

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

*Your New Louisiana Ancestors Format*

Volume 2, Number 10

By Damon Veach

**PRESERVATION PROJECT:** With the approaching bicentennial of the War of 1812, the Federation of Genealogical Societies, a non-profit genealogical organization headquartered in Austin, Texas, is pleased to announce a national fundraising initiative to raise \$3.7 million to digitize of the War of 1812 pension files. The digitization process will enable online access by historians and family researchers to the memories and biographies of those who fought to protect our nation's independence. This announcement is being made at the start of the National Genealogical Society's 2010 conference, an event that will draw more than two thousand genealogists to Salt Lake City, Utah.

The War of 1812, often referred to as America's second war for independence, significantly shaped this country's identity both internationally and domestically. Many remember the War of 1812 as the war that gave us the "Star-Spangled Banner" and the burning of the White House. Some of the great leaders of our country, including three presidents, took part in this conflict. Nearly 300,000 men served, including members of at least eighteen Native American tribes.

The pension records for the War of 1812 consist of more than 7.2 million documents in 180,000 files. The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) receives more than three thousand requests per year for War of 1812 pensions, placing them among the most requested sets of records. Digitizing these valuable records will preserve the originals by removing them from continued heavy use. It will also make the images of the records much more widely available. NARA reports these important historical records already have been conserved and readied for digitization, so scanning could start as soon as funds are received. With the cost for digitizing and saving a single page from a pension file being fifty cents, supporters will see progress from the earliest days of the fundraising initiative.

Genealogists, historians, and scholars of military history have long appreciated the value of pension files. A typical pension file may contain documents that describe a veteran's service as well as why he, his widow, or his dependents qualify for a pension. In the cases of widows' and dependents' filings, there are typically a number of documents proving the claimant is related to the veteran. The testimony of a veteran's comrades can provide unique and valuable data on what military life entailed, the rigors of everyday camp life, and details of particular skirmishes and battles. One may discover numerous details of an ancestor's life in these pension files, some of which may be many dozens of pages long.

The Federation of Genealogical Societies is committed to projects that link the genealogical community and advance the cause of preserving records and making them more accessible. The Federation will be working with the genealogical and historical societies nation-wide, particularly in states where War of 1812 activities took place, as well as the many War of 1812 societies and bicentennial commissions, to raise awareness about this vital preservation and access project and to raise the funds necessary to complete the project.

Those interested in contributing to the Preserve the Pensions! Project or wanting additional information should contact the Federation of Genealogical Societies via their website at [www.fgs.org/1812](http://www.fgs.org/1812), or contact Curt Witcher at 260-421-1226 or [1812@FGS.org](mailto:1812@FGS.org).

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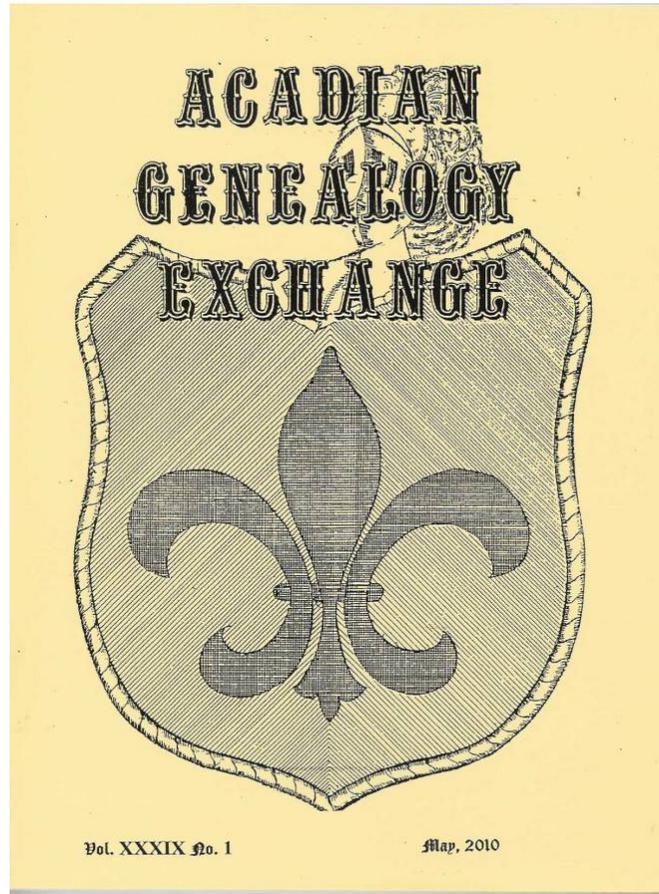
**HISTORIC CHURCH:** Saturday, May 9, Eugene LeBlanc (standing fifth from the right) presented a tour and lecture on the St. Gabriel Catholic Church to the Canary Islanders Heritage Society of Louisiana. The church was financed by the King of Spain and constructed for Acadian and Canary Island settlers. Completed in July of 1776, it is the oldest wooden church in the Mississippi Valley.



