

Louisiana Family History Research: Four Centuries of History and Genealogy

Class 2: Eighteenth Century Louisiana:

A Confluence of Cultures

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During the 1700s, Louisiana experienced a great influx of diverse peoples. Due to its colonial status under Catholic nations – France and Spain – most of these immigrants were Catholic. Changes in policy due to changing regimes influenced the populations encouraged to settled within the bounds of modern-day Louisiana.

Government

Louisiana began the century as a French Crown colony, and after two decades under royal charters, it returned to being a royal colony in 1731. In 1763, France lost its hold on North America, so it gave the western part of Louisiana to Spain while England seized the eastern part. The east side became part of the U.S. first, while the west was returned to France before being sold to the U.S. The two sides of the Mississippi River would not merge again until the 1800s.

Year	Nation	How/what?	Comments
1682	France	Claim and contract for colonization	
1699	France	French Crown Colony	
1712 1717	France	Royal Charter (Antoine Crozat) Royal Charter (John Law, Company of the Indies)	Originally for 15 years but revoked and reassigned in 1717
1731	France	French Crown Colony	Charter of the Company of the Indies expired
1762	Spain	Treaty of Fountainbleu	Louisiana Territory <i>west</i> of Mississippi River
1763	England	Treaty of Paris	All lands <i>east</i> of Mississippi River; La. lands part of West Florida
1781/ 1783	Spain	Peace of Paris	Seized control of West Florida, so England gave territory to Spain
1795	United States	Treaty of San Lorenzo (or Pinckney's Treaty)	Territory <i>east</i> of Mississippi River
1800	France	Third Treaty of San Ildefonso	Retrocession of Louisiana <i>west</i> of Mississippi, but delayed
1803	United States	Louisiana Purchase	

Arriving populations

A variety of Catholic populations began entering Louisiana through the efforts of the French royal charter holders. To make a profit from the colony, they needed colonists and transported laborers to work the land. Not many immigrated during the decades when Louisiana was a French Crown colony. The Spanish interregnum introduced new policies that restarted the slave trade and encouraged new Catholic populations to settle in Louisiana. The century ended with an oncoming flood of Caribbean refugees and Anglo-Americans as Louisiana began the process of joining the United States.

When settled?	Who settled?	Where settled?	Comments
beginning by 1708	French; French-Canadian		By 1708= 339 individuals in colony
1717-1720	French and others (like Bohemians)		Transported; typically convicts or destitute
1719-1731	Africans: Senegambia, Bight of Benin, Angola	via New Orleans in rural areas	Transported ~6,000 during 1720s
1763-1803			Importation re-instated under Spanish regime
1721-1724	German-speakers: Germans, Swiss, Alsatians	German Coast (St. Charles Parish)	<i>Côte des Allemands</i>
1754		Second German Coast (St. John the Baptist)	
1778-1783	Spaniards: Andalusians; Canary Islanders	New Iberia; St. Bernard Parish	
1764-1785	Acadians	Acadian Coast (St. James Parish); Ascension Parish	Expulsion 1755-1764
1769-1800	Irish	New Orleans	
1791-1810	Haitians	New Orleans	Many via Cuba
beginning 1790s	Anglo-Americans	East of Mississippi River	

Resources:

Elizabeth Shown Mills, "Family and Social Patterns of the Colonial Louisiana Frontier: A Quantitative Analysis, 1714–1803" (New College Honors Thesis, University of Alabama, 1981); Historic Pathways website, at historicpathways.com.

Elizabeth Shown Mills, "Social and Family Patterns on the Colonial Louisiana Frontier," *Sociological Spectrum* 2 (1982):233–248; Historic Pathways website, at historicpathways.com.

French

Winston De Ville, *Gulf Coast Colonials: A Compendium of French Families in Early Eighteenth Century Louisiana* (Baltimore: Genealogical Pub. Co., 1968); F334.M6 D38 1968.

Winston De Ville, *First Settlers of Pointe Coupee: A Study Based on Early Louisiana Church Records, 1737-1750* (New Orleans: Polyanthos, 1974); F377.P55 D4 1974.

