or Greece; but we cannot recreate in America the cultures of Italy, West Africa, France, Ireland or Cuba. Instead we should try to protect the new world culture that has given meaning to our lives in South Louisiana."

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Continued from Page 16

Effects

revolutionary literature from France and from the French Jacobin Society of Philadelphia, which was urging rebellion in Louisiana, and sent a petition signed by 150 citizens to the American government asking annexation to the United States. Anonymous incendiary documents appeared, reviling government officials, and citizens began to discuss the possibility of getting rid of them by use of the guillotine. Suspicion was everywhere; no one could be trusted. Mob roamed the streets of New Orleans, destroying property, shrieking that Carondelet was a Cochon de l’or, and promising him first place on the guillotine. Jean Delvaux, a parish priest in Natchitoches, led an open revolutionary movement. Louisiana was practically in open rebellion against the Governor and the Spanish regime.

Carondelet responded in several ways. First, he put more governmental responsibility in the hands of substantial citizens, asking them to help him preserve order. Next, he brought in additional Spanish troops to organize militia companies to put down any revolt. In Willams' view, according to Hangar. In August 1803, (for example) the French Prefect, Pierre Clément de Laussat, asked the Spanish governor ... to detain five black sailors from Saint-Domingue at the mouth of the Mississippi in order to "stop communication between these blacks and those of this colony."

While there were several agitators among the free black population of Louisiana who wanted to use the rebellions in France and Haiti to further their liberties in Louisiana, in the long run things got worse, not better, for free black people here. According to Hangar, "Louisiana never experienced a revolution like the one in Saint-Domingue (but) the free black rights and privileges deteriorated even further under United States rule. Without the protection of a paternalistic Spanish government free people of color in New Orleans encountered continuing attacks on their status as a distinct group; local whites endeavored to treat all persons of African descent like slaves."

BETTER VISION

BY: JOHN F. THOMPSON, O.D.

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*Some Restrictions Apply
European French came for diverse reasons

They helped keep Louisiana’s Gallic accent

"These immigrants, coming in the wake of dramatic upheavals during the Napoleonic era, provided not only crucial skilled, literate, and experienced reinforcements of the local creole elite, but also shored up French and Franco-African society in New Orleans from top to bottom."

— Arnold Hirsch and Joseph Logsdon

Later immigrants to Louisiana, even white émigrés who shared the French language and culture, were not necessarily automatically accepted into the established society of the old French families of Louisiana.

In his essay, "Colonial New Orleans: A Fragment of the Eighteenth-Century French Ethos" in the book "Creole New Orleans," Jerah Johnson writes: "The two most important other (than Acadian and Spanish) ethnic groups (to come to Louisiana) during the Spanish period were refugees from the revolution on the Caribbean French Island of Saint-Domingue, who soon came to be called the 'foreign French' by New Orleans creoles, and Anglo-Americans, who increasingly immigrated to Louisiana from British-ruled Florida and from the United States. The major accommodation both groups would have to make would be not to the Spanish authorities, who required little from incoming settlers beyond a pledge of loyalty to the Spanish crown, observance of Spain's trade laws, and outward conformity to the Catholic Church, but to the local French creoles.

The same problem faced most of the so-called "European French" who came directly from the mother country.

As Paul F. Lachance points out in his essay, "The Foreign French," "over the whole of the antebellum period, most of the European French immigrated to New Orleans without ever having set foot in Saint-Domingue. Until 1832, according to the Annual Reports on Immigration to the United States, fewer than one thousand French immigrants per year passed through the port of New Orleans. From then until the Civil War, annual arrivals ranged from three thousand to over seven thousand."

The émigrés left France for many reasons. Some of them were exiles from the French Revolution of 1789. Napoleon Bonaparte's coup d'état in 1799 sent a second collection of French exiles to Louisiana. The government was made up of those who were at odds with his regime. Many of his supporters were forced to flee France after Napoleon was sent into exile, first to Elba in May 1814, and then to St. Helena in October 1815.

As Arnold Hirsch and Joseph Logsdon point out in their book, "Creole New Orleans," this later surge of French émigrés helped the white Creoles of the region hold onto social and political power longer than may have been the case otherwise, and also helped the cause of the Creoles of color.

These immigrants, coming in the wake of dramatic upheavals during the Napoleonic era, provided not only crucial skilled, literate, and experienced reinforcements of the local creole elite, but also shored up French and Franco-African society in New Orleans from top to bottom, the authors say.