Photo by Marie Estopinal

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**ACADIAN RESEARCH:** Janet Jehn has just released another excellent “Acadian Genealogy Exchange.” Not only has she continued to release these publications, but she is struggling now to complete the Acadian Descendants volume, which consists mostly of Vincent descendants of Anne Gaudet and Pierre Vincent. She is up to 600 pages and will have to make a decision about whether to split it up into multiple volumes.



Noted under the Exchange Corner of this issue is a notice of an upcoming event for 2011. From September 30 to October 9, 2011, the entire Acadiana Region will open its doors to welcome family and friends to Grand Reveil Acadien/Great Acadian Awakening. It will be held the week before Festival Acadiens et Creoles and will close with a huge celebration of renewal on the last day of the festival. For more information and updates on this, go to the website – [www.gra2011.org](http://www.gra2011.org).

Included in this issue is a reprint from the Essex Institute Historical Collections, October 1948 issue on the Acadians in Rowley, the Massachusetts Acadians, refugees from Saint-Domingue, baptisms of Becancour and Saint-Gregoire, Quebec, the genealogy of Chef Paul Prudhomme, the Lafourche Creoles, funeral records from Aubuchon Funeral Home, burials at Mount Calvary Cemetery (Clyde, Kansas), ancestors in North America, and many, many more items of interest. This

issue is really exceptional in its content, and Jehn is to be congratulated for her continuing work on Acadian projects.

This newsletter (actually bigger than most quarterlies) is issued in May and October. The subscription rate is only \$17 with a surname index in the October issue. Queries are free to members and non-members as long as they have an Acadian connection.

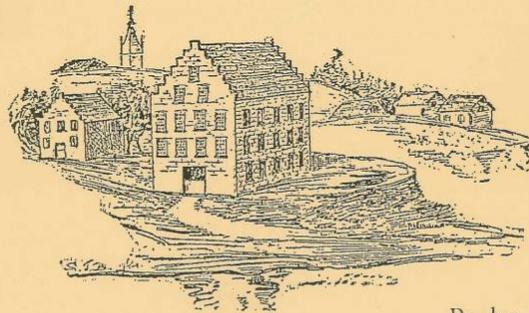
For information on Jehn's work, send correspondence to her at Acadian Genealogy Exchange, 3265 Wayman Branch Rd., Covington, KY 41015-4601. This makes her 39<sup>th</sup> year of publication of Acadian information, and each issue seems to be an improvement on the previous one.

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**UNLIKELY SOURCE:** You may see a title like "Old Taverns of New York" and think it has nothing to do with genealogy. Actually, it is quite good from both a historical read and a look into the genealogy connections. The author of this book is W. Harrison Bayles and was originally published by Provincial Press. Winston De Ville saw its importance, and now Claitor's Publishing is offering it in a new soft-cover format.

It is a reference work that reads like a historical novel, but in the process of enjoying all the connections within each tavern, you come away with a nice look at early American history and all those individuals you might not ever associate as being out and about in taverns. This could just as easily be set in one of the major bars of today, except Bayles has told the stories in such a way that it is one of those interesting looks into the past that holds your interest from the very beginning.

# Old Taverns of New York



In the introduction by Timothy Field Beard, he points out how a period in the story of a great city has just about disappeared with only a few remaining. These were somewhat rollicking periods where our ancestors could sit around and drink and talk into the early morning hours. The coziness and camaraderie of these days are gone. Business is conducted in specific places now, not among friends in such casual atmospheres. As has been said many times before, gone are the days – and so are the wonderful peeks into the past through the lives of our ancestors.

This is a rather expensive book (\$83.50), but somehow I feel it is worth it. You just don't find history in this form very often. It gives you such an intimate look into the past that it even causes you to yearn for other days, other times. I rather appreciate this book and the fact that it is now available again. I can understand why De Ville chose to publish this one, and now Claitor's has made it available again. This title can be order by clicking the following link : [http://claitors.com/cgi-bin/clt/cltdetails\\_lb.cgi?Stock Number=1-59804-124-X](http://claitors.com/cgi-bin/clt/cltdetails_lb.cgi?Stock Number=1-59804-124-X)

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**FREE SERVICE:** Correspondence to this column should be directed to Damon Veach, Cajuns, Creoles, Pirates and Planters, 709 Bungalow Lane, Baton Rouge, LA 70802-5337. The e-mail address is [ancestorslaveach@cox.net](mailto:ancestorslaveach@cox.net). Queries and book reviews are printed as space permits, and you are encouraged to take advantage of this free service. Claitor's Publishing can serve as a distributor for self-published

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