The history of Baton Rouge began with a tall red cypress stripped of its bark marking the boundary between the hunting grounds of the Houma and Bayou Goula Indians. French explorers gave the tree the name, “le baton rouge” or Red Stick.

Baton Rouge was founded by the French in 1719 on the first high land they found during the exploration of the Mississippi River. Baton Rouge has since lived under seven flags and four names.

The seven governments that have held sway over Baton Rouge include France, England, Spain, Louisiana, the Florida Republic, the Confederate States and the United States.

Istouma was the Indian name used before the first of the seven flags was planted on Louisiana soil. The name Dironbourg was the contribution of Diron d’Artagouette. He received a grant from the Company of the Indies, who had control of Louisiana at that time.

War in the state, pitting some 6,000 Confederate and 18,000 Union soldiers against each other in one of the longest sieges in American military history.

At the turn of the century the town began to develop industrially because of its strategic location on the first bluff along the Mississippi River north of the Gulf of Mexico.

The city of Baton Rouge is now 73.4 square miles in size with some 247,925 people. Parish size is 472.1 square miles with a population of approximately 386,804.