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# PETITION FOR FEDERAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

SUBMITTED BY

THE UNITED HOUMA NATION, INC.

TO THE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR

PETITION FOR FEDERAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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TO THE

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# PART I

## INTRODUCTION

The United Houma Nation, Incorporated, located in Lafourche, Terrebonne, Jefferson, St. Mary, and St. Bernard parishes, submits this petition for federal acknowledgment of its status as an Indian tribe. For the purposes of this petition the tribal representative is Helen Gindrat whose address is Star Route, Box 95-A, Golden Meadow, La. 70357. All inquiries should be directed to Mrs. Gindrat at the above address, or by phone at (504)475-4460.

This Indian tribe meets all seven of the criteria found in 25 CFR 83.7. The United Houma Nation has been identified from historic times until the present as "American Indian" or "aboriginal" (83.7 (a)). A majority of the members of the tribe inhabit the areas around Golden Meadow, Dulac, Montegut, Pointe aux Chenes, Bayou Grand Caillou, Bayou DuLarge, Point Barre, Grand Bois, and Isle Jean Charles, as have their ancestors, and they have been and are recognized as an Indian community distinct from other populations (83.7 (b)). During their long history, the tribe has maintained political influence or other authority over its members as an autonomous entity (83.7 (c)). The tribe has written governing document (83.7 (d)), and current

membership roles which establish descendancy from an historic tribal entity (83.7 (e)). Its membership is composed of persons who are not members of any other North American Indian tribe (83.7 (f)). Finally, neither the tribe nor its members are the subject of congressional legislation which has expressly terminated or forbidden a federal relationship (83.7 (g)).

United Houma Nation, Inc.
Star Rt. Box 95A
Golden Meadow, La. 70357

Mrs. Arlinda Locklear
Native American Rights Fund
1712 N. St. N.W.
Washington, D. C. 20036-2976

20 April 1985

Resolution: Support of Federal Recognition Petition

Whereas the United Houma Nation Tribal Council met in special session on April 20, 1985 at the Administrative Office in Golden Meadow, Louisiana and reviewed the Federal Recognition Petition;
And whereas the Tribal Council of the United Houma Nation is in complete support of the Federal Recognition Petition:

We, therefore, have unaimously voted to support this Federal Recognition Petition this 20th day of April 1985

Kirby Verret
Tribal Chairman
Terrebonne

Helen D. Gindrat
Vice Chairperson
Lafourche

Marie Domangue
Secretary
Terrebonne

John Billiot
Jefferson

Dolores Dardar
Treasurer
Lafourche

Joseph Billiot Jr.
Jefferson

Martha L. Bergeron
Martha Bergron
St. Mary

Clyde Dion
Terrebonne
Parliamentarian

RECEIVED
MAY - 2 1985
WASHINGTON

JULIEN D. BOUDREAUX, III, PRESIDENT
WILLIE J. BONVILLAIN, JR., VICE PRESIDENT

DISTRICT A
PERCY E. GABRIEL, SR
142 BANKS STREET
HOUMA, LOUISIANA 70360

DISTRICT B
FLOYD J. DUPLANTIS
1105 MORRISON AVENUE
HOUMA, LOUISIANA 70360

DISTRICT C
DONALD P. LANDRY
526 DUVAL STREET
HOUMA, LOUISIANA 70360

DISTRICT D
ALLEN C. BONVILLAIN
3200 STEPHANIE STREET
HOUMA, LOUISIANA 70360

DISTRICT E
ERNEST A. VOISIN
215 MELODY DRIVE
HOUMA, LOUISIANA 70360

DISTRICT F
ROBERT J. BERGERON
ROUTE 3, BOX 983A
BAYOU-SIDE DRIVE
HOUMA, LOUISIANA 70360

DISTRICT G
LOUIS P. KLINGMAN, JR.
P. O. BOX 17
MONTEGUT, LOUISIANA 70377

DISTRICT H
MRS. JUNE LECOMPTE
ROUTE 1, BOX 405
CHAUVIN, LOUISIANA 70344

AIMÉE H. GRILLET, TREAS
PAUL A. LABAT, SECT.

# POLICE JURY

PARISH OF TERREBONNE
POST OFFICE BOX 2768
HOUMA, LOUISIANA 70361
(504) 868-3000

April 5, 1984

DISTRICT I
WILLIE J. BONVILLAIN, JR.
BOX 258 ROUTE 6
HOUMA, LOUISIANA 70360

DISTRICT J
PETER G. BOURGEOIS, JR.
P. O. BOX 1768
HOUMA, LOUISIANA 70361

DISTRICT K
L. VERNON BOURGEOIS
604 HIGHLAND DRIVE
HOUMA, LOUISIANA 70360

DISTRICT L
WILLIS J. HENRY
P. O. BOX 7096
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DISTRICT M
CALVIN P. BODDEN
605 GAYNELL DRIVE
HOUMA, LOUISIANA 70360

DISTRICT N
CHARLES DUET
ROUTE 2, BOX 025
SCHRIEVER, LOUISIANA 70395

DISTRICT O
JULIEN D. BOUDREAUX, III
BOX 167
DONNER, LOUISIANA 70352

Native American Rights Fund
1712 N St. N.W.
Washington, D.C.

ATTENTION: ARLINDA LOCKLEAR

Dear Ms. Locklear:

RE: HOUMAS INDIAN TRIBE

Enclosed is a copy of a "resolution" adopted by the Terrebonne Parish Council expressing the Council's feelings and support of the Houmas Indian Tribe.

Your favorable consideration of the Council's request will be most appreciated.

Yours Truly,

Paul A. Labat

Paul A. Labat
COUNCIL CLERK
TERREBONNE PARISH COUNCIL

PAL:mba

c.c. Congressional Delegation
Kirby Verret

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APR - 7 1984
N.A.R.F.
WASHINGTON

OFFERED BY: Mr. L. Klingman, Jr.
SECONDED: Unanimously

RESOLUTION NO. 84-0628

WHEREAS, the Houmas Indians have always been an integral part of Terrebonne Parish including numerous contributions to our heritage and culture, and

WHEREAS, these contributions are well documented by the name given to our Parish Seat - Houma, and

WHEREAS, the Houmas Indians of Louisiana are the largest recognized Indian tribe in this State consisting of over 6,000 individuals, and

WHEREAS, the majority of the Houmas Indians reside in Terrebonne Parish, and

WHEREAS, the Terrebonne Parish Council has learned that the Houma Indian tribe is applying for federal recognition through the Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and

WHEREAS, the Council fully realizes the many benefits that federal recogition would bring to the Houmas Indians including educational and economic advantages.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Terrebonne Parish Council wishes to express its full support of the Houmas Indian Tribe receiving federal recognition through the Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs.

THERE WAS RECORDED:

YEAS: P. Gabriel, Sr., N. Bolden, C. Davidson, A. Bonvillain, B. Bonvillain, N. Bergeron, Jr., L. Klingman, Jr., R. Bergeron, W. Bonvillain, Jr., U. Guidry, R. Domangue, W. Henry and C. Bodden

NAYS: None

NOT VOTING: J.D. Boudreaux III

ABSENT: C. Duet

And the Chairman declared the Resolution adopted on this 14th. day of March, 1984.

* * * * * * * * * * *

I, PAUL A. LABAT, Clerk of the Council of Terrebonne Parish, Louisiana, do hereby certify that the foregoing is is a true and correct copy of the RESOLUTION adopted by the Parish Council in REGULAR session on MARCH 14, 1984 at which meeting a quorum was present.

GIVEN UNDER MY OFFICIAL SIGNATURE & SEAL OF OFFICE this 19th. day of March, 1984.

Paul A. Labat

PAUL A. LABAT
COUNCIL CLERK
TERREBONNE PARISH COUNCIL

83.7 (a) - PART II

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE UNITED HOUMA NATION, INC.

PETITION FOR FEDERAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This petition was written by Dr. Jack Campisi, and includes material from earlier drafts by Dr. Janel Curry-Roper and Mr. Greg Bowman. The United Houma Nation wishes to express in indebtedness to these researchers for their conscientious efforts on its behalf, and to the Native American Rights Fund and the Mennonite Central Committee for their support.

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Community

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83.7(d).

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83.7(e).

A List of All Known Current Members of the Group...

83.7(f).

A Statement That The Membership of the Petitioning Group is Composed Principally of Persons Who Are Not Members of Any Other North American Indian Tribe.

83.7(g).

A Statement That the Petitioner is not, nor are its Members, the Subject of Congressional Legislation Which Has Expressly Terminated or Forbidden the Federal Relationship.

Maps


| | | |
|---|---|---|
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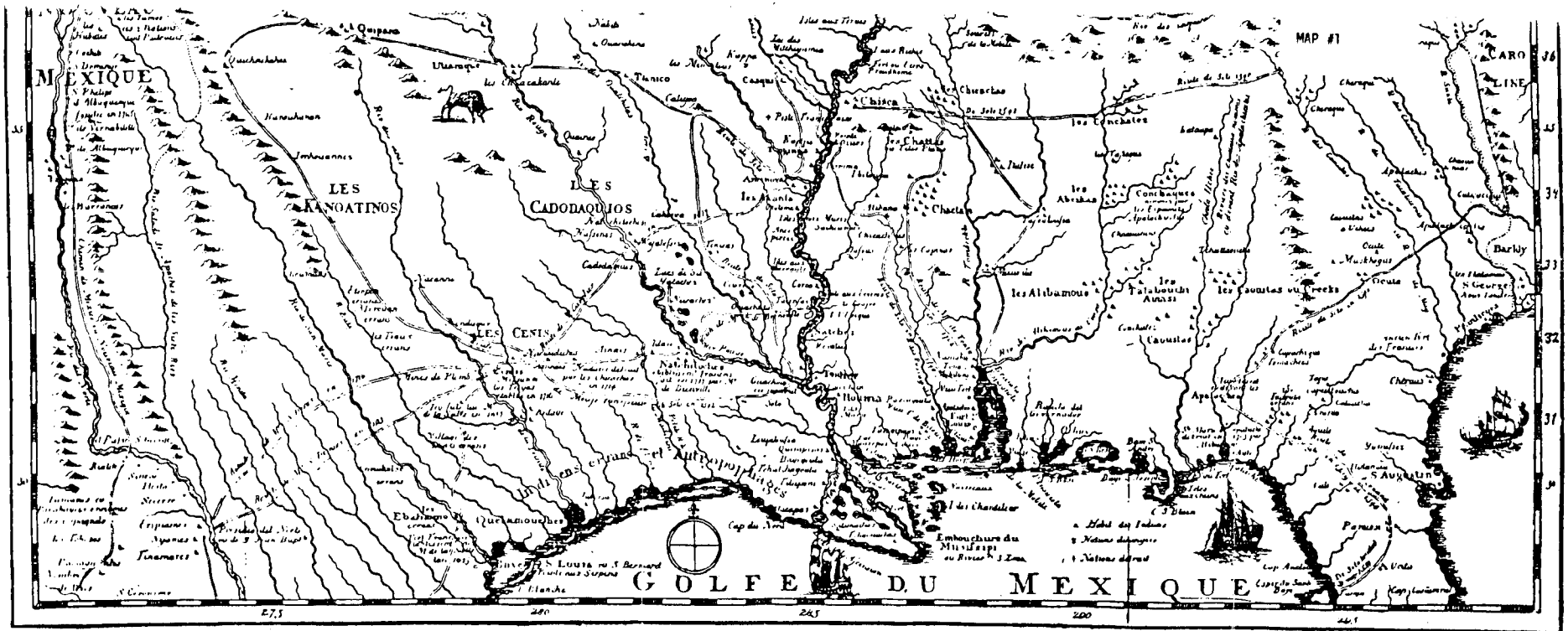
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3. Frank G. Speck, Houma Indians facing Page 104
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NOTE.— The manuscript from which the above Map was prepared, was found in the "Bibliotheque du Roi," in Paris, in a Volume of LaHarpe's Journeys of 1718–1722. It is said to bear date the year 1700.* If so, it is evident that after the original preparation and before publication some one has added matter subsequently ascertained, for the Map above contains items of as late a date as 1717. Also is to be noted the fact that while all the other parts of the Map are in the French language, one single English phrase is to be found in the lower right hand corner, to-wit: "DeSoto landed 31 May, 1539." This would indicate that some one other than the original draughtsman had taken part in its creation and at a time subsequent to its original preparation.—AUTHOR.

(*) Edmund J. Forstall, in French's Historical Collections of Louisiana, part II.

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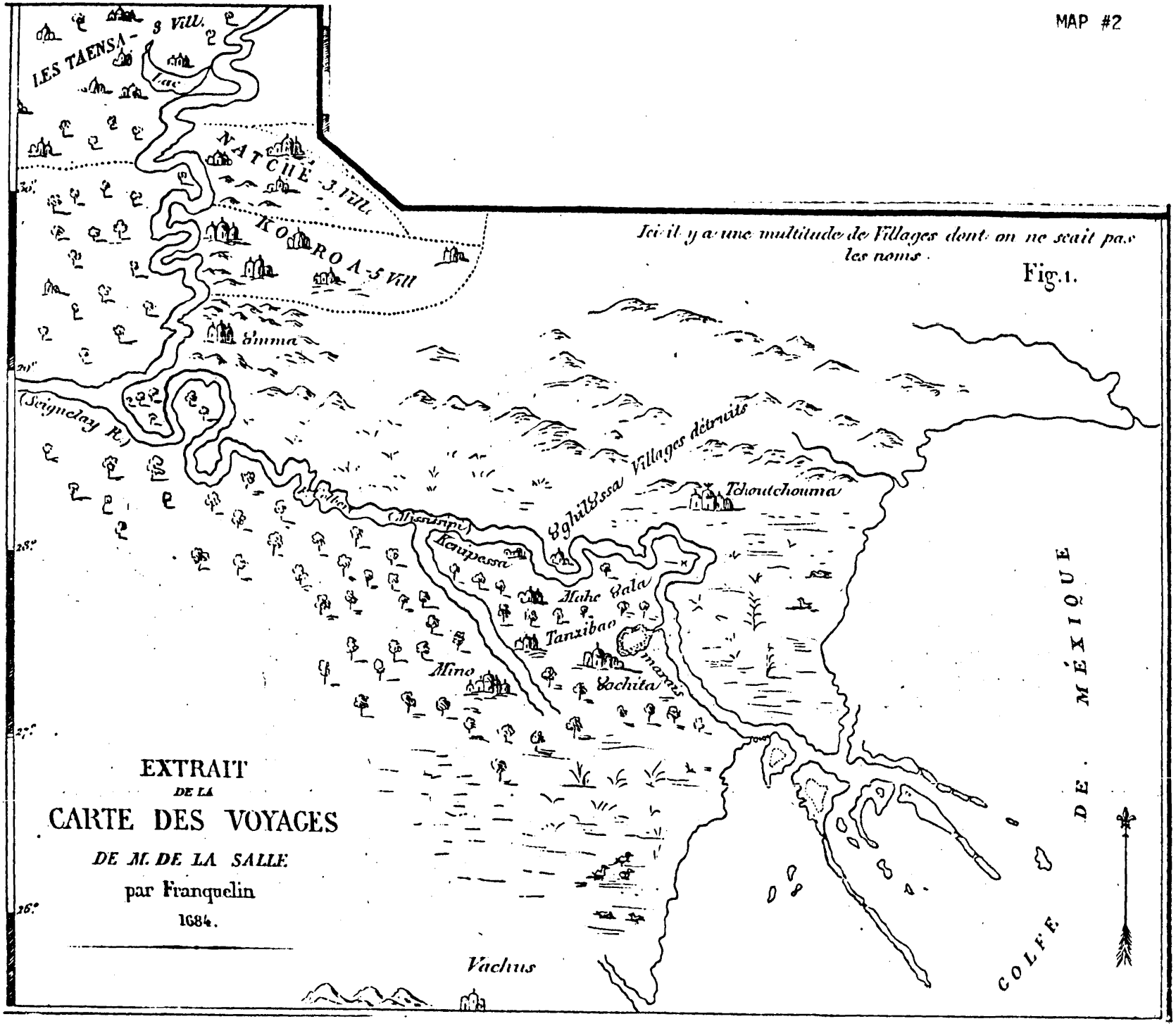
83.7(a) A statement of facts establishing that the petitioner has been identified from historical times until the present on a substantially continuous basis, as "American Indian," or "aboriginal."

## II - Historical Overview

### Background to Colonial Rivalries

While the Spanish were the first to explore the Mississippi River valley, the disastrous results of those efforts kept them from colonizing. In 1541 Hernando de Soto led an expedition in search of gold but within a year he and half the members of expedition were dead of disease, starvation, and Indian attack (DeConde 1976: 4-5). Spain continued to assert a claim to the region but made no further efforts to settle leaving the area open to the French.

Nearly one hundred years elapsed before the colonial rivalries led to the colonization of the Mississippi Valley. French policy developed as an outgrowth of its expanding interest in the nation's interior river system, from the Great Lakes and Ohio River to the Gulf. The principal architect of this policy was Samuel de Champlain, explorer, colonizer, and governor of New France, who



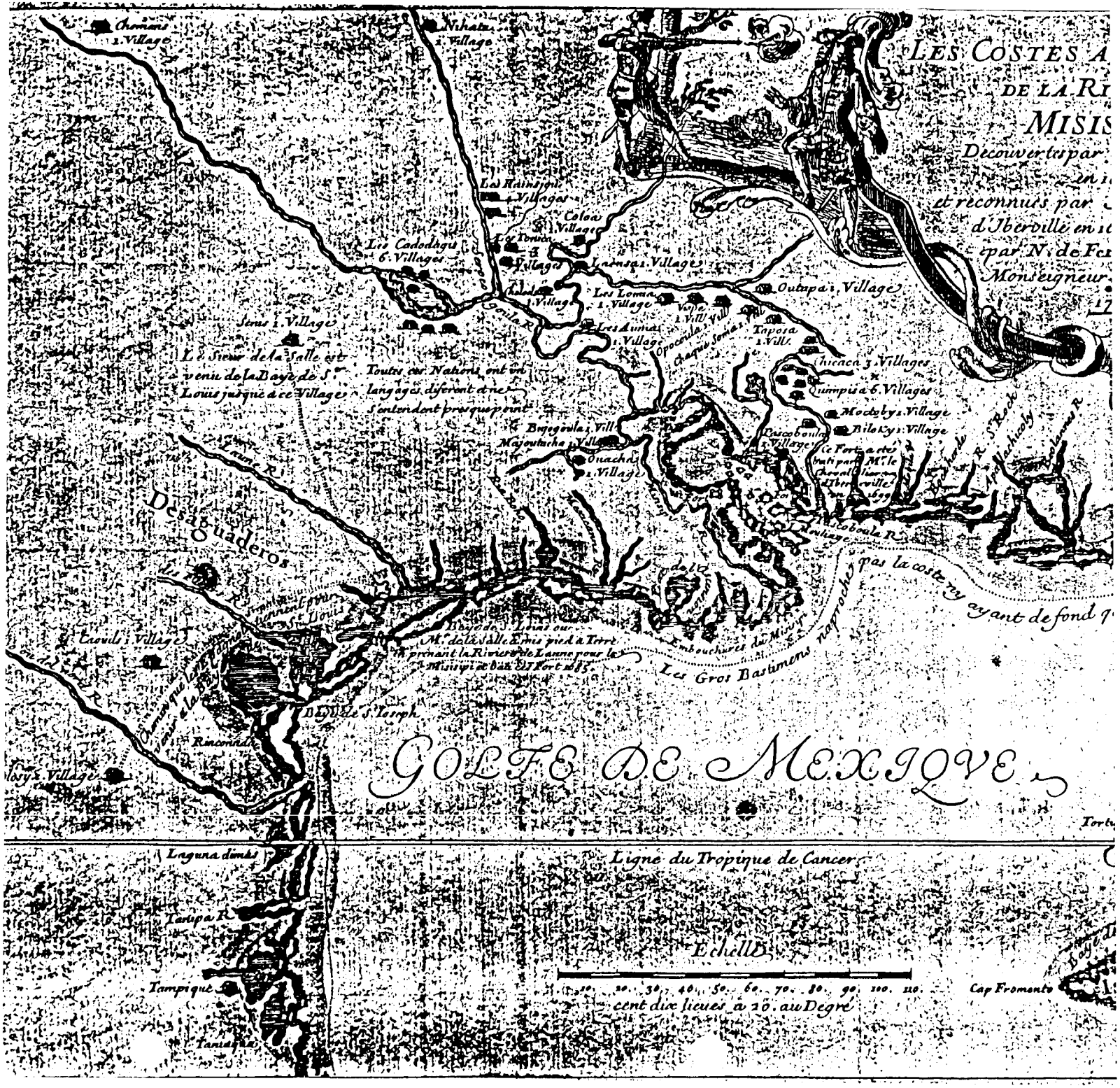

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sponsored the exploration of the fur rich interior.

By 1661 the French were enmeshed in colonial struggles for the control of the fur trade. The French king, Louis XIV, appointed Jean Talon intendant of New France and gave him what amounted to sovereign power in the region. Talon moved to New France in 1663, and immediately set upon an ambitious plan to explore and colonize the Mississippi valley. He organized the further exploration of the Ohio-Great Lakes area and supported negotiations with the Indian tribes. In addition, he established a number of French settlements to facilitate the fur trade. Perhaps his crowning achievement was the sponsorship of the famous Marquette-Joliet expedition, which took place during the first year of his successor's tenure, the comte de Frontenac who assumed office in 1673.

While Frontenac struggled to maintain French influence in North America against the efforts of the English and Spanish, another French adventurer saw the possibilities of establishing a great empire. Robert Cavelier, sieur de La Salle, developed a plan to establish a string of forts from the Great lakes to the Gulf, at the same time winning the loyalty of the Indian tribes in the area. France could then control the trade and prevent the expansion of its two principal colonial adversaries, England and Spain. He proposed his scheme to the monarch and after some frustrating delay, the French Minister of Finance Colbert,

MAP #3




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in 1678, authorized him to commence. But matters did not go well with his diplomatic efforts and he soon abandoned his plan to set up a string of forts, contenting himself with sailing down the Mississippi to its mouth, claiming the land and naming it for his sovereign (DeConde 1976: 6-7).