"Literally wedding themselves to and preserving the city's creole base for a generation after the Louisiana Purchase and American immigration that followed it, these Gallic immigrants made the obliteration of French influence that followed the Yankee invasions of Detroit, Chicago, St. Louis, and other French colonial settlements in the Mississippi Valley was not replicated (in New Orleans)."

The authors point to research by Joseph Tregle Jr. that showed that "French-speaking voters managed to keep control of state and city government even after they lost their numerical dominance in Louisiana. Through a manipulation of constitutional devices and legislative gerrymandering, they maintained control of state government until the mid-1840s."

After that, Tregle finds Americans were finally able to batter down the French resistance in New Orleans and elsewhere in southern Louisiana, even though they adopted "some elements of the Creole culture.

Hirsch and Logsdon point out, "The Americans found new allies among the waves of European immigrants that came ... from nations other than France, particularly from Ireland and Germany. Before the Civil War, New Orleans ranked second only to New York as the nation's leading port of immigration. ... After the 1860s, a steady stream of Spaniards, Latin Americans, Greeks, Dalmatians, Chinese, Filipinos, and particularly Italians continued to settle in the city. ... Many of the immigrants drew solace from the well-rooted Catholic church in New Orleans and adopted creole habits of cuisine and festivity, but they showed little interest in learning the French language."

According to Tregle, the coming of the Civil War provided the white Creoles of Louisiana "their last chance for revival of creole supremacy."

On May 15, 1861, a new journal appeared in New Orleans, La Renaissance Louisianaise: Organe des Populations Franco-Américaines du Sud. Its publisher was Emile Hiriart and its backers included the elite of New Orleans and white Creole society. According to Tregle, "it committed passionately to a double goal, absolute victory of the Southern Confederacy and creation within it of a Louisiana restored to a community whose heart, mind, and spirit were irrevocably 'French.'"

With the loss of the war, so also was lost the Creole dream of Gallic revival in Louisiana. The culture and society were absorbed by the Americans, and white Creoles had only their identity to fight for. That is when they began to push forward the claim that "creole" meant "White.""—Hirsch and Logsdon note, "White creoles began to divorce themselves from their historical association with black creoles by attempting to deny use of the traditionally broad designation to anyone of African ancestry."—Tregle clearly demonstrates that the new usage of the word creole emerged only during the Reconstruction era (and because of a struggle for white supremacy).

Americanization brought new roles for Creoles of color

The Americanization of Louisiana brought new roles and new struggles for Creoles of color as it did for white Creoles.

As Carl Brasseaux et al point out in the book, "Creoles of Color in the Bayou Country," "Throughout the colonial and antebellum periods, the Creoles of color had existed as a separate class, distinct from the dominant whites as well as from the slaves. Although they did not enjoy full citizenship rights and privileges, they did have considerably more rights and privileges than the slaves. During the Civil War, portions of the state came under Union control, the gens de couleur libres attempted to maintain the three-tier social system that guaranteed them separate status. Union officials, however, were unwilling to recognize this distinction and insisted on treating all persons of African ancestry as members of a single class. This monolithic view of nonwhites was institutionalized by black codes that followed the war's end."

"Once they accepted the realities of their new situation, the Creoles of color determined that if they were to be classed with the freedmen they would be the social and political leaders of their race. They reasoned that because they had experienced the problems of being free in a white man's world, were educated, and were property owners, they had earned the right to leadership."

They point out that all of the black representatives from the prairie region to the 1868 state constitutional convention were Creoles of color. These included men such as Auguste Donato Jr. of St. Landry Parish, Fortuné Riard of Lafayette Parish, Sosthène Snaer of St. Martin Parish, and Jean-Baptiste Esmard of St. Mary Parish.

Creoles of color also supplied half of the black legislators and all of the black state senators to represent the area during Reconstruction. These included representatives Robert J. Graham, Samuel Martinet, Victor Rechon, and Arthur Antoine, and senators Alexandre François and Emile Detégue.

"These were Creoles of color, or individuals who were Creole of color by parents of both races, or by individuals in how they were treated... The Creoles of color remained politically active throughout the Reconstruction era, sometimes at risk to their own safety. François, for example, was beaten severely by political opponents and died of his injuries. Their influence began to wane at the end of the Reconstruction era, but many of them continued to be politically active."

