

Volume 15

Number 068

Cajuns in Louisiana - II

Lead: Expelled by the British from the eastern maritime provinces of Canada, many settlers of French descent and language migrated southeast down the Mississippi to Louisiana. The Cajuns had arrived.

Intro.: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.

Content: After the Expulsion of 1755, French immigrants were attracted to Louisiana because they thought it was a French colony which was willing to provide material assistance to the early newcomers the first of whom arrived in 1763. The

colony's resources were quickly depleted, however, and subsequent waves of the so-called Cajuns found little help. They also experienced downright hostility from the already established French residents known as Creoles. In addition they discovered to their surprise that they had immigrated into Spanish territory when a shift in international fortunes made New France into New Spain under the secret Treaty of Fontainebleau (1762).

The Spanish were not as accommodating in land distribution as their predecessors and tensions grew between the arriving French immigrants and the colonial authorities. Many Cajuns

participated in the Rebellion of 1768 against Governor Antonio de Ulloa and thereby earned grudging acceptance from their neighbors, thus capturing again the peace and security that had been snatched from them in Canada.

The clannish Cajuns were farmers and mostly turned their backs on New Orleans preferring to settle the swampy bayous in the so-called “French Triangle” running west of the city toward present-day Lafayette. There in relative isolation, Cajun culture - music, cooking, economic self-sufficiency, language - thrived in growing numbers and solidarity.

What used to be a term of derision

is worn proudly by today's Cajun's all over but especially in those parishes – Ascension, St. James, Lafourche, Plaquemines - that claim connection to the original arrivals who, fleeing British persecution in Canada, came to add their Cajun heritage to the rich mix that would become modern Louisiana.

At the University of Richmond, this is Dan Roberts.

Resources

- Ancelet, Barry Jean. "Cajun Music." *The Journal of American Folklore* 107 (1994): 285-303.
- Borders, Florence E. "Creole and Cajun Musics in New Orleans." *Black Music Research Journal* 8 (1988): 15-31.
- Brasseaux, Carl A. *Acadian to Cajun: Transformation of a People, 1803-1877*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1992.
- Brasseaux, Carl A. *French, Cajun, Creole, Houma: A Primer on Francophone Louisiana*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2005.
- Brasseaux, Carl A. *The Founding of New Acadia*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1987.
- Heimlich, Evan. "Acadians," in *Gale Encyclopedia of Multicultural America* Vol. 1, ed. 2, edited by Jeffrey Lehman. Detroit: Gale, 2000.
- Lewis, Pierce F. *New Orleans: The Making of an Urban Landscape*. Santa Fe: Center for American Places, 2003.
- Philip, Franklin, trans. *French America: mobility, identity, and minority experience across the continent*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1993.
- Rushton, William Faulkner. *The Cajuns: from Acadia to Louisiana*. New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1979.
- Trépanier, Cécyle. "The Cajunization of French Louisiana: Forging a Regional Identity." *The Geographical Journal* 157 (1991): 161-171.

Copyright by Dan Roberts Enterprises, Inc.