Having established the claim La Salle set about convincing the king of the wisdom of colonizing the area, arguing that it would be easier to conduct trade by going up the Mississippi rather than down it. To encourage the gold conscious Louis, La Salle pointed out that colonies in the area would facilitate the plundering of Spanish settlements and ships. La Salle left for Louisiana in 1684, but was unable to find the mouth of the river. Desperate, he attempted to march overland and after two more years of hardship, he was murdered by members of his crew before he could establish the colony. In the meantime, the King had signed a peace treaty with Spain and interest in the colony waned (Ibid: 7).

## Early Contact

The next fifteen years were marked by the increasing tempo of colonial struggles between France, England and Spain. Control of the Mississippi became the pivotal factor in these struggles even though most of the battling occurred in the interior regions. By the end of the

century the colonial powers had reached a stalemate and a peace of sorts was declared. This allowed the French to renew their efforts at colonization and, in 1699, Louis de Phelypeaux, comte de Pontchartrain sent Pierre Lemoyne, sieur d'Iberville to explore and colonize the area. To prevent incursions by other explorers d'Iberville spent considerable time establishing alliances with the tribes along the valley. It was in this context that he made the first contacts with the Houma which he described in some detail:

> The 20th I reached the landing place of the Ouma village, at half-past 10 in the morning, distant from my camp about 3 leagues, where I found five men, three Oumas and Quinipissas, who awaited me with the peace calumet, having come from the village when they heard the report of the swivel gun. As far off as they discovered us they sang, and the Bayogoulas whom I had sang for me. Landing, we embraced and caressed each other after their manner, and smoked together. At 11 I set out for the village, the Bayogoulas and these people escorting us the entire way. The deputies of the Oumas walked in front, singing continually, although we had to pass along a very bad road, filled with very steep hills or little mountains for almost the whole distance. One hour after midday we came in sight of the village, where, at 400 paces, I met three men deputed to bring me the calumet. It was necessary to smoke in form, seated on a mat, which fatigued me much, I never having smoked. These three new singers conducted me up a height, where there were three cabins, at 300 paces from the village, where they had me stop and sent to inform the chief of my arrival, waiting a reply as to what we should do. A man came to tell us to enter. On entering the three singers walked in front, singing, presenting to the village the calumet of peace, raised as high as their arms would reach. The chief and two of the most important persons came before me at the entrance of the village, each bearing a white cross in the hand, and saluted me in their manner, taking me

by the arms, leading me to the middle of their square on mats, where all the village was assembled, where they smoked anew, and showed me many marks of friendship. I made them a little present in advance of what I wished to give them from my boats. At 4 o'clock in the evening they gave a formal ball for us in the middle of the square, where the entire village was assembled. They brought into the midst of the assembly drums, chychycouchy, which are gourds, in which there are dried seeds, and with sticks holding them; they made a little noise and serve to mark the time. A number of singers repaired thither. A short time afterward there came 20 young people of from 20 to 30 years old, and 15 of the prettiest young girls magnificantly adorned after their manner, entirely naked, having only their breechcloths on, which they wore above a kind of belt a foct broad, made of feathers and skin or hair painted red, yellow, and white, the face and the body daubed of painted with different colors, bearing feathers in their hands, which served them as fans or to keep time, their hair neatly plaited with bunches of feathers. The young men were naked, having only a belt like the girls, which concealed them in part, they being well daubed with paint and their hair well provided with bunches of feathers. Many had pieces of copper in the form of flattened plates, two and three together fastened to their belts, and hanging as far down as the knees, which made a noise and assisted in marking the time. They danced like that for three hours in a very active and sprightly manner. Night having come, the chief made us lodge in his cabin or house which he had prepared. After having supped on hominy made of Indian corn, they brought in and lighted a torch of canes, 15 feet long, bound together, 2 feet in circumference, which they planted in the middle, afire at the top, and which lighted sufficiently well. All the youth of the village repaired there with their bows and arrows, war clubs, and warlike instruments, and some women and girls, where they began to dance anew until midnight war dances which I found very pretty, and then all retired except the chief, who remained and slept with us in his cabin along with all the Bayogoulas, to whom they paid the same honours as to ourselves, regarding them as French, having brought the latter to their homes. These two chiefs harangued each other; the Bayogoula harangued the Ouma for me. This village is on a hill, where there are 140 cabins;

there may be 350 men there at most, and many children. All the cabins are on the edge of the hill, in a double row in places, and arranged in a circle. There is a square 200 paces across, very neat. The cornfields are in the valleys and on the other hills in the neighborhood. This entire country is nothing but hills of quite good black earth, no rocks; I have seen none since leaving the sea. This village is 2 1/2 leagues from the river toward the north; the woods there are open, a mixture of all kinds of oaks; above all there are many canes in the bottoms. I did not see any fruit tree there. They gave me two kinds of nuts; one, like those of Canada, hard nuts, and the other, little, made like olives and no larger. They have not yet cultivated anything else except melons and have sowed tobacco (Margry 1880, 4: 174-77, as cited in Swanton 1911: 285-86).

Boffer #4

Iberville spent three days with the Houma. Leadership, he suggested, passed from father to son and was limited in power to that of spokesman. "The chiefs," he wrote, "are no more masters of their people than are the chiefs of the other nations in the direction of Canada. I have only noticed among them more civility" (Ibid: 286-7). This contrasts sharply with the descriptions given of the political structure of the Natchez and implies considerable political diversity in the region. Another journalist accompanying Iberville mentioned that "they put their dead on posts, like those of the other (i.e. the Bayogoula) village, and when anyone falls ill there are two men who sing to chase away the evil spirits" (Ibid). Father Gravier affirmed most of the details of the visit in a letter to Father Jean de Lamberville adding that the Houma had at least three chiefs, a plentiful food supply, and

were friendly to a fault (French 1875: 79-94). Later, in the same year, the tribe was visited by another French expedition headed by De Montigny. He reported approximately 100 dwellings in the village (Ibid). Iberville returned the following year and found that half the population had died from what he referred to as the "abdominal flux" (Ibid: 287-8).

Iberville continued his diplomatic efforts contacting a number of tribes along the river. In October, 1699, he visited the Bayogoula and Mougoulacha villages which he found in a state of alarm, the Houmas having staged a surprise attack on both, carrying off 25 prisoners (La Harpe 1971: 19). The hostilities were apparently caused by a dispute over the hunting grounds of the Houmas and the Bayogoulas. This boundary line was marked by a red post, called an "istrouma," and was located 5 leagues above Bayou Manchac, the present site of Baton Rouge. The Houma were residing about 30 leagues above the "istrouma" or "baton rouge," while the Bayogoulas exploited the territory below the marker (La Harpe 1971: 19). In his efforts to extend French influence Iberville, accompanied by Bienville and several Bayogoula chiefs, returned to the Houma village in March, 1700, where he negotiated a settlement of the dispute and a return of prisoners (La Harpe 1872, 5: 122).

The turmoil and dislocation in the valley was rooted in more than disputes over hunting territories. English

slave traders from the Carolinas engaged some tribes to prey upon others. "Two Englishmen from Carolina who live with them cause the Chikachas to make war on other nations," wrote Francois de Montigny in 1699. "They send them to war in all directions in order to make as many slaves as they can, whom they afterwards buy from them and resell to the English, who send them to Barbados and to other places" (Calder 1935: 205). To meet this ever present threat tribes moved frequently with remnants banding together and dividing off in their efforts to find safety. Often, groups sought protection by moving close to French forts and acknowledging their allegiance to the King.

The results of the European-inspired warfare, combined with the spread of disease, so seriously disrupted tribal life that it is impossible to present a cogent picture of the native population in the lower Mississippi Valley. Only the larger tribes like the Choctaws, Chickasaws and Creeks escaped the full fury of war and disease at the turn of the century. For the others there was a constant threat of destruction (Giraud 1974: 77-9).

French exploration and colonization was accompanied by efforts to spread Catholicism. Jesuit and Recollet fathers traveled with the explorers -- often they were the explorers -- to establish missions among the tribes. From them come the most complete reports of native life at

MAP #4


Tamaroa
Tionontatecaga
les Caskinampo
les Conchaques
Pays des Cofachi
Apalache
Apalache Bemarin
Embouchure du Mississipi
Baye du S.t Esprit
Baye de Carlos
Isle de Bahama
Canal de Bahama
les Bayogoula
les Quachas
les Natchez
les Chaouenons
les Cherachas
les Tionontatecaga
les Calicuas
les Cheyouessa
les Cayagnes
les Chaouitas
les Conchaques
les Chakta ou Indiens à tête plate
les Alibamons
les Chicachas
les Caskinampo
les Tamaroa
les Tali
les Cacknipo
les Mosquites
les Matanças
les Mimbres
les Martyrs
Isle à la Sonde
Isles aux Tortues
Isle aux Biches
Petit Village des Cheracha
Village des Tagaria
Village des Tali
Village des Chaouenons
Village des Chachoumas
Village des Natchez
Village des Chicachas
Fort Prudhomme
Fort S.t Louis
Fort de la Conception
Fort de la Caroline
Fort de la Floride
Fort de la Floride
Fort de la Floride

contact.

Father Paul du Ru accompanied Iberville's party in 1700 and established a mission among the Houma. Later in the year he was replaced by Father Gravier and Father de Limoges. It is from Father Gravier's journal that we get the best description of Houma:

> We left that village of the Natchez on the 24th and 25th of November. We discovered the Hills of the houmas to the South of the Mississippi, which forms a bay that one enters by leaving the main Channel to the right. There is a good league and a half from the point of disembarkation to the village of the houmas,-- over a very bad Road, for one has to ascend and descend, and walk half bent, through the Canes. The village is on the crest of a steep mountain, precipitous on all sides. There are 80 Cabins, in it, and in the middle of the Village is a fine and level open space, where, from morning to night, young men exercise themselves. They run after a flat stone, which they throw in the air from one end of the square to the other, and Try to Make it fall On two Cylinders, which they roll wherever they think the stone will fall.
>
> There is nothing fine about the temple except the Vestibule, which is embellished with the most pleasing and best executed grotesque figures that one can see. These Are four Satyrs, two of which are in relief,-- all four standing out from the wall, and having on their heads, their hands, and their legs,-- for fillets, bracelets, Garters, baldrics, and belts,-- snakes, mice and Dogs. The colors are black, white, red, and Yellow; and are applied so well, and with such absence of confusion, that they constitute an agreeably surprising spectacle. The Old man who keeps up the fire-- the name of which, he told us, was Louak onloughe-- the "sacred fire"-- showed us the bones of the woman Chief who died last year. That woman had so distinguished herself by the blows that she inflicted upon their enemies, having in person led several war-parties that she was looked upon as an Amazon, and as the mistress of the whole village. Greater honor was paid to her than to the great Chief; for she occupied the 1st place

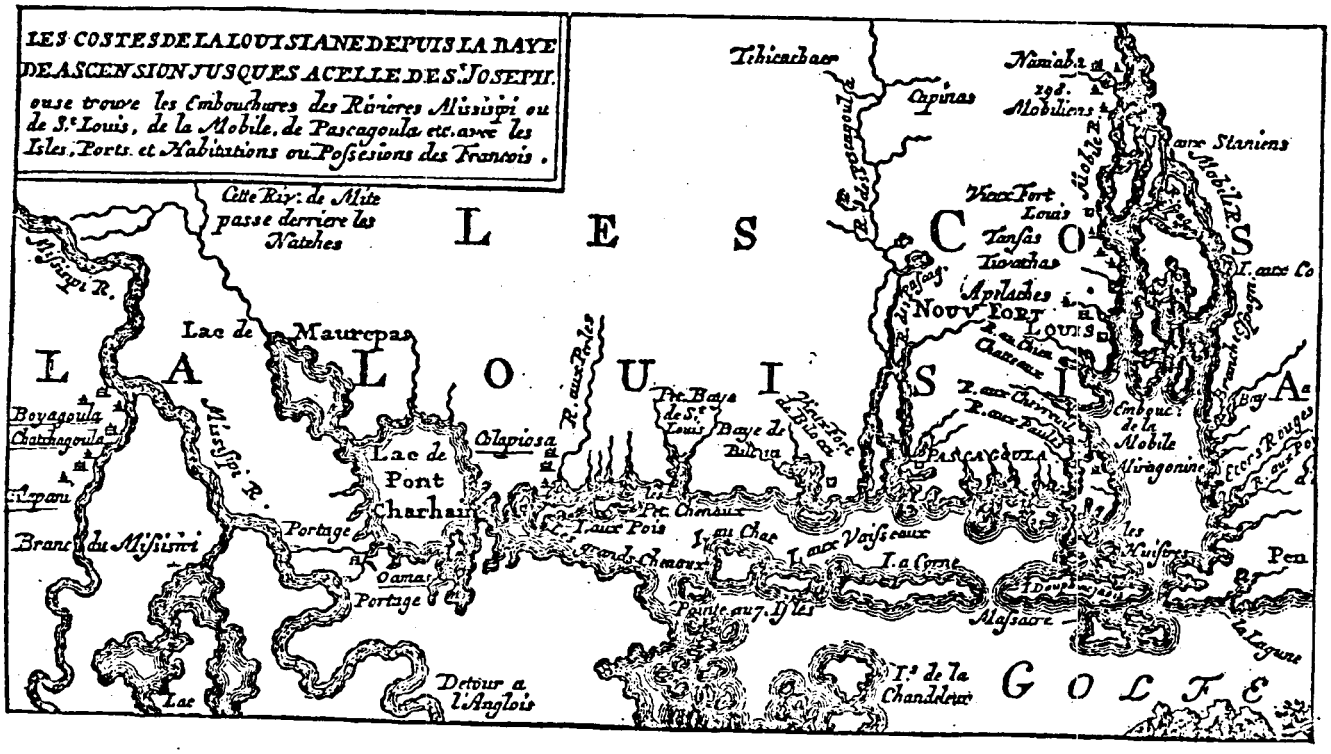
in all the Councils, and, when she walked about, was always preceded by four young men, who sang and danced the Calumet to her. She was dressed as an Amazon, she painted her face and Wore her Hair like the men. In this village they know nothing of all the yells that are usually uttered among the Natches when they pass before the temple-- opposite which is a Chapel 50 feet long that Father du Ru caused to be built last spring; also a great Cross 35 or 40 feet high, that he caused to be erected in the public place of the village. Father de Limoges had arrived there three days before, in order to settle there and to labor for the Conversion of the houmas, who seemed to me to be very docile. The Great Chief is very reasonable, and says that he acknowledges but one spirit who had made all. I counted 70 Cabins in the village, which I visited with Father de Limoges, who chose to give me the first-fruits of his mission in the baptism that I administered to a Child 3 days old. I gave him the name of St. Francis Xavier, the Patron of the mission; God took him to paradise a few days afterward, there to labor for the Conversion of his parents and of his Countrymen.

On the 3rd of december, we celebrated the Festival of that great Saint as solemnly as we could; and I Chanted the first high mass that was ever heard in the village. I was Surprised at the little Curiosity that they manifested. If the Mississippi country be settled, and this mission be not taken from us, There is reason to hope that we shall do well here, on account of the docility of those poor people. The Women and girls are more modest than Among the neighboring Tribes. May God be pleased to convert them, and make the road to Their village Impractical for certain French libertines. All that they do for their sick is to suck them Until Blood comes. I saw one in the hands of the old Medicine-man; one whistled and played on a gourd; another sucked; while the third sang the Song of the Crocodile, whose skin served them as a drum. As they are Satisfied with their Squashes and their corn, of which they have an abundance, They are indolent, and hardly ever Hunt. They have nevertheless the reputation of being warriors and being feared by neighboring nations. They are not cruel; and, far from putting to death any slaves who, they may capture, as soon as the latter enter the village the women weep over Them, pity them for having been taken, and afterward treat them

better than their own children. When any of their people go out Hunting, the women begin to weep, as if they were about to lose them; And, when they return from Hunting, They weep with joy at seeing them once again. There are few Villages in france where there are more hens and Cocks than in that of the houmas, because they never kill any, and will not eat any that their dogs quite often kill. When one wishes to obtain chickens from them, He must not say that he intends to kill or eat them. They would give them with reluctance; but they willingly sell these fowl when they are not killed in their presence, or when they are told that they will be taken away to be reared as with them. The hens have little chickens at all times, And in the month of december there were some in all the Cabins, since they keep warm in the Cabins,-- which the people are Careful to keep clean, and which they sweep out 2 or 3 times a day. The Children, the men and the young men are dressed like the Tounika. The women wear a fringed skirt, which covers them from the Waist to below the knees. When they go out their Cabins they wear a Robe of Muskrat skins, or Turkey's feathers. Their faces are tattooed with figures, and they wear their hair plaited like the Tounika And Natches, and blacken their teeth as Those Tribes do. Although all savages have a great dread of cold, when there is the slightest frost (for there is no winter here) They all bathe, both great and small, and come out of the water quite chilled with cold. An old man Calls out at daybreak when it freezes. This kind of bath sometimes brings on a Bloody Flux, which carries off many of them (JR 65: 145-53).

The above passage, while written with the hyperbole common to the religious zealots of the day, illustrates several important points. It is not clear just what Gravier meant by his reference to "four satyrs," possibly he was referring to some effigies or masks. It seems apparent that he did not understand what he observed in the "temple." He suggests that there were similarities among the Tunica, Natchez and others in such areas as

MAP #5


LES COSTES DE LA LOUISIANE DEPUIS LA BAYE DE ASCENSION JUSQUES A CELLE DE S.t JOSEPH.
ouse trouve les Embouchures des Rivieres Missisipi ou de S.t Louis, de la Mobile, de Pascagoula etc. avec les Isles, Ports. et Habitations ou Possesions des Francois.
Tchicachaes
Nanahe
Capinas
Mobiliens
Mobile R.
Vieux Fort Louis
Tensas
Tiouachas
Apalaches
NOUV.LE PORT LOUIS
Lac de Maurepas
LA LOUISIANE
Missipi R.
Boyagoula
Chatimagoula
Colapissa
Lac de Pont Charhain
Portage
Branc.h du Missisipi
Oama
Portage
Pt. Chemaux
I. aux Pois
I. aux Vaisseaux
I. a Corne
Pointe au 7. Isles
Massacre
les Naissones
Pen
Detour a l'Anglois
Lac
Is de la Chanddeur
GOLFE
Pascagoula
Mirogonine
Ecores Rouges
Lagune

ceremonials, beliefs, games and costumes. This is in part supported by a description of the Houma given by Jean Bossu in the 1730's.

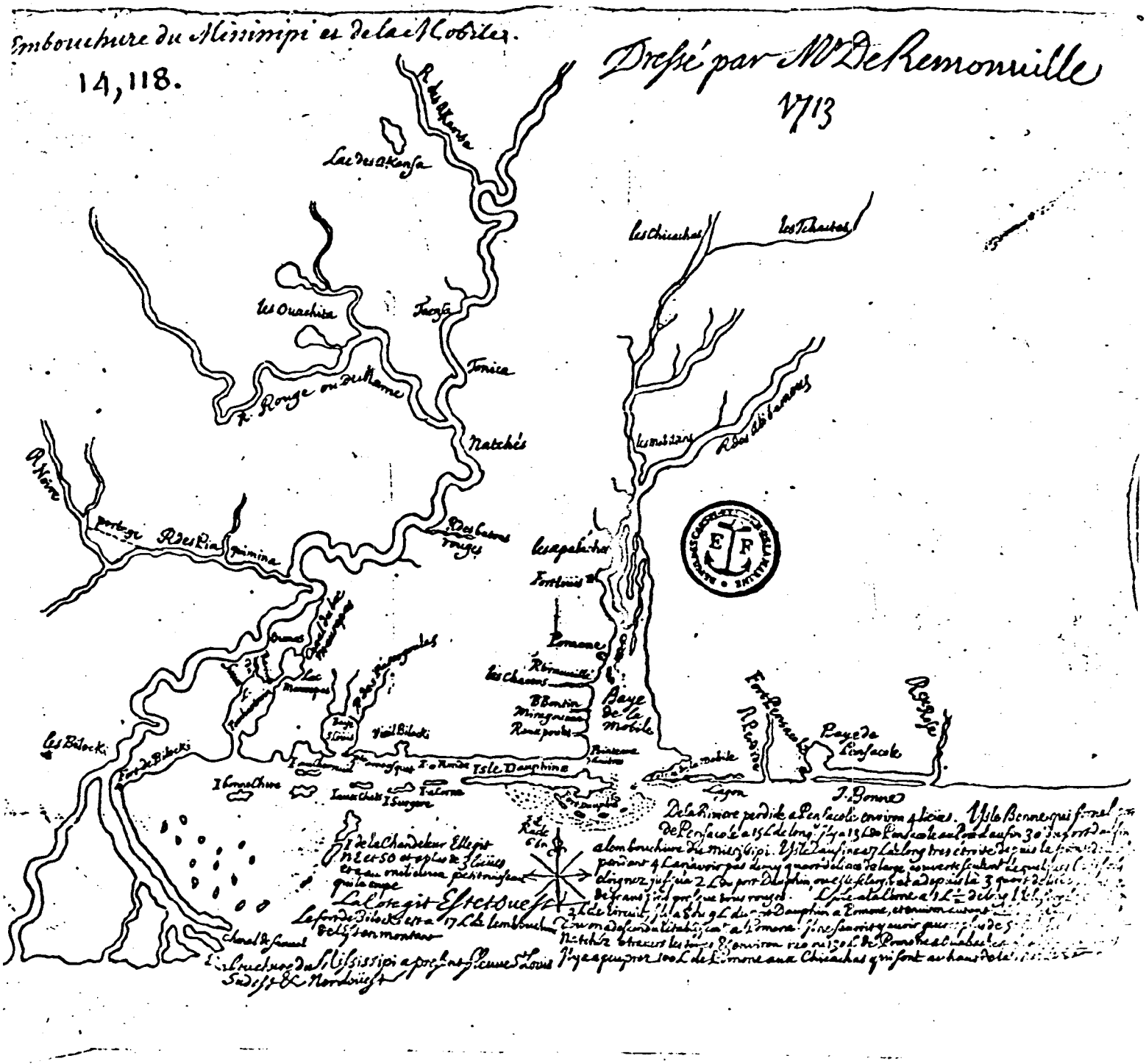
> Above them (Collapissas) are the Oumas, sun worshippers. Like nearly all other nations of America, there people believe that the Sovereign Being resides there, and they therefore revere in this living sun the author of all nature. They say that nothing on earth compares to this wonder, which enlightens the universe, and which dispenses joy and abundance. It is according to such principles that they follow this worship as a cult and pray to the sun as the physical image of the grandeur and the goodness of a god, who deigns to communicate to mankind by showering them with his benefits (Dart 1918, 1(3): 198).

