

CAJUNS, CREOLES, PIRATES AND PLANTERS

Your New Louisiana Ancestors Format

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By Damon Veach

OUTSTANDING JOURNAL: Begun in 1978, *le Raconteur* has slowly but surely grown into one of the largest and most well-known of the statewide genealogical publications. From the beginning, its focus has been on the preservation and use of original records, more so than publishing compiled genealogies. Each issue contains indexes, abstracts, translations, and guides to a variety of original source material from around the state.

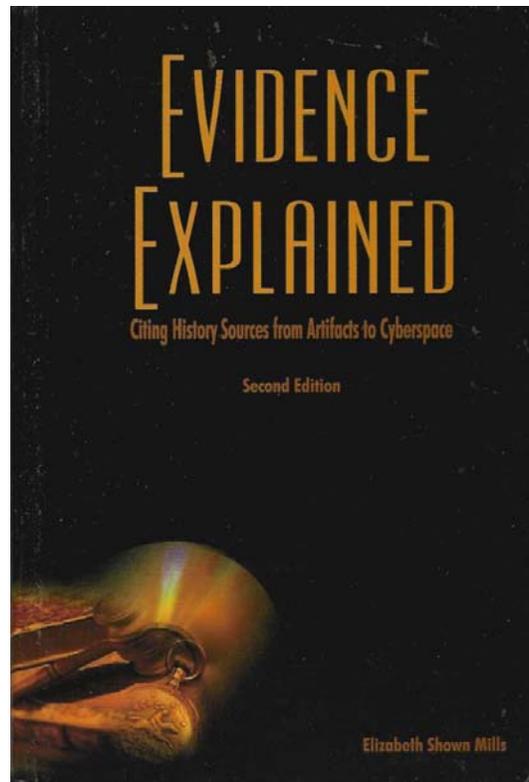
The latest issue, which has just been released, is no exception. As always, the December issue contains the index for the entire year. This consumes nearly half of the space. But, the editor makes up for it by including a variety of smaller articles. The issue, for example, contains an 1806 St. Landry Parish tax listing, an index of West Baton Rouge Parish naturalizations, a listing of early Lafayette Parish postmasters, a 1778 list of petitioners at Iberville, St. Martin Parish voter registrations, and short items on West Feliciana, Pointe Coupee, and Winn Parishes. Book reviews, a Computer Corner, announcements of new research material at the State Archives, and other society news are also regular features.

The quarterly journal is published by Le Comité des Archives de la Louisiane, a group which promotes both genealogical research and archival preservation. They have also announced a new initiative to expand the society's website (www.lecomite.org), inviting members to join its newly formed Website Development Task Force. Watch for new developments from this very active group.

Memberships for 2009 are available at \$20 through December 31st. Memberships for 2010 are \$15 through February 28. To join, mail payment to: Le Comité des Archives, P.O. Box 1547, Baton Rouge, LA 70821.

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EVIDENCE EXPLAINED: Guide books are one of the most helpful items in any genealogical library, and one of the best of its kind is *Evidence Explained*, which has just been released in an updated second edition. This one comes from Elizabeth Shown Mills, a historical writer with decades of research experience in public and private records. She is the author of several other books.



When it was first released in 2007, it met with enthusiastic response for all sections of the research community. It is a definitive guide to the citation and analysis of historical sources, a guide so thorough that it leaves nothing to chance, whether you want to cite a podcast or a census record. This new edition includes updates to numerous websites, new models for electronic sources such as blogs and online forums, and new model citations to traditional and non-traditional genealogical sources, thus continuing its role as the single and most comprehensive style manual for genealogical writing and publishing.

According to Mills, there are no historical sources we can trust at face value, something I have warned my readers about over the years. Records simply offer evidence, and their assertions may or may not be true. To decide what actually happened, we must understand those records. To analyze that evidence and judge what to believe, researchers need particular facts about those records.

Evidence Explained has two principal uses. It provides citation models for most historical sources, especially original materials not covered by classic citation guides. Beyond that, it can help readers understand each type of record and identify each in such detail that everyone will know not only where to find sources, but the nature of that source. Thus the evidence can be better interpreted and the accuracy of conclusions can be properly appraised.

Take a look at these highlights:

1 - Covers all contemporary and electronic sources not discussed in traditional style manuals, including digital, audio, and video sources.

2 – Explains citation principles and includes more than 1,000 citation models for virtually every source type.

3 – Shows readers where to go to find their sources and how to describe them and evaluate them.

4 – Teaches readers to separate facts from assertions and theory from proof in the evaluation of evidence.

This book can be ordered from Joe Garonzik at Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 3600 Clipper Mill Rd., Suite 260, Baltimore, MD 21211. The price including postage and handling is \$65.45. This should be in every major genealogical research library collection. If it isn't in your local library, see if they will add it to a future order.

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DESOTO PLUME: The latest issue of *DeSoto Plume*, published by the DeSoto Parish Historical Society, contains an extensive study of the Catholic Church in DeSoto Parish. Written by Liz Chrysler, it carries the beginnings back to the early French and Spanish settlers of the 1700s. What is so nice about this article is the number of family names given in telling the story. It was interesting to learn of the first baptism in Natchitoches, that of Joseph Marcel Antonio DeSoto, son of Manuel DeSoto and Marie des Neiges de St. Denis. This took place in 1758.

Another article by Liz Chrysler was titled “Garden of God,” and it concerns the little rock chapel at Carmel, Louisiana. Carmelite missionaries renamed the remnants of Bayou Pierre Settlement to Carmel, which translated means “Garden of God.”

Gay Means closed out this wonderful little publication with an article on baptisms at Clear Lake, and a picture of this was added to illustrate the crowds that gathered at Clear Lake Bridge for a typical baptism.

Membership in this society is only \$10 per year. Meetings are held on the Sunday nearest the 22nd and during the months of February, May, August, and November. Meetings begin at 3 p.m., and the location is at a different place each time and announced prior to these dates. Send membership fees and any questions to the society to George Meriwether Gilmer Jr., P.O. Box 300, Stonewall, LA 71078.

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MISCELLANEA: Queries are printed in this format free of charge. Books and society publications are also reviewed if a sample copy is sent with each request. Be

sure to check out the new formats of this column when they are posted every Monday morning. And tell your genealogical friends about this free service. All back issues are archived for your convenience, and they are presented in three formats – PDF, HTML, and Word. Send news releases and other items directly to Damon Veach, Cajuns, Creoles, Pirates and Planters, 709 Bungalow Lane, Baton Rouge, LA 70802-5337. The e-mail address is ancestorslaveach@cox.net.