

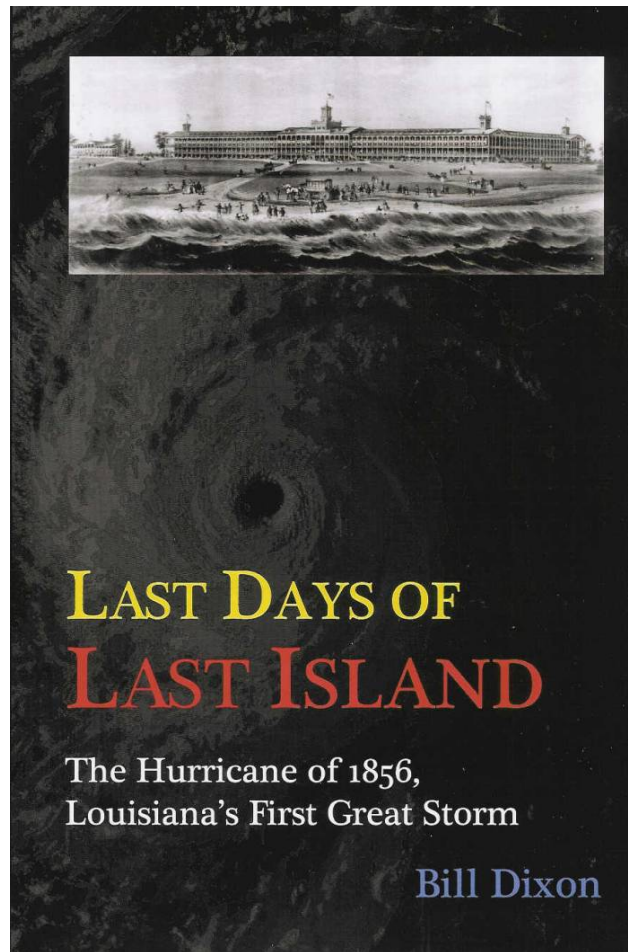
CAJUNS, CREOLES, PIRATES AND PLANTERS

Your New Louisiana Ancestors Format

Volume 1, Number 20

By Damon Veach

LAST ISLAND: The University of Louisiana At Lafayette Press has released an excellent book on the hurricane that struck Last Island, also called Isle Dernière, Isle Dernier, or L'Isle Dernière. Last Island was located south of Dulac, Louisiana, between Lake Pelto, Caillou Bay, and the Gulf of Mexico. It was originally approximately 25 miles in length before being hit by the hurricane.



Author Bill Dixon spent years in research and has come up with a definitive look at this devastating storm that was a category four when it struck the island and entered the lower part of the state. Last Island was the South's newest and most popular spot for Louisiana's antebellum society to visit. Over 200 people perished in this storm, and at the time it struck, there were more than four hundred vacationers who had come here to get away from the hot August sun and enjoy the cool breeze from the Gulf. These included wealthy sugar planters, powerful

politicians, and many family members, friends, and servants. It was a retreat and a way of escaping the humidity, illness, and insects of southern Louisiana.

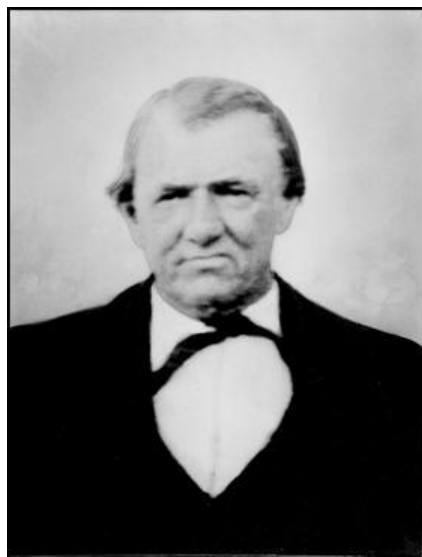
It was August 10, 1856 when the ominous cloud appeared over the Gulf. Even today, the story of this storm remains of intense interest, and Dixon seems to have come up with a winner, a book that completely holds your interest from the first page until the end. It is a comprehensive account of this hurricane, and he has included a number of great pictures and maps to illustrate this study.