On the other hand, Gravier is quite explicit about the role of women in the society. His identification of a woman as a political leader is significant and suggests that it was common for women to play an important role in the community's activities. Again, his reference to amazons betrays his classical training and not a perception of reality.

## Colonial Warfare Renewed

By 1706 colonial rivalries relying on tribal surrogates once more disrupted relations in the lower Mississippi. The French were convinced that the pro-English tribes were intending to launch attacks against their allies, including the Houmas (La Harpe 1971: 76). Fearful of attack and anxious for protection from the

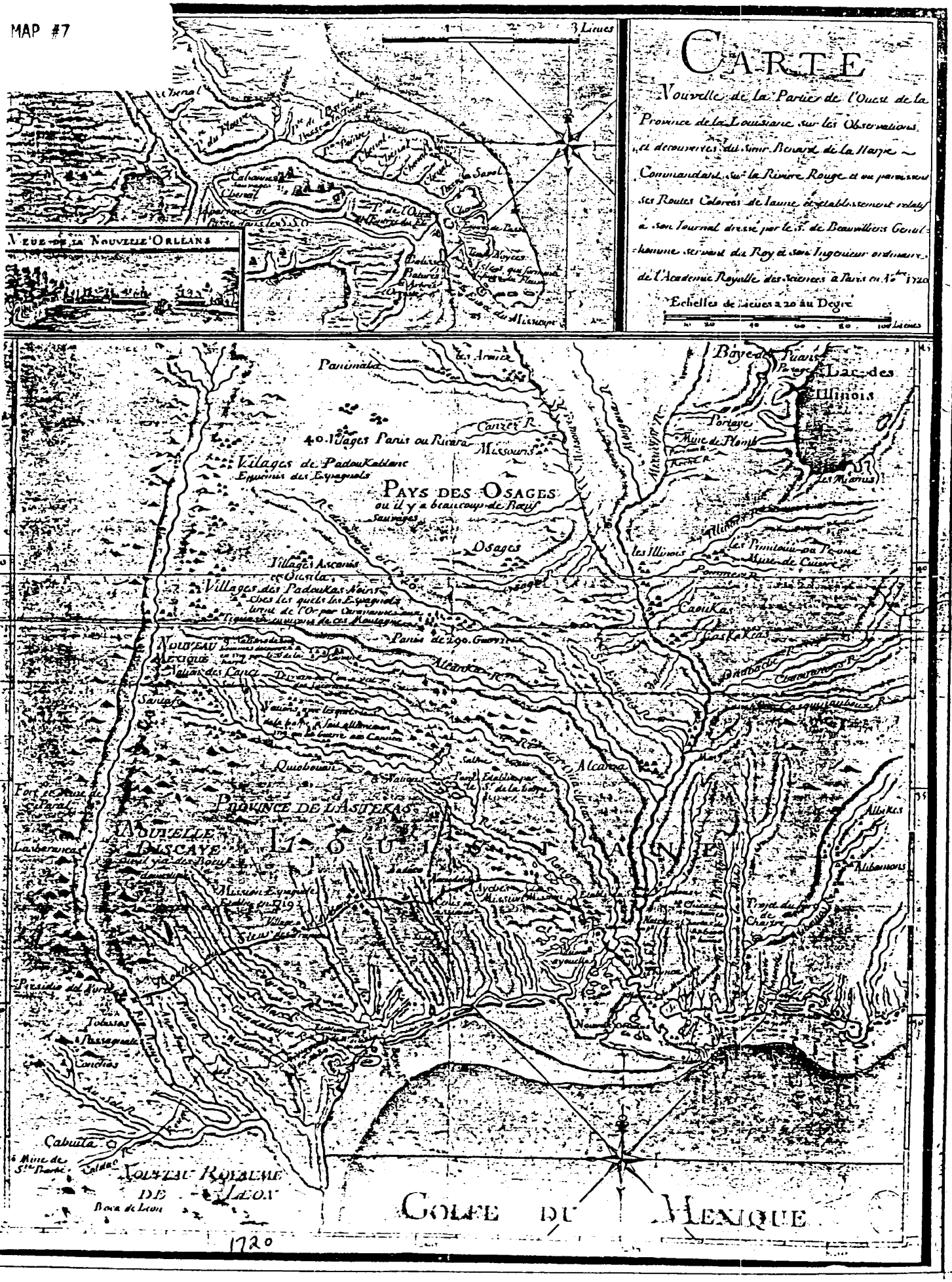
MAP #6


Embouchure du Mississipi et de la Mobile.
14,118.
Dressé par Mr De Remonville
1713
R. des Akansa
Les Akansa
Les Ouachita
Tensa
R. Rouge ou Mesme
Tonica
Natchés
R. Noire
Portage
Rivieres
Mimina
Des Cannes Rouges
Les Pelicha
Fontouis
Remonville
Les Chicachas
Les Tchactas
Les Chicachas
Rivieres des Canards
Baye de la Mobile
Fort Peremarle
R. Perle
Baye de Pensacole
R. Rouge
Les Bilocki
Fond de Bilocki
Isle Dauphine
Isle Bonne
Lagon
Isle de la Chandeleur
Le fond de Bilocki est a 17 Lb
Belize son mouillage
Chenal de Sonnel
Embouchure du Mississipi a 29 Lieues St Louis
Sud ouest & Nord ouest

French, the Houmas moved further south. "This year," wrote Penicaut, a carpenter who accompanied the Iberville expedition, "a savage nation named the Oumas deserted their settlement and came to dwell on the bank of the Missicipy River near Riviere des Chetimachas. Another savage nation named the Tonicas ... went to settle in the location the Oummas vacated" (McWilliams 1953: 129-30). There is a discrepancy between Penicaut's and La Harpe's versions of the events in that the latter has the Tunica joining the Houma in 1706, at which time the guests attacked and killed a good portion of the tribe (Margry 1877 5: 483, as cited in Swanton 1911: 289). Following this La Harpe has the tribe settling on Bayou St. John, near New Orleans, and later moving from there to the head of Bayou Lafourche, also known as the Chitimacha River and Bayou Lafourche des Chitimachas. La Harpe, who stopped at the village in 1718 described it as follows: "It is situated in a level country; the houses or cabins surround a large open space; they number 60, which may contain 200 men. This nation busies itself in raising hens and in the culture of maize and beans" (Ibid: 290).

The tribe occupied two villages, a small one called Petit Houmas, two leagues below the headwaters of Bayou Lafourche on the east side of the Mississippi River, and the other -- Grand Houmas -- a short distance inland (Nareness 1916: 34). A French census taken in 1722

MAP #7


CARTE
Nouvelle de la Parties de l'Ouest de la Province de la Louisiane sur les Observations et decouvertes du Sieur Benard de la Harpe Commandant sur la Riviere Rouge et ou paroissent ses Routes Colorees de Jaune et etablissement relatif a son Journal dressé par le S.r de Beauvillers Gentilhomme servant du Roy et son Ingenieur ordinaire de l'Academie Royalle des Sciences a Paris en Mr. 1720
Echelles de Lieues a 20 au Degré
3 Lieues
Veue de la Nouvelle Orleans
Panimaha
Les Arcs
Canzes R.
40. Villages Paris ou Rivara
Missouris
Villages de Padoucah blanc
Esquinis des Espagnols
PAYS DES OSAGES
ou il y a beaucoup de Bœufs
Sauvages
Osages
Villages Ascanis et Gionlas
Villages des Padoucas Noirs
Chez les quels les Espagnols
Paris de l'Igo. Guemis
Nouveau Mexique
Sauvages
Quioboual
Tahuayas
Alcanzes
PROVINCE DE LASITEKAS
VIEILLE BISCAYE
LOUISIANE
Missions Espagnole
Presidio del Norte
Tobosas
Passagnats
Conchos
Cabuita
Mine de Ste Barbe
Nouveau Royaume de Leon
Bahia de Leon
Golfe du Mexique
Boyeaux Puans
Lac des Illinois
Portage
Riviere de Plomb
Les Miamis
Illinois
les Illinois
les Pimitoui ou Peone
Riviere de Cuivre
Pommeux R.
Casquinampo
Casquinahoua R.
Akansas
Albinons
1720

confirms this location (Maduell 1972: 28).

The impact of nearly continual warfare had its effect on France resulting in major changes for the colony of Louisiana. In 1712 the king granted Antoine Crozat exclusive rights to the colony for a period of fifteen years. Crozat sent Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac to the colony to serve as governor, but Cadillac was unsuccessful in his efforts to reap profits. Finally, in 1717, he who? surrendered his monopoly (DeConde 1976: 11-12).

He was replaced by a more audacious speculator, the Scottish economist John Law, who convinced the regent, Phillippe II, to put into practice the principles embodied in the mercantile theory. Law operated a banking monopoly with considerable success until his interests turned to Louisiana. He received a charter for the Compaignie de la Louisiane ou d'Occident, sold stock and sent Jean Baptiste Lemoyne, sieur de Bienville as governor-general, to make his scheme work. Bienville arrived in 1718 and located his base 107 miles from the sea, calling it New Orleans (Ibid: 13-14).

By 1721 Law's get-rich-quick scheme had collapsed, but not before the colony had increased in population to more than eight thousand, and not before he had spurred France's colonial rivals with a resulting increase in war and dislocation. The Mississippi Valley became a center of European conflict.

MAP #8




*A New* MAP *of the North Parts of*

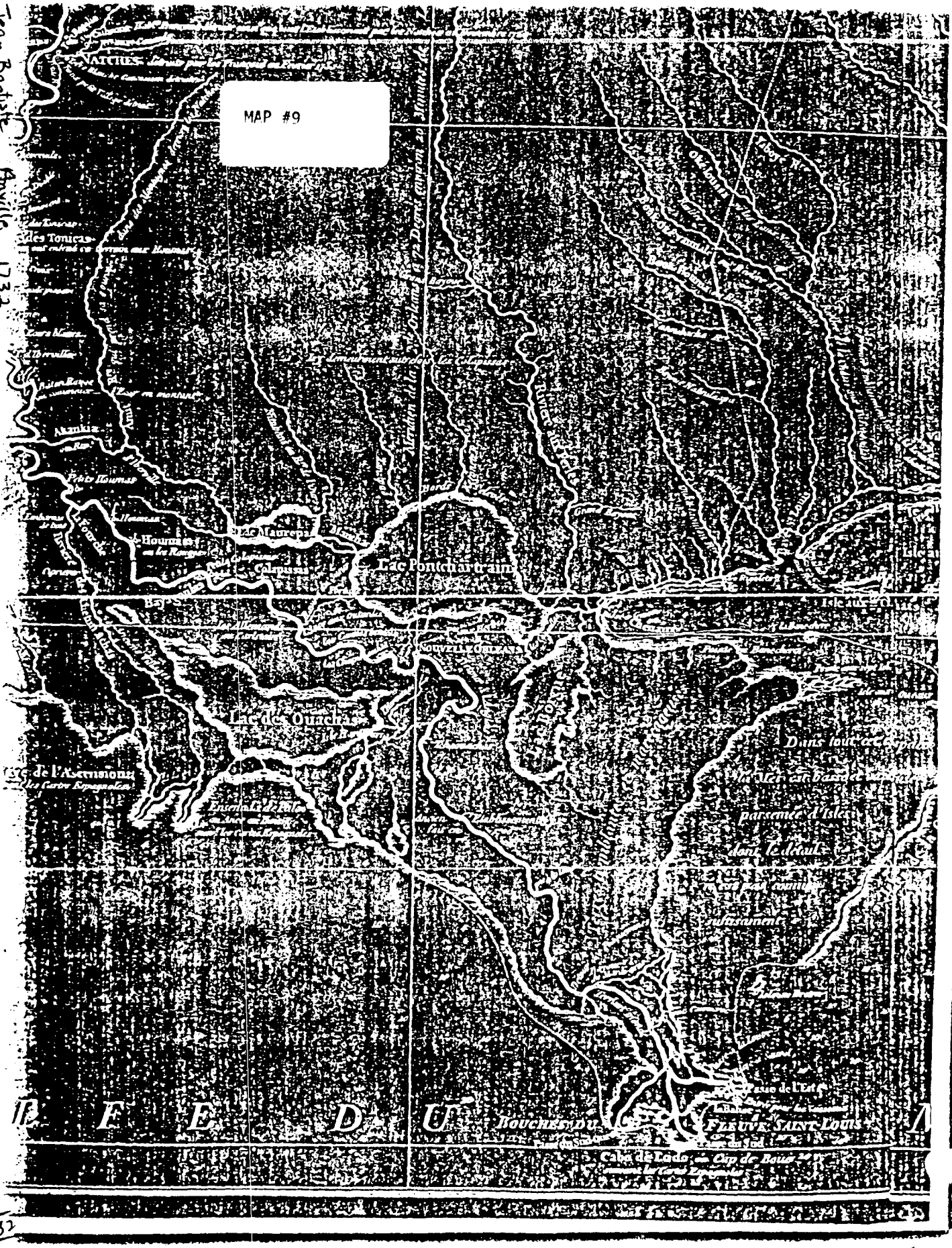
# AMERICA claimed by FRANCE

*under y^e Names of* LOUISIANA, MISSISSIPI, CANADA *and* NEW FRANCE *with y^e Adjoyning Territories of* ENGLAND *and* SPAIN.

*The Projection of this* Map *is Call'd* Mercator's, *And it is laid Down according to the Newest and Most Exact Observations By* H. MOLL *Geographer. 1720.*

That conflict and the attendant efforts of France to control the Natchez tribe led to the Natchez war in 1729 that exhausted the few remaining resources of the Company of the Indies, which controlled Louisiana. Ultimately, it resulted in the destruction of the Natchez tribe. While the war was a disaster for the participants, the Houma were spared its worst effects. Having moved close to the French settlements they found themselves outside the theater of war. In addition, in 1717 they had joined 23 other tribes which made peace with the French (McWilliams 1953: 206). This friendship prevented the Houmas, along with the Tunicas, from being asked to join the Indian tribes against the French, "as they (Tunicas) and the Oumas are too much wedded to the French" (Du Pratz 1947: 80-1). Governor de Kerlerec, in a report about the year 1754, recognized the importance of the tribe, which had about 60 warriors, as a buffer against incursions by the English and their Indian allies (De Kerlerec 1907 1: 75).

By 1733 the smaller Houma village had moved to an area called Houmas Point on the west bank of the Mississippi River. The main village remained at its previous location on the east bank of the river (de Crenay 1733). By this time, according to de Nouaille, an officer in the service of Bienville, at least two tribes had joined the Houmas. He wrote in his journal that on September 7, 1739 his forces stopped at the main Houma village and found:

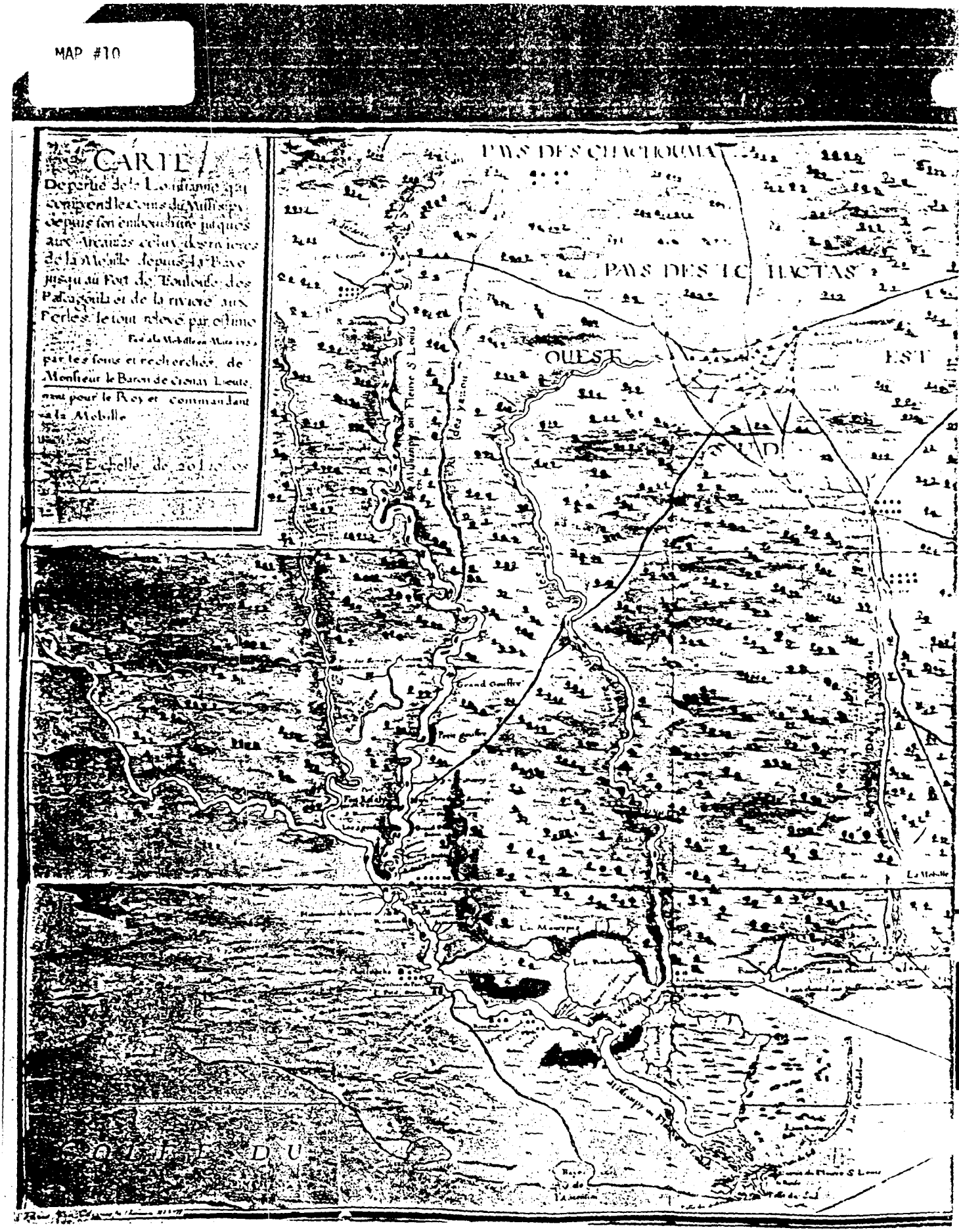

MAP #9
NATCHES
Mankiz
Pointe Houmas
Houmas
Maurepas
Galapuscas
Lac Pontchartrain
Lac des Ouachas
de l'Ascension
Bayou
Bayou
Bayou

> are but one and the same nation in different settlements, and may be all classified as Colapissas, the first two being distinct in but one respect, their chiefs being great-grandson, the one of a Houmas, the other of a Bayogoulas, which accounts for their preserving these names, although the original have long been extinct. The above united nations can furnish from 90 to 100 warriors; <there are> as many youths, and as many women (Claiborne, as cited in Swanton 1911: 278-9).

If Swanton is correct when he says that the three tribes shared from a common linguistic stock -- the Muskhogean -- then the merging of groups, who also appear to have shared many cultural traits, would not be unique or surprising. Both the Bayogoulas and the Colapissas (Acolapissa) suffered from disease and war with the attendant reduction in numbers so that the absorption of at least part of them by the Houma is most likely.

The colonial struggle between France and England culminated in the French and Indian War (1754-1763). As a result of its loss France was forced to surrender its empire. Canada and the portion of Louisiana east of the Mississippi River went to England while Spain received western Louisiana. The Houmas and other Indian allies of the French found this difficult to comprehend. Used indirectly against the English in the past, the Houmas now found themselves under their enemy's influence. In July 1763, the Houma, Biloxi, Chitimacha, and several other tribes went to New Orleans to meet with French Governor D'Abbadie concerning rumors of the Louisiana cession

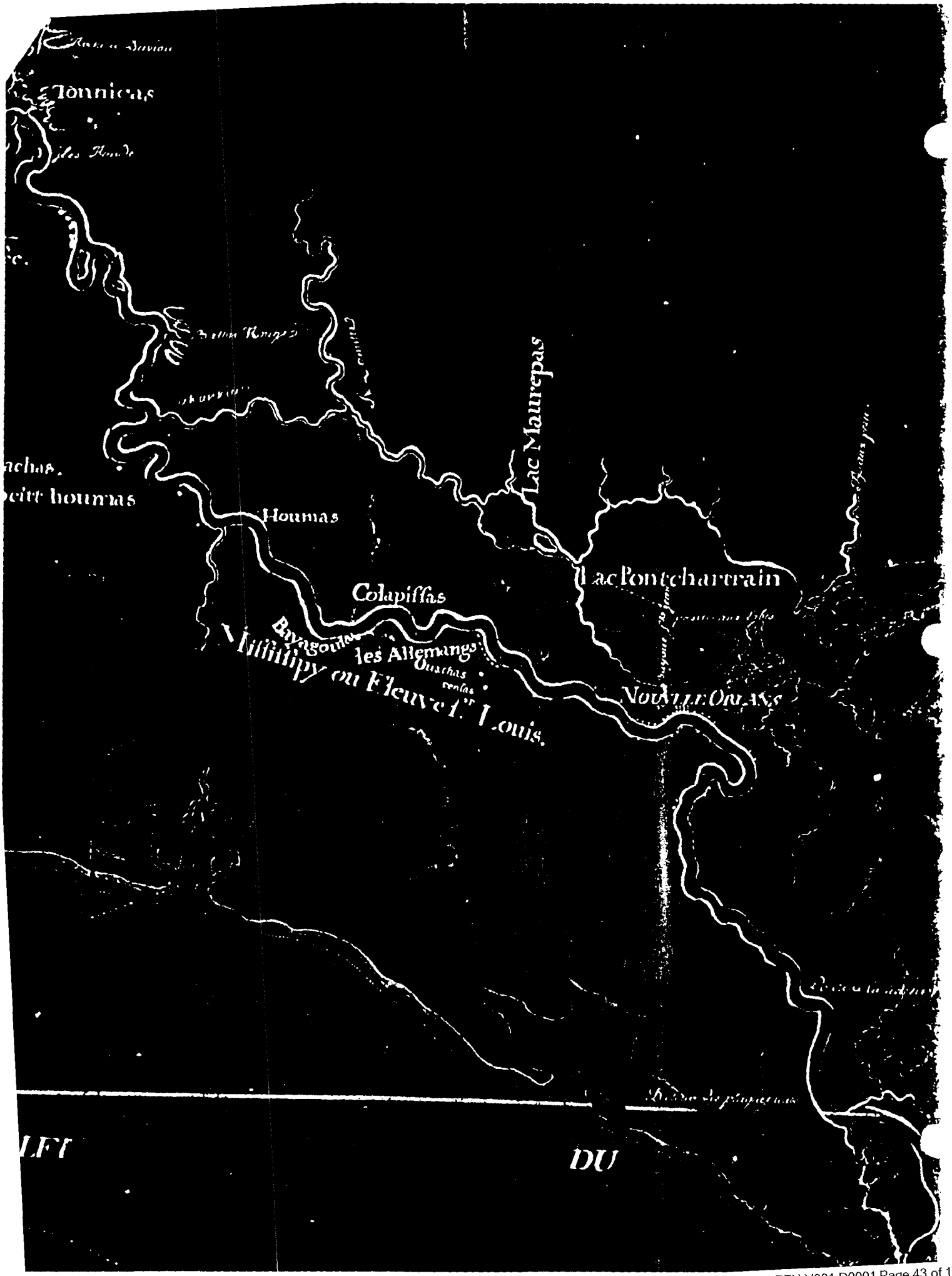
MAP #10


CARTE
PAYS DES CHACTOMA
PAYS DES TCHACTAS
OUEST
EST
SUD
Fort de la Mobille
La Mobille
Fort Toulouse
Fort Rosalie
Fort de Chartres
Fort de Tombecbé
Fort Conde
Fort St Louis
Fort Pontchartrain
Fort Maurepas
Fort Rouge
Fort de la Mobille
Fort St Louis
Fort de

(Alvord and Carter 1915: 162-3). Again, in March of 1764, the Houmas voiced their concern to D'Abbadie after they observed English taking possession of land given to them by the "emporer." D'Abbadie's response was to urge the tribes to maintain peaceful relations with the English (Ibid: 179).

