A Medley of Cultures:
Louisiana History at the Cabildo

Chapter 1

Introduction

This book is the result of research conducted for an exhibition on Louisiana history prepared by the Louisiana State Museum and presented within the walls of the historic Spanish Cabildo, constructed in the 1790s. All the words written for the exhibition script would not fit on those walls, however, so these pages augment that text. The exhibition presents a chronological and thematic view of Louisiana history from early contact between American Indians and Europeans through the era of Reconstruction. One of the main themes is the long history of ethnic and racial diversity that shaped Louisiana. Thus, the exhibition—and this book—are heavily social and economic, rather than political, in their subject matter. They incorporate the findings of the "new" social history to examine the everyday lives of "common folk" rather than concentrate solely upon the historical markers of "great white men."

In this work I chose a topical, rather than a chronological, approach to Louisiana's history. Each chapter focuses on a particular subject such as recreation and leisure, disease and death, ethnicity and race, or education. In addition, individual chapters look at three major events in Louisiana history: the Battle of New Orleans, the Civil War, and Reconstruction. Organization by topic allows the reader to peruse the entire work or look in depth only at subjects of special interest. For readers interested in learning even more about a particular topic, a list of additional readings follows each chapter.

Before we journey into the social and economic past of Louisiana, let us look briefly at the state's political history.

* * *

Finding Louisiana: Early Exploration

Early explorers of Louisiana came from many European nations. The first to adventure into the Mississippi River region were Spaniards: Alonzo Alvárez de Pineda in 1519, Pánfilo de Narváez in 1527, and Hernando de Soto in 1542, all of whom came by way of Florida. Hernando de Soto's overland expedition was the first to confirm European discovery of the Mississippi River, although his brief visit provided only glimpses of the region. The hostile climate, wildlife, geography, and American Indians cost the Spaniards many lives and persuaded them to look elsewhere for precious metals, fertile soils, and docile native laborers.

European powers ignored Louisiana for nearly a century and a half until French explorers rekindled an interest in the Mississippi Valley and Gulf Coast region. Like the Spaniards before them, the French hoped to find instant wealth in the area. In addition, they sought a westward waterway to link French Canada with the Pacific Ocean and then the Orient. Although this dream of an east-west water route across North America was quickly dashed, Louis XIV, the French Sun King, encouraged exploration of the Mississippi River to enlarge his empire and halt Britain's and Spain's expansion. The French crown envisioned a giant arc of settlement that stretched from Canada through the middle of the continent and into the French Caribbean islands.

The first French explorers of the rumored "great river" were seven men led by Louis Joliet, a native of Canada, and Jesuit Father Jacques Marquette, a native of France. In May 1672 the party set out from Canada, authorized to explore the river from the north and establish missions among the Indians. They sailed downriver to the point where the Arkansas River flowed into the Mississippi, near present-day Beulah, Mississippi. Worried that further southward exploration would invite confrontation with Spanish colonists, the expedition turned around and returned to Canada.

A decade later René-Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle, continued French exploration of the Mississippi to its mouth. La Salle undertook his journey with twenty-three Frenchmen and eighteen American Indians in 1682. Upon reaching the river's mouth, La Salle donned his finest clothes, helped erect a cross and pillar decorated with the royal coat of arms, and proclaimed possession of the Mississippi River, all its tributaries, and all the lands drained by these waters for Louis XIV, king of France. La Salle named this vast expanse "Louisiane" or "Louis' land," in honor of his king.

La Salle returned to France by way of Canada and in Paris sought crown assistance to establish permanent settlement in the new colony. He enticed royal officials with maps made to show the Mississippi emptying into the gulf near Matagorda Bay in the present state of Texas. The maps—probably purposefully falsified—placed the new French claim very close to New Spain's rich silver mines.

Whatever the tactic, La Salle won approval to sail in 1684, along with ships, provisions, and 280 men and women. La Salle's party navigated past the Mississippi and landed west of it. They unknowingly selected a very unhealthy site for settlement, five miles up Garcitas Creek on an extension of Matagorda Bay in Texas. Loss of communication by sea added to their woes: one of the ships returned to France and two others ran aground, one at the hands of a drunken pilot. In 1687 discontented remaining members of the expedition murdered La Salle and his nephew as they searched for the Mississippi. A Spanish expedition sent to find La Salle and halt his trespasses into territory claimed by Spain found the remains of La Salle's settlement and colonists in 1689. France's involvement in the War of the League of Augsburg (known in North America as King William's War) delayed further exploration and settlement of Louisiana until 1699.

