Louisiana Places

Proffit Island

Proffit Island (East Baton Rouge) is a large island in the Mississippi River, located about ten miles north of Baton Rouge and three miles south of Port Hickey.

Proffit Island is a shortened form of an earlier name, Proffit's Island. Some historians say it was named for George Proffit, who lived on the island. Perhaps it was named for this Proffit, but certainly it is doubtful that he maintained his residence on this island. After reading the inventory of this well-to-do plantation owner it would be more logical to assume that his residence was on the mainland on The Plains, where he had a grant that included tracts No. 40 and No. 60, rather than on the overflow lands of Proffit's Island.

George Proffit lived on The Plains for a very short time. In 1789 he was granted a plantation on the bluff that "had previously been occupied." He was a widower with married children. Shortly after moving to his grant he was taken ill and died on Oct. 2, 1790, of "putrid fever."

Proffit's Island was probably named for George Proffit's son, who was also named George. Records show that the son, George Proffit, received grants to two islands in the Mississippi in 1803. One of these was probably Proffit's Island. However, years after Mr. Proffit's death, land maps show Proffit's Island as public overflow lands.

Source: Virginia Lobdell Jennings' "The Plains and the People." — Clare D'Artois Leeper