

CAJUNS, CREOLES, PIRATES AND PLANTERS

Your New Louisiana Ancestors Format

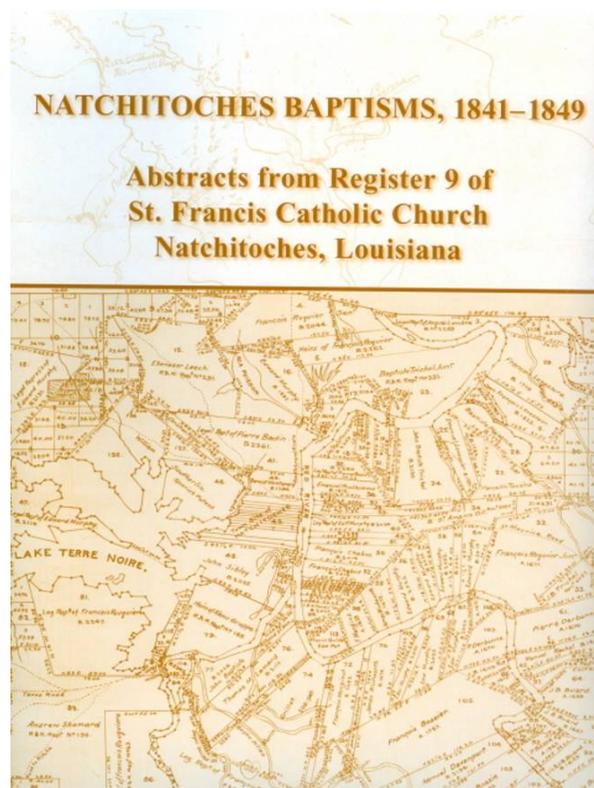
Volume 2, Number 4

By Damon Veach

NATCHITOCHES RECORDS: Sacramental records are a great source of genealogical information for those with Catholic ancestors. South Louisiana researchers have long been lucky to have an abundance of these available in book form. But, researchers of North Louisiana roots have not had it so easy. Not only were there fewer Catholic families in the region, but some of the early church records, such as those at Alexandria, have been lost. Not so with Natchitoches. Their sacramental records date back to 1729, and with a few exceptions, are fairly well intact. Furthermore, most pre-1900 records have been microfilmed and are available in at least two public archives in the state.

Back in the 1970s and 1980s, Elizabeth Shown Mills abstracted and published three volumes of the earliest Natchitoches Catholic church records. For decades, these were all that were available. Then, in 2007, Judy Riffel picked up the series with the publication of *Natchitoches Baptisms, 1817-1840, Abstracts from Register 6 of St. Francis Catholic Church, Natchitoches, Louisiana*. A second volume in this new series has just been released.

Natchitoches Baptisms, 1841-1849, Abstracts from Register 9 of St. Francis Catholic Church, Natchitoches, Louisiana, picks up where Register 6 left off. Found in this register are over 1,500 baptisms of mainly whites, but a handful of Native Americans, free people of color, and slaves. Not all are children either. There are several adult baptisms.



During the time period of this register, the Natchitoches priests made many trips far beyond the civil parish lines. References can be found to baptisms being performed in Alexandria, Shreveport, and Bossier Parish. The baptisms performed in Rapides are particularly important because of the loss of the parish's civil records in 1864 and the Catholic church records in 1895, both to fire. Unfortunately, the priests did not regularly note their location. But, from the names found in the register, it is apparent that they also traveled into Sabine, DeSoto, and Avoyelles Parishes.

As nearly all the entries in the original register are written in French, having these translated into English is a great benefit to researchers. Riffel is an experienced researcher who has translated countless French and Spanish documents. She has translated all genealogical information and compiled a full-name index.

The 179-page softcover book is published by Le Comité des Archives de la Louisiane. It sells for \$43.50 postpaid, and \$33.50 to current members. Order from Le Comité, P.O. Box 1547, Baton Rouge, LA 70821.

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MEETING SCHEDULED: The next meeting of the Canary Islanders Heritage Society is Saturday, April 10th at 11 a.m. at the State Archives Building on Essen Lane. Clifford Normand will speak on "Bernardo de Galvez and the Spanish Contribution to the American Revolution." Further information can be obtained from Rose Marie Powell, president of the group – 225-755-0422.

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HONORING MCDONOGH: This year, John McDonogh Day will mark the 120th annual observance that honors public school philanthropist John McDonogh. In return for his legacy of 39 public schools to the New Orleans area, all he asked was that students place flowers around his grave annually. Gretna's McDonogh No. 26 School is the last school still honoring this tradition. This will take place on Friday, May 7, 2010 at the John McDonogh Cenotaph, McDonoghville Cemetery, 520 Hancock Street in Gretna. For further details, visit www.johnmcdonogh.com or call 1-888-4-GRETNA.

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EXCELLENT BOOKS: *Colonial Soldiers of the South, 1732-1774* is one volume in two and written by Murtie J. Clark. The American colonies were organized into military defense districts because no regular army existed to protect settlers from marauders or from rebellion within. On alarm, colonists formed militia companies from their own ranks to go to the scene of action. When the emergency ended, these trained bands retired. Records of these companies exist, but those of the South are widely scattered. After a thorough investigation of a wide variety of source materials, Clark has organized them into a logical and convenient form.

The records are chiefly muster rolls and pay rolls of the militias of Maryland, Virginia, North and South Carolina, and Georgia, and they identify about 55,000 soldiers by name, rank, date, militia company, and district. Other records provide data on age, height, country of birth, occupation, and date and place of enlistment. Also, there are the Scotch Highlanders in Oglethorpe's Georgia regiment, recruits who served under Washington's ensign in Virginia, and the ordinary settlers and frontiersmen who did their duty. This source book is a milestone in colonial genealogy and history.

The price is \$90.00, postpaid, and it can be ordered from Genealogical Publishing Company, 3600 Clipper Mill Road, Suite 260, Baltimore, MD 21211. They remain the top genealogical publishing company in the United States and have an extensive catalog of titles for researchers.