In 1699 Pierre Le Moyne, Sieur d'Iberville, sailed into the Gulf of Mexico to resume France's quest for a transcontinental empire. His party reached the mouth of the Mississippi on Shrove Tuesday and celebrated Mardi Gras with a mass and *Te Deum*. Over the next few months Iberville's expedition continued up the Mississippi past Baton Rouge and Pointe Coupée and then returned through Lakes Pontchartrain and Borgne into the gulf.

Iberville's men constructed the first French settlement in Louisiana on the eastern shore of the Bay of Biloxi. Convinced that large ships would get stuck going into the mouth of the Mississippi River, Iberville chose to establish a permanent site on the Gulf Coast rather than on the river. While Iberville returned to France for additional provisions and settlers later in 1699, his brother, Jean-Baptiste Le Moyne, Sieur de Bienville, continued to explore the Mississippi River. Bienville found that ships could get to the river and travel down toward the mouth by way of Lakes Pontchartrain and Borgne. He encountered an English ship well up the river at what has since been called English Turn *(Detour à l'Anglois)* because Bienville fooled the British into thinking he had a large force, so they turned around and retreated downriver. Iberville, however, still insisted that the Mississippi was not navigable and concentrated his efforts on establishing a French presence along the Gulf Coast. Thus, Bienville had to delay creating a permanent settlement on the lower Mississippi River for almost two decades.

* * *

Colonial Louisiana

Louisiana's colonial period lasted from 1699, when the French established a permanent settlement in the area, to 1803, when the United States purchased it. France ceded Louisiana to Spain in the Treaty of Paris of 1763, and Spanish administrators governed the colony until 1803.

During French and Spanish rule Louisiana's value to Europeans was mainly strategic. Both countries viewed Louisiana as useful within the context of larger geopolitical considerations: they wanted to keep the colony out of the hands of archrival England. Although European rulers put more resources into the colony than they got out, France hoped that by occupying Louisiana it could gain access to silver mines in northern New Spain (Mexico). Spain, in turn, wanted Louisiana as a protective barrier between those same mines and Britain's increasingly expansive North American colonies to the east.

While a French colony, Louisiana was governed alternately by the crown and several chartered proprietors. Discouraged by its failure to make Louisiana profitable and distracted by war with England, the French royal house turned the colony over to financier Antoine Crozat in 1712. France contracted with Crozat to operate Louisiana as a proprietary colony, giving him a monopoly on trade with Louisiana in exchange for his promise to bring settlers and slaves and supply the colony with goods.

After losing much money, Crozat resigned as proprietor of Louisiana in 1717, and the crown turned the colony over to John Law's recently chartered Company of the West. A Scot, Law was an economic wizard who created a French national bank to finance trade and colonization and brought together many trading monopolies, including the Company of the West, into one large corporation called the Company of the Indies (1719).

Unfortunately for Louisiana, more people in France invested money in the parent bank that controlled the Company of the Indies than were willing to settle in the colony. The value of the bank's stock inflated wildly, but the colony failed to live up to promises of vast wealth made to lure speculators. As word of this deception spread, investors sought to cash in their shares and in 1720 the "Mississippi Bubble" burst.

Although beset by failed crops, futile searches for mineral wealth, Indian wars, and slave insurrections, the Company of the Indies retained its Louisiana charter until 1731. Louisiana then returned to direct royal administration—first by France and then Spain—for the remainder of its colonial period.

The system of government in Louisiana mirrored that of its European rulers: absolutist and paternalistic. The royal houses of France and Spain governed Louisiana through their appointed representatives—at the upper levels commonly consisting of a governor, a commissioner or intendant, several post commanders, and a council. As part of the Spanish empire, Louisiana fell within the viceroyalty of New Spain, but came under the immediate supervision of the captain general of Havana, Cuba. Unlike their counterparts in the British North American colonies, propertied white male Louisianians could not elect representatives to colonial assemblies, although under Spanish rule, local elites could purchase seats on the New Orleans town council (cabildo). According to the French and Spanish system of governing, crown officials were to take the interests of all subjects into account and make decisions based upon the common good—or at least that was the ideal.

The highest-ranking official in Louisiana was the governor. Because Louisiana was a frontier colony, most of its governors were military officers, whose primary duty was to protect the province against armed threats from other European powers and Indians. Most were born in France or Spain. In contrast to the British North American colonies, the governor's power in Louisiana was not curbed by local legislative bodies and only rarely by the intendant and council members. Although governors frequently abused this power, they also used their authority to act in the interest of colonials—allowing much-needed food, supplies, specie, and slaves to enter Louisiana illegally—even when such actions ran counter to the crown's interests.