The English took steps in the fall of 1764 to extend their influence over the tribes. They started by contacting tribes and distributing gifts. For example, in December, 1765, Major Robert Farmer reported having given gifts to the Chitimacha, Houma, and other tribes when he was visited by them at Bayou Iberville as he ascended the Mississippi (Alvord and Carter 1916: 127-8). This act did not placate the Houma who, soon after, moved to get away from the English influence. With the permission of Governor D'Abbadie, the Houma and a number of other tribes moved to the west side of th Mississippi River (O'Callaghan 145: 281).

This movement is substantiated by both English and Spanish records. In 1765, the English census data for the Southern Department of Indian Nations listed the Houma as present. A year later there is no record of them, but they do appear in the Spanish records. A census ordered by the Spanish governor Ulloa shows one village of Houma on the west bank of the Mississippi River and the other village


Tonnicas
Houmas
Lac Maurepas
Lac Pontchartrain
Colapissas
Bayagoulas
les Allemands
Ouachas
Nouvelle Orleans
Mississippy ou Fleuve St. Louis.
DU

# CARTE PARTICULIERE

## d'une partie de la Louisianne ou les Fleuve & Rivierres ont esté relevé a l'estime & les Routtes par terre relevé & mesurées aux pas, par les S.rs Broutin, de Vergés, jngnieurs & Saucier dessinateur.

### SCAVOIR.

Le fleuve S.t Louis ou mississipy par le S.r Broutin depuis la Balise jusq'aux Natchez, depuis ce Posste par le S.r de Vergés jusqu'au point marqué de la lettre A. & de ce point par le S.r Saucier jusqu'au point de la Rivierre a Margot ou tout les Postes etablis & principeaux points sont polés selon leurs latitude.

La Rivierre rouge & celle de la Mobille par le S.r Broutin.

La Rivierre des Pasagoulas & celle des Yazoux par le S.r Saucier.

### RENVOYE DES ROUTTES PAR TERRE.

du point A tirr le fleuve relevé par le S.r de Vergés jusqu'au point B

du point B par le S.r Saucier jusqu'a la rencontre de la Rivierre des Yazoux au point

du même point par idem jusqu'au bord du chenal du diable marqué C

du fort de l'Assomption par le S.r Broutin jusqu'au point E

de ce point par le S.r Saucier jusqu'au Ichikachas

de l'entrée de la rivierre a margot pour la visiter jusqu'au point F du point G aux points H & K pour rencontrer la ditte rivierre par le S.r Broutin.

du point N aux Ichikachas par idem.

des Ichikachas aux Ichactas, du point I sur la rivierre des Yazoux aux dits Ichactas & au Posste de Tombecbé, & de ce Posste aux Ichikachaés par le S.r Saucier.

Echelle de Vingt cinq lieues

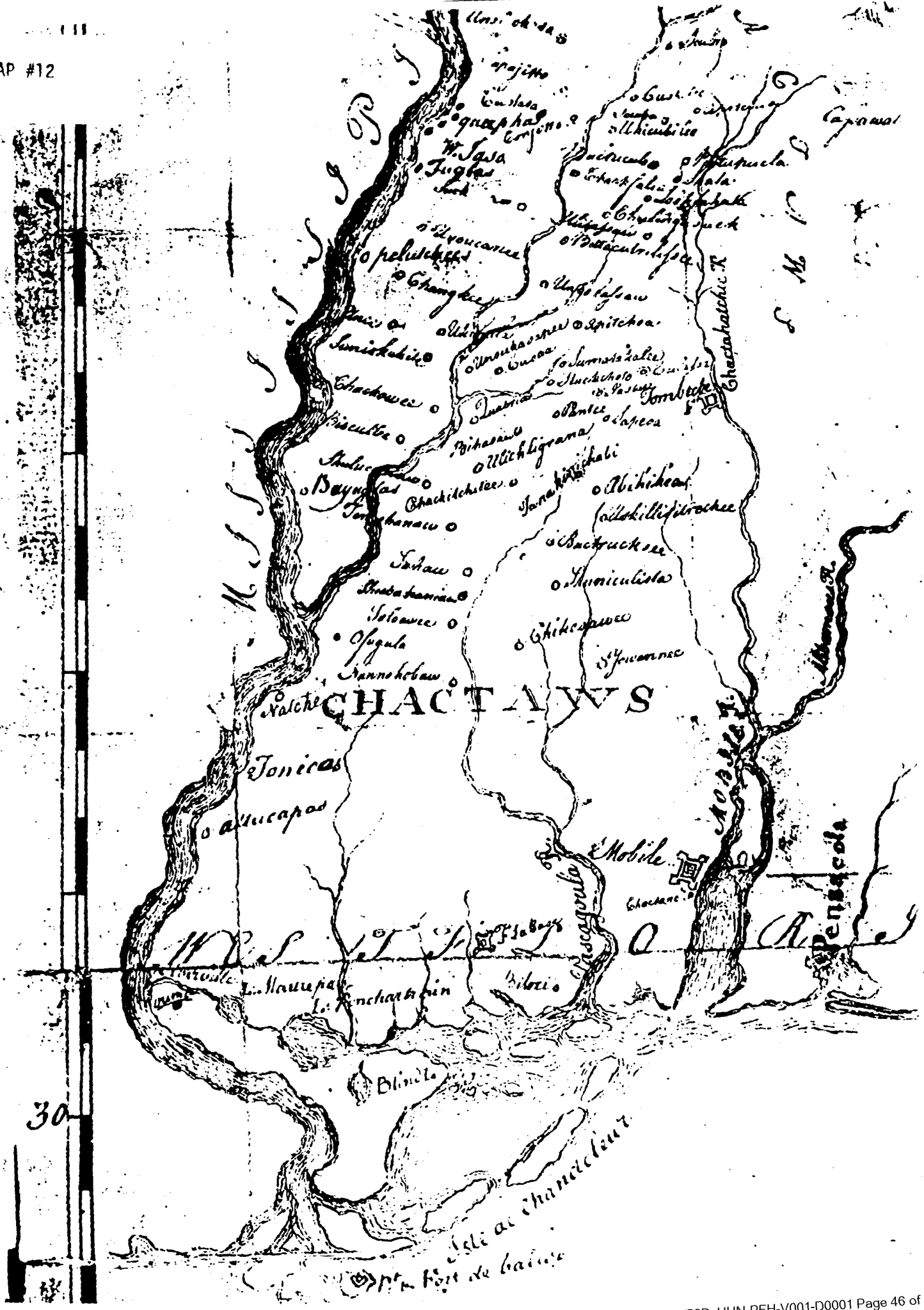


still on the east side of the river, but further south in an area under Spanish control (Voorhies 1973: 164).

Like the English, the Spanish moved to consolidate their position with the tribes within their domain. In 1769, the Spanish governor O'Reilly called together all of the tribes under his control within sixty miles of New Orleans. The meeting was attended by nine chiefs, including one from Houma. Each chief, in turn, shared with the governor his lighted calumet, holding it as the governor smoked. Following this, O'Reilly impressed upon the chiefs their great fortune in having Spain as their ruler and at being subjects of the greatest king in the world. He then presented a medal, hung on scarlet silk ribbons, to each chief, as tokens of allegiance to the sovereign (Kinnaird 1949, 2: 101-2, 154). These medals became a significant element in the oral traditions of the tribes (Hodge 1907: 879).

The English were displeased with these actions and appealed to Governor Unzaga in 1771 for permission to invite the tribes to return to English control (Bjork 1941: 401). In the same year, the British Indian Agent John Thomas reported having met with the "Spanish Indians Humas" who presented him with the Eagle's tail, a white fan signifying peace. The Houmas, whose numbers were put at 46 warriors, were received as "visiting friendly Indians" until the problems between the Spanish and English could be

MAP #12


CHACTAWS
Mobile
Pensacola
Mississippi R.
Chactahatchie R.
Tombecbe R.
Iberville
Biloxi
Blinelo
30

resolved (Thomas Letter 1773: 391).

These colonial rivalries had a profound impact on the tribes in the lower Mississippi valley, particularly the Houmas. The tribes were drawn into alliances with the various colonial powers which inevitably resulted in their waging war on each other. Matters came to a head in 1772 when the Houmas informed the Spanish governor of an impending attack by the Talapouche (Alabama). The Houmas were so concerned that they commenced building a fort which Commandant Judice derisively described as "a kind of small, square court, about sixty steps around, made of all kinds of wood, about as big as a leg and about eight feet high; they have left mentrieres of about 5X5 feet, and plan soon to reinforce the fort by doubling the posts and by use of bousillage, so that it will stop a ball, for presently a ball will pass through" (PPC September 1772, Microfilm 189-A: 433). In the same month the Houmas sent a delegation to the governor to request five guns, ammunition, and vermilion. Coincidently, the Tunica abandoned their village and moved to Pointe Coupee in anticipation of an attack by the Talapouches (Ibid: 441).

In March, 1773 the Houmas moved their village to Bayou Lafourche. Commandant Judice told the governor "I think they will settle about three-quarters of a league from the river, on the left bank of the bayou" (Ibid: 473). The site, he reported, had been previously occupied by the

Chitimachas. In September 1773, they renewed their request for arms and support pleading that they were in dire need (Ibid: 477).

Whether due to the continuing state of war, the pull and threat of conflicting rivalries, or factors related to internal community problems, the tribe developed a number of fissures. While professing loyalty to the Spanish some of the Houma were busy negotiating with the English. In 1772 they asked an English officer (probably Thomas) for medals, but he refused because the Houmas were not located in English territory (Ibid: 568). Two years later another delegation of Houmas visited the English at Bayou Manchac. While there is no mention of the object of the meeting, it is fair to assume that trade and alliance were among the subjects discussed (Ibid: 538).

By 1775 conditions along the lower Mississippi river approached the chaotic as illustrated by the following summaries taken from the Papeles Procendentes de Cuba, Commandant's correspondence, translated and summarized by Dr. Diane H. Corbin.

> 5 February 1775
> The Chitimachas, Atakapas and Opelousas are coming to town to ask the governor for help in avenging the death of their two chiefs that the Houmas killed. In a postscript, he adds that some Chitimachas this week robbed some Houmas who were out hunting. They took their boat, guns, everything; this seems to him to be a prelude to war (Roll 189B: 267).
>
> 18 May 1775
> Judice has learned from some Tensas that the

Chitimachas, Atakapas and Opelousas are going to ask the governor's permission to make war on the Houmas in revenge for the deaths of their two chiefs (Ibid: 270).

18 May 1775
Judice has learned more from the Tensas. A great council has been held in Pensacola to plan a war for the spring against the Spanish and French. The Arkansas are to begin the war. They are sending deputies with necklaces; two deputies from the Choctaws and Chickasaws went to the Talapouches ("a little beyond Manchac"), who accepted. They went then to the Chitimachas, and next to the Atakapas and Opelousas. Pajamingo, the Talapouche chief was killed by his own people, probably because he was pro-Spanish. There has been a little mix-up between some Pascagoulas and Homas. Calabee <a chief of the Houma> shot twice at them after they refused to stand and fight. Judice chewed them out, and recommended peace and tranquility (Ibid: 271).

3 June 1775
Judice has heard that six Choctaws have come to tell the Choctaws who have taken refuge with the Houmas to leave before fall. He is worried about the possibility of an attack: the Indians might kill an "inhabitant," or "cause them <the habitants> to give up the left bank of the river as being the most exposed (Ibid: 273).

20 June 1775
Judice has talked with Champagne, the chief of the Chitimacha; Champagne will investigate the visit of the Choctaws and Chickasaws. Calabee is sending ten men to investigate affairs among the Tunicas (Ibid: 274).

In 1774, Calabee, the chief of the Houma, sold the vacated land of the tribe on the English side of the Mississippi River to Maurice Conway and Alexander Latil (Houma Claim 1845: 32). This sale of land identified as the Houma Claim was confirmed by the United States Congress after much discussion of its legality and the possibility of fraud in the transaction (Pintado Papers 21: 94; 24:

185, 188, 201). Disregarding the legal questions, the sale establishes that in the last quarter of the century the Houma possessed land and a recognized leadership.

That leadership showed the strains of the multiple pressures imposed on the community. According to Judice, a young chief named Matiabee was accused of killing a member of the tribe and, according to tribal custom, was to be punished by death. In addition, the tribe wanted to kill Matiabee's wife and a close female relative (PPC Aug. 30, 1775, 189B: 277).

Judice, who agreed to protect Matiabee if he was innocent, but not interfere with tribal law if he was not, investigated the affair and reported to the governor that the individual had shot himself while drunk. He asked the governor to call together the enemies of Matiabee and persuade them to leave Matiabee alone in order to prevent a massacre. After communication with the governor, Calabee agreed to leave Matiabee in peace, even though he continued to believe him guilty (Ibid: 308).

The incident mentioned above would be of little import, except as an illustration that tribal law was still functioning in the latter part of the eighteenth century, were it not for a letter from Judice to Governor Unzaga, written on October 1, 1775.

> I have the honor of informing Your Excellency that the Huma chief and several of his tribesmen are descending <the Mississippi river> to the city in order to see you and to request the present which His Majesty has customarily

given them annually. Having heard that Your Excellency was indisposed, I did everything within my power to keep them from descending now, but it was impossible to stop them. Their reason <for going> was that Calabee had departed before them, and that, if he received the present, he would keep everything, and not give them anything. Just after I had begun this report, which I have the honor of directing to you, the chief asked me to ask you, Your Grace, if you would mind sending me their present. Once it arrives, I will convoke a <tribal> assembly, at which time I will divide them <the presents>, as was done formerly. By this means, each member of this tribe will receive his share of the present, and the exact opposite will occur when they receive it <the annual present> themselves. Only five or six <tribesmen> will receive anything. If Your Excellency approves the chief's request, please notify me of your decision, and, as soon as I am notified, I will send my son to the city with several men from this tribe to receive the said present. Since this tribe has sold its village site, it has divided to the point that it currently consists of three villages, Calabee, with about twenty men, remains on the village site that he sold to Mr. Conway; the chief, with about as many men, retired to a site two and one-half leagues above <that of Calabee's village>, and established a village twenty arpents distance from the river, upon the land of the district <white> settlers who are greatly disturbed by it; one Tiefayo, with eight families, has withdrawn to the <lower> Lafourche, where they have done quite well. I have done everything possible to reunite this tribe into only one village. They were on the verge of reuniting and of establishing themselves in the Lafourche <district>, when an Indian named Pailmastabee, a Choctaw, told them not to listen to me. That things were going well and that they should remain there. Meanwhile, Your Grace, this tribe being separated as it is, it has been impossible for me to maintain order among them and to prevent them from constantly creating disorders. When the residents of the chief's village commit a crime, they place the blame on the residents of Calabee's village; those of the latter village on those of Tiefayo's village. These accusations fly to the extent, Your Grace, that they cause me much grief. Having received complaints against this tribe on a daily basis, my wish would be, if Your Excellency approves,

> that these tribes retire to the Lafourche area, where they will do very well, out of harm's way, and too distant to cause numerous disorders. Your Excellency, if you decide that my intentions regarding this tribe are just, I ask you, when they will be in the city, to order them to retire to the Lafourche, be it one league and a half or one-half league as Your Excellency will deem proper. The lands there are immense, and it is one of the most beautiful regions of the colony (PPC 189B: 284-5).

It is certain that the colonial struggles between Spain and England, and soon the United States, were at the center of the divisions within the Houma. Calabee played the Spanish off against the English, visiting each and undoubtedly making promises in exchange for gifts. The Spanish commandant resented this and leaned toward a lesser chief, Matiabee. Judice expressed his feelings publicly during the annual distribution of presents to the Houma. He reported that all were satisfied with the distribution except Calabee who demanded a "couvert blanche" -- a white blanket -- but "since there were only two, I gave them to the two first chiefs (Tioutioubacbee, medal chief, and Matiabee, petty chief, but the only real chief of this nation)" (Ibid: 559).

According to the oral tradition of the Houmas, at least one of the Houma villages moved directly from the fork of the Chitimacha to the present site of the city that bears their name -- Houma, Louisiana. They no longer felt comfortable around the fork because of English influence in

the area and because the game and fish were no longer plentiful. The Houmas left to settle in a place where they could live as they wanted and not be entangled further in colonial affairs. This village, located on the land of the present day city of Houma, was originally called Chufuhoma. All the land between the Achafalaya River and Barataria was reputedly given to the tribe by the Spanish govenor until all the descendants of the tribe had died (Oral Histories Nos. 2, 3, 6, 13, 15, hereinafter OH; BIA, Letter from Charles Billiot to BIA No. 43529-27). According to Gregory, the name Chufuhoma may be the word Chukahoma which means Red House village -- red and white being traditional colors in the moiety division typical of southeastern tribes (Hiram Gregory to Janel M. Curry, personal communications 1977-8).

Although no written documents have been found to support the claim to the land described above, one must look at the whole Spanish Indian policy in order to understand the situation. In the testimony of Louis C. DeBlanc in 1777, concerning Indian rights, he stated, "that claims of Indians were always recognized by the Spanish government and no act thereof was ever considered necessary to their validity" (DeBlanc 1777 21: 285). This policy is confirmed by several statements by Spanish governors who instructed that the rights of Indians to the lands they occupied were to be upheld and protected (Ibid: 284). In

one instance, Governor Miro intervened on behalf of the Tunica tribe which was in danger of losing its land.

> Tell Mr. Bordelon and Vitrine to look out for some other part to place themselves, as the lands they demand belong to the Indians, and that they have known rights which ought to be respected everywhere (Cited in Downs 1976: 201).

Thus, it is quite possible that the Houma had a verbal agreement with the Spanish government concerning the land on which they later based a claim with the United States government, but because their right to the land was not challenged during Spanish times, it was not necessary to put their claims in writing.

Later, in the 1784 Thomas Hutchins, a British officer and geographer travelling in Louisiana, met with another Houma chief by the name of Natchiabe who, with 25 warriors, lived along "the banks of a creek known by the name of Chetimachas Fork" (Hutchins 1784: 39-40). If we accept the argument that one Houma community (Chufahouma) was located near the present city of Houma, this information places the second village on Bayou Lafourche, near the city of Donaldsonville. According to Bazet this village moved soon after to a site about three miles from Chufahouma (1934: 15). However, the argument is not convincing. It is more likely that when the community moved, it followed the course of Bayou Lafourche settling in the area of Golden Meadow.

Land records do show that three people to whom the

members of the Houma tribe trace their ancestry obtained warrants of survey or permission to settle from the Spanish government in 1787-88 on Bayou Terrebonne, south of the Chufahouma village. They were Louis le Sauvage, who later became tribal chief, and Jean Billiot and his wife Marie Nerisse (American State Papers 1832, 2: 432-3; Conveyance Records Book 1: 157-8). In addition to these names, early courthouse records refer to the Houma as the Courteaux Indians which was, most likely, a reference to an extended family.

