

CAJUNS, CREOLES, PIRATES AND PLANTERS

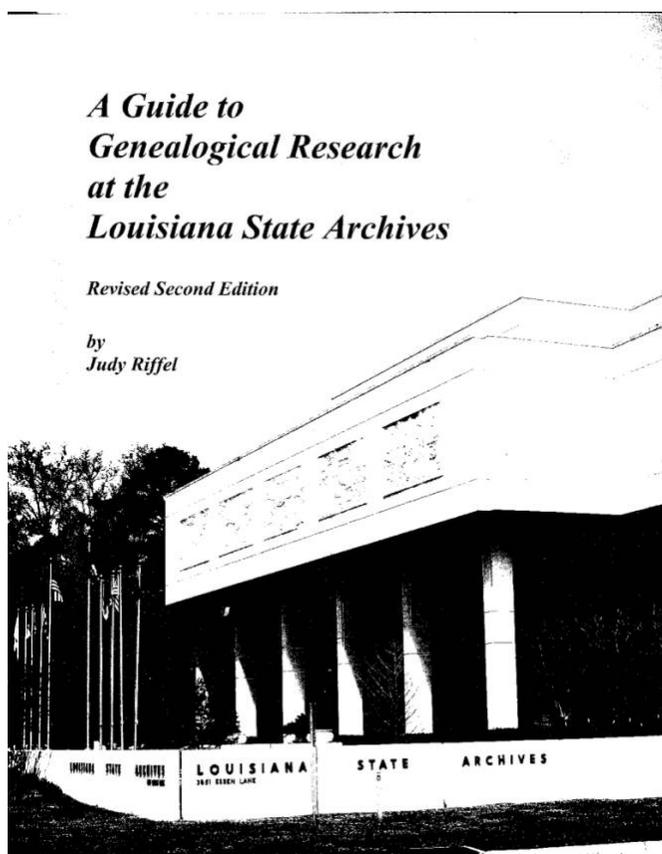
Your New Louisiana Ancestors Format

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By Damon Veach

ARCHIVES GUIDE REPRINTED, UPDATED: Since opening in 1987, the Louisiana State Archives building on Essen Lane in Baton Rouge has become one of the top genealogical research facilities in the state. Not only does it house an impressive collection of books and periodicals, but its holdings of microfilm and original manuscripts are outstanding. Where it has been lagging, however, is in educating the genealogical public on just what is available and how to use it.

Last year, Le Comité des Archives de la Louisiane took the first step towards rectifying that situation by publishing "A Guide to Genealogical Research at the Louisiana State Archives." The first edition of 300 copies sold out in only a matter of months, demonstrating just how hungry genealogists were for guidance on navigating the multitude of sources found there. As a result, the society had to move up its plans for publishing a revised edition, which was released earlier this month.



The second edition contains all the information found in the first edition, plus information on new acquisitions at the State Archives since last year. Compiled by Judy Riffel, a professional genealogist who has spent the better part of the last 22 years conducting research there, the book provides basic information on hours, procedures, fees, and computer access. Twelve chapters cover the various record groups including Censuses and Census Substitutes, Vital Records, Colonial Records, Parish Civil Records, Land Records and Maps, Military and Pension Records, Immigration and Naturalization Records, Other Governmental Records, Church and Cemetery Records, Newspapers, Ethnic Research, and Miscellaneous Collections.

The format of the chapters varies to suit the subject. Some chapters contain lists of collections on specific topics, supplemented by explanatory text. For example, the chapter on Parish Civil Records contains numerous tables listing parish collections that have marriage, probate, and other types of civil records. The accompanying text explains what these records are and how they can be useful to genealogical researchers.

Other chapters provide more detailed explanations or background information. This is where Riffel's in-depth knowledge really shows. In the chapter on Vital Records, for instance, she explains the laws behind the creation and maintenance of vital records in Louisiana. This type of information can be helpful to genealogists who may be seeking answers as to why they can't find a particular record or where else they might look for it.

Even experienced researchers will find a few surprises. The chapter on Other Governmental Records covers some little known and rarely used collections that contain useful genealogical data. These include the State Supreme Court Records, Hospital and Other Medical Records, Occupational and Trade Licenses, Penitentiary and Other Criminal Records, and the Rebel Archives, to name a few.