One of the major concerns of colonial political leaders was defending and expanding Louisiana at the expense of imperial rivals: first France against Spain and

Britain and then Spain against France, Britain, and the United States. France initially explored and colonized Louisiana to establish a link between its colony to the north—Canada—and its Caribbean islands to the south. Royal authorities also wanted to prevent the British from getting to Spain's nearby silver mines before they did.

As part of the Treaty of Paris that ended the Seven Years' War (called the French and Indian War in the North American colonies) in 1763 France gave Spain Louisiana minus West Florida, which the British claimed. Britain also acquired East Florida from Spain in exchange for the return of Cuba, which Britain had seized. A second Treaty of Paris signed in 1783 to end the American Revolution returned both East and West Florida to Spain. Although West Florida was a distinct political unit, in practice it was governed as an extension of Louisiana, with the governor at Pensacola coming under *de facto* supervision of the governor-general at New Orleans.

This geographic realignment of political power extended Spain's empire in North America but brought it directly into conflict with a new rival, the United States. Spain did not recognize United States claims to a large tract of land lying west of the Appalachians, east of the Mississippi, and north of West Florida. Settlers from the United States flooded into the region, demanding land and access to the port of New Orleans.

Caught in the middle of warfare between Britain and France and desperately in need of allies, Spain finally gave in to pressure from the United States. In the Treaty of San Lorenzo (known to Americans as Pinckney's Treaty) of 1795 Spain accepted 31° north as the northern border of West Florida and granted United States citizens the right to navigate the Mississippi to the gulf, as well as to unload and store goods for reshipment on oceangoing vessels at New Orleans or other Spanish ports; this was referred to as the right of deposit.

New Orleans was the capital and leading city of colonial Louisiana during most of the eighteenth century. Bienville founded New Orleans in 1718 on a crescent-shaped section of the Mississippi's left bank about one hundred miles from the mouth. He named France's newest settlement in honor of the French regent, the Duc d'Orleans. The site had both strategic and economic advantages. Because it sits where distance between the Mississippi and Lakes Pontchartrain and Borgne is shortest, Indians had long used the area as a depot and market for goods carried between the two waterways. The narrow strip of land also aided rapid troop movements, and the river's curve slowed ships approaching from downriver and exposed them to gunfire.

* * *

The Louisiana Purchase

Louisiana's colonial period ended on 20 December 1803 when the French colonial prefect, Pierre Clément de Laussat, transferred the territory to representatives of the United States, William C. C. Claiborne and General James Wilkinson. A scarce twenty days before, Spain's officials, Governor Manuel de Salcedo and the Marqués de Casa Calvo, had transferred Louisiana to Laussat and the French. This seemingly sudden change in rule had been years in the making.

The process started with French emperor Napoleon Bonaparte, who with his foreign minister Talleyrand shared the vision of a renewed western empire for France. They saw Saint-Domingue, a Caribbean island with an economy based on sugar and African slavery, as France's most valuable American colony and the focal point of these imperial designs. Heralded as the liberator of France, Napoleon was bent on conquering people who sought their own freedom. He sent troops to regain control of the island from revolting slaves. But the spirit of the French Revolution, which paved the way for Napoleon's rise to power, fired the imagination of blacks rebelling on the island. They dealt France a stunning defeat, and in January 1804 established the Republic of Haiti. In the process, waves of slave, free black, and white refugees came to New Orleans.

Napoleon's imperial schemes included the recapturing of Louisiana, considered vital to France's strategic, diplomatic, and economic aims. Napoleon wanted to use Louisiana as a granary for France's West Indian islands, especially Saint-Domingue. And France, like Spain, hoped to use Louisiana to halt the aggressive westward march of a young, expansionist United States. Finally, if needed, Louisiana would make good bartering material: trading privileges on the Mississippi or actual transfer of territory in exchange for alliances and money.

Napoleon's designs on Louisiana as a cornerstone for his American empire met with initial success. He not only made peace with the United States, at least temporarily, but he also persuaded Spain to cede Louisiana to him. On 30 September 1800 France and the United States signed the Convention of Mortefontaine, thereby averting a naval war between the two nations. With this treaty in hand, France moved into secret negotiations with Spain to regain Louisiana, its former colony. Signed on 1 October 1800, the Treaty of San Ildefonso stipulated that France provide Spain an Italian kingdom for the duke of Parma (son-in-law of Spain's King Carlos IV). In return, Spain gave France Louisiana and six war vessels. Napoleon verbally promised Carlos IV that France would never transfer Louisiana to another party.

