

CAJUNS, CREOLES, PIRATES AND PLANTERS

Your New Louisiana Ancestors Format

Volume 1, Number 1

By Damon Veach

LE RACONTEUR CONTINUES EXCELLENCE: Land grants hold a special fascination for many Louisiana genealogists. Tales of vast holdings of land granted by colonial governments are often passed down in a family. Sometimes these stories hold true, and sometimes they don't quite live up to expectations. Proving the oral history can be a special challenge.

That's because Louisiana's colonial land grant documents are scattered in many collections, not only in the United States, but all over the world. Microfilm copies of some of the more well-known collections are available in many Louisiana libraries. Abstracts, translations, and indexes to some have been published in books and articles. Still, stray land grants may be found in odd assorted collections tucked away in unexpected places.

The March issue of *le Raconteur* contains abstracts from one such obscure collection of Louisiana land grant documents housed at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. Most of these are of Spanish land grants in the Baton Rouge and surrounding area. The records were translated and abstracted by Judy Riffel, who has located many such documents. One of the survey maps is also reproduced and shows land just north of the Baton Rouge fort which was granted to a Spanish soldier in 1790.

The collection was microfilmed by the Library of Congress for Le Comité des Archives de la Louisiane, the genealogy society that publishes *le Raconteur*. The society has recently donated the microfilm to the Louisiana State Archives where researchers can view the entire collection.

The remaining articles in this issue are equally impressive. "Published Accounts of Slaves in Baton Rouge, 1819-1822," is a compilation by Yvonne Lewis Day of notices from early Baton Rouge newspapers. They describe slave sales, runaways, and captured slaves.

A sampling of other articles of note includes an index to deaths for the City of Jefferson (now part of New Orleans) for 1868-1870, a transcription of a 1798 census of New Feliciana, correspondence regarding early Methodist inroads in the Opelousas area, and medical reports of the 13th Louisiana Infantry in 1861.

Membership in this group is \$20 per year after March 1st and includes four issues of their journal. (It is only \$15 per year if checks are received prior to March 1st of each year.) To join, mail checks or money orders to: Le Comité, P.O. Box 1547, Baton Rouge, LA 70821. For more information, visit their website at

<http://www.lecomite.org>. Members receive many discounts on publications which more than pays for the annual memberships, and back issues of *le Raconteur* are also available as well as their new newsletter. Riffel is the editor and is one of the top genealogical researchers in the country.

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GOOD DEEDS BRING AWARDS: FamilySearch has announced the recipients of the 2009 FamilySearch Software Awards at the FamilySearch Developers Conference in Provo, Utah. The 12 recipients were recognized for their outstanding and innovative work in advancing products and technologies that integrate with FamilySearch's emerging suite of products and services.

The annual FamilySearch Software Awards have been established to encourage and recognize software development that benefits the family history and genealogy industry. "We are excited to announce the recipients of the 2009 FamilySearch Software Awards. The awards formally recognize the software achievements of those developers and companies that are making important contributions to the family history and genealogy industry," said Gordon Clarke, FamilySearch Web services product manager.

The Best Features awards this year were decided by a panel of judges for the industry. The Develop Choice Awards are decided by the vote of members of DevNet.FamilySearch.org, an online community of developers. The awards were given for the categories of best Application (API) Library, Most Useful to Developers, and Potential Future Impacts.

The following recipients were announced and presented at the FamilySearch Developers Conference:

Desktop Productivity

- Incline Software's Ancestral Quest for the "Best Listing Tool"
- Ohana Software's FamilyInsight for "Best Standardizer"
- RootsMagic's RootsMagic 4 for "Best Dashboard"

Desktop Syncing or Tree-Cleaning

- Incline Software's Ancestral Quest for the "Most Comprehensive Syncing"
- Ohana Software's FamilyInsight for "Best Person Separator"
- RootsMagic's RootsMagic 4 for "Easiest to Sync"

Desktop Use of Media

- Progeny Software's Charting Companion for the "Best for Desktop Printing"

Web Productivity

- US Family Tree's Grow Branch for the "Best Web Site Feature for Publishing"

Web Use of Media

- Generation Maps for the "Best Web Site Feature for Printing"
- TreeSeek for "Best Web Site Feature for Mapping"

Developers Choice Awards

- David Pugmire's fsapi.net for the "Best API Library"
- Ben Godard's fs-ubiquity for the "Potential Future Impact on the Genealogy Industry"

To learn more about the award recipients and respective products in each category, visit the FamilySearch Developers Network website:

<<https://devnet.familysearch.org/news/vote-for-developer-choice-award-winners>> website.

FamilySearch <<http://www.familysearch.org/>> International is the largest genealogy organization in the world. Millions of people use FamilySearch records, resources, and services to learn more about their family history. To help in this great pursuit, FamilySearch has been actively gathering, preserving, and sharing genealogical records worldwide for over 100 years. FamilySearch is a nonprofit organization sponsored by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Patrons can access FamilySearch services and resources free online at FamilySearch.org <<http://www.familysearch.org/>> or through over 4,500 family history centers in 70 countries, including the main Family History Library in Salt Lake City, Utah.

