French King Slighted by Early Settlers

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(Times-Picayune Staff Correspondent)

DONALDSONVILLE, La.—On a day that commemorates the 149th anniversary of Louisiane’s admission as a state and the 158th birthday of the Louisiana Purchase Treaty, a rundown of town names along Bayou Lafourche is an interesting revelation.

Although La Salle in 1682 named the territory for Louis XIV of France, this bayouland of French-speaking people has not followed suit.

Curiously, along the curling length of the stream there is no community named in honor of the French king or of the country he ruled.

Where the bayou begins by separating from the Mississippi River is the Ascension parish government seat, Donaldsonville, named by William Donaldson of New Orleans, who selected the site and built a city.

One of the prettiest small cities in the state, continuing the pattern laid down by Donaldson, this community for a brief time was capital of the state.

BELLE ALLIANCE

Going down Bayou Lafourche, there is Barton, named for Ernest Barton, who in 1831 purchased St. Emma plantation. The area in time took his name.

Leaving Ascension parish and moving into Assumption parish, the first name encountered is Belle Alliance, centered around a plantation home that received its name when a dying father asked that his two sons always have between them a “belle alliance.”

Belle Rose, facing Belle Alliance on the opposite bank, means “Beautiful Rose.”

The town of Palmyrtville was named when a traveler was unable to purchase any bread there, and has carried the name of “Short of Bread Town” to the present time.

The breadth of France does enter into the naming of Napoleonville. But it was not the France of Louis. An exsoldier of Napoleon’s army, settling there, gave it its name.

ERROR IN RECORDS

Farther down the bayou is Galliano. Spaniard Salvador Galliano settled on the bayou, raised rice and oranges on 400 acres of land, sold the produce to New Orleans merchants, who came by boat to purchase from Galliano. An error in church records added an extra “1” to the town name.

Near the far end of the bayou is Golden Meadow, where fields of golden rod named a community now famed for its shrimping industry.

Three parishes contain these communities. Not one of them recalls King Louis, Ascension and Assumption denote religious feasts. Lafourche takes its name from the bayou, and means “Fork.”

Then, there is the bayou itself, which might have become Bayou Louis instead of Lafourche, and the great river flowing past the bayou that could as easily have become the Louisiana instead of the Mississippi river.