

CAJUNS, CREOLES, PIRATES AND PLANTERS

Your New Louisiana Ancestors Format

Volume 4, Number 24



EARLY SETTLERS: When I first met Shirley Bourquard back in the 1980s, she was president of the St. Bernard Genealogical Society and one of the best researchers in the state. She was also editor of *L'Heritage*, the quarterly publication of the society. She was always a strong supporter of historic preservation, and a book she compiled about early residents in Southeast Louisiana still stands out as one of the best of its kind and shows her dedication to genealogical research.

Early Settlers on the Delta is a collection of extensive data gathered over a period of years and eventually came to be printed in book form. It is the result of a collection of family histories as well as additional research into families of this part of Louisiana. The family surnames in this book were determined on the basis of personal accumulation and additional information supplied by individuals researching their own families.

This book shows a lot of dedication on how to put such a massive amount of data into book form and do it in such an informative way. It covers the families that lived in St. Bernard

Parish in the early days as well as some from Plaquemines Parish who married into families or were baptized in St. Bernard. Even some from Orleans Parish and other areas can be noted in this compilation. Due to the lack of records or proof, not all families are complete, and some are touched on briefly or even some missed completely. It might also be noted that some of the records used in the research were torn, badly written, illegible, and not very easily translated.

In going through this book, the many spelling inconsistencies can be noted. This is due to the lack of uniformity in spelling in the documents researched. Sometimes proper names were misspelled in the same record, and place names were difficult to interpret. No attempt was made to correct these but left to the researcher for any adjustment.

Bourquard intended for this book to be a source book or research tool in which all genealogists could use as a guide in documenting personal family research in this area of the state. She even recommended that researchers obtain the documents needed to prove each line of research. It was also noted that the first book of marriages of St. Bernard Church, 1785-1820, mysteriously disappeared at some time causing this compiler to use other means to prove lineages. Records used to do this were notarial records in the Civil District Court Building (NONA), inventories, marriage contracts, successions, and even mortgage records. Some of the more extensively used materials were from the Louisiana State Museum Library (LSML), the New Orleans Public Library, Louisiana Division (NOPL), records of the New Orleans Notarial Archives (NONA), and the courthouse records of St. Bernard and Plaquemines parishes. Numerous books and other sources used are cited throughout the text and in the bibliography.

The Parish of St. Bernard was incorporated on March 31, 1807 by act of Territorial Legislature. A list of the first claimants for U.S. patents on property in this part of Louisiana are listed starting at Fisherman's Canal and going down river to the lower parish boundary. It is these individuals listed that make up the genealogies included in this work. These were Dezilet Delery, 606 acres, Antoine Bienvenu, 1,425 acres, Pierre De Laronde, 1,246 acres, Coulon Jumonville de Villier, 1,169 acres, and Madame Toutant Beauregard, 1,625 acres. There were 800 divided acres that for many years had various claimants, and the names are too many to list here, but they are all covered thoroughly in this book.

As the names imply, there were many Spanish migrants to the area and mostly from the Canary Islands. Villages began to come together, and several were noted in correspondence from Governor Galvez as early as July of 1781 with locations as far as the Amite River.

Anyone researching this part of Louisiana would be wise to check this book out. It was printed in a limited edition and is difficult to find now. Check with your local genealogical library to see it is available there.

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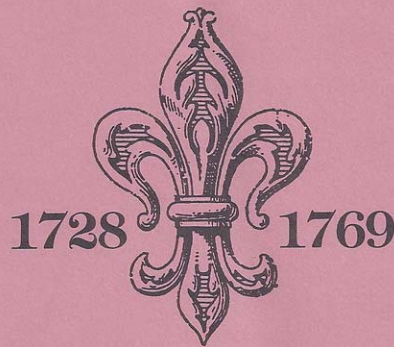
FORSYTH BOOKS: Alice Daly Forsyth was a friend and fellow Louisiana researcher. Her work on early New Orleans records and especially her connection with the New Orleans Genealogical Society was outstanding. Her accomplishments still serve to inspire those who knew her.