With a few exceptions, the book deals with Louisiana records. This is because the Louisiana State Archives collects and houses primarily Louisiana research materials. Two of the five appendices, however, list genealogical periodicals from other states and countries, and one appendix provides a list of family newsletters. Researchers should take note that many of these periodicals are not available in other local genealogical libraries.

The soft-cover book is 164 pages and sells postpaid for \$24 to current members of Le Comité and \$34 to non-members. To order, write Le Comité at P.O. Box 1547, Baton Rouge, LA 70821. Copies will also be available at the Louisiana Genealogical and Historical Society's Annual Seminar on Saturday, April 18th, at the Embassy Suites in Baton Rouge.

For those who have already purchased the first edition, a list of substantive changes will be posted to the society's website (www.lecomite.org). Better yet, donate your old copy to a friend or library and purchase a new one for yourself!

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GENEALOGICAL CONFERENCE: It's not often that a national genealogical conference comes anywhere near Louisiana. When one does, Louisiana researchers should take note and really enjoy the advantage of a rare opportunity to attend one so close to home.

This year's Federation of Genealogical Societies Conference will be held in Little Rock, Arkansas, from September 2-5, 2009. The conference theme is *Passages Through Time*, and the co-host is the Arkansas Genealogical Society. The Association of Professional Genealogists will also hold a Professional Management Conference the first day of the event. Pre-conference events will be held September 1 and include an ice cream social, an oral history workshop, and a lecture on developing a research plan.

Over 90 lecturers, some of the best in their field, will be speaking on a wide range of topics suitable for all skill levels, from experts to beginners and everyone in between. Some of the themes include individual state research, record types, methodology, genealogical practices, DNA, ethnic research, migration, mapping, archives and repositories, society management, and FamilySearch. Conference activities will also provide a good opportunity for attendees to meet, network, and trade research stories.

As a neighboring state, Louisiana will be well represented. Some of the Louisiana specific lectures include: *Coincoin: How to Recreate the Life of a Female Ancestor* (Elizabeth Shown Mills); *Genealogical Research at the Louisiana State Archives* (Judy Riffel); *Louisiana Conveyance Records: A Rich Source of Genealogical Research* (Sharon Batiste Gillins); *Negro Soldiers of Antebellum Louisiana – Their Service and Records* (Sharon Batiste Gillins); and *Unlikely Sources for North Louisiana Research* (Judy Riffel).

The Exhibit Hall is always a highlight at genealogical conferences. After all, genealogists like to shop for the latest resources and gadgets that can help them with their research. Booths will feature books (old and new), genealogy software and hardware, preservation supplies, genealogical and historical societies, ethnic organizations, DNA companies, popular magazines, scholarly journals, databases, continuing education opportunities, author book signings, publishers, a Heritage Film Festival, and places to sit, rest and network with other registrants.

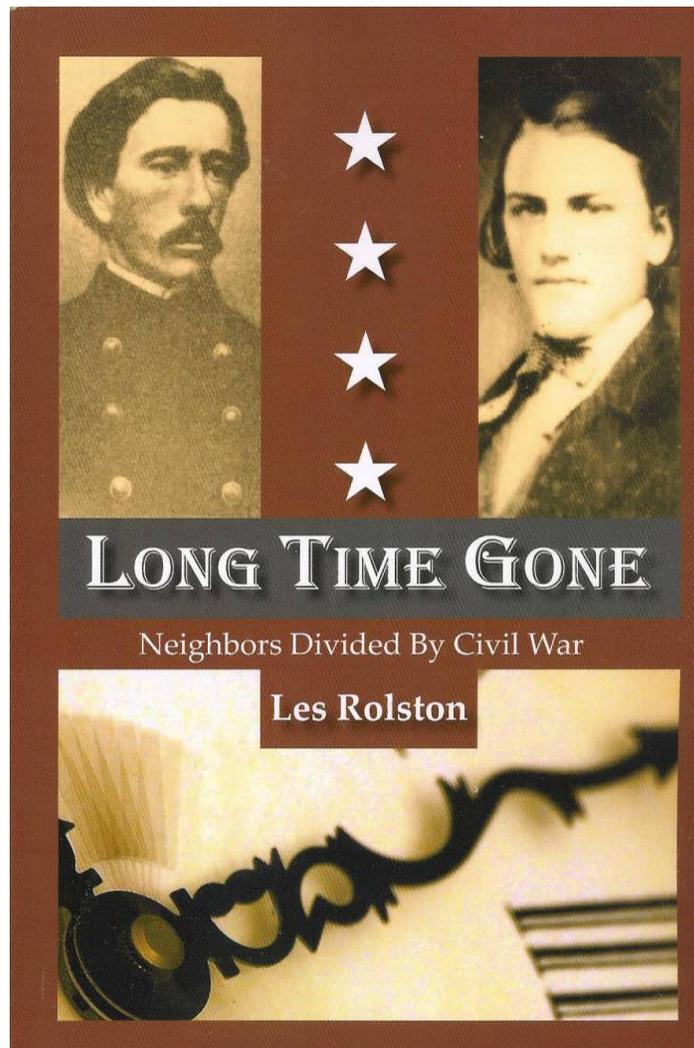
Prices for the conference vary depending on the number of events a participant chooses to attend. Early bird discounts are also available to those registering before June 2, 2009. For more information, go to the FGS website (<http://www.fgs.org/>).