Stanley Clisby Arthur, *Old Families of Louisiana* (1931; reprint, Baton Rouge: Claitor's Publishing Division, 1971); at FamilySearch.org.

Glenn R. Conrad, *First Families of Louisiana*, 2 vols. (Baton Rouge: Claitor's Publishing Division, 1970); vol. 2 (census and church) at FamilySearch.org; for index, see Donna Rachal Mills, *The First Families of Louisiana: An Index* (Tuscaloosa, Ala.: Mills Historical Press, 1992).

Winston De Ville, *Louisiana Colonials: Soldiers and Vagabonds* (Mobile: De Ville, 1963); at Internet Archive.

Acadian

Léa Normandeau-Jones, *Finding Your Acadian Ancestors* (Toronto: Heritage Productions, c2001); CS88.A25 N67 2001.

Timothy Hebert, *Acadian-Cajun Genealogy: Tracing Your Ancestry Back to Acadia & The Old World* ([CreateSpace], c2010); F380.A2 H433 2010.

Timothy Hebert, *Acadian-Cajun Atlas* (Self Published, 2003); G1126.S1 H43 2003.

Sidney Albert Marchand, *Acadian Exiles in the Golden Coast of Louisiana* (1943).

Carl Brasseaux, *Ensemble Encore: The Acadian Memorial Archive*, database of Acadian Memorial Foundation, at AcadianMemorial.org.

Tim Hebert, Acadian-Cajun Genealogy & History website, at freepages.rootsweb.com or at acadian-cajun.com via Wayback Machine.

Carl A. Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia: The Beginnings of Acadian Life in Louisiana, 1765-1803* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, c1987); F380.A2 B73 1987.

Winston De Ville, *The Acadian Coast in 1779: Settlers of Cabanocey and La Fourche in the Spanish Province of Louisiana During the American Revolution* (Ville Platte: De Ville, 1993); F380.A2 D4 1993.

Milton P. Rieder and Norma Gaudet, *The Crew and Passenger Registration Lists of the Seven Acadian Expeditions of 1785; A Listing by Family Groups of the Refugee Acadians Who Migrated from France to Spanish Louisiana in 1785* (Metairie, 1965); F380.F8 R5 1965.

"The 7 Ships Passenger Lists," Acadian-Cajun Genealogy & History, at <https://freepages.rootsweb.com/~acadiancajun/genealogy/7ships.htm>.

Janet B. Jehn, *Acadian Descendants*, 13 vols. (Covington, Ky., 1872-2002); F1036.8 J43; in which vol. 1 features passenger lists of the seven expeditions from France to Louisiana.

Bona Arsenault, *Histoire et généalogie des Acadiens*, vol. 6 (Québec: Les Editions Leméac Inc., 1978), which includes "Louisiane, États-Unis"; at Internet Archive.

Janet B. Jehn, *Corrections & Additions to Arsenault's Histoire et généalogie des Acadiens* (Covington, Ky.: J.B. Jehn, c1988).

German

- Albert J. Robichaux, Jr., *German Coast Families: European Origins and Settlement in Colonial Louisiana* (Rayne, La.: Hébert Publications, c1997); F380.G3 R63 1997.
- J. Hanno Deiler, *The Settlement of the German Coast of Louisiana and The Creoles of German Descent* (Philadelphia: American Germanica, 1909); at [Internet Archive](#).
- Ellen C. Merrill, *Germans of Louisiana* (Gretna, La.: Pelican Pub. Co., 2005); F380.G3 M47 2005; preview at [Google Books](#).
- St. Charles Parish Museum and Historical Association, St. Charles Parish Virtual Museum, at [scphistory.org](#).
- Alice D. Forsyth and Earlene L. Zeringue, *German "Pest Ships," 1720-1721* (New Orleans: New Orleans Genealogical Society, c1969).
- Bruce Ardoin, "The Baleine Brides: A missing Ship's Roll for Louisiana, 1721," *NGSQ* 75 (Dec. 1987):303-305.