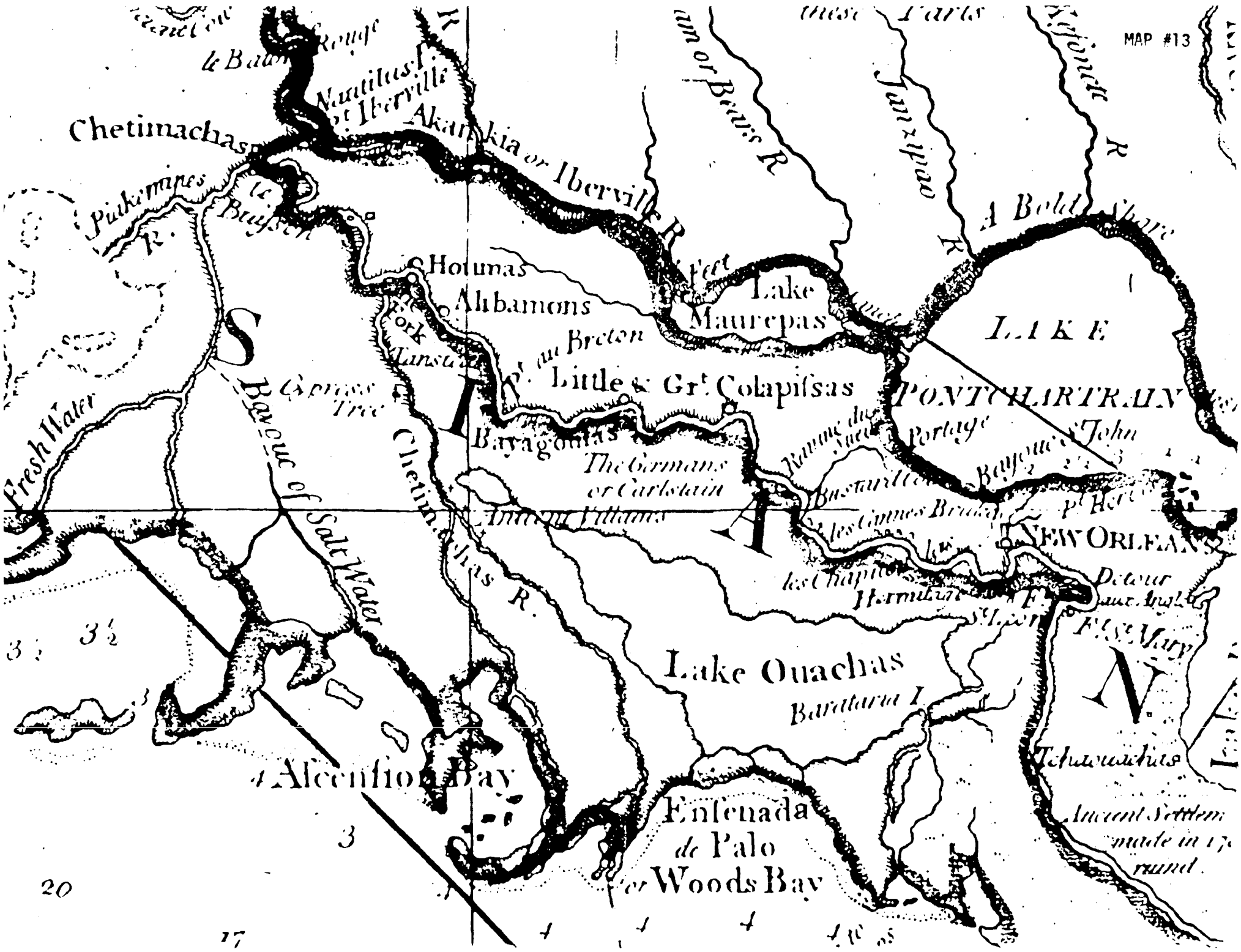
## The American Revolution

The advent of the American Revolution added to the confusion in the relations between the Houma, and the English and Spanish, who were vying for their support. This situation placed Spain in a particular dilemma. On the one hand any support Spain gave to the Americans would work against her colonial adversary England. Yet, such support would encourage the Americans who had ambitions in the area. European rivalries prevailed and in 1779 Spain went to war against England (DeConde 1976: 34). As part of its war efforts the Spanish government encouraged the tribes to attack the English.

The Houma continued their divided loyalties. In October, 1778, Judice received a report that twenty Houmas

led by Calabee had gone secretly to visit the English at Manchac. He summoned Calabee and the chief, Thioutioupacphee, to his office, but Calabee was not in the village. After several glasses of wine the chief expressed his shame at what Calabee's village had done, that they had accepted presents of vermilion, powder and shot, blankets, knives, flints, mirrors, and wine, and then had retired to the woods and spread the vermilion on the ground, after which they returned to the English and shook their hands (Ibid: 193A). Shortly thereafter, Matiabee came to report that the English expected their fort at Bayou Manchac to be attacked by the French within a few weeks. When Calabee returned he made an effort to avoid Judice and when confronted, acknowledged only that he had gone to the English because he was short of powder (Ibid).

By 1779 there were two opposing leaderships among the Houma, one led by Calabee and Thioutioupacphee, and the other by Matiabee and Tiompabee, whom Judice characterized as "the most meritorious and best man of the whole nation" (Ibid). It was apparently this latter group that the Spanish relied upon for assistance. In 1781 Judice requested that the Houma scout for him. They were prepared to go but were without ammunition and supplies. Pierre Joseph Favrot reported having given 18 pounds of powder and 36 pounds of bullets to ten Houmas and eight Arquensa (Arkansas) "who left to hit on Natches" (Favrot Family




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Papers 1769-1781, 2: 117). They returned from Natchez to report that they found 100 houses abandoned and they had killed and scalped six men, for which they were paid twelve bottles of liquor by the commandant "to encourage them to remain in readiness" (PPC 194: 410).

## Introduction of United States Policy and Control

With the approaching settlement of the American Revolution there was a concomitant increase in concern expressed by Spain over Louisiana and the effect an America take-over would have on the native population. DeConde provides an excellent summary of the controversy:

> To the Spaniards these territorial claims of Americans and their despoiling of Indians seemed proof enough of a ruthless land hunger. In August John Jay, one of the American peace commissioners, and Pedro Pablo Abraca y Bolea, conde de Aranda, Spain's ambassador to the court at Versailles, conferred over the western boundary of the United States. The American insisted upon drawing the line at the Mississippi River, thus including within the United States old eastern Louisiana, or land that had never been part of the thirteen English colonies. "That territory belongs to free and independent nations of Indians," Aranda said, "and you have no right to it."
>
> "These are points to be discussed and settled between the Indians and ourselves," Jay responded. "With respect to the Indians we claim the right of pre-emption; with respect to all nations, we claim the sovereignty over the territory." Spain consistently opposed such a frontier because she believed Americans would use it as "an avenue of penetration into Louisiana" (DeConde: 36-7).

Although Spain gained possession of the land, it was not long before Napoleon Bonaparte showed an interest which resulted, in 1800, in the transfer of Louisiana to France. French tenure was short-lived and in 1803 it sold its rights to the United States.

After the purchase of Louisiana the Houmas were faced with a new range of problems. Under the Spanish their rights had been respected and this was guaranteed to continue after the land cession. But the United States apparently had no intention of fulfilling its promise to France concerning the native population or its obligations to the Indian nations of the Louisiana Territory. Faced with the problem of land title confirmation in an already populated area, Indian land recognized by the Spanish, but disputed by whites, became, in many instances, public land (Purser 1964: 407). Such it seems was the case of the Houmas.

Within three years of the American take-over of Louisiana the Houma chiefs had established contact with the governor of the Louisiana Territory, W.W.C. Claiborne. He reported to Secretary of War Henry Dearborn, on April 4, 1806:

> I have this day drawn upon you in favor of Richard Claiborne an order for 48 dollars payable at five days' sight; this sum has been paid by me, for two uniform Coats which I presented to two Chief of a friendly tribe of Indians, called the Hamos; they reside in the County of Acadia within this territory, and have been in the habit of receiving small presents from Governors ... (Dunbar 1917 3: 347).

Five years later, a second delegation led by Chac-Chouma, visited Claiborne to renew the friendly relations between the tribe and the United States. According to Houma tradition the chief of the tribe met with Governor Claiborne in that year in New Orleans (OH Nos. 2, 9, 18). Their tradition is verified by two letters from Governor Claiborne, the first to a judge in St. James Parish and the second to the Secretary of State:

> To: Judge Cantrelle June 14, 1811
>
> Your letter of the 8th inst. was delivered to me by the Houmas chief Chac-Chouma. You did right in sending this good old man and his people to New Orleans. I have expressed my approbation of their conduct; made them presents to the amount of $100 and furnished them with provisions for their return home.
>
> W.C.C.
>
> Claiborne
> (Rowland 1917 5: 275).

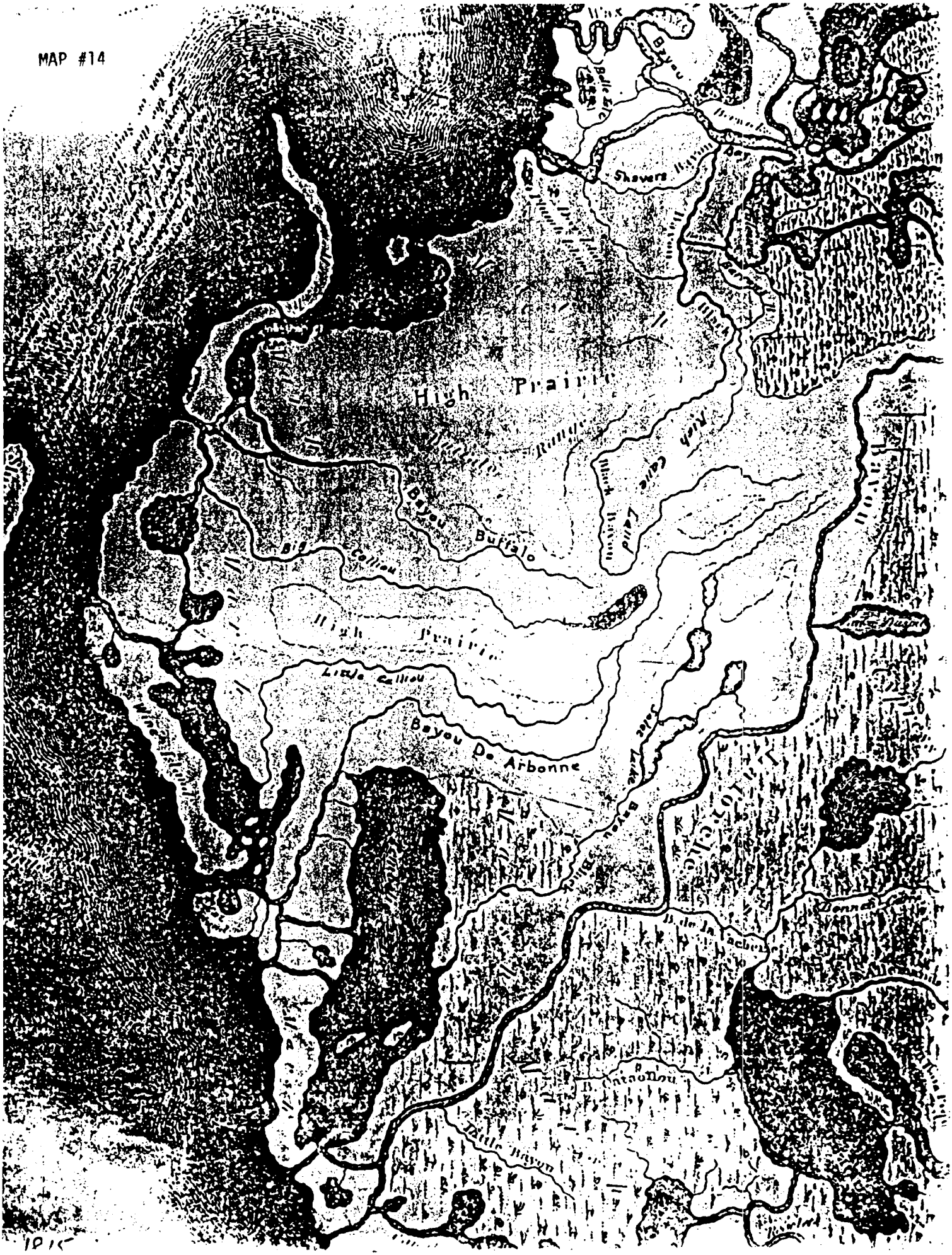
> To: William Eustis August 3, 1811
> Sir:
> I have this day drawn upon you for $100 Dollars payable at ten days sight to Smiths and Morrison on order, which sum I have expended in the purchase of certain articles of merchandise presented to the chief of the Houmas Indians and his attendants who lately visited this city. The Houmas were formerly part of lower Louisiana; their conduct was always most friendly towards the white settlers and from the different Governors of Louisiana, they were accustomed to receive marks of friendly attention. At the present day, the number of this tribe is greatly diminished; it does not exceed 80 souls, but their conduct is exemplary and the late visit of the Chief being the first he paid me, I thought it was a matter of policy to make him a small present (Ibid: 322-3).

Taken together, the 1806 and 1811 communications indicate that the Houma tribe had at least two chiefs at this time. This is suggested by the fact that Claiborne notes that his meeting with Chac-Chouma was the first visit paid by that chief to him. As to the other chief, the most likely candidate was Louis de la Houssaye Courteaux, alias le Sauvage. This chief is reputed to have been the leader who acquired land for the tribe from the Spanish government in 1787 (OH Nos. 2, 9, 15). This is supported by federal and parish documents (American State Papers 2: 432-433; Terrebonne Parish conveyance Records I: 157-158). It is quite possible that le Sauvage was in attendance at the 1811 meeting and the recipient of the second coat. While this meeting with Claiborne, who was an official representative of the United States government, reflects an acknowledgment that the Houma had maintained a separate and distinct tribal status, there was no follow up.

In 1814 the Houma tribe filed a claim with the United States government for "a tract of land lying on Bayou Boeuf and Bayou Black containing 12 sections" (American State Papers 3: 232; Pintado Papers 22: 40). This land, which lies between Houma and Morgan City, Louisiana, was said to have been given to them by the Spanish. The United States rejected the claim because "we know of no law of the United States by which a tribe of Indians have a right to claim land as a donation" (Ibid). This opinion was in violation

of the Louisiana Purchase Treaty which called for the honoring of all agreements made under the Spanish rule. Since no written evidence of a Spanish grant could be shown, the Houma land claim was rejected,and, as a result, the Houma tribe became landless.

This action was but the precursor of the neglect that the Houma and other tribes in Louisiana were to face over the next century. The process was accelerated by the development of a viewpoint in the national government that these tribes no longer existed. A case in point is the appointment of Dr. John Sibley, from Massachusetts and North Carolina, as Louisiana Indian agent. Among his many responsibility he was charged with compiling a list of all the tribes in Louisiana (Purser 1964: 20-2). Sibley arrived in 1803 to take up his duties, settling at Natchitoches. Apparently he disliked the idea of visiting the swamplands to conduct his census so he never bothered to make the necessary journey (Downs 1976: 204). Before hostility from his French neighbors forced his replacement, (Purser 1961: 85) he did submit a list of sorts which identified the location of the Houma on the east side of the Mississippi River below Bayou Manchac (American State Papers 1832 1: 725), a place that they had largely vacated some forty years before. He went on to say that they hardly existed as a tribe, a statement that has provided an official federal justification for their neglect.


MAP #14
Shavers
High Prairie
Bayou Buffalo
Big Cotton
Little Cotton
Bayou De Arbonne

Sibley incorrectly identified this settlement as the tribal center. His estimate received support from Daniel Clark who wrote President Madison identifying the group as having sixty members, but failing to mention that it was not the main body of the tribe. It would be too much to assume that Clark, who was a long time resident of the area and later its congressman, was unaware of the true location of the tribe. Clark's "mistake" is understandable in the light of his other interests; he coveted land that was part of the Houma claim. There is a strong possibility the Clark and Sibley perpetuated the idea that the Houma tribe "scarcely exists as a nation" in hopes of furthering their own interests. The effect of these two communications was to make the group appear as an insignificant remnant of the tribe (Curry 1979: 17).

## The Houma Tribe in the Nineteenth Century

By the 1820s a new leader arose among the Houmas, Rosalie Courteaux. She was married to a Frenchman named Jacque Billiot. Her mother was Ann Marie Pierre, alias Marianne Sauvage, the sister of Louis le Sauvage. Her father was Joseph Abbe, a Biloxi medal chief also known as Shulushumon, Tough-La-Bay, Courteau, and Houma (Swanton

1911: 292; Dormon Collection; Conveyance Records: Book A:92, Book I: 157-8, Book R:39-40). Rosalie Courteaux is something of a folk heroine to the tribe. Most present day Houma can trace their lineage back to her and they use the term Grandma Rosalie when referring to her. Many stories have been passed down about Rosalie Courteaux along with one which says she got her name Courteaux (short, in French) from her diminutive stature. Jacque Billiot's parents were Jean Billiot and Marie Enerise who were with the tribe in 1787. Records indicate that they, too, were of at least partial Indian parentage (Terrebonne Parish Conveyance Book 1: 485).

The Houma maintained close ties with the Biloxi and Tunica tribes throughout this period. In addition, they visited with some regularity their close neighbors the Chitimachas on Bayou Teche. Several Houmas owned land both in Terrebonne Parish, and near the Biloxi and Tunica in Pointe Coupee Parish. The family name Dion/Dean, common among the Houma, came from a Frenchman who initially married a Chitimacha woman and then settled in the Grand Caillou area. Their descendants married into the Houma tribe. Finally, Swanton, when he visited the tribe in 1907, noted that there were a number of individuals who claimed Chitimacha descent (Swanton fieldnotes).

In Rosalie Courteaux's generation and the next, from about 1800 to 1840, many of the Houma women married

Frenchmen, giving the tribe French family names which became essentially "Indian" names. These names include Billiot, Dardar, Dion (Dean), Dupre, Gallet, Naquin, Parfait, Verdin, Gregoire, and Verret. This switch to patrinomy helped to confuse the Indian ancestry of the group. To add to the tribe's problems, courthouse records listed the Houma not as Indians as they had been up to this point, but as "free people of color."

To understand the significance of this change in designation it is necessary to explore the implications of the term as well as changes in its meaning. Originally, the term "gens de couleur" referred to the free Negro population, the result almost exclusively of the unions between white men and black women (Berlin 1974: 109). The common phrases used in describing the children of American Indians and Euro-Americans were "mustee" and "half-breeds" (Forbes 1983: 60-73). These terms were not perjorative during the French and Spanish regimes in Louisiana. According to Berlin:

> Early French adventurers in this region, unlike English mainland colonists, did not settle with their families, and the predominantly male population quickly formed liaisons with black slave women. By the middle of the eighteenth century, such matches had become so commonplace that whites customarily recognized their mulatto children, and some provided for their upbringing and education. Few white men thought it necessary to hide what English mainland colonists called "shameful" and "unnatural" relations. Although the children of these mixed racial unions followed the status of their mother, a liberal manumission policy encouraged masters to free their black mistresses and light-skinned

children. By 1769, when Spain gained control of Louisiana, mulattoes composed better than half of the small free Negro population centered in New Orleans, and the remaining free blacks were mostly women 1974: 109).

The situation of tolerance changed quickly with the take-over by the United States. In part, this change was prompted by the racial attitudes of those settlers from elsewhere in the south who moved to Louisiana to establish plantations. Additionally, it was a function of the very size of the free black population, which had gained some degree of economic, political and military power under the Spanish. And finally, there was the fear engendered by rebellions, such as the one led by L'Overture against the French plantation owners in Santo Domingo. Fear of slave uprisings was so pervasive that by the 1820s efforts were made to curtail the freedom of the free blacks in the state. One aspect of this was the indiscriminate application of the term "gens de coleur," thus lumping all non-white people in one caste.

The will of Alexandre Verdun,dated April 29, 1829, illustrates this specialized meaning of "gens de coleur" as referring to the issue of white-Indian marriages. The will reads, in part:

> Firstly, I declare that my name and Christian name are Alexandre Verdun and that I am a Native of the parish now under the name of the Parish of Jefferson at a league and one-half from New Orleans. Also, I give and bequeath to Eulalie, free colored woman and the child of Marie Gregoire, savage woman, the seventh of my

property upon my death (Terrebonne Parish Conveyance Book E 829: 94-96).

The will goes on to name and identify as "gens de coleur" six additional children who are to share in the estate. Given the absence of a frre black population this far from New Orleans, it is safe to assume the use of the term refers to individuals of Indian and Cajun ancestry.

According to Janel Curry, the tribe was subjected to persecution by local whites soon after the War of 1812. She writes:

> Hostilities against the Houmas soon arose. Oral tradition holds that Rosalie Courteaux lived in a house on the same land now occupied by the Terrebonne Parish Courthouse in Houma, Louisiana. The French settlers burned her home and caused her to flee with the rest of the tribe. One group led by Rosalie settled at Pointe Barre on Lower Bayou Terrebonne while the other group, led by Julian Courteaux, moved to land along the Bayou Petit Caillou. Members of the tribe claim, along with other tactics, that disease infested blankets were given to the tribe to destroy it. Robert Ruffin Barrow, a major figure in early Terrebonne Parish history and a chief opponent of the Houmas, is said to have come to Pointe Barre and killed some of the tribe which had thought he had come to trade. Although it is not possible to substantiate this fact, it is evident that he had many dealings with the Indians concerning fraudulent claims for areas inhabited by the Houmas. However, these claims were rejected by the federal government. Houma tradition tells of a massacre of their people during the 19th century which took place below Grand Caillou (Curry 1979: 18).

While it is impossible to determine the validity of these assertions, it is certain that the Houma were subjected to prejudice and exploitation. Over the course of the half century the Houmas moved down the bayous,

changed their economy from one based on agriculture to hunting and gathering in the marshlands, and spread out over the lower portions of the parish. By 1850 Houma families lived in the area from Bayou DuLarge in the west to Bayou Lafourche in the east. The most concentrated population area remained at Pointe aux Chenes/Pointe Barre. Many families lived on houseboats or in small clusters along the shores of the many lakes which made up a part of the marshland complex. This adaptive strategy effectively put the Houma population out of reach of the white population while making available to them a ready food supply and furs for a cash crop. The disadvantage was that they were so remote that their existence was seldom noted. As late as the 1870's the area occupied by the Houma had not been explored or surveyed by the United States and the region had no effective system of governance. It is doubtful, for example, that any conscientious effort was made during this period to take a census of the population in the marshland area. This would account for the unusually low population figures for the Houma during the 19th century.

In 1859, at the suggestion of a Spaniard, Clement Carlos, who had been associated with the Houmas for a number of years, Rosalie Courteaux purchased a large tract of public land for her people (Ibid). Because the tribe was not formally recognized, the land could not be

purchased in the name of the group and thus receive protection under federal law.

While Rosalie Courteaux lived the tribe seemed secure in its title, but after her death in 1883, that security vanished as whites in the surrounding area used a number of devices to take away the property. A typical case involved a Houma man, Guillame Billiot, who faithfully paid land taxes to Terrebonne Parish on his property. Unknown to him, his land had been assessed in Lafourche Parish under someone elses name. In 1897, that person failed to pay their taxes, officials in Lafourche Parish put Billiot's land up for sale. A court case ensued at which Billiot testified:

> Petitioner further avers that Mrs. Mary Cambon connived at the said illegal assessment and sale of said lands in the parish of Lafourche and well knowing herself not to be the owner thereof, permitted said lands to be assessed to her and after notice, allowed them to be sold at tax-sale and then illegally and fraudulently appropriated to herself the residue left in the sheriff's hands after said sale (Adam Boquet v. Guillame Billiot et al).

Needless to say, the suit did not result in the recovery of the land.

Another means of dispossession was the use of a Louisiana law that did not allow illegitimate children to inherit land. All an individual had to do was to file papers indicating a break in the succession, and publish a public notice of the action. If the owner of the subject property did not respond within a specified length of time,

the title reverted to the individual who filed. Because the Houma and other tribes were not federally recognized, their marriage customs were not recognized. This legal concept was upheld in a case in 1917 involving the Tunica (Sesostrie Youchicant v. Texas Pacific Railway Case). There are a number of examples of such land sales for the Houmas ( see, for example, Terrebonne Parish Conveyance Record Book Y).