Brasseaux reports, "With the end of Reconstruction, (Creoles of color) were unable to win election to the legislature, though Creoles of color from other portions of the state continued to serve in the state senate. Prairie Creoles of color, however, supported their confères ... who consistently fought to expand and maintain the Reconstruction gains made toward political and social parity with whites. This valiant civil and political rights campaign was successful until 1890; then, as the political influence of the Creoles of color waned, the Bourbon Redeemers gradually began to remove the social gains they had fought so hard to earn and maintain."
### Some important dates on colonial and Créole Louisiana

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1492</td>
<td>Columbus discovers the Caribbean island of Hispaniola.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1502</td>
<td>African slaves are first reported in the New World.</td>
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<td>1577</td>
<td>After attempts to enslave the Indians of the Caribbean fail, Spain decides to send 15,000 slaves from Africa to the island of Hispaniola.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1640</td>
<td>The British begin the large scale introduction of African labor for sugar production in the British possessions in the Caribbean.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1695</td>
<td>The western half of the island of Hispaniola is ceded to France by Spain. The French part of the island is named Saint-Domingue.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1708</td>
<td>French officials in Louisiana ask permission to exchange Indian slaves in Louisiana for African slaves from the West Indies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1716</td>
<td>The French government officially sanctions African slavery in Louisiana.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1719</td>
<td>The first French slave vessels arrives in Louisiana from Africa.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1724</td>
<td>Louisiana adopts a Code Noir primarily for the regulation of slaves and free black people.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1762</td>
<td>On Nov. 3, by the Treaty of Fontainebleau, France cedes to Spain all of Louisiana west of the Mississippi River.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1763</td>
<td>On Feb. 10, by the Treaty of Paris, France cedes to England Louisiana east of the Mississippi River.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1766</td>
<td>The first free black man in the Attakapas and Opelousas districts is noted in a government census.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1791</td>
<td>Slave revolts begin in Saint-Domingue.</td>
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<td>1792</td>
<td>The First French Republic is formed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1793</td>
<td>In response to uprisings, the government abolishes slavery in Saint-Domingue.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1794</td>
<td>The French National Convention emancipates all slaves in the French colonies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1795</td>
<td>In April, a slave uprising is suppressed in Pointe Coupée Parish. A new government, called the Directory, is established in France.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1799</td>
<td>On Nov. 9, Napoleon Bonaparte seizes control of France.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1800</td>
<td>The United States enacts stiff penalties for American citizens serving voluntarily on slave ships trading between two foreign countries.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1801</td>
<td>Former slave Toussaint Louverture seizes control in Saint-Domingue and proclaims himself emperor for life.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1803</td>
<td>Napoleon sends troops to Haiti. They capture and imprison Toussaint Louverture, but cannot put down the slave uprising.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1804</td>
<td>Haiti wins independence from France.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1806</td>
<td>On July 12, Napoleon consolidates his power in Europe with the defeat of an allied army at Austerlitz.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1807</td>
<td>The British Parliament bans the Atlantic slave trade.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1809</td>
<td>Large numbers of Haitian refugees—white, black, and brown—emigrate to Louisiana.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1810</td>
<td>The British negotiate an agreement with Portugal calling for gradual abolition of the slave trade in the South Atlantic.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1811</td>
<td>In January, a massive slave uprising in St. Charles and St. John the Baptist parishes is suppressed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1812</td>
<td>Napoleon's army occupies Moscow on Sept. 14.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1814</td>
<td>On April 11, Napoleon abdicates, and the Bourbon dynasty returns to power in France as Louis XVIII comes to the throne.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1815</td>
<td>On March 20, after escaping from exile in Elba, Napoleon seizes power in France again but is able to hold it for only 100 days.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1817</td>
<td>On Sept. 23, Great Britain and Spain sign a treaty prohibiting the slave trade. Spain agrees to end slave trading north of the equator immediately and south of the equator in 1820. British naval vessels are given the right to search suspected slavers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>U.S. law declares slave trading an act of piracy, punishable by death.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1821</td>
<td>On May 5, Napoleon dies in exile on the South Atlantic island of St. Helena.</td>
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<td>1824</td>
<td>Charles X ascends to the French throne and tries to re-establish the total power of earlier French kings.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1826</td>
<td>The Spanish government proclaims free any slave managing to prove he has been illegally imported.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>Charles X is overthrown by the July Revolution, and Louis Philippe, the so-called Citizen King, is put on the throne.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1831</td>
<td>A large slave revolt is brutally suppressed in Jamaica.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1848</td>
<td>The February Revolution overturns the French government and establishes the Second Republic. Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, a nephew of Napoleon, is elected to a four-year term as president.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1851</td>
<td>France formally abolishes slavery.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1852</td>
<td>On Dec. 2, one year after seizing complete power in France, Louis Napoleon establishes the Second Empire and declares himself Emperor Napoleon III.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1863</td>
<td>A state constitution adopted during the Civil War abolishes slavery in Louisiana.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>In July, the French declare war against Prussia, a part of present-day Germany.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>On May 10, France and Prussia come to peace terms and sign the Treaty of Frankfurt under which France gives up the territories of Alsace and Lorraine.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1875</td>
<td>The Third Republic is formed in France.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1888</td>
<td>Slavery is abolished in Brazil, ending slavery in the Americas.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Rights