But Napoleon's plan collapsed when the twelve-year revolt of slaves and free blacks in Saint-Domingue ended in November 1803, and the humiliated French forces withdrew. On 1 January 1804 Haiti declared itself an independent republic—the first self-governed by blacks in the Western Hemisphere. The French defeat in Haiti had a ripple effect on Napoleon's strategic plan to recapture Louisiana. General Claude Perrin Victor, sustaining losses on the island, failed to reach his ultimate destination—Louisiana, no longer a viable target. As Napoleon's New World empire disintegrated, the loss of Haiti made Louisiana unnecessary.

Delays on the part of Spain also doomed Napoleon's Louisiana venture. King Carlos IV refused to transfer Louisiana until France found a kingdom for his son-in-law. Spain's recalcitrance forced Napoleon to renege on his promise to Carlos IV to preserve Louisiana for France. He finally sold the colony to the United States.

The United States wanted to acquire New Orleans primarily to guarantee its right of deposit, which gave its vessels license to sail down the Mississippi River through Spanish territory and unload goods at New Orleans for shipment to the Atlantic coast and Europe. By the 1790s most goods shipped down the Mississippi came from United States territories hundreds of miles upriver. This right of deposit was guaranteed in the Treaty of San Lorenzo, negotiated between Spain and the United States in 1795, and was renewable every three years. Even with this right, American merchants and farmers had to pay a tax of six percent on the value of goods brought into and out of New Orleans.

American anxiety heightened in October 1802 when Spanish officials suddenly withdrew the United States' right to deposit western produce at New Orleans. Although Spain reopened the mouth of the Mississippi to American trade six months later, United States officials worried that Spain would revoke their right of deposit at any time.

French-held Louisiana stood in the way of the United States' territorial growth. The United States wanted Louisiana because so many American settlers and merchants were already in the region and because of its vital geographic position at the mouth of the Mississippi. Thomas Jefferson was a leading proponent of United States expansion across the North American continent. He and other members of the American Philosophical Society—including George Washington, John Adams, James Madison, and Alexander Hamilton—backed an expedition to explore Louisiana and areas farther west as early as 1793.

France's need to dispose of Louisiana and the United States' desire to obtain at least the port of New Orleans drew representatives of both governments to the bargaining table. Despite secrecy surrounding the Treaty of San Ildefonso, the United States government discovered the transfer of Louisiana from Spain to France and sent Robert R. Livingston to France in 1801 to act as its minister. Livingston tried repeatedly to purchase New Orleans, but Napoleon refused. Jefferson eventually sent James Monroe, special emissary to Paris and Madrid, to assist Livingston. On 11 April 1803, just days before Monroe arrived in Paris, Napoleon offered to sell not only New Orleans but all of Louisiana to the United States. Unable to provide an army to defend Louisiana, Napoleon needed funds and preferred to have the colony in American rather than British hands.

The Marquis de Barbé-Marbois, Napoleon's minister of the treasury, negotiated the terms of the Louisiana Purchase with Livingston and Monroe. The United States purchased Louisiana for $11,250,000 and assumed claims of its own citizens against France up to $3,750,000, for a total purchase price of $15 million. Once the treaty was translated from French to English, the diplomats signed it on 2 May 1803 in France.

On 30 November 1803 Spain's representatives—Governor Manuel de Salcedo and the Marqués de Casa Calvo—officially transferred Louisiana to France's representative, Prefect Pierre Clément de Laussat. Laussat's vivid prose depicted the event:

> **At 11:45 on November 30, 1803, I set afoot for the City Hall [Cabildo], escorted by about sixty Frenchmen. The brig *L'Argo* fired a salute as we went past. We arrived at the Place [d'Armes]. The crowd was already considerable. The Spanish troops were lined under arms on**

> **one side and the militia on the other. The drums rolled before the guardhouse as I passed. The commissioners of His Catholic Majesty came to meet me halfway down the room. Monsieur de Salcedo seated himself in the middle . . . armchair; I sat in another on his right, the Monsieur the Marquis de Casa Calvo on his left. I presented my powers and the order of the king of Spain. . . . The Marquis de Casa Calvo declared in a loud voice that "the subjects who did not wish to remain under Spanish domination were from that moment completely freed of their oath of allegiance." The governor, at the same time, handed me on a silver tray the keys to the forts St. Charles and St. Louis. He then gave up his seat and I took it myself. . . . We signed and affixed our seals. We then arose and went out on the balconies of the City Hall.**