Spanish

- Sidney Louis Villeré, *The Canary Islands Migration to Louisiana, 1778-1783* (New Orleans: The Genealogical Research Society of New Orleans, 1971); at [FamilySearch.org](#).
- Gilbert C. Din, *The Canary Islanders of Louisiana* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, c1988); to borrow at [Internet Archive](#).
- Canary Islanders Heritage Society of Louisiana, website at <https://www.canaryislanders.org/>.
- Jack D. L. Holmes, *Honor and Fidelity: The Louisiana Infantry Regiment and the Louisiana Militia Companies, 1766-1821* (Birmingham, Ala.: Louisiana Collection Series, 1965).
- Leroy Martinez, *From Across the Spanish Empire: Spanish Soldiers who Helped Win the American Revolutionary War, 1776-1783* (Baltimore: Clearfield, 2015); E269.S63 M37 2015; which mostly uses Holmes's *Honor and Fidelity*.
- Granville W. Hough, *Spain's Louisiana Patriots in its 1779-1783 War with England during the American Revolution* ([Midway City, Calif.]: SHHAR Press, c2000); F380.S75 H68 2000; which cites Din and Holmes.

African and Haitian

- Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana: The Development of Afro-Creole Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (Baton Rouge, 1992); preview at [Google Books](#).
- Afro-Louisiana History and Genealogy, 1718-1820 website with database (by Dr. Hall), at <https://www.ibiblio.org/laslave/introduction.php>.
- Carl A. Brasseaux, *Creoles of Color in the Bayou Country* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, c1994); borrow at [Internet Archive](#).

Carl A. Brasseaux, ed., *The Road to Louisiana: The Saint-Domingue Refugees, 1792-1809* (Lafayette, La.: Center for Louisiana Studies, University of Southwestern Louisiana, 1992); borrow at [Internet Archive](#).

"Haitian Immigration: Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," c2005, website of In Motion: The African-American Migration Experience, at <https://www.inmotionaame.org/print.cfm@migration=5.html>.

- Bibliography includes:
 - ❖ Cyprian Davis, *The History of Black Catholics in the United States* (New York, 1990).
 - ❖ Alice Dunbar-Nelson, "People of Color of Louisiana," *Journal of Negro History* Part 1 in 1 (Oct. 1916): 361-76 and Part 2 in 2 (Jan. 1917):51-78.
 - ❖ Thomas Marc Fiehrer, "The African Presence in Colonial Louisiana: An Essay on the Continuity of Caribbean Culture," in Macdonald, Kemp, and Haas, *Louisiana's Black Heritage* (New Orleans, 1979), 3-31.

Catholic record-keeping

The official religion was Catholic. For most of the 18th Century, Louisiana was encompassed by one vast diocese run by another colony – Quebec under the French and Cuba under the Spanish. In 1793, the Spanish established the Diocese of Louisiana and the Floridas. Although smaller diocese within Louisiana did not form until the 19th Century, modern diocese now hold sacramental records for parishes dating back to the early 1700s.

Diocese of Louisiana and the Floridas, 1576-1803 collection, University of Notre Dame Archives, at <https://archives.nd.edu/mano/>.

- ❖ **Archdiocese of New Orleans** at <https://nolacatholic.org/genealogy>
 - 8 civil parishes: Jefferson, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. John the Baptist, St. Tammany, Washington
 - Charles E. Nolan, *Sacramental Records of the Roman Catholic Church of the Archdiocese of New Orleans*, 19 vols. (New Orleans: Archdiocese of New Orleans, c1987-c2004); F379.N5 W66 1987.
 - Indices 1718-1815 = PDFs for first 11 vols. at <https://nolacatholic.org/publications>
 - Digitized:
 - 43 registers dating 1718-1812
 - Mostly for: St. Louis Cathedral, New Orleans
 - Also select registers for: Royal Military Hospital, St. Charles Borromeo (Destrehan), St. John the Baptist (Edgard) beg. 1772, St. Bernard (Galveztown)
 - At <https://nolacatholic.org/church-records>
- ❖ **Diocese of Alexandria** at <https://www.diocesealex.org/our-diocese/archives/>
 - 13 civil parishes: Avoyelles, Caldwell, Catahoula, Concordia, Franklin, Grant, LaSalle, Madison, Natchitoches, Rapides, Tensas, Vernon, Winn