Conference brochures will also be placed out in the Baton Rouge area genealogy libraries.

Conferences such as this provide genealogists with an excellent opportunity to combine self improvement with entertainment. They're also an opportunity to get out from behind your computer and meet some of the people you've read and heard about.

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LONG TIME GONE: Les Rolston has come up with another excellent book about the Civil War. In "Long Time Gone: Neighbors Divided by Civil War," he tells of two young Rhode Islanders, boyhood friends from the village of Pawtuxet. As teenagers, they fought on opposite sides.



Elisha Hunt Rhodes served with the 2nd Rhode Island, and his schoolmate James Rhodes Sheldon was with the 50th Georgia. This makes for interesting reading while learning so much more about a country divided by war. Rolston has done an excellent job bringing their stories to life in this book. The book is written from the soldiers' points of view, and the details are amazing. What makes the book even more important is the way the author has of telling the story from both sides.

Readers who followed the old "Louisiana Ancestors" column will recall Rolston as the author of "Lost Soul: A Confederate Soldier in New England." This book described his efforts to preserve the unmarked gravesite of the only Confederate soldier known to have been buried in Rhode Island, namely Sam Postlethwaite. As a result of his work, the story gained national attention. He solved the mystery of the soldier in the cane field in Bayou Goula, Louisiana, when he identified Private David Ingraham, 3rd Rhode Island Cavalry, as being buried in a makeshift grave there. This grave is now marked as a Louisiana historic site.

Anyone interested in Rolston's books can learn more by contacting Mariner Media, 131 West 21st St., P.O. Box 464, Buena Vista, VA 24416 or info@MarinerMedia.com. "Long Time Gone" costs \$34.95, and "Lost Soul" (second edition) is \$19.95, in soft-cover format. You may want to check and see if they are available at major bookstores in your area. Rolston is just one of those writers who can grab your attention and hold it until you finish the book or article. When it comes to the Civil War, his works are absolutely outstanding in every way.

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NORTH LOUISIANA GROUP: If you are not a member of the North Louisiana Historical Association, check with your local librarian and see if they keep this group's publications in stock. Their winter edition of "North Louisiana History" begins year 40 of this excellent collection of documented articles about the early history of the northern part of Louisiana. One of the articles by James R. Smith won second place in the graduate division of Overdyke Awards in the spring of 2008. The title was *Shreveport, the Heart and Transportation Hub of the Confederate Trans-Mississippi Department*. Smith did a fine job of bringing this together in written form, and the illustrations made it even better.

William McCleary's contribution to this issue was *Remembering Rupert Peyton (1899-1982), Journalist and State Representative*. This one is well illustrated too. Other articles covered African-American voting rights, Cane River voices, and a summary of a field trip to Poverty Point that members of this group enjoyed. Gay Griffith Means is editor of this journal.

Anyone interested in membership can contact this group at P.O. Box 6701, Shreveport, LA 71136-6701. Regular membership is \$25 per year. Make checks payable to North Louisiana Historical Association. Single copies of earlier issues are still available.

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SPANISH TOWN HISTORY: John C. Sykes III will speak at the Saturday, April 18th meeting of the Baton Rouge Genealogical and Historical Society at Bluebonnet Library at 10 a.m. The subject is the history of Spanish Town and focuses on new research on the history settlers, and architecture of Baton Rouge's oldest neighborhood, including a discussion of the Canary Island emigrants who settled there.