United States President Thomas Jefferson selected William C. C. Claiborne, former governor of the Mississippi territory and highest civilian official in the vicinity, to govern lower Louisiana. Backing Claiborne with military power was General James Wilkinson. On 17 December these two commissioners, five hundred United States army troops, and one hundred Mississippi volunteers encamped just above New Orleans, ready to take formal possession of Louisiana. Once United States troops lined up in the Place d'Armes on 20 December 1803, commissioners Claiborne and Wilkinson entered the Cabildo and climbed the staircase to the *Sala Capitular* (council room), where they and Prefect Laussat signed the transfer document. Laussat again narrated the transfer's occasion:

> **The commissioners, Messieurs Claiborne and Wilkinson, were received at the foot of the stairs of the City Hall. . . . I advanced toward them, midway down the length of the council room [*Sala Capitular*]. Claiborne seated himself in an armchair at my right, and Wilkinson in another at my left. I announced the purpose of the ceremony. The commissioners presented their powers to me, their secretary reading these in a loud voice. Immediately afterward, I ordered to be read: first, the treaty covering the cession; second, my powers; and third, the act covering the exchange of ratifications. I then declared that I transferred the country to the United States . . . I handed the keys of the city, interlaced with tricolor ribbons, to Monsieur Wilkinson, and I immediately released from their oath of fidelity to France all those inhabitants who wished to remain under the domination of the United States.**

The United States formally took possession of the full territory of Louisiana at St. Louis in 1804, when France handed over the rights to upper Louisiana. This area encompassed that part of the Mississippi River Valley north of where the Ohio River flows into the

Mississippi, near Cape Girardeau, Missouri. On 9 March 1804 Spanish Lieutenant Governor Charles de Hault de Lassus turned over upper Louisiana to France, represented by United States Captain Amos Stoddard. The following day Stoddard transferred the region from France to the United States. He remained in the territory as civil commandant.

* * *

The Territorial Period: A Louisiana Laboratory

Purchase of the Louisiana territory more than doubled the physical size of the United States. In 1803 Louisiana encompassed an area stretching from the Mississippi River to the Rocky Mountains and from the Gulf of Mexico to the Canadian border. Following the transfer of Louisiana to the United States, Congress moved quickly to organize its new acquisition. On 26 March 1804 it divided the Louisiana Purchase into the territories of Orleans and Louisiana. The present state of Louisiana, minus the Florida parishes, made up the Territory of Orleans. The Territory of Louisiana encompassed the remaining area of the former colony.

Because Louisiana was so different from its other states and territories, the United States government made its residents go through a trial period before admitting Louisiana as a state. This vast new acquisition challenged fundamental American institutions: judicial and legal systems, political parties, and land allocation. Its diverse peoples had to prove that they were ready to become part of the United States. They also had to adapt to such common American practices as elections and trial by jury, democratic processes absent under French and Spanish rule. Although United States procedures eventually replaced many of those of colonial France and Spain, Americans did not mold Louisiana into a state like all others. Many of its unique aspects, rooted in the colonial period, remain today.

Closing the vast chasm that separated Anglo and Latin political traditions posed the greatest challenge to effective American rule. The various European ethnic groups already in Louisiana—primarily those of French and Spanish descent (commonly known as "Creoles")—united to resist United States imposition of Anglo political and cultural norms throughout the territorial and antebellum periods. Even though native Louisianians had learned local self-government during the colonial era, Governor Claiborne and other United States officials believed that local leaders did not fully understand American republican concepts and thus were not prepared to govern Louisiana before going through an apprenticeship in democratic forms of government.

At last, in 1811 the United States Congress authorized Louisiana to call a state constitutional convention. According to the 1810 census, more than 76,000 people, about half black and half white, resided in the Territory of Orleans. This number clearly exceeded the population figure of 60,000 specified for statehood in the Northwest

Ordinance of 1787. Moreover, United States authorities, including Governor Claiborne, finally felt that Louisianians were qualified to govern their own state.

Louisiana's 1812 constitution, conservative for the time, was modeled on that of Kentucky, with only slight variations. It provided for a two-house legislature, limited suffrage, and extensive executive powers. Only adult white males who paid taxes could vote, disqualifying two-thirds of the adult white male population in 1812 and all nonwhites and women. Age, property, and residency requirements restricted those who could hold office. Unlike most states, Louisiana's governor had the authority, with senate approval, to appoint all judges and local officials. This policy of a strong head of state accorded with Louisiana's French and Spanish colonial tradition of powerful governors.

Originally, the constitution did not include the Florida parishes, annexed to Louisiana following the West Florida Rebellion of 1810. The convention, however, requested that Congress add the Florida parishes to the new state.