A number of houses, several gambling establishments, and a resort hotel were destroyed by the storm. This well documented and indexed book is available for \$20 (soft cover) or \$30 (hard cover). It can be ordered directly from the publisher (University of Louisiana at Lafayette Press (P.O. Box 40831, Lafayette, LA 70504-0831) as well as in bookstores or online. The website for the Center for Louisiana Studies is <http://cls.louisiana.edu>, or call Greg Mouton, Marketing Director, 337-482-1163. This is a must-have book for any Louisiana collector.

The author will be at Barnes & Noble (CitiPlace) in Baton Rouge on Saturday, August 1st, 3:30 p.m. – 5 p.m. and Barnes & Noble (Perkins Rowe) on Sunday, August 2nd, 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m.

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MEETING SCHEDULED: A meeting of the Vermilion Historical Society will be held at the meeting rooms of the Vermilion Parish Library, 405 E. St. Victor St., Abbeville, Louisiana, on Tuesday, July 28, 2009 at 5:30 p.m. A short business meeting will be followed by a presentation on Ambroise Lacour – Public Servant.



Ambroise Lacour came to Vermilion Parish just after its creation in 1844. He became a teacher, a justice of the peace, served on the police jury, was elected

sheriff, was elected mayor of Abbeville, served on the school board, and acted as clerk of the police jury for many years.

Lacour is interesting for two reasons. First, he left a scrapbook containing not only a record of his activities in the various offices that he held, but newspaper clippings from as far back as 1845 that are not available anywhere else. Secondly, he claimed publicly that the first Bowie knife was made near Campbell's Ferry in what later became Vermilion Parish.

The meeting is open to the public so if you want to learn more about the man, his scrapbook, and Jim Bowie's connection to Vermilion Parish, just attend the meeting. Abbeville is one of the most historic towns in the state and is located southwest of Lafayette in the heart of Cajun country. It is home to many restaurants that specialize in the authentic tastes of the region.

For more information on this society, go to www.vermilionhistorical.com. This is definitely one of the best genealogical/historical web sites you will find, and it is one that will keep you amazed at the historical wonders of this part of Louisiana.

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ACTIVE SOCIETY: The Vicksburg Genealogical Society was formed in 1982 and was incorporated in 1986. They are one of the best genealogical organizations in the Deep South and rank exceptionally high on a national scale. They publish a fully indexed quarterly called *Mississippi River Routes*. If your research interests are in the Louisiana parishes and the Mississippi counties along and near the Mississippi River, you may need to check their group out, especially their publication. Their materials cover this area all the way from the northern boundary of the Florida Parishes area of Louisiana (along the Louisiana-Mississippi state line) to the Louisiana-Arkansas line and beyond.

Each issue of their publication features original documented material, including family history, record inventories, church, public, organizational, or corporate records, Bible records, cemetery inventories, letters, diaries, ledgers, and queries. They constantly recruit new members and seek new material to publish.

There is one thing for certain about this group. They know how to plan ahead and prepare members and guests for programs extending into 2010. They hold monthly meetings between September and May. Take a look at what they have scheduled:

- September 14 – Peter Miazza (Old Greenwood Cemetery, Jackson)
- October 13 – Jim Barnett (Natchez Indian Confederacy)
- November 9 – Tony Dardeau Jr. (Pierre Hardouin, 1699 ship carpenter)
- December 14 – Lamar Roberts (Vicksburg in post cards)
- January 11 – Mary Anne Dotson (Belle Boyd, Confederate spy)
- February 8 – Richard Taylor (Jimmie Doolittle's Raiders)

March 8 – Tim Hamilton (Mississippi River steamboats)
April 12 – Lamar Roberts and Others (“Show and Tell”)
May 10 – Carole Schultz (Flood of 1927)

Membership in the society runs from June 1 to May 31, and the cost is \$25 annually. *Mississippi River Routes* is included with the membership into this group. Their website is at <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~msvgs/index.htm>. Tony Dardeau is editor of their publication, and the address for submitting membership checks is Vicksburg Genealogical Society, Attn: Treasurer, P.O. Box 1161, Vicksburg, MS 39181-1161.