Louisiana's rich historic background makes it a state unique in the Union, and no other single spot is so rich in tradition and romance than is East Baton Rouge Parish (county). Seven flags have flown over this section and seven peoples have struggled for supremacy. The Fleur d'lis of the French Bourbons waved proudly over East Baton Rouge only to be replaced by the Crosses of England. The arms of Castile bowed to the blue-field white-starred flag of the Florida republic, and this in turn gave way to the 17 stars and strips of the young United States. The yellow banner of the sovereign state of Louisiana fluttered aloft for a short period and their place was taken during the bitter days of the Civil War by the stars and bars of the Confederacy.

Mighty nations have struggled for supremacy here since the times when the parish seat was a small trading village.

Baton Rouge was founded by the French in 1719 on the first high land that the voyageurs found in their ascent of the Mississippi River.

Baton Rouge, French for "red stick" was named by the French during their early exploration of the Mississippi River.

There are two legends concerning the derivation of the name of the city. One is that a tall, slim tree was used by the Indians in the area to hang their game. The tree was stained red from the blood of the dead animals. Upon visiting an Indian village at what is now the present site of the city the Frenchmen named it La Baton Rouge.

Another legend is that the name was taken from a large cypress tree whose bark had been removed and which stood a mighty "red stick" high above the waters of the Mississippi and which marked the boundary between the lands of the Houma and Bayou Goula Indians. As early as 1699 Iberville wrote of a small village of the Indians which was located here and 20 years later, the French voyageurs founded the city on the same spot.

In 1762, Baton Rouge was ceded to the British at the same time that Spain acquired Louisiana, but her possession of the fertile spot was not destined to be long. In May, 1779, Spain declared war on England and Governor Galvez of Louisiana set about to capture the village. He was successful in September of the same year and on September 21, 1779, the English garrison
at Baton Rouge capitulated, and the arms of Castile waved proudly above the fortress.

When the Florida revolt against Spanish dominion occurred, Baton Rouge joined in the fray and for a short period until 1815 the flag of the Florida republic fluttered above Baton Rouge. In 1815 at the close of the War of 1812, the young United States acquired the territory, remaining in possession until the clouds of a civil war broke over the nation and the sovereign state of Louisiana was formed, soon to become an integral part of the Confederacy. It was not until after the Civil War that Baton Rouge, after being the scene of several encounters, again became part of the United States.

In 1807, the parish of East Baton Rouge was created, although it was not officially designated as such until 1811. The city was chartered on July 6, 1817, almost a century after the founding by the French, a century packed with history and traditions.

Public Relations Department
Baton Rouge Area Chamber of Commerce
Baton Rouge, Louisiana