On 30 April 1812 Congress admitted Louisiana, including the Florida parishes, as the eighteenth state in the Union. Exactly nine years had elapsed since the signing of the Louisiana Purchase. Then, in late June 1812 Louisianians elected territorial governor William C. C. Claiborne their first state governor.

* * *

Antebellum Louisiana

Cultural differences and individual personalities, rather than party platforms and philosophies, defined political lines in antebellum Louisiana. Conflict between Latin and Anglo residents and between northern and southern sections of the state infused most political issues. Overall, though, planters—whether of the cotton Democrat or sugar Whig variety—and their merchant allies dominated state government in antebellum Louisiana.

In general, the Florida parishes (formerly English and Spanish possessions) and north Louisiana supported Anglo-American candidates of the Democratic party. Many of the voters living in these areas were Protestants of British or American descent. On both large and small farms they grew and exported cotton and thus, like most Democrats, opposed tariffs. In retaliation for added values, or tariffs, placed on imported goods in the United States, foreign countries often added customs duties to American goods they imported and cut into the sellers' profits. During the antebellum period, most of what England and France imported from the United States was southern cotton.

On the other side of the political arena stood the wealthier planters and their merchant allies from the sugar parishes of south Louisiana. Primarily Catholics and native-born descendants of French and Spanish colonists, south Louisiana voters supported tariffs to protect their sugar from foreign competition and a strong national bank, issues championed by the Whig party and its candidates.

New Orleans reflected on a smaller scale the statewide conflict between Anglo and Latin factions. In 1836 the city was divided into three municipalities. Democrats drew support from an immigrant and Creole coalition of Catholics in the First and Third Municipalities. The Whig party and its successor, the American or so-called Know-Nothing party, attracted Protestant, native-born Anglo-Americans who mainly resided in the Second Municipality.

The Whig party dissolved in the 1850s, when slavery emerged as a national issue and the party could no longer retain support in both North and South. Unhappy with Democratic or Republican party alternatives, many former Whigs in Louisiana and other southern states joined the American party. Party members were called "Know-Nothings" because when asked about their fraternal-like, secretive rituals, they replied, "I know nothing." The American party was anti-Catholic and anti-foreign, but Louisiana Know-Nothings downplayed the first and emphasized the latter. Nativist sentiments were especially strong in New Orleans, the second largest port of immigration in the United States. Irish immigrants in particular competed for jobs and housing with less affluent native whites and free blacks.

Several times in the 1850s riots broke out between Democrats and Know-Nothings over the issue of vote fraud. Although the Know-Nothings often resorted to force, both sides fraudulently registered and intimidated voters. During the 1854 election Know-Nothings claimed that white Creole and Irish Democrats worked together to move voters between several polling places, thus increasing the Democratic vote. The Democratic mayor of New Orleans, John L. Lewis, had to impose a curfew and strengthen police forces to decrease the rioting.

In 1846 legislators voted to move the site of the state capital from New Orleans to Baton Rouge. Four years later workers completed the capitol building, one of the best examples of neo-Gothic architecture in Louisiana. Baton Rouge remained the center of state government until the Civil War, when two governments operated: the Confederate in Shreveport and the Union in New Orleans. The Constitution of 1879 once again restored Baton Rouge as the state capital, where it has remained ever since.

Voters wanted to locate the capital outside of New Orleans so that not all power was centralized in the Crescent City. Some also believed that the many diversions available in New Orleans distracted legislators from the business of running the state. The legislature first tried a new location in Donaldsonville, between New Orleans and Baton Rouge, in 1830, but only met there for one session.

One of the main political issues of the antebellum era concerned expanding the Cotton Kingdom, including its slave labor force, farther west into Texas and the Pacific and south to Cuba. Expeditions against Mexico from 1846 to 1848 and against Cuba in 1851 were launched from Louisiana, where they received much support.

Troops from Louisiana fought in the Mexican War (1846–1848). Among them were the Washington Artillery and the Seventh Louisiana Infantry Battalion, whose drummer was the free black man Jordan B. Noble of Battle of New Orleans fame. In the 1830s several Louisianians had also fought with Texans in their war for independence.

The Mexican War gave many Louisianians, including Lieutenant P. G. T. Beauregard, military training they would find valuable a few years later in the Civil War. One of the leading figures in the Mexican War was General Zachary Taylor. A popular war hero, Taylor in 1848 became the only Louisiana resident ever elected president.