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VOLUNTEERS RALLY FOR CENSUS TRANSCRIPTION: Here is more information from FamilySearch and the 1875 Norway Census Transcription Initiative that is underway. FamilySearch International, the University of Tromsø, and DIS-Norge announced today a joint initiative to transcribe the 1875 Norway Census for free online access. It is the only Norway census that has not been indexed and the first to be tackled as a global, Internet-based effort. Volunteers who can read Norwegian are being sought to complete the project at www.familysearch.org. (Go to FamilySearch.org, then click Index Records, and then click Volunteer.)

The 1875 Norway Census is valuable to researchers because it was the last national census taken just before the great Norwegian immigration period that started in 1878. Researchers will not have to wait much longer for convenient, online access to the historic census. FamilySearch digitized the census images and is using its Web-based transcription tool and volunteers to create the automated index. The University of Tromsø and DIS-Norge are sponsoring the project, but many more online volunteers are needed to transcribe the 1.6 million individuals found in the tens of thousands of census sheets.

Although FamilySearch has done other major international indexing projects, this is the first one for Norway. “The biggest challenge is the Norwegian handwriting and names,” said Jeff Svare, collection management specialist. “Most of FamilySearch’s current volunteers are not skilled at reading Norwegian names or handwriting. Native Norwegian volunteers would be much more effective and efficient at transcribing the required information from the census sheets,” concluded Svare.

Volunteering is simple. Volunteers with Internet access register online at FamilySearchIndexing.org. Once they have downloaded the transcription software, there is an optional, but very helpful, tutorial. They then select the Norway 1875 Census project, and a digital image of a census page will appear. The volunteers then enter the highlighted information they see on their computer screen. That information is saved and compiled online in an index that will be made freely available to the public. Each batch should take about 30 minutes.

Indexers do not need to worry about their skill level at reading censuses. Each census page is transcribed by two different indexers. Any discrepancies between the two entries will be arbitrated by a third indexer. The result is a highly accurate, free index of tremendous value to family history enthusiasts. The more online volunteers that help, the quicker the free census index will be available online for all to enjoy and benefit from.

There are other hidden benefits to volunteering. Volunteers become familiar with historical documents, the valuable stories they can conceal, and their usefulness and application to genealogical research.

The FamilySearch Records Access program has already generated over 500 million names and images through its volunteer initiatives. The collections can be searched for free at FamilySearch.org. (Go to FamilySearch.org, then click Search Records, and then click Record Search pilot.)

Gunnar Thorvaldson, professor of history and manager of research for the Norwegian Historical Data Centre at the University of Tromsø, said, “The University welcomes the cooperation with the FamilySearch Center to extend our sample of computerized entries from the 1875 census for Norway. This will significantly increase the potential use of the first high quality Norwegian census both in statistical and ancestry-related research.”

“We are happy to be able to assist FamilySearch in indexing the 1875 Norway Census,” said Torill Johnsen, president of DIS-Norge. “Lots of important genealogical information has limited access because it is still only available on paper in archives and libraries. Online access to those reliable sources makes it available for genealogists from their own computer when they want it. Active involvement from volunteers will hasten the completion of the 1875 Norway Census and increase the number of digitally accessible sources,” added Johnsen.

FamilySearch manages the largest collection of genealogical records worldwide. In 2007 it announced plans to begin digitizing and indexing its collection for broader, more economic online access—starting with popular collections like the U.S., Canada, and U.K. censuses. FamilySearch has created free online indexes to date for the 1850, 1860, 1870, 1880, and 1900 U.S. Censuses. FamilySearch is working with The Generations Network to provide enhanced, free indexes for the remaining U.S. censuses.

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ABOUT FAMILYSEARCH INTERNATIONAL: **FamilySearch** International is the largest genealogy organization in the world. Millions of people use FamilySearch records, resources, and services to learn more about their family history. To help in this great pursuit, FamilySearch has been actively gathering, preserving, and sharing genealogical records worldwide for over 100 years. FamilySearch is a nonprofit organization sponsored by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Patrons may access FamilySearch services and resources free online at FamilySearch.org or through over 4,500 family history centers in 70 countries, including the main Family History Library in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Cajuns, Creoles, Pirates, and Planters is a little longer in this first issue because of all the information collected on FamilySearch. Each issue will be approximately three typed pages – unless the data received before deadline warrants a longer column.

Welcome to the new format and be sure to take advantage of all that is offered and available for you in the world of genealogical research. Tell your friends, organizations, and librarians about this new service. The continued success will be due to your support and interest in what is happening in Louisiana’s genealogical organizations, libraries, and special seminars.

All correspondence should be directed to ancestorslaveach@cox.net. Personal correspondence to the compiler can be sent to 709 Bungalow Lane, Baton Rouge, LA 70802-5337. Queries are very important, and they are welcomed for publication with no limit to the number of words in each. They should, however, contain a Louisiana connection by heritage or residence of researcher working on lines in other states or countries, and it is important to include both the e-mail and snail-mail address in case researchers do not have Internet service. Books, society publications, and other materials are reviewed only if sample copies are submitted with each request. (Note: Make sure all material for review is sent to the address above. This column is no longer associated with any newspaper.) These review items are then donated to the DeSoto Parish Historical Society for inclusion in the Veach-Foshee Memorial Library Collection which is housed in the Mansfield Female College Museum in Mansfield, Louisiana.

Thank you for your support over the years, and now let’s continue our research.