Despite the legal actions and physical abuse brought against the Houmas -- or, perhaps because of it -- the Houmas adapted well to life in the lower bayous and swamps. One contemporary account, in which they are mistaken for Cajuns, gives insights into their life style.

> One community of twelve hundred (Cajuns), in the region of LaFourche and Terrebonne, lacked an appointed priest, and not half a dozen could read or write any language; there were no books here, not even a Bible, nor newspapers or pamphlets. Yet these illiterate swamp Cajuns were strangely intelligent for all their apparent ignorance. They were independent and contented. Not a week end went by without simple balls or parties, and during the week there were poker games, target shooting, piroque races, and wrestling, upon which wagers were freely made. Cheap claret and whisky were served at every gathering, but seldom to excess. It was a curious peasant culture which preserved older ways of existence and made no effort to raise or change the material standards of life.
>
> They were atavistic pioneers who spent the winter months shooting ducks, snipe, deer, and rabbits; and paddled down the bayous and over the lakes in quest of game in a piroque, a frail wooden craft about ten feet long and two feet wide. When the hunting season was over in the spring they returned to their little farms, planted such vegetables as tomatoes, okra, and melons, and took them to New Orleans market.

> These hunter-farmers had a peculiar and well-diversified economy (Shugg 1939: 309-311).

This description of the Houmas suggests the high level of social integration that existed among the settlements that made up the Houma community.

Viewed from the perspective of a outsider, the bayous, lakes, and swamps of the area appear to be an isolating morass. However, from the Houma perspective, it was, and is, an easily navigated region, once one understood the pathways. Connecting the Houma settlements from east to west were a series of hand-dug canals called "trenasse." These were constructed by the members of the various extended families to facilitate access to the rich trapping grounds. Each set of trenasse connected with others allowing people to move easily among the settlements (Campisi 1983, fieldnotes).

The traveler referred to above gave the Houma population as 1200, a figure considerably higher than that in federal records. As pointed out earlier, it is doubtful that the census-takers ever penetrated the marshlands to make an accurate count. However, we have no way of knowing how the 1200 figure was determined, but it is, in all likelihood, closer to the actual number. The federal census data does show the stability of the Indian population and their continued occupancy along the lower bayous for the entire nineteenth century.

The movement of the Houma tribe to the marshlands did more than bring about a shift in the way tribal members made a living. It resulted in profound changes in the political organization. Without federal and state recognition and with the decentralized residency patterns, the isolation from the political structures of the two parishes, the tribe evolved a system of local leaders who were the heads of the extended households in the residential centers. While Rosalie Courteaux lived she was able to act in the capacity of tribal leader, although there were precious few opportunities to deal with outside authorities.

In 1907 the anthropologist John Swanton visited the Houma to conduct research. His principal informant was Bob Verret, whom he identified as a tribal leader, although this appelation is contested by some. Verret provided Swanton with the following population estimates:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Pointe Barre..... | 28 houses; | 165 people |
| Lower Pointe aux Chenes... | 36 houses; | 160 people |
| Champs Charles..... | 13 houses; | 117 people |
| Lower Bayou Lafourche..... | 25 houses; | 175 people |
| Bayou DuLarge..... | 12-14 houses; | 84-98 people |
| Bayou Sale..... | 25 houses; | 175 people |
| TOTALS | 139-141 houses | 876-890 people |

According to Swanton, the figures for Pointe aux Barre and

Pointe aux Chenes were based upon a house-to-house survey. He identified three families as the progenitors of the tribe -- Courteaux, Billiot, and Verdine. While arguing that the members represent a mixture of non-Indians, Houmas, and other tribes, he says of them "... they form a distinct class of the population, and prefer to be called "Indians" (Swanton 1911: 292).

In addition to the residency survey, Swanton collected both genealogical and linguistic data. He traced the ancestry of a woman whom he identifies as his oldest informant, Felicite Billiot, back to "Marion" (Marianne) and Joseph Abbe. Her mother she identifies as "an Atakapa from Texas." Further, she informed Swanton that her grandmother had moved from Mississippi, first to Bayou Lafourche, and then to lower Bayou Terrebonne in order to avoid English rule. However, in his fieldnotes he attributed this genealogy to Bartholemy Billiot who was the brother of Felicite (Swanton Notebook MS No. 4201: 1) and a son of Rosalie Courteaux. From her perspective the Houma accepted individuals from a number of other tribes, but in Swanton's view "... it is certain that most of these were Muskohogean, and that the Houma was always the dominating element" (Ibid).

Swanton's vocabulary is more informative in that he was able to accumulate a sizeable word list which he said was close to Choctaw. He provided the following analysis:

> Chakchiuma languages, moreover, we have a slight amount of additional information. In the first place Iberville records that the Bayogoula called his ships "pinais," evidently from the Choctaw word "peni," 'canoe,' 'boat,' while an animal represented in their temple and evidently the opossum is called "choucouacha," i.e., "cukuaca," the Choctaw diminutive of "cukata," 'opossum.' Gravier (1700) tells us that the Houma called their sacred fire "louak," or "loughe," which is, as we know, the word for 'fire' in Chocktaw, and finally the writer, as has been noted, was enabled to collect about 80 words from an old Houma woman which are little different from the equivalent Choctaw expressions. The correctness of most of these was confirmed by another woman, yet it is evident on comparing the list with their Chocktaw equivalents that some errors have crept in, owing to the defective memories of the informants. Other variations may be dialectic (Ibid.: 27-8).

Swanton went on to list approximately 90 verbs, nouns, etc. which include body parts, numbers, weather terms, animals and the like (for the complete list see appendix). Additionally, Swanton collected a number of place names which were not reproduced in the monograph, but which appear in his fieldnotes. These included: Chat ku dsha mnish - Bayou Sale; Chat ku mink, or Ku mink chat - Bayou Teche; Chati kuti ngi - eastern end of Bayou Teche; Chati kuti ngi na mu - A Chitimacha village built almost at the junction of Bayou Teche and Bayou Atchafalaya, about 30 miles from Clarenton; and Chit na tsebu - "Little Bayou," Bayou Lafourche. From this research Swanton argued that the Houma and Chakchiuma were originally one tribe, but this conclusion rests on very thin data.

One final aspect of Swanton's work deserves attention.

In the course of his visit he took approximately 50 photos, some of which were reproduced in the Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletins 43 and 137. They show that Swanton visited the principal settlement areas. Not only did he photograph many of the elderly members of the tribe, but his pictures show something of their way of life. For, example, many of the houses had thatched roofs made of palmetto leaves and siding made from rough-cut lumber. There is one photo of a sawmill owned by Louis Frederick who is identified as a Houma Indian (Swanton, fieldnotes, Neg. #152) and another showing the method of roof construction (Ibid: Neg.#155, Swanton 1946: Pl. 25).

Had Swanton been able to spend more time among the Houma he would certainly have become aware of the richness of their folklore. Some of these are direct borrowings from the French, like the stories about people who could turn themselves into animals (Parr 1940). Others, while they may include borrowed elements, are closer to native mythology. An example of this is the "feu-follet" -- false fires. In general, they appear as balls of fire in the night and when followed, cause an individual to become lost. Examples of these stories include:

> Those feu-follets, they lost people. You see them in lakes. You see them like lights. And you head towards that light. And you ride and ride. The light always stays in front of you, and you find that you have not been moving at all. They'll come on board with you. What causes them is beyond me. But to get rid of them, you take a needle. You make it pass through the eye of the needle. It's like a ball

of fire.

> There were a lot of people who saw things. They saw lights in the sky. Those they called "feu-follets." When we first started going to sea, they said you should never go at night - you should never go on a light i.e., you should never, if you saw one, follow the "light." There were some who called them bad spirits, others called them "feu-follets." Sometimes you would leave to go to sea, and you had to follow by light. Well, you would never be able to reach the light, if it was a "feu-follet." It would lead you through the bayous and lakes and get you lost. We were lost, we stayed there all night; we stopped navigating for the reason that we didn't know where we were. It was that light that had lost us (Duthu, Houma Collection).

Although the feu-follets are common to French folklore, the Houma variant is very similar to the Choctaw "Hashok-Okwa hui'ga." Swanton describes this "grass water drop" in connection with the will-o'-the-wisp. He states, "Its heart only is visible and that only at night, and if one looks at it he is led astray" (Swanton 1931: 198). Also common to the Houma and Choctaw is the belief that the way to make the false fire powerless is to force it to pass through the eye of a needle (Gregory to Curry, personal communication 1978).

Ghost stories combining elements of Catholicism with native beliefs are also common.

> They didn't have no religion those people there. They used to live, hear the devil holler at them, laugh in trees, all kinds of things like that. That was on Point Jean Charles. Someone would come and steal a woman's baby. Go up in the tree - way up in the tree and then make the baby cry and the woman would come out and "bring my baby down. I don't know who you are. You can't be God. You got to be the devil!" And he'd laugh - "Ho! Ho! Ho! Ho! Ho!" She'd say,

"bring my baby down" and she was crying and crying, and called the neighbors who got a ladder to get that child down. So they reported that to the priest. And the priest said "That's the demon." He says, "Are you married Catholic, received communion - you baptized?" No, they didn't know that. "Well," he says, "I'll see about that" (OH No. 15).

Other stories involve headless men and skinless bulls, with many of the sights reported on religious holidays, particularly All Saints Day.

Two creatures dominate the Houma folklore -- Lutins and l'homme de bois. The first is a French loan word for what the Choctaws called "Bohpoli," or "Kowi anukasha." A similar creature is found in the belief system of the Creek and Chickasaw. Like the Choctaw's "Bohpoli," "Lutins" are relatively harmless creatures, two or three feet high. They are known as tricksters. Unlike the French variant, which were believed to tie up the tails of mares, the Houma Lutins lived in trees and played pranks on the unwary.

One time there was this man, who lived all by himself. Every night this little Lutin would bother him by making noise in the kitchen, and keeping him awake. Finally the man said, "Oh, I'm gonna move from here. I'm going to leave this Lutin here." And when the man started putting all his things in the wagon the Lutin was putting stuff in there too. It would put things in the wagon, too. And when the old man got ready to leave the Lutin got on the wagon, too. He said, "You're leaving, then I'm leaving, too." The man said, "Then, what's the use of moving!" So he didn't move.

No one could live there, at the tin house. There was something there. Old man Bergeron had that house built. Near the old house, there was a huge oak tree. One day, a man named Solet came near the place; and way up in the last and highest branches was a boy about this tall (about

three feet). And the little boy signaled the man for him to come nearer. The boy continued waving but the man was afraid. He said he knew better than that (Duthu, Houma Collection).

My son was once coming into the house; it was getting dark. He thought suddenly that the chickens were all out of the pen, so he went out back to get them all in. When he reached the pen, he saw behind the fence, this little tiny person, who was just sort of stooping there. As soon as he saw my son, he took off for the woods. Before my husband could get there to see what was the matter, the little person was gone (OH No. 6).

According to Houma beliefs there are several ways to keep Lutins out of the house. One could sprinkle flour on the floor to detect the footprints or place mustard seeds around to keep the creature away (Ibid).

The other, "l'homme de bois," comes in two varieties. The first represents people who live wild in the woods, while the second are capable of changing into mythical creatures.

My aunt told me. They were all young. My father and some other had gone alligator hunting. And in those days, there were a lot of trees there. Suddenly, there came this strange smell in the air. There were only women and children at home. Their grandmother lived with them then, and she said, "Do you smell that odor? That's 'un homme de bois' who is coming here." One woman asked, "What do you think we ought to do?" She said "Light some tobacco. An 'homme de bois' does not like the smell of tobacco." Now they didn't have floors of wood; it was a floor of dirt. And they took a bale of tobacco and lit it. The smoke carried far and the strange odor began going away. The men went to look for him the next day but could not find him. The tobacco smoke had killed him they said. "Des hommes de bois!" There were some of those around. They were men with only four fingers. They had no thumbs. And if they saw someone who had a thumb, they pulled it out. There were a lot of them.

And they lived and ate in the trees (Duthu, Houma Collection).

This story contains three elements of native belief; the use of tobacco to ward off evil, the presence of tree dwellers, and the power of the number four. One person said that there were now fewer "l'homme de bois" because of the disappearance of the forests.

A final type of story relates to Rosalie Courteaux. These stories recount events in her life and present them as key aspects of Houme tribal history. The stories tell of the tribe's movements, its travails, lost wealth, and the like.

Along with this folk lore went a complex set of beliefs and herbal practices. On the matter of birth, an expectant mother must satisfy any cravings or else her child will have a birthmark. She must not laugh at another child's mark for that too will cause her child to have one.

In the area of marriage some French and Catholic customs were merged with Indian practice. Houmas tended to marry in their teens. After the tribe became more decentralized they took on the custom of "sauter l'balai," or "jumping the broom." Among the Houmas, before one got married, the older people were consulted as to whether it was right or not. If they approved, the ceremony was planned. Several men held the broom and acted as judges as the couple "jumped the broom." While the French usually got married later on, the Houmas tended to take the

ceremony more seriously and treat it as the marriage rite. Due to the lack of priests and the prejudice against the Houma, as well as the delays and bureaucratic difficulties presented by the church, many Houma did not go through the formality of a second wedding. As one Houma man stated:

> That's why we lost that land at Terrebonne. The people themselves look at that (jumping the broom) as a wedding -- they were married. But it wasn't recorded. It was the judge who pronounced the couple man and wife. You jumped the broom and you were married (Duthu, Houma Collection).

Until the late 1800s, taso-making time was courting time. The tribe would meet together at the Gulf in the Spring to catch and dry fish. The finished product was called tasso. Marriages were arranged and conducted at these meetings. In most cases a second ceremony was conducted in church, although this was not considered obligatory.

There is a comparable set of beliefs surrounding death. One states that dust must never be swept out after the man of the house leaves, but only after someone dies. It is believed that the dust will go with the diseased. Another belief is that there will be a death in the family if a door is closed to make a window. Some of these are shared by other groups, but that makes them no less important to the integration of the Houma community.

Some premonitions do reflect their Indian heritage. Death is to be expected when an owl is heard during the day or when a voice speaks to one from the woods. Other signs

include a dog howling at the same time every day, a chicken cackling between 8 a.m. and noon, and the persistent pecking of a woodpecker. There is also the belief that the number of fingers one sees in a hand in the clouds signifies the number of deaths that will occur in the near future. According to Gregory, woodpeckers are commonly found in Southeastern mythology, and the open hand is a traditional Indian sign of death (Gregory to Curry, 1978).

Tradition holds that a year of mourning is to be observed following a death, a belief consistent with other Indian groups. After the body is prepared, there is a wake in a home where friends come day and night to visit until the funeral. In the past the deceased was buried near the home. Many items were put with the dead in their burial place. These are usually favorite objects or pieces of clothing. In the case of a child, this might include a favorite toy.

Folk stories related to death include tales of the dead who come back to life to converse with the living. The following is an example of this story:

> And we pass there and my cousin said "You see that?" I said, "Yah, I seen her before." She had died before and was a good friend of my mother said "Why are you crying?" I says "I didn't turn back when I seen her and I was scared." She said, "What's she look?" I said she had a handkerchief on her head and she was sitting by the door and she looked at us. I seen her before. She said, "yes, that's Aunt Margaret. She come back." You know people come back from the grave. My mother says to me. "I've got to go see her. I wish she would be there yet. I would talk to her. Maybe she needs something."

> So we went back and she wasn't there. Her chair was there. (OH No. 15).

Others say that they are occasionally visited by their dead relatives and some hold conversations with the deceased for a time after their death.

Probably the most impressive aspect of Houma cultural retention relates to curing and herbal practices. The practitioners are called traiteurs. Speck, during his visits in 1938-1938 and in 1941 found medicinal knowledge and practice widespread among the Houmas. He noted that "... knowledge of remedies is general property to the group. Interest was easy to arouse in the camps and shacks of the Houma trappers because the interest was already strongly present. It was the men who gave information from a general store of experience and hearsay" (1941: 51-2).

Speck found that the medicinal practices were a blending of Indian and non-Indian practices. There were no special ceremonies attendant to the gathering of the plants, but care was taken to collect them under the optimum conditions. Some ceremony accompanied their use.

> The individual who administers herb cures to the ailing is known as a "traiteur". Medicinal knowledge was handed down through the family from a grandparent, parent, aunt or uncle to a family member who showed interest. In some instances, a particularly well-versed trateur would choose an apprentice to train. Part of his art is to have learned by memory prayers and "chants" to be mumbled while treating a sufferer, with certain accompanying motions. This is an important ritualistic branch of the treatment of the disease involving the religious tradition of the Houma (Ibid: 52).

Probably, the most important aspect concerning the traiteurs was their role as leaders in the community. With their knowledge of medicine and their reliance on power they were able to exert influence on others.

Speck's medicinal catalogue includes seventy-three plants used for a 105 different applications. While a few reflect European borrowings, the majority were native in origin. This struck Speck as strange in light of other cultural aspects accepted by the Houmas. Curry and Bowman were able to verify the continuance and vitality of curing practices while conducting research in the 1970s.

Soon after Swanton visited southern Louisiana, the Houmas began moving up the bayous to higher ground because of the loss of land due to the effects of hurricanes. Thus, by 1910 there were eight separate but related settlements, all located on the lower ends of the bayous. Starting with the most westerly they were Bayou DuLarge, Dulac on Bayou Grand Caillou, Montegut on Bayou Terrebonne, Pointe Barre, Point aux Chenes, Isle Jean Charles, Grand Bois, and Golden Meadow on Bayou Lafourche.

## The Houma Tribe In The Twentieth Century

By the 1890s the Houmas faced a new set of problems related to education. While the state required all

children to go to school, the parishes would not allow the Houmas to attend the schools for whites and the Houmas refused to attend those established for blacks. As a result, the children received no education. Some members of the tribe challenged the system. In 1917 Henry Billiot attempted to enroll his children in an all white school. When he was prevented by school authorities. He sued the parish school district. After a lengthy court case which centered on the racial attributes of the plaintiff, the court ruled in favor of the defendents, blocking the admittance of Billiot's children (H.L. Billiot v. Terrebonne Board of Education, cv no. 7876).

While the racial issue continued to stymie the Houmas, another issue arose after World War I which had a direct impact upon the tribe. Until 1924 the Houmas got the bulk of their income trapping muskrat and mink in the swamplands that flank the bayous. In 1895, this land was purchased by individuals from the Atchafalaya Levee District. However, it was not until the post-war period that the price of fur rose sufficiently to arouse the interest of the owners. With the increase in profits the owners of the swamplands introduced a leasing system, generally selling the leases to middlemen who either required the Houmas to work for a daily wage of $2.00 or to share a percentage of their catch (Underwood 1938: 14-5). The Houmas fought for their trap lines, but the owners won out (Campisi 1983 fieldnotes).

The Houmas continued to be treated as pariahs by the national government without any attempt to determine the true conditions. For example, in 1921 Congressman Carl Hayden (D. Arizona) received a letter from a man in New Orleans inquiring about the Houmas. Hayden sent the letter to BIA Commissioner Charles H. Burke requesting information and asking if they were " real Indians or are they intermarried with negroes?" Burke replied to Hayden that as far as the federal government was concerned:

> The records of the Office show that no treaty was ever entered into by the said tribe and the Government; nor are there any lands or funds held in trust for their descendants by the United States.
>
> These Indians appear to have been under the jurisdiction of the local or State authorities, and the Office has no knowledge of any claims that they may have against the State of Louisiana, or the United States (NA RG No. 75, 97649-1921-266 Gen. Ser.)

The issues of land and education merged during the 1920s and Houma leaders pressed their claims at the local, state and the national level. They appealed to the school board for help but no action was taken. In 1924 the tribal members from Bayou DuLarge petitioned the Terrebonne Parish school board for a school. Board minutes state, "The Board considered a petition from Indian (sic) on Bayou DuLarge on a school for their children. Action was postponed on the same" (Terrebonne Board of Education August 12, 1924, Book

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demonstrate, there were repeated attempts by the Houmas to secure education for their children.

From the point of view of the Houmas, the reason behind this denial went beyond racial prejudice. It was motivated by fear that an educated people might be able to press their claims for land.

> They didn't want the Indians to have a school. They would come around every four years to see how many children come to school. There was school a long time ago but they stopped that. Survey results never went further than Houma, maybe to the courthouse but not to Baton Rouge. There was a man named Henry Adam who came from the north and he asked this judge "Why don't you want the Indians in the school? You don't want to give them school." And the judge answered "You see, the Indians see too clearly. If they're sent to the schools, they would see better, they would see what all was taken from them. So we have to keep them in the dark. Because those Indians, they're smart (OH 2: 2).

Another person put it this way:

> That's why they didn't want us to go to school, because they know the land belongs to us. They don't want us to find out about it. They knew the land belonged to us... I heard that many times, from whites, who said that they keep the Indians out of schools because some day they said they're going to fight for their land. That's why they keep Indians from the school (OH 18: 5).

