

CAJUNS, CREOLES, PIRATES AND PLANTERS

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HERITAGE DISCUSSED: The January 7th meeting of the Canary Islanders Heritage Society of Louisiana was held at the Louisiana State Archives Building, 3851 Essen Lane, Baton Rouge Louisiana. After the 11 a.m. general membership meeting, society member Cliff Normand presented a history of Spain's support of the American Revolution in both material and combat troops. Normand explained how descendants of those who served in the Spanish Army under Governor-General Bernardo Galvez, a force which included militia of Acadians, Germans, Irish, Isleños, Native Americans and Free Men of Color, qualify for membership in the Sons and Daughters of the American Revolution. Pictured above (left to right) are Cliff Normand and Society members Karen Lambert, Alisa Janney, Stephen Estopinal and Layne Lindsly. Information about the Canary Islanders Heritage Society of Louisiana can be found on the web at www.canaryislanders.org.

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PREROGATIVE COURT: I have mentioned the importance of the Prerogative Court of Maryland before, and with each volume, I am always amazed at the amount of data in each and the importance of this information. The Prerogative Court was the focal point for probate in colonial Maryland, and it was also the colony's court for equity cases, that is, the resolution of disputes over the settlement and distribution of an estate. From 1765 to 1767, most of the entries for the docket involve situations where the personal representative has not filed the proper documents. Beginning in April 1765, entries for accounts no longer furnish the administrator's name. There is also a gap in these Testamentary Proceedings from November 1, 1765, to May 23, 1766.

This series of Prerogative Court transcripts is arranged, with a few exceptions, chronologically by court session. Volume XXXV, the latest one in the series, refers to about 7,000 colonial inhabitants of the Province of Maryland. For the most part, the transcriptions state the names of the principals (testators, heirs, guardians, witnesses, and so forth), details of bequests, names of slaves, appraisers, and more.

Volume I begins with 1658 and the most recent one carries the data through 1767. At \$32.50 per book with an additional \$5.50 postage and handling fee, this is not something I can personally recommend for individuals to purchase. However, if these books can be found in any major genealogical library, they can be extremely helpful when researching early family lines in Maryland.

Check with your local genealogical librarian or with the State Archives to see if these books are in their research rooms. These are all publications of the Genealogical Publishing Company of Baltimore, Maryland.

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FAMILY NEWSLETTER: The latest Morgan-Chapman Family Newsletter continues to keep this family informed by their interesting publication. It was noted in the latest review copy that the Sixteenth Biennial Reunion of the Morgan-Chapman descendants would be held on June 30, 2012. Complete information on the publication and on the reunion can be obtained from Chapman Morgan, 3656 Linda Lee Dr., Santa Maria, CA 93455-2619. Subscription to the newsletter is only \$5.00 per year.

The latest issue contained an interesting look at Chatsworth Plantation Store records. This plantation was built in 1859 and is situated in the Manchac area of East Baton Rouge Parish. It was originally developed by Fergus Peniston, the adopted son of Fergus Duplantier and was purchased by Francois Gardere in 1866.

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VERMILION REVISITED: The Vermilion Historical Society is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization dedicated to the collection, preservation, and dissemination of

the history of Vermilion Parish. It was formed in 1975 as a result of the renewed interest in the history of the region. They have published three major books covering this area of Louisiana.

History of Vermilion Parish, Louisiana is a 485-page book containing historical topics, family stories, and pictures. It was released in 1983. In 2003, they did a second volume called *History of Vermilion Parish, Louisiana, Volume II*, and this one contained 620 pages. The third book was called *Journeys Into the Past – Abbeville, Louisiana: The Early Years*, written by Ken Dupuy. All are still available from the society at P.O. Box 877, Abbeville, LA 70511-0877. All three are excellent publications.

Gary Theall has made slide presentations over the years and is an authority on the history of this area. These are based on his knowledge of the region as well as that of Ken Dupuy. Many of these are now posted on the Vermilion Historical Society website – <http://www.vermilionhistorical.com/>. This has got to be one of the finest of all websites, and whether you have ties to this area or not, you will be amazed at the data on display here.

In addition to all that has been done to preserve the area's history in books and in slide shows, the society also maintains a museum at the Alliance Center located at 200 N. Magdalen Square. Historical artifacts, documents and photographs are on display at this location, including the Morgan Effigy, a deer antler carved by Native Americans about 1,000 years ago. The sketch of the effigy is the logo of the society.

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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. 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 genealogy titles. Go to their homepage for details on how you can obtain this excellent service.