- Natchitoches beg. 1734
 - Elizabeth Shown Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729-1803: Abstracts of the Catholic Church Registers of the French and Spanish Post of St. Jean Baptiste des Natchitoches in Louisiana* (New Orleans: Polyanthos, 1977); F379.N2 M53 1977.
 - Baptismal Records of the Immaculate Conception Catholic Church of Natchitoches, Louisiana, 1724-1829 [FSL 219456]; locked at [FamilySearch](#).
 - St. François, Natchitoches, La., Parish registers, 1729-1796 [FSL 1026611]; locked at [FamilySearch](#).
- Avoyelles beg. 1796
- ❖ **Diocese of Baton Rouge** at <https://diobr.org/archives>
 - 12 civil parishes: Ascension, Assumption, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Iberville, Livingston, Pointe Coupee, St. James, St. Helena, Tangipahoa, West Baton Rouge, West Feliciana
 - *Diocese of Baton Rouge, Catholic Church Records*, 22 vols. (Baton Rouge: Diocese, c1978-c2007); F368.C37 1978.
 - Ascension of Our Lord, Donaldsonville beg. 1772
 - Assumption of the B.V.M., Plattenville beg. 1793
 - St. Joseph, Baton Rouge beg. 1788
 - St. Gabriel the Archangel, St. Gabriel, Iberville beg. 1773
 - Registre de la paroisse Saint-Gabriel d'Iberville, Louisiane, 1773-1859 [FSL 1026601]; at [FamilySearch.org](#).
 - St. Mary of False River, New Roads (including St. Francis, Pointe Coupee) beg. 1727
 - St. James, St. James beg. 1770
- ❖ **Diocese of Lafayette** at <https://diolaf.org/archives>
 - 8 civil parishes: Acadia, Evangeline, Iberia, Lafayette, St. Landry, St. Martin, St. Mary, Vermilion
 - Donald J. Hébert, *Southwest Louisiana Records: Church and Civil Records of Settlers*, 47 vols. (Eunice: Hébert Publications, 1974-c1989), vol. 1 covers 1756-1810; F368.H42 1974; indexed on [FamilySearch](#).
 - St. Landry, Opelousas beg. 1776
 - Parish registers, 1776-1806 [FSL 1026612]; at [FamilySearch.org](#).

Civil record-keeping

The French and the Spanish styles of record-keeping involved having local notaries create and keep records like marriage contracts, sales, probate/succession, and manumissions. Many of these notarial records have since been collected at parish courthouses, the Louisiana State Archives, or the New Orleans Notarial Archives. The bulk of Louisiana's provincial court records are accessible through the Louisiana State Museum Historical Center. Provincial records including censuses, petitions, and military service were sent abroad in papers filed with the imperial administrative entity – primarily in France or Spain.

Settlements/Posts	Year	Peoples	Parish	Comments
Natchitoches	1714	French	Natchitoches	
New Orleans	1718	French	Orleans	Colonial capital (instead of Mobile) as of 1722
Baton Rouge	1721		East Baton Rouge	East of Mississippi River so part of West Florida after 1763
Pointe Coupée	1720	French	Pointe Coupée	Acadians forbidden to settle there but nearby so in its church records
German Coast	1719-1722	German-speakers	St. Charles, St. John the Baptist	Includes: Hoffen, Augsburg, Mariental, Karlstein, L'Anse Aux Outardes (Bustard's Cove); Wallace in 1768
Rapides	1723/By 1767		Rapides	Post on rapids of Red River
Opelousas	1764	Creoles, Acadians	St. Landry	Settlers arrived before official post established in 1764
Attakapas	1765	Acadian	St. Martin, St. Mary etc.	Trading posts est. 1720-1744
Iberville Parish	Early 1770s	Acadian		Includes: Plaquemines, St. Gabriel
Lafourche	By 1769	Acadian	Ascension, Assumption, Lafourche	Settlements along Bayou Lafourche
Ouachita	1783		Ouachita, Union	State Archives for Dr. E. Russ Williams's three-part "Encyclopedia of Individuals and Founding Families of the Ouachita Valley of Louisiana From 1785 to 1850."
St. Bernard	1778	Isleños	St. Bernard	Originally called Terre Aux Boeufs
Marksville	1794	Mixed	Avoyelles	Trading post established by Marc Eliche, a Venetian Jew

