

# **CAJUNS, CREOLES, PIRATES AND PLANTERS**

*Your New Louisiana Ancestors Format*

Volume 1, Number 21

By Damon Veach

**ASIAN RESEARCH:** With the interest in genealogical research continuing to capture more interest, it is not at all unusual to see so many of the residents of Louisiana looking for their heritage. This includes more of the different ethnic groups than you might think. Asians are among this diverse group of people.

A book that may be of great value to those of Chinese descent is one that has been released from Clearfield Publishing Company of Baltimore, Maryland. It's called *In Search of Your Asian Roots*, by Sheau-yuch J. Chao. It is printed in Chinese, so you have to be fluent in the language to make it a usable research guide. Although it has an English text, it is still confusing if you don't speak Chinese.

Contained in this book are the standard elements for research purposes: history and genealogy of surnames, family name index, publications in both English and Chinese, and a bibliography of Chinese surnames. The Chinese possess one of the oldest genealogical traditions in the world, extending back to the Shang Period (1700-1122 B.C.E.). The author honors this tradition and provides context by including a glossary and a chronology of Chinese history to help readers in finding terms and the dates of imperial time periods referred in the volume. Also included is a Pinyin to Wade-Giles Conversion Table for the benefit of readers who are less familiar with the Wade-Giles system of Romanization of Chinese sounds adopted by the Library of Congress and utilized throughout the book.

At the heart of the work are three principal chapters. Chapter 1 describes the history of Chinese surnames, the research on Chinese surnames in literature, and reasons surnames have changed in Chinese history. Chapter 2, by far the largest of the chapters, delivers a genealogical analysis of more than 600 Chinese surnames.

Typically, each surname sketch depicts the founder or other originating influence upon the name, the various locales associated with the surname, reasons behind alterations in the name, and so on. Chapter 3 consists of an annotated bibliography of Chinese and English language sources on Chinese surnames. The work concludes with separate indexes to family names, authors, titles, Chinese-character stroke numbers (one mechanism used for grouping Chinese characters).

The preparation of *Genealogical Resources on Chinese Surnames* was the result of a prodigious effort. Among other things, the author translated and analyzed nearly 200 books in ancient Chinese literature housed at Columbia University's East Asian Library, the Harvard-Yenching Library at Harvard University, and the Library of Congress. This publication of this book at this particular time is guaranteed to be a

boon to East Asian researchers, librarians, bibliographers, students, and, of course, genealogical researchers working on their Chinese forebears.

The publisher of this book is Clearfield Company, 3600 Clipper Mill Road, Suite 260, Baltimore, MD 21211. The price is \$37.50, postpaid.

Another book published by this same company involves Texas records. The vast records of Texas were created by successive governments over a period of almost 200 years. From the earliest recorded land grants by the Spanish and the Mexicans, to the grants, deeds, and patents of the Republic and State of Texas, the titles to the lands of Texas have remained intact and have passed down by will or deed to the present.

These records and masses of other genealogical records are available to researchers now. It's just a matter of locating them, and this is the book to help in this matter. *Genealogical Records in Texas* was written by Imogene Kinard Kennedy and Leon J. Kennedy, and this remarkable book holds the answers to this research problem.

Texas covers a lot of area, but this guide cuts it right down to size and makes record searching fast and convenient. In text and maps, it provides detailed information on the legal and historical background of the state, the origin of each county, the location of the records for each portion of the county before it was organized into its present boundaries, and the specific records available in the courthouses, the Texas State Library, the Texas State Archives, and the Texas General Land Office.

In addition, it provides information on the original colonies and districts of Texas, a list of Spanish terms used in land grants and deeds, a list of Texas libraries with resources for genealogical research, and a bibliography. The price of this book is \$41.50, postage and handling included.

If you have family ties to Texas, don't pass this one up. It is an excellent addition to any genealogical library.

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**SPANISH TOWN:** The Canary Islanders Heritage Society will hold their regular meeting on August 8th at the Louisiana State Museum, 660 N. 4th Street, Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The meeting will begin at 11:00 a.m. and feature a lecture by John Sykes on the history of Spanish Town.

Many of the original settlers of Spanish Town were Canary Islanders. A list of the surnames include Cazas, Pereyra, Pino, Rodriguez, Collado, Quintana, Diaz, Tilano, Marcos, Bockseh, Rivas, Lesassier, Losada, Guedry, Solano, Gacio, Masias, Sanchez, Cruzat and Estevan. Following the lecture, Sykes will conduct a walking tour of Spanish Town.

**MAJOR RESEARCH CENTER:** The Williams Research Center in New Orleans is one of the better research facilities in the country. It is located at 410 Chartres Street in the French Quarter and is a part of The Historic New Orleans Collection (THNOC). The building was once a police station and municipal courthouse. Today, the façade and the reading room, which occupy the former courtroom, are suggestive of the building's earlier design.

THNOC's rare and important holdings here are available to the general public. Patrons have access to library items along with photographs, prints, drawings, and paintings. Even beautiful and unusual three-dimensional objects are there for patrons to peruse. Rare manuscripts and documents are available in the original and in microform.

The reading room at the Williams Research Center is open from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. from Tuesday through Saturday, excluding holidays. Access to the research center begins with an interview with reading room staff and the consultation of automated catalogues. Scholars have access to extensive collections related to the Gulf South, particularly New Orleans and Louisiana. The extensive holdings include many items of interest to researchers including books, pamphlets, sheet music, painted broadsides, theatre programs, and periodicals. More than two linear miles of documents and manuscripts are housed here along with all the photographs, prints, drawings, and paintings.

The major fields for research here are colonial Louisiana, the Louisiana Purchase, the Battle of New Orleans, the Civil War, Mississippi River life, cartography, transportation, plantations, urban development, Louisiana artists and writers, architecture, French Quarter, early New Orleans jazz, historic preservation, and Mardi Gras. The entire collection reflects all aspects of the history and culture of the Gulf South, Louisiana, and New Orleans. The selection of materials and actual collections are too numerous to mention here, but it is one of the most impressive ones now in existence in the United States.

Some of those items which may not be widely known to be housed here are the Pierre Clement Laussat papers, records of African American troops in Louisiana during the Civil War, survey of historic New Orleans cemeteries, land survey records from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, New Orleans city directories, Louisiana materials from the French National Archives, Louisiana materials from the General Archive of the Indies in Seville, Spain and the Cuban National Archives, and much, much more.

You can learn more about this collection and the research facility by contacting The Historic New Orleans Collection, 533 Royal Street, New Orleans, LA 70130 or by e-mail at [wrc@hnoc.org](mailto:wrc@hnoc.org).