law does not ordain.

ARTICLE 6 — The law is the expression of the general will. All citizens have the right to take part in its making, personally, or through their representatives. It must be the same for all, whether it protects or punishes. All citizens, being equal in the eyes of the law, shall be equally eligible to all high offices, public positions and employment according to their abilities, and without other distinction than that of their virtues and talents.

ARTICLE 7 — No person may be accused, arrested, or detained except in the cases determined by the law and following the procedure that it has prescribed. Those who solicit, expedite, carry out, or cause to be carried out arbitrary orders must be punished; but any citizen summoned or apprehended by virtue of the law, must give instant obedience. Resistance results in guilt.

ARTICLE 8 — The law must prescribe only the punishments that are strictly and evidently necessary; and no one may be punished except by virtue of a law drawn up, promulgated, and legally applied before the offense is committed.

ARTICLE 9 — Every man is presumed innocent until he has been declared guilty. If it is considered necessary to arrest him, any undue harshness that is not required to secure his person must be severely curbed by law.

ARTICLE 10 — No one may be disturbed on account of his opinions, even religious ones, as long as the manifestation of such opinion does not interfere with the establishment of law and order.

ARTICLE 11 — The free communication of ideas and opinions is one of the most precious of the rights of man. Any citizen may therefore speak, write, and publish freely, except in regard to the abuse of this liberty in cases determined by law.

ARTICLE 12 — A public entity is necessary to guarantee the Rights of Man and of the Citizen. This entity is therefore established for the benefit of all, and not for the particular use of those to whom it is entrusted.

ARTICLE 13 — For the maintenance of this entity and for administrative purposes, a general tax is indispensable; it must be equally distributed among all citizens in proportion to their ability to pay.

ARTICLE 14 — All citizens have the right to ascertain, themselves, or through their representatives, the need for a public tax, to consent to it freely, to watch over its use, and to determine its proportion, basis, collection, and duration.

ARTICLE 15 — Society has the right to ask a public official for an accounting of his administration.

ARTICLE 16 — Any society in which no provision is made for guaranteeing rights or for the separation of powers, has no constitution.

ARTICLE 17 — Since the right to property is inviolable and sacred, no one may be deprived thereof, unless public necessity, legally ascertained, obviously requires it and just and prior indemnity has been paid.

Continued from Page 22

Roles

By the end of Reconstruction, Creoles of color began to form distinct communities, such as Prairie Laurent, Rideau, Mallet, Anse de Prien Noir, Rougon, Soileau, and others.

In the view of the authors of "Creoles of Color in the Bayou Country," "Denizens of these communities clearly hoped that their physical isolation and exclusive land ownership within the settlements would help them preserve their identity, culture, racial integrity, and elevated social status within the African-American society. In an effort to prevent their children from marrying beneath their social station, elders of several Creoles of color settlements imposed increasingly stringent ... measures to reduce contact with outsiders."

Some of these barriers remained in effect well into the 1940s but they began to come down in the 1950s and 1960s, when Creoles joined with other people of color in the civil rights movement. This new association, according to Brasseaux et al., "led to a blurring of the traditional distinction between Creoles of color and the French- and Creole-speaking descendants of slaves, who in the 1980s began to refer to themselves as black Creoles, thereby further clouding the issue of identity within the Creole of Color community, and with English-speaking blacks who constitute a majority of south Louisiana's African-American population."