Local Records:

Natchitoches

Winston De Ville, *Marriage Contracts of Natchitoches, 1739-1803* ([Nashville?]: De Ville, 1961); at [Internet Archive](#).

Winston De Ville, *Natchitoches Documents, 1732-1785; A Calendar of Civil Records from Fort St. Jean Baptiste in the French and Spanish Province of Louisiana* (Ville Platte: Smith Publications, c1994); F379.N2 D4 1994.

Elizabeth Shown Mills and Ellie Lennon, *Natchitoches Colonials—A Source Book: Censuses, Military Rolls and Tax Lists, 1722–1803* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 2017); F379.N2 M54 1981.

New Orleans

Winston De Ville, *The New Orleans French 1720-1733; A Collection of Marriage Records Relating to the First Colonists of the Louisiana Province* (Baltimore: Genealogical Pub. Co., 1973); at [Ancestry.com](#).

Alice D. Forsyth, *Louisiana Marriages: A Compilation of Marriage Records from the St. Louis Cathedral in New Orleans During the Spanish Regime and the Early American Period, 1784-1806*, (New Orleans: Polyanthos, 1977); F368.F66 1977.

Elizabeth Becker Gianelloni, *Love, Honor, and Betrayal: The Notarial Acts of Estevan de Quiñones, 1778-1784* ([Baton Rouge?], 1964); F368.L62 1964.

Notarial records, 1731-1880, at [FamilySearch.org](#), 5 rolls, locked.

Notarial Archives, Research Center at New Orleans, website featuring guides/indexes at [OrleansCivilClerk.com](#).

German Coasts: St. Charles and St. John the Baptist Parishes

Glenn R. Conrad, *St. Charles: Abstracts of the Civil Records of St. Charles Parish, 1770-1803* (Lafayette: University of Southern Louisiana, 1974); F388.S124 C66.

Glenn R. Conrad, *Saint-Jean-Baptiste des Allemands; Abstracts of the Civil Records of St. John the Baptist Parish to 1803*, 2nd ed. (Lafayette: University of Southern Louisiana, 1992); F377.S135 C66 1992.

Elizabeth Becker Gianelloni, *St. Charles Parish: The D'Arensbourg Records, 1734-1769* ([Baton Rouge]: Louisiana State Archives and Records Commission, [1965]); F388.S124 G53 1965.

Judy Riffel, comp., *Abstracts of St. John the Baptist Parish Civil Records, 1757-1798* (Le Comité des Archives de la Louisiane, 2003).

Pointe Coupée

Winston De Ville, *First Settlers of Pointe Coupee: A Study Based on Early Louisiana Church Records, 1737-1750* (New Orleans: Polyanthos, 1974); F377.P55 D4 1974.

Winston De Ville, *Slaves and Masters of Pointe Coupee, Louisiana: A Calendar of Civil Records, 1762-1823* (Ville Platte: De Ville, 1988); F377.P55 D48 1988.

Winston De Ville, *Census of Pointe Coupee, Louisiana, 1745* (New Orleans: Polyanthos, 1978); F377.P55 C46 1978.

South: Opelousas, Attakapas, Lafourche

Donald J. Hébert, *Southwest Louisiana Records: Church and Civil Records of Settlers*, 47 vols. (Eunice: Hébert Publications, 1974-c1989), vol. 1 covers 1756-1810; F368.H42 1974; indexed on [FamilySearch](#).

