Bogalusa gets its name from Bogalusa Creek which flows through the town and empties into Pearl River. The name Bogalusa rests on the well-known Choctaw word “bok” or “bog,” creek, and “lusa,” black.

Modern maps of Louisiana seem generally to record the spelling Bogue Lusa for the name of the creek and Bogalusa for the name of the town; but the local pronunciation is said to be the same for both. However, the stream is now called Bogalus Creek.

According to William Read, a former LSU professor and a noted authority on Louisiana place-names and their origins, “The view that Bogalusa may have arisen from an Italian laborer’s exclamation ‘Broka-loosa’ is too absurd to receive consideration in any serious study of place names. The origin of the name is firmly established by the evidence of all the old forms.”

Bogalusa appeared in print in 1803 as “Arroyo negro o Bogholiza,” and “Bog-holiza, conocido por el nombre vulgar de Black Creek”; in 1818 as Bogue Luca; in 1846 as Bogue Loosa; and in 1925 as Bogue Lusa.

Bogalusa is on Highway 21 in Washington Parish.