The United States also tried to expand its boundaries by purchasing Cuba. After this attempt failed, southern mercenaries and Cuban exiles decided to take the island by force, with New Orleans as their point of departure. These adventurers were called filibusters, from the Spanish term *filibustero*, meaning freebooter or pirate.

Filibusters launched two expeditions from New Orleans, in 1850 and 1851. They chose New Orleans because it was in the South, where many supported the project to expand the cotton empire, and because public officials in the Crescent City ignored President Zachary Taylor's warning not to upset the sectional balance achieved in the Compromise of 1850. Port authorities gave their "winking encouragement," and crowds cheered as the filibusters sailed from New Orleans in May 1850 and August 1851 with the goal of freeing Cuba from Spanish colonial rule and adding another slave state to the Union.

Spanish troops defeated both invasion attempts. In 1850 the filibusters managed to escape to Key West, Florida, and regroup for a second expedition. Of the 420 mercenaries involved in the 1851 invasion, Spanish forces killed 200 and captured the rest. After sending 160 prisoners to Spain, Cuban authorities executed 50 American prisoners by firing squad. The executions outraged Louisianians and other southerners. Rioters in New Orleans destroyed the Spanish consulate and shops owned by Spaniards. For several years following the failed 1851 invasion, Louisianians honored their "Martyrs for Cuban Freedom."

On the eve of the Civil War Louisiana remained a culturally diverse society, one further divided by socioeconomic, racial, and ethnic concerns. These issues would escalate tensions as the state grappled with the decision to secede from or remain in the Union and then dealt with federal occupation and continuing skirmishes between Union and Confederate troops. Because they were such momentous events, separate chapters discuss events leading to Louisiana’s participation in the Civil War and the state’s role in the turbulent, controversial Reconstruction era.

Selected Bibliography

Adams, William H. "The Louisiana Whigs." *LH* 15 (summer 1974): 213–28.

———. *The Whig Party of Louisiana.* Lafayette, La.: University of Southwestern Louisiana, 1973.

Allain, Mathé. *"Not Worth a Straw": French Colonial Policy and the Early Years of Louisiana.* Lafayette, La.: Center for Louisiana Studies, 1988.

Alliot, Paul. "Historical and Political Reflections on Louisiana." In *Louisiana under the Rule of Spain, France, and the United States, 1785–1807,* edited by James Alexander Robertson, 1:29–143. Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark, 1911.

Arena, C. Richard. "Landholding and Political Power in Spanish Louisiana." *LHQ* 38 (October 1955): 23–39.

Arnold, Morris S. *Unequal Laws unto a Savage Race: European Legal Traditions in Arkansas, 1686–1836.* Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1985.

Billings, Warren M., and Edward F. Haas, eds. *In Search of Fundamental Law: Louisiana's Constitutions, 1812–1974.* Lafayette, La.: Center for Louisiana Studies, 1993.

Boyett, Gene W. "Money and Maritime Activities in New Orleans during the Mexican War." *LH* 17 (fall 1976): 413–29.

Bradley, Jared W. "W. C. C. Claiborne and Spain: Foreign Affairs under Jefferson and Madison, 1801–1811, Part I." *LH* 12 (fall 1971): 297–314.

———. "W. C. C. Claiborne and Spain: Foreign Affairs under Jefferson and Madison, 1801–1811, Part II." *LH* 13 (winter 1972): 5–26.

Brasseaux, Carl A. *Denis-Nicolas Foucault and the New Orleans Rebellion of 1768.* Ruston, La.: McGinty Publications, 1987.

Brooks, Philip C. "Spain's Farewell to Louisiana, 1803–1821." *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 27 (June 1940): 29–42.

Burson, Caroline Maude. *The Stewardship of Don Esteban Miró, 1782–1792.* New Orleans: American Printing, 1940.

Bush, Robert D. "Colonial Administration in French Louisiana: The Napoleonic Episode, 1802–1803." *Publications of the Louisiana Historical Society,* 2d ser., 2 (1974): 36–59.

———. "Documents on the Louisiana Purchase: The Laussat Papers." *LH* 18 (winter 1977): 104–7.

Carriere, Marius. "Political Leadership of the Louisiana Know-Nothing Party." *LH* 21 (spring 1980): 183–95.

Carson, David A. "The Role of Congress in the Acquisition of the Louisiana Territory." *LH* 26 (fall 1985): 369–83.

Clark, Thomas D., and John D. W. Guice. *Frontiers in Conflict: The Old Southwest, 1795–1830.* Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1989.

Cox, Isaac Joslin. *The West Florida Controversy, 1798–1813: A Study in American Diplomacy.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1918.