Winston De Ville, *Opelousas Post: The Census of 1771* (Ville Platte: De Ville, 1986); F379.063 D47 1986.

Winston De Ville, *Attakapas Post: The Census of 1771* (Ville Platte: De Ville, 1986); F379.S2 D4 1986.

Winston De Ville, *Southwest Louisiana in 1785* (Ville Platte: De Ville, c1992); F368.D41 1992.

Colonial Records

Louisiana Historical Center's Louisiana Colonial Documents Digitization Project, at

<https://lacolonialdocs.org/>, for:

- New Orleans's French Superior Council (1714–1769)
- Spanish Judicial Records (1769-1803)

Alice D. Forsyth and Ghislaine Pleasonton, *Louisiana Marriage Contracts: A Compilation of Abstracts from Records of the Superior Council of Louisiana during the French Regime*, 2 vols. (New Orleans: Polyanthos, 1980-1989); F368.F67 1980.

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Archives of the Spanish government of West Florida, collection of 12 microfilm reels; locked at FamilySearch.org.

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Winston De Ville, *Louisiana and Mississippi Lands: A Guide to Spanish Land Grants at the University of Michigan – properties at Ascension, Attakapas, Baton Rouge, Opelousas, Pointe Coupee, St. Charles ...* (Ville Platte: Evangeline Genealogical and Historical Soc., 1985); F368.D39 1985.

Walter Lowrie, *Early Settlers of Louisiana as Taken from Land Claims in the Eastern District of the Orleans Territory* (Easley, S.C.: Southern Historical Press, c1986); F368.L7 1986.

Winston De Ville, *Louisiana Troops 1720-1770* (Fort Worth: American Reference Publishers, 1965); at Ancestry.com.

Charles R. Maduell, *The Census Tables for the French Colony of Louisiana from 1699 Through 1732* (Baltimore: Genealogical Pub. Co., 1972); at Ancestry.com.

Jacqueline K. Voorhies, *Some Late Eighteenth-Century Louisianans, Census Records, 1758-1796* (Lafayette, La.: University of Southwestern Louisiana, 1973); at FamilySearch.org.

Collection repositories

Judy Riffel, *A Guide to Genealogical Research at the Louisiana State Archives* (Baton Rouge: Comite des Archives de la Louisiane, c2008); F368.R543 2008.

Judy Riffel, *Guide to the Louisiana Miscellany Collection, 1724-1837* (Baton Rouge: Comite des Archives de la Louisiane, c2006); F372.L53 2006, with index at lecomite.org.

Louisiana State Archives and Records, Baton Rouge, at <https://www.sos.la.gov/HistoricalResources/Pages/default.aspx>

Southern University, John B. Cade Library, Baton Rouge, at <http://subr.libguides.com/c.php?g=413211>



Louisiana Historical Association, Center for Louisiana Studies and Acadiana Manuscripts Collection in University Archives, The University of Southwestern Louisiana, Lafayette, at <https://louisianastudies.louisiana.edu/about-center/archives-research>

Tulane University, Howard-Tilton Memorial Library (Latin American Library), New Orleans, at <https://lal.tulane.edu/collections/special-collections>

New Orleans Public Library, Louisiana Division, New Orleans, at <https://nolacityarchives.org/>

The Historic New Orleans Collection, Kemper and Leila Williams Foundation, Research Library, New Orleans, at <https://www.hnoc.org/about>

Archives Nationales d’Outre-Mer (ANOM), website at <https://recherche-anom.culture.gouv.fr/>.

Archivo General de Indias, website at

<https://www.cultura.gob.es/cultura/areas/archivos/mc/archivos/agi/portada.html>.

- [Loyola University](#), New Orleans microfilmed selections pertaining to Louisiana.
- University of Louisiana, Lafayette holds microfilmed records of the [Archivo General de Indias \(Seville, Spain\)](#) and genealogical research pertaining to the “[Loyola Spanish Documents Project, 1978-1985](#).”
- P.K. Yonge Library of University of Florida, Gainesville has [Papeles de Cuba project](#) and offers [via PDF](#) a full list of legajos available.