Agitation from Houmas as well as concern expressed from outsiders finally forced the Bureau of Indian Affairs to investigate the status of the tribe. Between the 12th and 16th of June, 1932, Special Commissioner Roy Nash visited the Houma settlements. His report, which is entitled "Louisiana's Three thousand Indian Outcasts,"

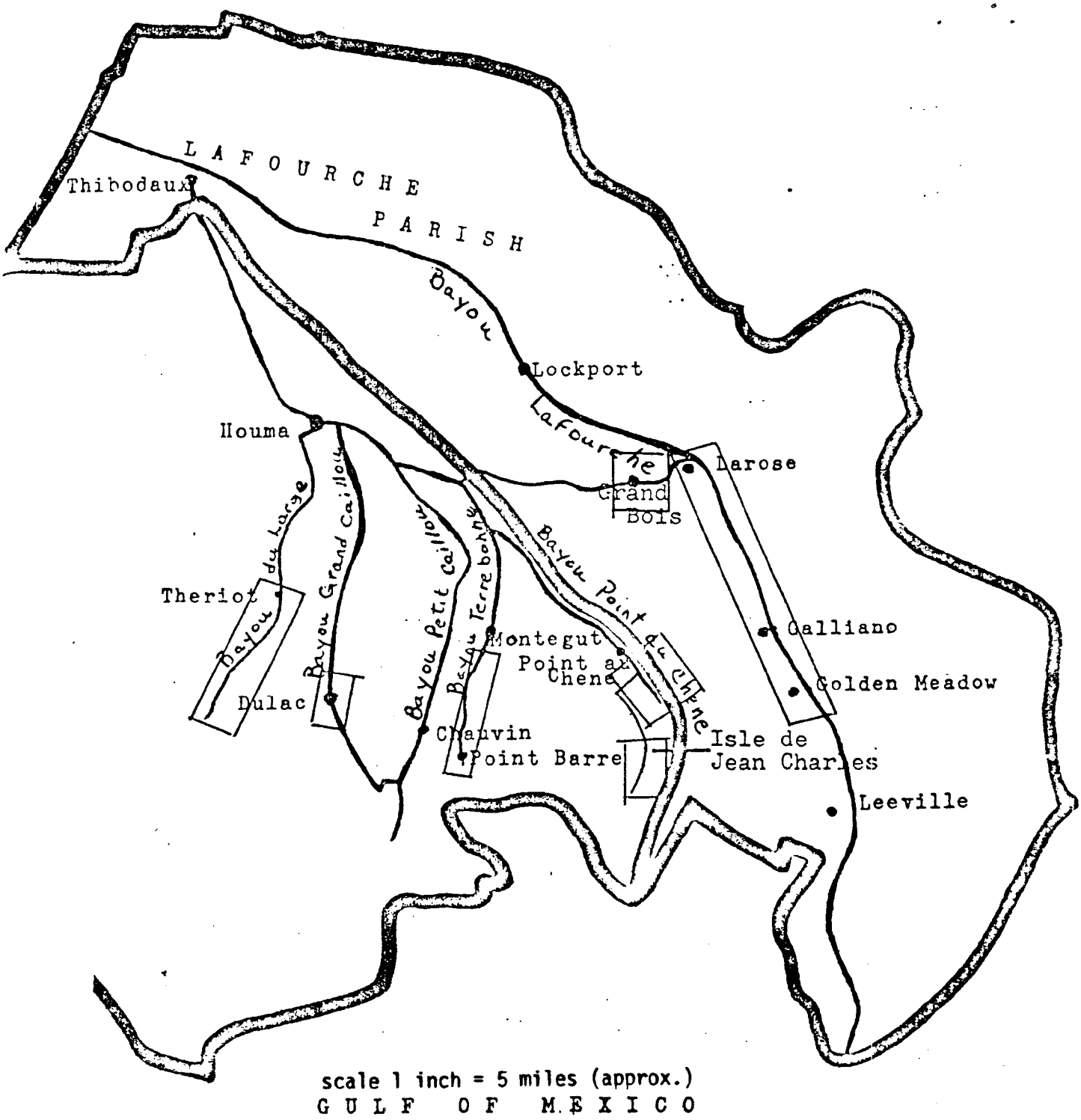
acknowledges that the Houma are Indians, a mixture of French and Indian. He goes on to say that, in addition:

> But there is a five per cent which shows unmistakable Negro blood, and that is where all the trouble lies. The whites will not admit any of the Indian mixed breeds to their schools because of the possibility of admitting someone with a few drops of colored blood; the "Indians" will not attend the colored schools. The result is that none of those with Indian blood attend any school whatever (NA RG75; Central Files, 1907-1939, BIA).

The federal government's attitude toward the Houma was reinforced by Nash Report and it became the principal source for a federal justification for no action. For example, when Congressman Montet of Louisiana wrote to Commissioner Rhoads concerning the deplorable conditions of the "900 Indians in Terrebonne Parish," NA RG75 Central Files, 1907-1939: 68776-1931-800), the commissioner replied that the Indians of Terrebonne Parish were not a federal responsibility and to extend them aid would be unfair to the other poor of the area. In a remarkable display of circular logic he argued that "Without Federal aid the Indians of Louisiana exist, free of the handicaps of wardship; to impose wardship upon them would be to turn the clock backward" (NA RG75 Central Files, 1907-1939 BIA: 68776-1931-800). He finished his reply by quoting the Nash report.

The following year the Louisiana State Superintendent of Education appealed to the Bureau of Indian Affairs for assistance for the Indian children of Terrebonne Parish.

MAP #15 - LOCATION OF HOUMA SETTLEMENTS _- 1985



The Bureau called a meeting to discuss the problem and then informed the state that it was their responsibility and not the federal government's (Ibid: 25436-1931-150). Among the Houma, David, Charles, and Maurice Billiot were the most vocal. Beginning around 1933 they fired off a steady stream of letters to every person in state and federal government who might be able to assist them in gaining education for the Houmas. Others, like Victor Naquin, added their complaints, and eventually the Bureau conducted another survey, this time by an anthropologist, Dr. Ruth Underhill.

Underhill spent ten days in the fall of 1938 visiting the groups including the Houma. Her report was not limited to a brief and subjective generalization concerning the Houma, but rather included a detailed history as well as an analysis of the underlying racial problem which prevented the Houma from going to white schools. She identified the following settlements with their approximate population:

Mauvais Bois - a "ridge" of land in surrounding swamp. 20 people Occupation, fishing and trapping

Bayou Dularge - Both sides of a bayou, on one side of which there is a good road part way down. 75 Shrimping, oystering, trapping; parish school started.

Bayou Grand Caillou - 100 Both sides of a bayou. many shanty boats. Since the starting of a Methodist mission and day school, many boats have moved to be near it. Good road, negroes and Cajuns in proximity.

Bayou Terrebonne - 30 Below the town of Montegut where some people work in oil well jobs, etc. Others oyster and shrimp. One-room parish school.

L'isle Jean Charles - 132 An island or ridge in the swamp occupied only by Indian families, accessible only by boat. Occupation, trapping, oystering and shrimping. One man makes furniture by hand. No school.

Bayou Point aux Chenes (or Chien) - 25 along bayou. Occupation, trapping, oystering, shrimping. Baptist church and day school. Minister visits above L'isle Jean Charles and contemplates a school there.

Bayou Lafourche - string of Indian houses outside town Golden Meadow. People fish for shrimp and work in shrimp canneries and day labor, no school. 100 people. (1938: 12-3).

According to Underhill the members of the tribe made their living trapping, shrimping and oystering, with yearly incomes ranging from $200 to $500, most of which goes for clothing and groceries (Ibid: 16). Most lived in shacks of one or two rooms. Houses contained little furniture beyond several four poster beds, while cooking was done in an adjacent lean-to.

As to the status of education, the purpose of the survey, Underhill reported a Methodist mission school at Bayou Grand Caillou with a registration of 50, three parish schools at Bayou Terrebonne with 19 students, a second at Bayou Dularge and the third in Lafourche Parish. In addition, there was a Baptist school at Point au Chenes which was closed for lack of students and another planned for L'isle Jean Charles. She interviewed the superintendent of schools for Terrebonne Parish, H.L. Bourgeois, "who emphasized the impossibility of the

'Indians' attending White schools and said that the reason he had not established Indian schools was that the Indians could not agree among themselves as to which were Indians and which negroes. Indians of whom the writer asked the question denied this difficulty" (Ibid: 18). Underhill concluded that the Houmas were the poorest of all the groups in the area and that their lack of education was a principal cause. She recommended that the Indian Office establish an office in the area to serve the one thousand to two thousand Indians.

While these efforts to improve Houma conditions were under discussion, another researcher became interested in the tribe. Frank Speck began his research efforts in the early part of 1938 and struck up a close friendship with the Billiots. Thereafter, he was both scholar and advocate for the tribe. He was instrumental in getting the BIA to send Underhill to the community.

Speck estimated the population at 2000, considerably more than the number given to Underhill by Bazet. He attributed the difference to the parish's determination to prevent the recognition of the tribe (1940: 1). This population was spread over an area 80 miles east to west and 30 to 40 miles from the coast. However, the core of the population covered a much smaller area and included Bayou DuLarge, Bayou Dulac, Pointe Barre on Bayou Terrebonne, Bayou Point aux Chenes, Bayou Blue, and Bayou

Lafourche.

Within these settlements Speck found a rich and vibrant culture and a cohesive social and political organization. Many lived as their forbearers, in wattle and daub structures with palmetto roofs. They practiced traditional ways of subsistence, and curing, augmenting their income with day labor and the sale of shrimp, oysters, and furs. Of their political system, he wrote:

> The present non-integration of the Houma as a tribe, without headmen and council, would seem to make the question of approach to the affairs of the group a most perplexing one in any attempt to deal with it as such. A means, however, is open by which to recognize and to deal with the people as an unit. This lies in the bond of kinship. It is relatively strong. The family patronyms indicate that the collective Houma band stems from a limited group of progenitors, the names Billiot (approximately comprising 13 family subdivisions), Verdin (approximately 11 families), constituting almost the entire population of Bayou La Fourche, the eastern sector inhabited. In the Terre Bonne and adjacent sections the family names from others are Diane (or Dean) (10 subdivisions alone at Du Lac), Parfait (10 subdivisions alone at Du Lac), and Gregoire (5 subdivisions at Du Lac) with others not recorded by the people of old Houma stock and residence. Ties of kinship are conscientiously maintained, and marriages are contracted within them. The families manifest pride in their names, their history and hold prestige among themselves as Houma Indians. It may be found, broadly applied, that the entire Houma group is now a distended consanguineous family (1941: 10-11).

Speck was accurate in his analysis of the importance of kinship as a political system, but he overstated the case for isolation. He claims that leaders from Golden Meadow did not know their counterparts at Dulac. If true, it was

the exception rather than the rule since there was a high level of inter-residential marriage and frequent social gatherings between members of the various settlements (Campisi 1983, fieldnotes).

Speck's findings are summarized below:

| Location | families/leaders | number | comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Bayou Boeuf - | Elfage Billiot | a few | no schools |
| 2. Bayou DuLarge | Billiot | 8 | a number |
| | Verret | 5 | of schools |
| | Gregoire | 2 | including |
| | Coteau | 1 | Baptist |
| | Forest | 4 | mission. |
| | Diane (Dean) | 1 | |
| 3. Grand Caillou | Diane, Parfait, Billiot, Verdin Solay, Verret, Gregoire, Dufilius Carbon, Lodrigue, Fitch, Duthu, Francis, Forest | 65 family divisions with a population of 700 within walking distance of Dulac. | |
| 4. Bayou Blue | Verdin | 8 | no school |
| 5. Bayou Lafourche | Billiot | 11 | Golden Meadow |
| | Verdin | 5 | center for |
| | Dardard | 1 | population. |
| 6. Cut Off | Verdin, Naquin | 7/8 families north of Golden Meadow (Speck 1941: 14-16) | |

Although Speck took careful note of the extent and composition of the settlements his survey did not cover a number of key locations, particularly Pointe aux Chenes and Isle Jean Charles. Nonetheless, it does provide an indication of the extent of the interrelationships among the settlements as well as their homogeneity.

Along with the lack of educational opportunities the Houmas were plagued by land problems. As has been noted, the tribe had been deprived of its land by government fiat

and individuals had been swindled out of theirs by unscrupulous whites. The members of the tribe had taken up residence on land which was part of the public domain or which, though privately held, had no economic value for its owners. However, as soon as the land showed exploitable resources, the tribal members were pushed aside. Initially, this occurred with the rise in the price of furs after World War I; later, in the 1920s, as a result of the discovery of oil and natural gas. The Houmas had settled on land that turned out to be one of the richest areas of gas and oil in the nation. The result was a series of manipulations by non-Indians that left the tribe landless. This affected all areas of Houma life. A plea on their behalf was made to the Bureau of Indian Affairs in January 1933, by a New Orleans attorney, Frederic Querens.

> During December some of these Indians were served with further injunction proceedings, and two of the Indians were held by the Court as having violated an injunction rendered against them last year and were sentenced to serve a few days in the Federal jail. I mention the fact merely to show that by these proceedings and others these people are being confined gradually to their own small allotments of lands, which are insufficient for them to maintain an existence upon. I am reliably informed that the Indians endeavor to make some arrangements with these adjoining owners prior to the trapping season, but were held off with promises until the last minute and then finally fooled. Their operations have ceased, and they are now without any means to purchase clothes, medicine, etc., and even seed for some small spring planting. I believe some of them will be confronted with starvation before the winter is over. I have been assured again today of this fact without the slightest exaggeration being involved.

> They are unable to come out and obtain employment anywhere of any kind, for there is no employment to be obtained. They neither read, speak nor write the English language, having had no education whatsoever, nor read nor write French.
>
> Can you, and will you please do something through your department for these unfortunate people before it is too late (NA RG75 Central Files 1907-1939: 43488-1932-150).

The basic problem that Querens alluded to was that the land the Houmas had considered Indian land, and from which they had made a living for over a century, was now being taken away from them. Speck told of a routine eviction of an Indian family from their land. In 1909, an Indian family found a freshwater lake in the marshes, where they established a homestead. After twenty years, they were approached by a stranger from one of the oil companies who ordered them to move. When they did not, their house, gardens, and animal pens were destroyed. They still refused to leave so the oil company blocked the path to their home, destroyed the lake by digging a channel, and ruined the marshes by drilling a well which caused oil to spread over the area. Finally, men came and shot the family's cattle. They left with no recourse (Speck: 1970: 78-9). In other instances, representatives of oil companies came to individuals and got them to sign what they thought were leases for which they were paid $20. It was only after the transactions had been completed that the Houmas found out that they had signed quitclaims to their

property. In one instance, over 150 families lost their land. These complaints were brought to the attention of the federal authorities who refused to act.

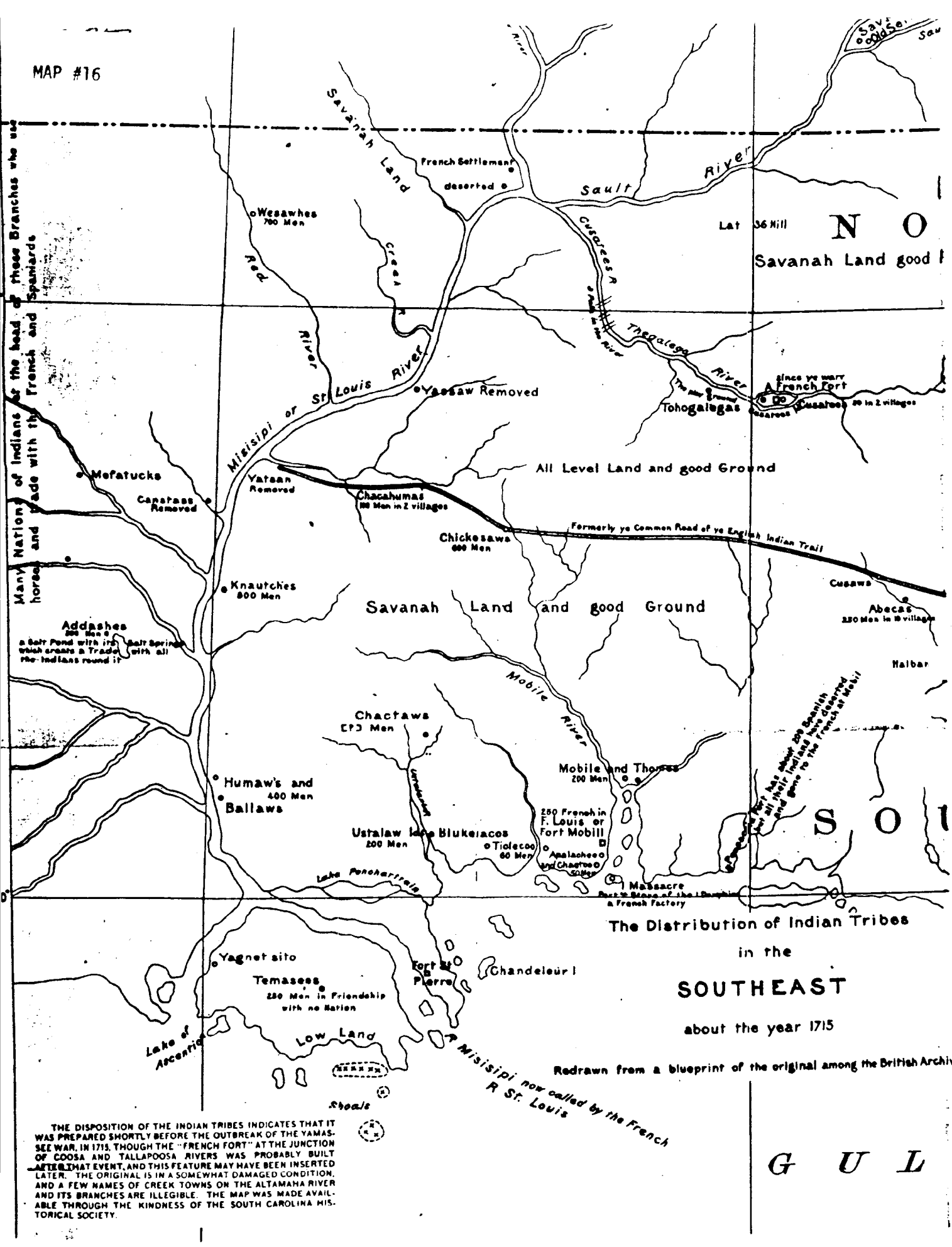
For the period covered by this section of the report three demonstrable, significant, and pertinent conclusions may be drawn. First, and foremost, there is no question that the people who make up the Houma tribe are the direct descendants of those who settled the area in the eigtheenth century. Nor is there any doubt that the federal ,state, and parish governments consistently, if grudgingly, recognized their continued existence. The concern of the federal government was not with the question of whether the Houma were Indians but rather, whether they were eligible for federal services. Nor did the state and local authorities deny their Houma Indian ancestry. Instead, their concerns were motivated by racist criteria which denied the Houma access to services and made easier their exploitation by classifying them as blacks. It is equally apparent that the tribal members did not accept this designation and that they maintained a strong sense of themselves as Houma Indians and a pride in their heritage.

Second, it has been amply demonstrated that the group has had continuous leadership from the eigtheeenth century to the present. The form of that leadership changed with conditions; the subject of its exercise varied with the issues confronting the group and the remedies available.

Nevertheless, there can be little doubt that a number of strong leaders served the various residential areas during the latter part of the nineteenth century and the half of the twentieth. This issue will be discussed in greater detail in section 83.7 (c).

Third, there is no question that the Houma represent a single Indian community with a diversified residential or settlement pattern. For nearly 200 years the Houma have occupied the same area. They have adapted to a variety of ecological changes with great resiliency. Yet, they have maintained a cultural continuity through their close-knit kin network. As has been demonstrated, they are a community circumscribed by social boundaries, unable to achieve acceptance as Indians by the dominant group and unwilling to be lumped with the other. In section 83.7 (b) the nature of this community will be described in greater detail.

The petitioner submits that, based upon the evidence contained herein, the criteria contained in section 83.7 (a) " A statement of facts establishing that the petitioner has been identified from historical times until the present on a substantially continuous basis as 'American Indian' or 'aboriginal'" has been met.




THE DISPOSITION OF THE INDIAN TRIBES INDICATES THAT IT WAS PREPARED SHORTLY BEFORE THE OUTBREAK OF THE YAMASSEE WAR, IN 1715, THOUGH THE "FRENCH FORT" AT THE JUNCTION OF COOSA AND TALLAPOOSA RIVERS WAS PROBABLY BUILT AFTER THAT EVENT, AND THIS FEATURE MAY HAVE BEEN INSERTED LATER. THE ORIGINAL IS IN A SOMEWHAT DAMAGED CONDITION, AND A FEW NAMES OF CREEK TOWNS ON THE ALTAMAHA RIVER AND ITS BRANCHES ARE ILLEGIBLE. THE MAP WAS MADE AVAILABLE THROUGH THE KINDNESS OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

83.7(b) Evidence that a substantial portion of the petitioning group inhabits a specific area or lives in a community viewed as American Indian and distinct from other populations in the area and that its members are descendants of an Indian tribe which historically inhabited a specific area.

The Houma Tribe in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

The United Houma Tribe lives on land which it has traditionally inhabited for nearly two hundred years. At the time of contact the tribe was located about 35 leagues above the present-day site of Baton Rouge. Assuming Iberville was referring to nautical leagues this would put the distance above Baton Rouge at 120 miles, probably an exaggerated amount. The De L'Isle map, "Carte du Mexique et de la Floride," dated 1703, places the village closer to the mouth of the Red River.

The village would appear to have been located on the east side of the Mississippi River, on a high bluff at a bend in the river. The village contained between 80 and 100 houses and was dominated by a large square. Corn and squash were the principal crops, supplemented by abundant supplies of fish, game and fowl (Historical Overview: 4-10, hereinafter HO). Iberville set the adult male population

in 1699 at 350, or approximately 1400 people. The following year he returned to find half the population had died from the "abdominal flux" (HO: 7), most probably a form of dysentery.