Dargo, George. *Jefferson's Louisiana: Politics and the Clash of Legal Traditions.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975.

Dart, Henry Plauche. "The Place of the Civil Law in Louisiana." *Tulane Law Review* 4 (February 1930): 163–77.

Dawson, Joseph G., III, ed. *The Louisiana Governors: From Iberville to Edwards.* Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1990.

DeConde, Alexander. *Entangling Alliances: Politics and Diplomacy under George Washington.* Durham: Duke University Press, 1958.

Din, Gilbert C. *Francisco Bouligny: A Bourbon Soldier in Spanish Louisiana.* Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1993.

Dunn, Marie S. "A Comparative Study: Louisiana's French and Anglo-Saxon Cultures." *Louisiana Studies* 10 (fall 1971): 131–69.

Favrot, J. St. Clair. "Baton Rouge, the Historic Capital of Louisiana." *LHQ* 12 (October 1929): 611–29.

Fiehrer, Thomas Marc. "The Baron de Carondelet as Agent of Bourbon Reform: A Study of Spanish Colonial Administration in the Years of the French Revolution." Ph.D. diss., Tulane University, 1977.

Fletcher, Mildred Stahl. "Louisiana as a Factor in French Diplomacy from 1763 to 1800." *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 17 (December 1930): 367–76.

Gilley, B. H. "'Polk's War' and the Louisiana Press." *LH* 20 (winter 1979): 5–23.

Giraud, Marcel. *A History of French Louisiana.* Vol. 5, *The Company of the Indies, 1723–1731.* Translated by Brian Pearce. Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1991.

Greer, James Kimmins. "Louisiana Politics, 1845–1861." Chap. 4. *LHQ* 12 (October 1929): 555–610.

Hoese, H. Dickson. "On the Correct Landfall of La Salle in Texas, 1685." *LH* 19 (winter 1978): 5–32.

James, James A. "Louisiana as a Factor in American Diplomacy, 1795–1800." *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 1 (June 1914): 44–56.

Kilbourne, Richard Holcombe, Jr. *A History of the Louisiana Civil Code: The Formative Years, 1803–1839.* Baton Rouge: Publications Institute, Paul M. Hebert Law Center, LSU, 1987.

Lafargue, André. "Pierre Clement de Laussat, Colonial Prefect and High Commissioner of France in Louisiana: His Memoirs, Proclamations and Orders." *LHQ* 20 (January 1937): 159–82.

LeBreton, Marietta Marie. "A History of the Territory of Orleans, 1803–1812." Ph.D. diss., Louisiana State University, 1969.

Lyon, E. Wilson. *Louisiana in French Diplomacy, 1759–1804.* Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1934.

Meyers, Rose. *A History of Baton Rouge, 1699–1812.* Baton Rouge: Baton Rouge Bicentennial Corporation by LSU Press, 1976.

Newton, Lewis William. "Creoles and Anglo-Americans in Old Louisiana: A Study in Cultural Conflicts." *Southwestern Social Science Quarterly* 14 (June 1933): 31–48.

Reynolds, C. Russell. "Alfonso el Sabio's Laws Survive in the Civil Code of Louisiana." *LH* 12 (spring 1971): 137–47.

A Sketch of the Life and Public Services of General Zachary Taylor, The People's Candidate for the Presidency. Washington, D.C.: n.p., 1848.

Smith, Ronald D. "Napoleon and Louisiana: Failure of the Proposed Expedition to Occupy and Defend Louisiana, 1801–1803." *LH* 12 (winter 1971): 21–40.

Soulé, Leon Cyprian. *The Know Nothing Party in New Orleans: A Reappraisal.* Baton Rouge: Louisiana Historical Association, 1961.

Taylor, Joe Gray. *Louisiana: A Bicentennial History.* New York: W. W. Norton, 1976.

Tregle, Joseph G., Jr. "Political Reinforcement of Ethnic Dominance in Louisiana, 1812–1845." In *The Americanization of the Gulf Coast, 1803–1850,* edited by Lucius F.

Ellsworth, 78–87. Proceedings of the Gulf Coast History and Humanities Conference, vol. 3. Pensacola, Fl.: Historic Pensacola Preservation Board, 1972.

Urban, Chester Stanley. "New Orleans and the Cuban Question during the Lopez Expeditions of 1849–1851: A Local Study in 'Manifest Destiny.'" *LHQ* 22 (October 1939): 1095–1167.

Wall, Bennett H., ed. *Louisiana: A History*. 2d ed. Arlington Heights, Ill.: Forum Press, 1990.

Weber, David J. *The Spanish Frontier in North America*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992.