

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

*Your New Louisiana Ancestors Format*

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**ANNIVERSARY ISSUE:** Louisiana celebrates the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of statehood this year. Many of the events scheduled around the state will focus on Louisiana's culture and history. A few may even incorporate genealogy and family history. Le Comité des Archives de la Louisiane has chosen to commemorate the event by publishing a special Statehood Bicentennial issue of its quarterly journal, *Le Raconteur*.

This issue contains numerous extracts from 1812 Louisiana newspapers, but with a genealogical twist. Included are obituaries, lists of letters in the post office, parish and district judges, tax lists, political supporters, information on slaves, and other items mentioning individuals. Other articles deal with events going around the time Louisiana became a state. Additionally, an article on the 1912 Centennial Celebration draws from archival documents as well as newspaper articles to describe how the state celebrated the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of statehood in 1912. Rounding out the issue is a list of historical events and exhibits planned around the state in 2012.

*Le Raconteur* begins its 32<sup>nd</sup> volume of quality genealogical research material. It is published four times a year in March, June, September, and December. A quarterly electronic newsletter, *E-Communiqué*, reports on genealogical events around the state and is published in January, April, July, and October. The group holds its annual meeting around September and other meetings as announced. Admission is usually free to members.

Le Comité is one of the largest and best genealogical groups in the United States. It has published numerous books which can be found listed on its website ([www.lecomite.org](http://www.lecomite.org)). To join, mail membership dues of \$20 or more to the society at P.O. Box 1547, Baton Rouge, LA 70821.

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**SOCIETY QUARTERLY:** The latest review issue of *Terrebonne Life Lines* arrived, and I was saddened to learn of the death of Audrey Westerman last November. She was the former editor of this publication and devoted so much time to the preservation of important Louisiana records. I had worked with her for many years and, although late, my condolences go out to her family and to the society members who worked with her over the years.

This issue of the quarterly completes volume 30 in the series, and it is filled with important genealogical information. This includes: the 1880 mortality schedule for Assumption Parish, Wards 1 & 2; data on Francis Redding Tillou Nicholls with

illustration and picture; St. Francis de Sales baptismal register index, 1904, Houma; a picture and list of St. Francis de Sales Academy, eighth grade students in 1937; information from the Thelma Riley Rockward oral history tape; direct descendants from Andreas Matherne to Tessa Belle Matherne; oral history interview of Wilson Domangue and Ella Hutchinson Domangue with pictures; data on Joseph Posecai and his wife Camelia Guidry; Gautreaux family information; an index; and other miscellaneous information.

All of this comes from the collective efforts of members of the Terrebonne Genealogical Society, Box 20295, Houma, LA 70360-0295. Membership in this group is \$25 per year for individuals or \$30 for family memberships. Regular meetings are on the last Saturday of each month, except November and December where there is a combined meeting on the second Saturday in December.

This is really a nice quarterly and is included with membership in the society. If you have ancestors in this area of the state, you may want to check into their back issues.

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**DESOTO PUBLICATION:** The February issue of *DeSoto Plume* is another nice publication. You have to flatten out the publication to get the complete picture of some of the students and faculty of Mansfield Female College and Model School taken in 1920. The picture covers both the front and back panels.

This is a publication of the DeSoto Parish Historical & Genealogical Society, P.O. Box 300, Stonewall, LA 71078. Membership dues are only \$10 per year, and their meetings are scheduled at different historical places within the parish. The last meeting on Sunday, February 26, 2012 was at the Mansfield Female College Museum where the Veach-Foshee Memorial Library Collection is located.

There were several items of interest in this latest issue. The beginning of the Bayou Pierre Settlements (now Carmel) was quite interesting, and the discussion of the Laffitte Company, a family enterprise in the lumber industry, was really good.

A special invitation is extended for the Paul Bouet Laffitte reunion scheduled for May 11 – 12, 2012. A block of rooms at the Church Street Inn in Natchitoches is being held for those wishing to attend. Part of this event will be a field trip to Carmel. The first reunion of this group took place in April of 2004.

All the color pictures in this issue of *DeSoto Plume* are very impressive. These included not only the officers and meeting attendees but the ones of Dr. Severn Doughty discussing his General Grocery & Mercantile Store Museum really added a touch of historical significance to this issue. Also included were pictures of the meeting at the historic Keachi Presbyterian Church and the historic structure located on Mansfield Library property and constructed in the 1890s.

Be sure to get your 2012 memberships in to George M. Gilmer Jr., Treasurer, at the above listed address. You will also need to check on available back issues of this publication and other publications they have published in recent years.

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**SPANISH SURNAMES:** If you are interested in learning more about Spanish surnames, you may want to check out <http://www.tusapellidos.com/surnames.htm>. This is a nice site and will prove of interest to many genealogical researchers. Just be aware of one thing. You can learn, but you don't have to buy any product offered. I have always advised my readers to do their own work, and if they come across offers of family crests and coats of arms to make sure they search out and make sure they are getting the authentic product they seek.

My surname is unique in that there is only one original crest and coat of arms, but if you have a common name like Smith, you will end up with numerous crests and coats of arms. You then have to figure out which one is actually your own. It is the same with Spanish, French, Italian, German, and other crests and coats of arms. You are most likely going to end up with more than one. Just take note of this when you check out this site above.

You can also refer to numerous books on the subject in local genealogical libraries. I would advise doing this before making any purchases online. Check it out first. You don't always receive what you expect.

Several years ago, I kept getting notices of a Veach book that was available. I knew our family had already done a book, so I knew this was not anything I would want to purchase. A friend of mine just had to have the one on his own family surname, and when it came with that nice cover, it was filled with names and addresses from phone books around the country. The history that was used as an introduction was what you normally see in any textbook. From the Mayflower on to the telephone listings, this was the family history he received. He didn't listen to my warning, so I'm telling you now to make sure you are getting what you request.

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**VOLUMES REPRINTED:** If you are interested in all the Southwest volumes originally published by Father Hebert, check out what is available now at Claitor's Publishing. The original volumes 1 and 2 have been reprinted. These were replaced by 1a, 1b, 2a, 2b, and 2c which caused a lot of confusion. You will soon find a complete list of all these books available from Claitor's.

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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 can be any length, and book reviews are printed as space permits, and you are encouraged to take advantage of this free service. All genealogical/historical/preservation books are reviewed in this column format, but a review copy is necessary for this service. Another service is offered here too. 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. It is a way to get out-of-print books back into the system and definitely is a great assistance to genealogists who may need this information.**