In 1977, she published her *Louisiana Marriages: 1*, abstracts of marriage records of the St. Louis Cathedral in New Orleans for the period 1784 -1806. In 1980, in collaboration with Ghislaine Pleasonton, another outstanding records preservationist, Mrs. Forsyth followed this first important work with *Louisiana Marriage Contracts, 1725 - 1758*, abstracts of records from the French colonial era presently preserved in the Louisiana Historical Center Library in New Orleans.

In *Louisiana Marriage Contracts, Vol. 2*, she turned once again to the records in the collection of the Louisiana Historical Center Library, abstracts of a further group of marriage contracts spanning the greater part of the French colonial era and documents in French from the earliest years of the Spanish regime. These records were not available when the first book was published.

Working from copies of the original civil marriage contracts, she extracted all pertinent data concerning the parties contracting marriage, the names of parents when they were listed in the original record, and the names and occupations of witnesses who represented the bride and groom and who signed. Additional information included were birthplaces of the contracting parties, the goods and valuables which the bride and groom brought to the marriage, and the terms of the marriage contract. Jack Belsom's preface to this volume explains all this in detail.

Louisiana
Marriage Contracts
Vol. 2



Alice Daly Forsyth

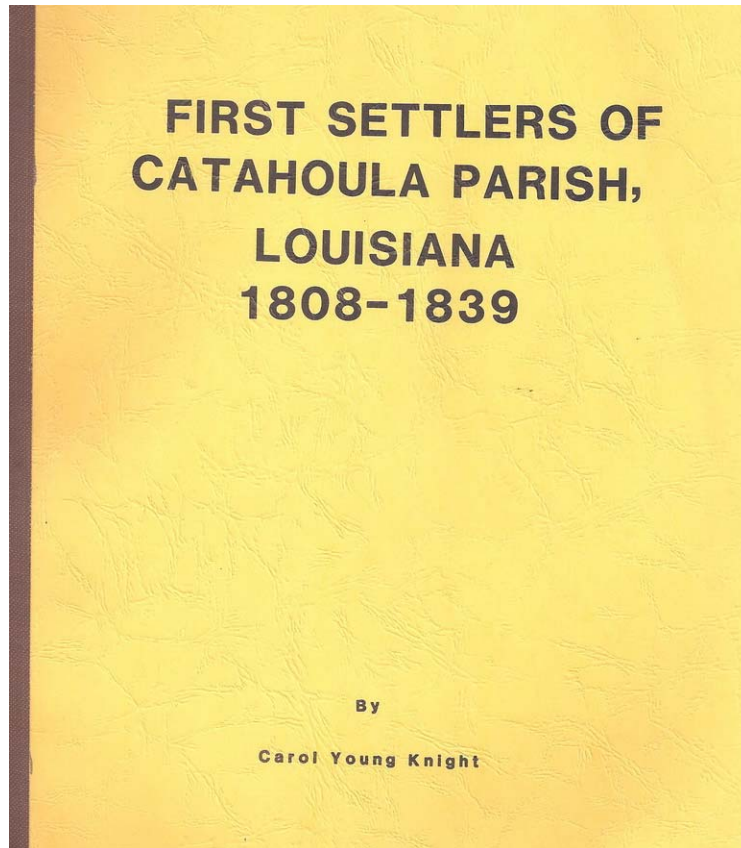
Here again, you will probably need to locate copies of this book in your local genealogical library collections. If you prefer to have a personal copy, you would need to go to the internet and search out the data. Not many books of this type are available for purchase, but you could be lucky and locate a copy.

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FIRST SETTLERS: Another book dating back to the early 1980s and also an excellent source of genealogical material is *First Settlers of Catahoula Parish, Louisiana, 1808-1839*. It was compiled by Carol Young Knight and also probably out of print.

Knight has copied the conveyance records of this period, and the information covers all the names of the early residents of Catahoula Parish, some listings brief while others contain a wealth of additional information on numerous individuals. She noted where some pages

were missing but seems to have done a thorough job in the transcriptions of those materials available.



This book is a soft-cover publication, and it is indexed for easy perusal. This is an excellent source of information for this part of Louisiana.

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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 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.