French Played an Important Role
In Development of 'New West'

French culture still exists and continues to yield considerable influence in the "new West" of Louisiana, according to an article by Delorey Benoit in the "Meeneese Review."

Although the French Louisianaans of Calcasieu have gradually merged with the newer Anglo-American elements in this area, they have not been completely absorbed by it.

The French played a major role in the creation and development of Calcasieu Parish. It was they who dug into this wild, unsettled region of Louisiana in order to build the foundation on which rests the structure of a progressive, industrial center. Time and events seem to have hidden these foundation stones; yet one has only to scratch below the surface to discover the French heritage which is an integral part of life in Calcasieu today.

The French influence stems from the great migration of the Acadians and the occasional influx of French Creoles and adventurers into the western plains of Louisiana.

The adventurers, for the most part, were early 18th century settlers from France, outlaws and pirates for whom the untroubled West opened new horizons.

"Creole" was the name applied to the descendants of the first French colonists who settled mostly in New Orleans and along the Mississippi River. Needless to say, only a small number of Creoles were born here, as their well established plantation economy moved toward the rugged western frontier.

The Acadians, better known today as "Cajuns," were the French Acadian exiles from Nova Scotia who wandered into South and Southwest Louisiana. They came in fairly large groups and built permanent settlements.

Therefore, it is primarily to the Acadians that Calcasieu owes its French origin.

The true story of the Acadian exodus from Canada may perhaps shed some light on the psychological and sociological background of the modern "Cajun".

By the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 France lost Nova Scotia to the British. The new rulers did not trust the French colonists because of their nationality and religion.

They harassed and persecuted the Acadians, but refused to let them leave the colony.

Finally, when the French and Indian War broke out, the English demanded that the Acadians take an oath of allegiance, which they refused to do.

In reprisal, they were stripped of all their worldly possessions, separated from their loved ones, and scattered along the New England coast.

From there, many found their way to Louisiana, which was then a French colony. Their tragic experiences and magnificent struggle for survival have been immortalized in Longfellow's famous tale, "Evangeline."

Louisiana offered the homeless Acadians the haven and refuge for which they had been searching. At last, they were among friends who spoke their language and understood their plight.

The French Government helped them settle the rural section of South Louisiana.

Originating from the sturdy stock of Brittany, it is not surprising that the Acadians placed a trail along the coast of Louisiana, from the Mississippi to the Sabine.

Although the bulk of this great migration settled along Bayou Teche, the prairies of the West beckoned to these venturous Acadians.

"Contre des Abasapar, au nom du Seigneur," was an untamed, uncharted territory of tall grass, wild horses and Indians. This area was a real challenge to hardened Acadian pioneers.

It took courage and perseverance to build homes in the midst of general lawlessness and Indian suspicions.

The land between the Calcasieu and Vermillion Rivers on the east and the Sabine River on the west was called "Neutral Ground." Both France and Spain claimed this territory.

During that time, the region became infested with outlaws, pirates and smugglers. Armed border incidents broke out and illegal trade flourished.

Seeking a solution to the land dispute, the King of Spain commissioned Jean Lafitte to reconnoiter the entire section.

The Ged Oudfield is four miles north of the "new West" of "Creole" was the name given to Western Louisiana, which was then a French colony. Their tragic experiences and magnificent struggle for survival have been immortalized in Longfellow's famous tale, "Evangeline."

Vinton had Rich Resources in 1915

Editor's Note: The following is an article on Vinton which appeared in the June 23, 1915 edition of the Lake Charles American Press.

Vinton is one of the old new towns of the era, and one of the best in the parish surrounded by many resources, fertile soil and located in the heart of one of the largest and richest fields in the state.

The Ged oil field is four miles to the south and the Edgerville field five miles to the east, with many producing wells, and new ones are coming in and many more expected as the drilling goes on.

The town has a population of about 2,000. Vinton has four churches and a weekly newspaper, Vinton Booster.

The town has five brick business houses, a brick bank, a $35,000 brick public school building, about 25 business houses, electric lights and waterworks plant, ice plant, cement side walks and gravel streets.

Among the many other assets to the town of Vinton is the Sabine Canal Co., which is near the town.

The main canal is 20 miles in length and 18 miles of lateral with about 15,000 acres adjacent to the canal.

This canal company has one of the most up-to-date and modern steam pumping plants with a capacity of 100,000 gallons of water per minute. The water is pumped from the Sabine River about 25 miles from Orange, Tex.

LOGGERS — This logging crew is typical of those found in Allen Parish in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

This section was dotted with sawmills which devastated the forests of virgin timber.

ELRILY HOWE — The first two-story house built in Oakdale belonged to W. T. (Bill) Dunn. The City of Oakdale is presently situated on land which was owned by Dunn.

Lake Charles High Student Body, 1903