"HO:- THE TECHE GOT ITS NAME"

(From an Indian Legend)

If one is interested in Indian place-names, Louisiana should afford a fascinating field of study to the would-be searcher or historian. There he will find such place-names as Atchafalaya, Chacahoulou, Chapapela, Tchefuncta, Ponchatoula, Natchitoches, to mention only a few. Coming to the land of Evangeline, famous in song and poetry, he will find the word Teche. This one is not quite as hard to pronounce from its spelling as some of the others are, for it is pronounced "Tesh". This is the name of the lazy bayou that flows through the Evangeline country. Musical, poetical is the name Evangeline, but as mesh, flesh, thresh, and fresh. Some how they do not bring to mind many beautiful word-pictures.

While the lazy bayou lying in the sun quietly reflecting the moods of the sky above it and the beauties of nature along its banks inspires in one the feeling of poetry, the word Teche leaves one uninspired and cold. Small wonder, for Teche means "SNAKE".

A long, long time ago, so the legend goes, Indians living along this bayou awoke one morning to find that a snake of giant proportions had crawled out of its depths and was lying on the bank, possibly sunning himself. It was such a huge snake with such a foul breath that the Indians were terrified. To make things worse, it lashed out furiously with its powerful tail whenever it was disturbed.

The dismayed Indians, assembling all the warriors, quite a band of them, set to work shooting arrows into the creature all day long, and many an arrow took effect. Presumably, with such a lot of punctures, the monster lost considerable blood, for eventually it began showing signs of weakness. But it kept up the fight, never once turning tail when it might have saved itself by a short dive back into the water.

The weakening signs of the monster gave new courage to the warriors for as the tail-lashing grew feebler, the braves venturing nearer, set upon it with clubs and dispatched it just as the sun set.

This dreadful occurrence so impressed the Indians that, in commemoration of the event, they called the stream "TENCHÉ" signifying SNAKE.

In due course of time, white men came into the region and, through faulty pronunciation of Indian words, left out the sound of the "N" and the word became "TECHE", its present form, and thus it has remained -- BAYOU TECHE.

a/ Alaske Lewis Bernard

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