There is evidence of intertribal warfare dating as far back as 1699, the first documentation of contact available. In 1706 the Houma moved south, closer to French protection. According to La Harpe, they had been joined by the Tunica who promptly attacked and killed half the tribe. La Harpe has the Houma settling first on Bayou St. John, below New Orleans, and then moving to Bayou Lafourche, while Penicaut has them moving directly to Bayou Lafourche. Of the two contemporary maps available, the Le Maire map of 1717 shows the tribe on a bend of the Mississippi south of its juncture with the Red River, while the De L'Isle map of 1718 locates them south of Bayou Lafourche, in the vicinity of Bayou St. John. La Harpe is undoubtedly the most reliable source since he visited the village in 1718 and described it as consisting of 60 houses and some 200 men (HO: 13-14). Le Maire says that they were about sixty leagues above the mouth of the Mississippi and that their village contained about 100 families. They appear to have been joined by some Chitimachas who had separated from the main tribe in order to avoid a continuing war. The village was new and did not have a temple or sacred fire "as the Houmas and the Tunicas in changing their locations ceased

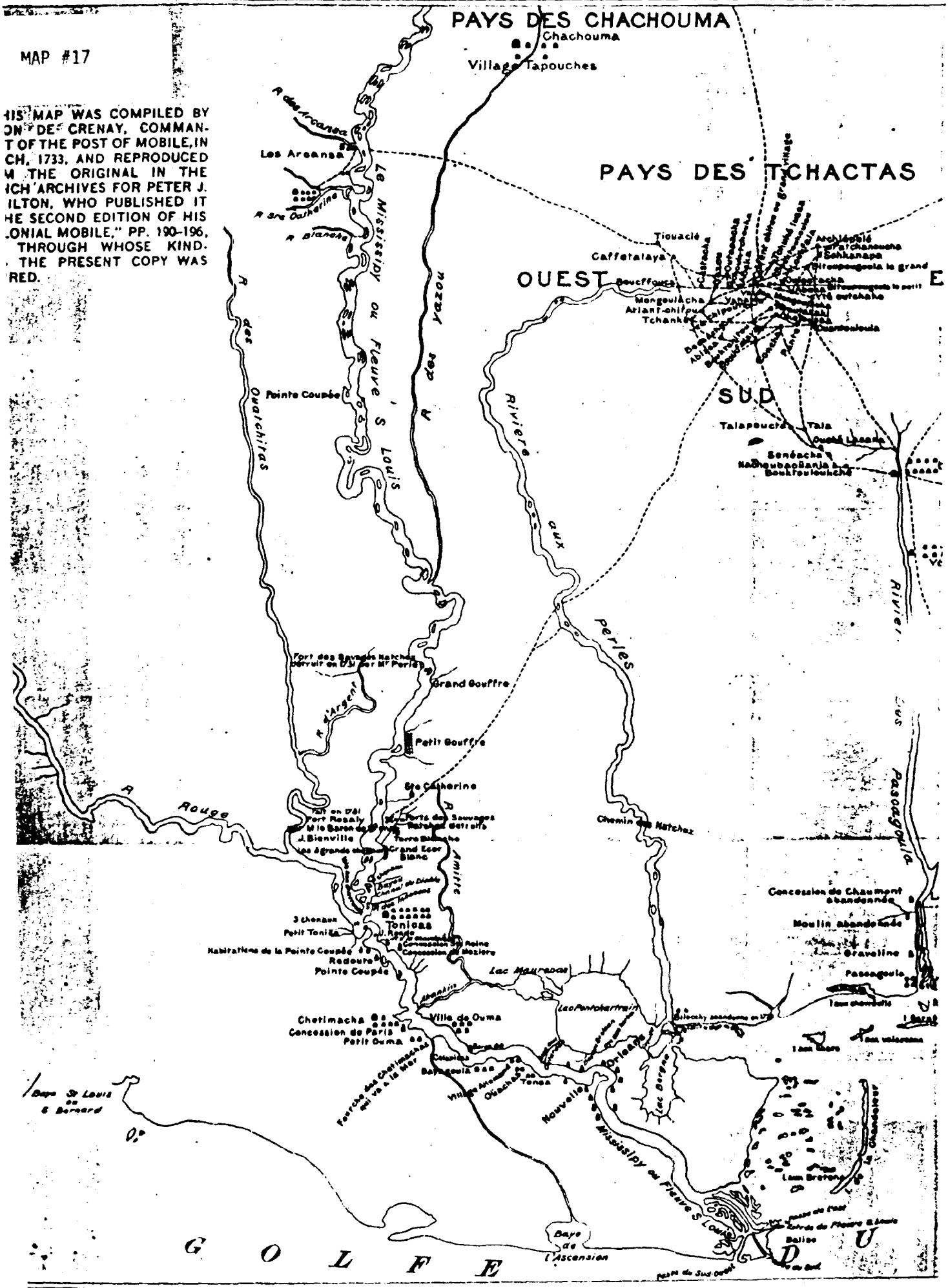
to dream of rebuilding their temples, which they had in their old villages" (Le Maire 1714). Finally, from the memoir of Charles Le Gac, Director of the Company of the Indies, we get the impression that there was a concentration of the tribes in the vicinity of New Orleans. Eleven leagues above New Orleans was the former village of the Tensas; two leagues above that the Colapissas, one league above them the Oqueloupas, and seven leagues further up the river the Houma village, a short distance below Bayou Lafourche (Le Gac 1718: 21).

There were, in all probability, two Houma villages at this time, the smaller (Petit Houmas) located two leagues below the headwaters of Bayou Lafourche, and the larger (Grand Houmas), a short distance inland (HO: 15). Contemporary maps show the tribe located near New Orleans and Bayou Lafourche; some indicate a single village while others show two. A map by H. Moll dated 1720 places the tribe in the vicinity of New Orleans while another by Devin of the same date shows them west of New Orleans but south of Bayou Lafourche. A third map entitled "Cours du Fleuve Saint Louis (circa 1718) shows them at Bayou Lafourche as does the DeBeauvilliers map (1720), made from the journal of Sieur Bernard de la Harpe.

By 1730 the maps not only reflect the new location but the establishment of the two villages. Broutin's "Carte Particuliere du Cours du Fleuve Missisipy ou St.Louis ala

MAP #17

HIS MAP WAS COMPILED BY
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T OF THE POST OF MOBILE, IN
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M THE ORIGINAL IN THE
ICH ARCHIVES FOR PETER J.
ILTON, WHO PUBLISHED IT
HE SECOND EDITION OF HIS
ONIAL MOBILE," PP. 190-196,
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Louisiane" identifies two Houma villages on the east side of the Mississippi river as does a map by Jean Baptiste D'Anville (1732). However, a map compiled by de Crenay (1733) shows that the Petit Houmas village had moved to the west bank. This is confirmed by Broutin's map of 1740 and Bellin's map of 1744. The maps show, in addition, that the tribes were living in close proximity to each other during the period and there was undoubtedly much splintering and merging of groups. This may explain de Nouaille's remarks about the union of the Bayogoula, Colapissas and the Houmas while the maps continue to show separate locations for these groups.

In 1765 the Houma moved their village on the east bank of the Mississippi river further south to avoid the English (HO: 17-18). The Jeffrey map of 1768 shows the two villages but it is impossible to tell their exact location. The period was marked by widespread political stress with the result that the Houma split into three separate settlements, each with its own leaders (HO: 19-24). Sometime toward the end of the eighteenth century the Houma apparently pushed further west and south with one village, and possibly two, moving to Bayou Terrebonne in the vicinity of the present-day city of Houma. This is in an area of land which Houma oral tradition holds was given to them by the Spanish (HO: 25-26). Land warrants were issued by the Spanish governor in 1787-1788 to Louis le Sauvage,

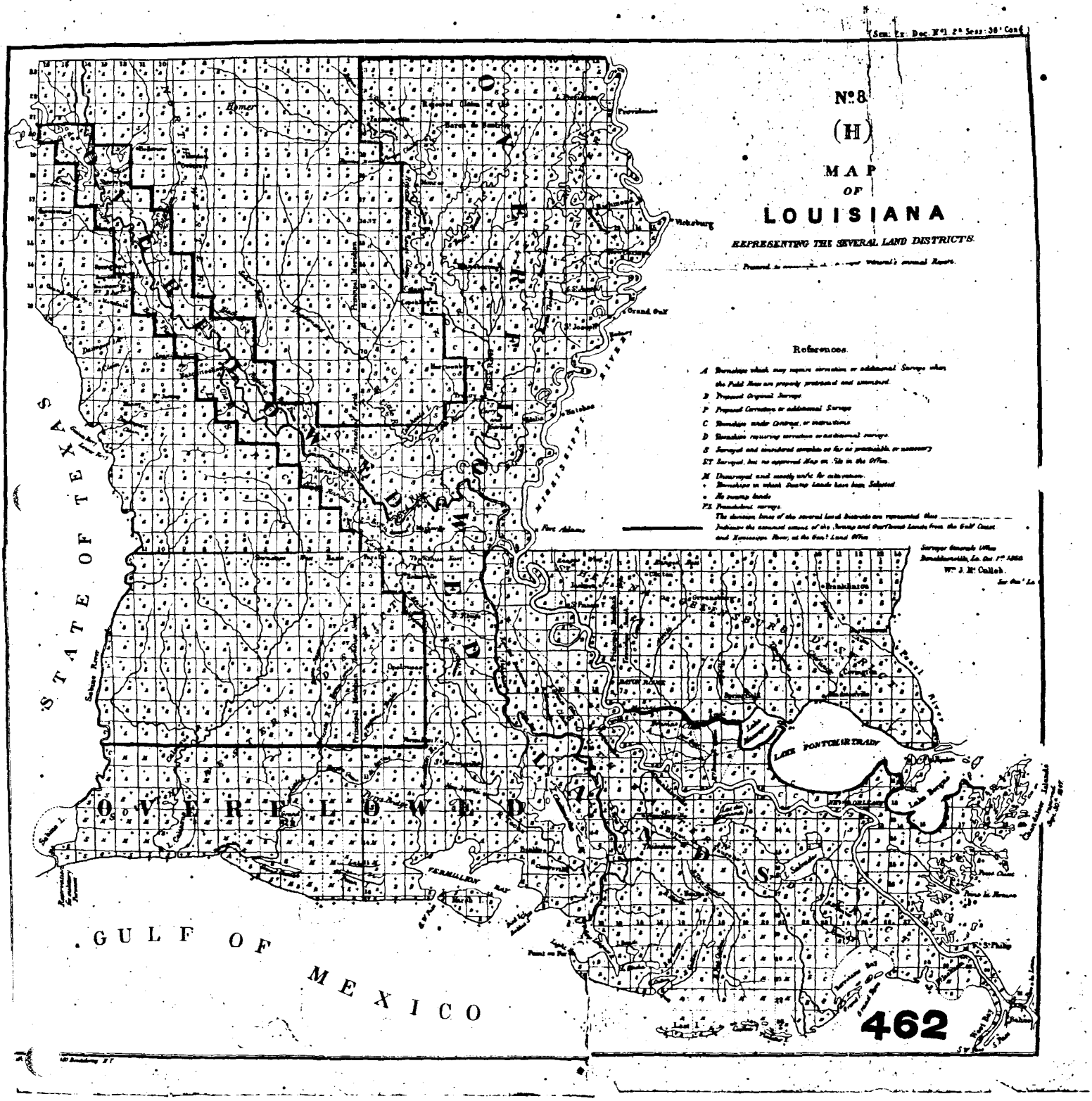
Jean Billiot and Marie Nerise for land south of Houma along Bayou Terrebonne (HO: 27). One community led by Natchiabe remained on Bayou Lafourche as late as 1784 (HO: 26). It is likely that this community moved further down the bayou to the vicinity of Golden Meadow over the course of the next two decades.

Between 1811 and 1814 the Houmas tried to get the United States to honor their claim to the land west and south of Bayou Terrebonne but without success (HO: 30-33). This failure placed the tribe in double jeopardy for not only did they lose the land but the denial forced them to acquire land as individuals which made it more susceptible to loss, as detailed earlier. Until 1822, Terrebonne and Lafourche parishes were part of one parish called Lafourche Interior. The non-Indian settlement pattern was the same for the two areas. In the 1760's the Spanish government permitted the newly arrived Acadians to settle near the beginning of Bayou Lafourche, but few Cajuns moved down the bayou until the first decade of the ninteenth century. Along with the Cajuns came some Spanish and German settlers (Uzee 1968: 121-3).

## Houma Settlements In The Nineteenth Century

By the 1820s, Americans had moved into the area and the settlements extended down as far as Lockport. Within

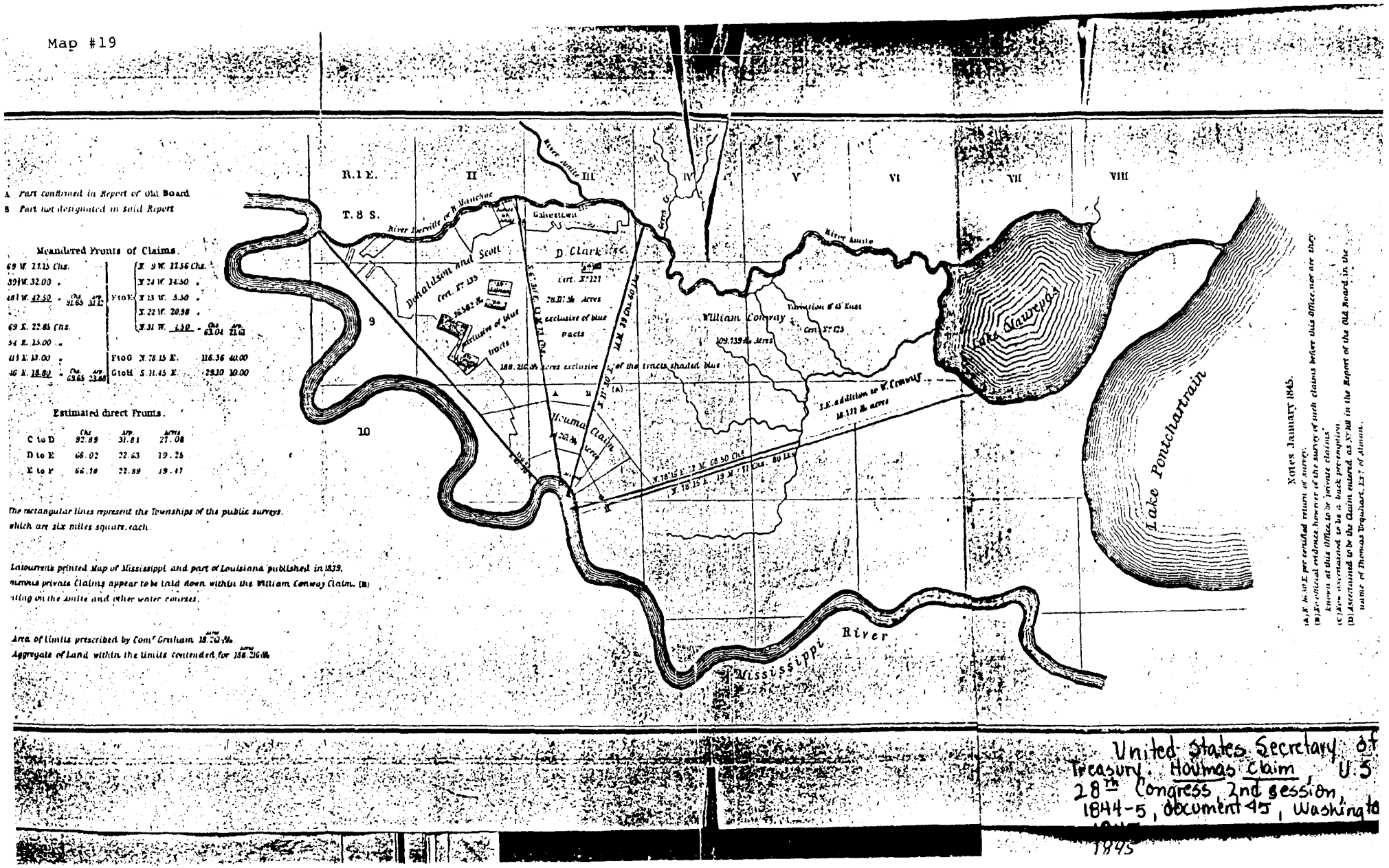
#18


(Sen. Ex. Doc. N°1, 2d Sess. 30th Cong.)
N°8
(H)
MAP
OF
LOUISIANA
REPRESENTING THE SEVERAL LAND DISTRICTS
References
STATE OF TEXAS
OVERFLOWED LANDS
GULF OF MEXICO
LAKE PONTCHARTRAIN
462

the next twenty years communities extended to Larose, but it was not until the 1870s that non-Indians settled as far south as Golden Meadow (Ibid). During the period from 1820 through 1850 the Houmas moved or were pushed south, spreading out along the various bayous. This is first reflected in the 1850 U.S. census which shows members of the tribe residing on Bayou Terrebonne, Bayou DuLarge, Bayou Petit Caillou, Bayou Pointe aux Chenes, Bayou Grand Caillou and Bayou Lafourche.

With the influx of Americans came an important change in the economics of the area. The Latin-Cajun habitants had established small farms on both sides of the bayous. These were generally six arpents (an arpent is 192 feet) wide and forty arpents deep and usually consisted of a small area of front elevated land bordering the bayou and the rest made up of back land, often swamp or low prairie. The farmers raised a variety of crops including rice, cotton, corn, and vegetables. During the high water period from January to June steamboats sailed along Bayou Lafourche from Donaldsonville to Fourchon at the mouth of the bayou. During the rest of the year, when the water level in the bayou fell, more shallow draft vessels carried on the trade and communication. While there was virtually no road system, there were tow paths on both sides of the bayous. When the Americans settled the upper portions of Bayou Lafourche and Bayou Terrebonne they either opened up

Map #19




United States Secretary of Treasury. Houmas claim, U.S. 28th Congress 2nd session, 1844-5, document 45, Washington 1845

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large tracts of land or bought out the small farmers and combined the properties to establish large sugar plantations. Along with these plantations came the proliferation of slavery. As the plantations grew they pushed the other settlers further south along the bayous (Uzee 1968: 120-8), and this, in turn, pressed the Houmas into areas where there was very little land for residences, let alone agriculture. By the Civil War the area had four types of residential patterns: sugar plantations with their slave quarters on the upper reaches of the bayous, below that small narrow farms stretching out on both sides of the bayou, and further down the bayous, the Houma communities. Beyond the established communities, out in the vastness of the swamplands, lived Houma families who owned no land and either camped along the lakes or lived on houseboats. Since the census takers were only interested in Indians who held property and resided in accessible communities, most of those who lived in the marshes were never counted or recorded.

From the data available it is clear that the Houmas occupied the lower ends of the bayous that constitute the Lafourche-Terrebonne distributary system from at least the early decades of the nineteenth century. The names of the principal family lines were established by that time and include Courteaux, Naquin, Dardar, Dion, Verret, Gregoire, and Billiot.



1. BOB VERRET AND BAPTISTE BILLIOUT, HOUMA INDIANS, TERREBONNE PARISH, LA., 1907.

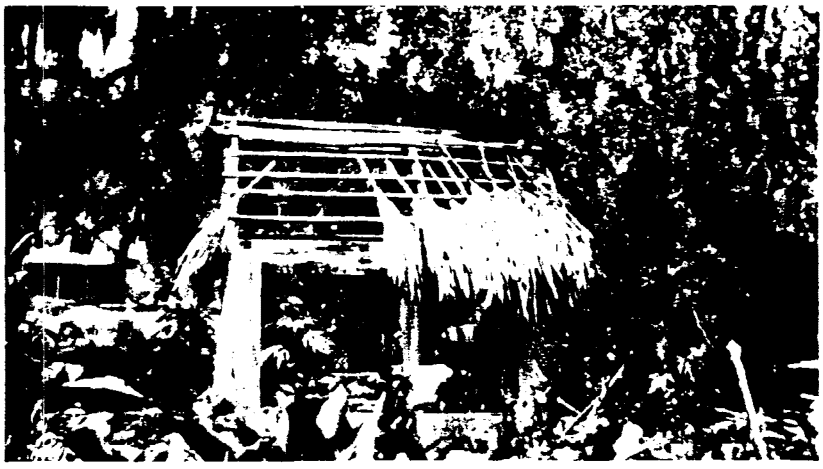


2. HOUMA INDIANS ON LOWER BAYOU LAFOURCHE, LA., 1907

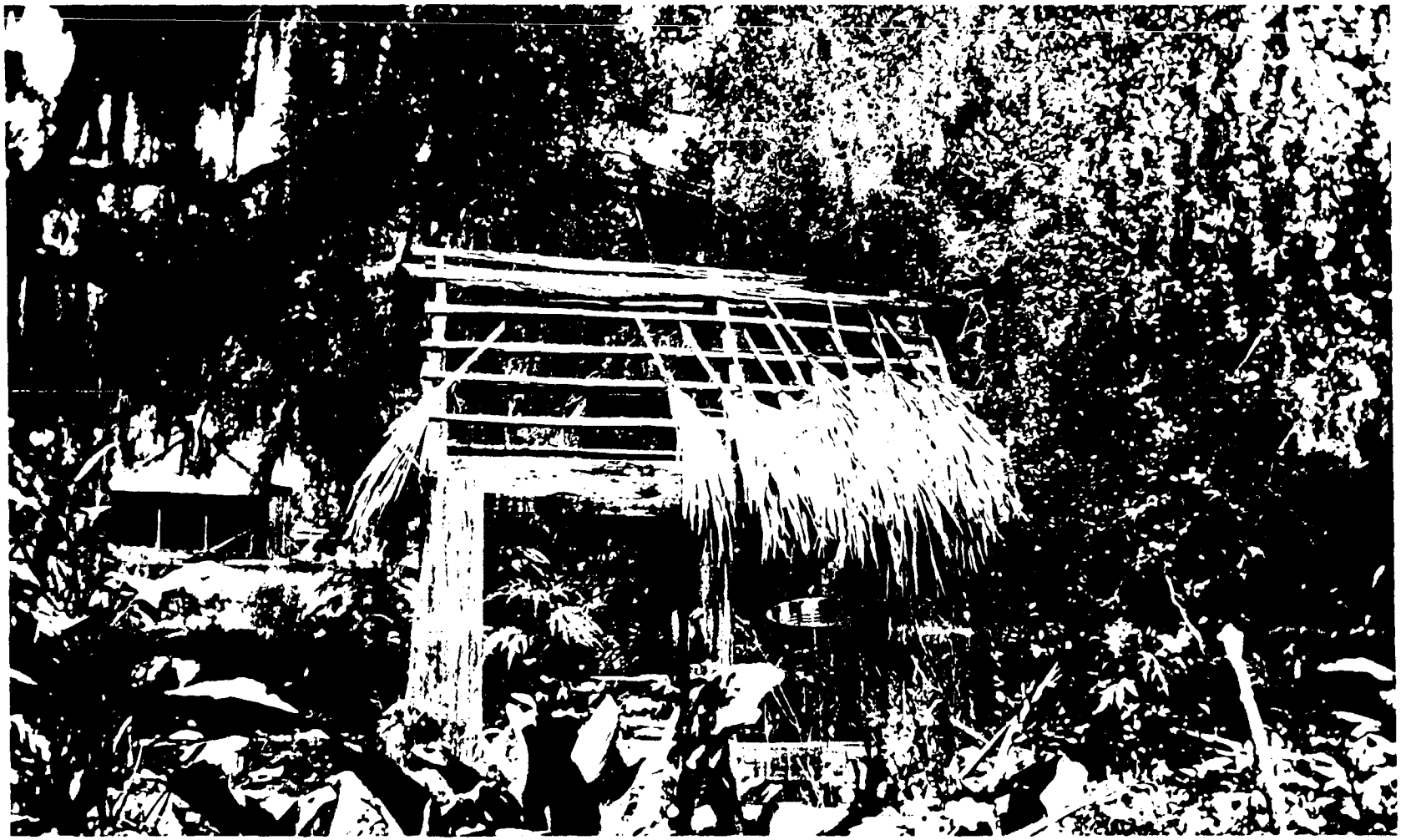
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1. OLD HOUMA WOMAN, POINT AU CHIEN, LA.



2. OLD HOUMA HOUSE, AT POINT AU CHIEN, LA., 1907.



Swanton # 155



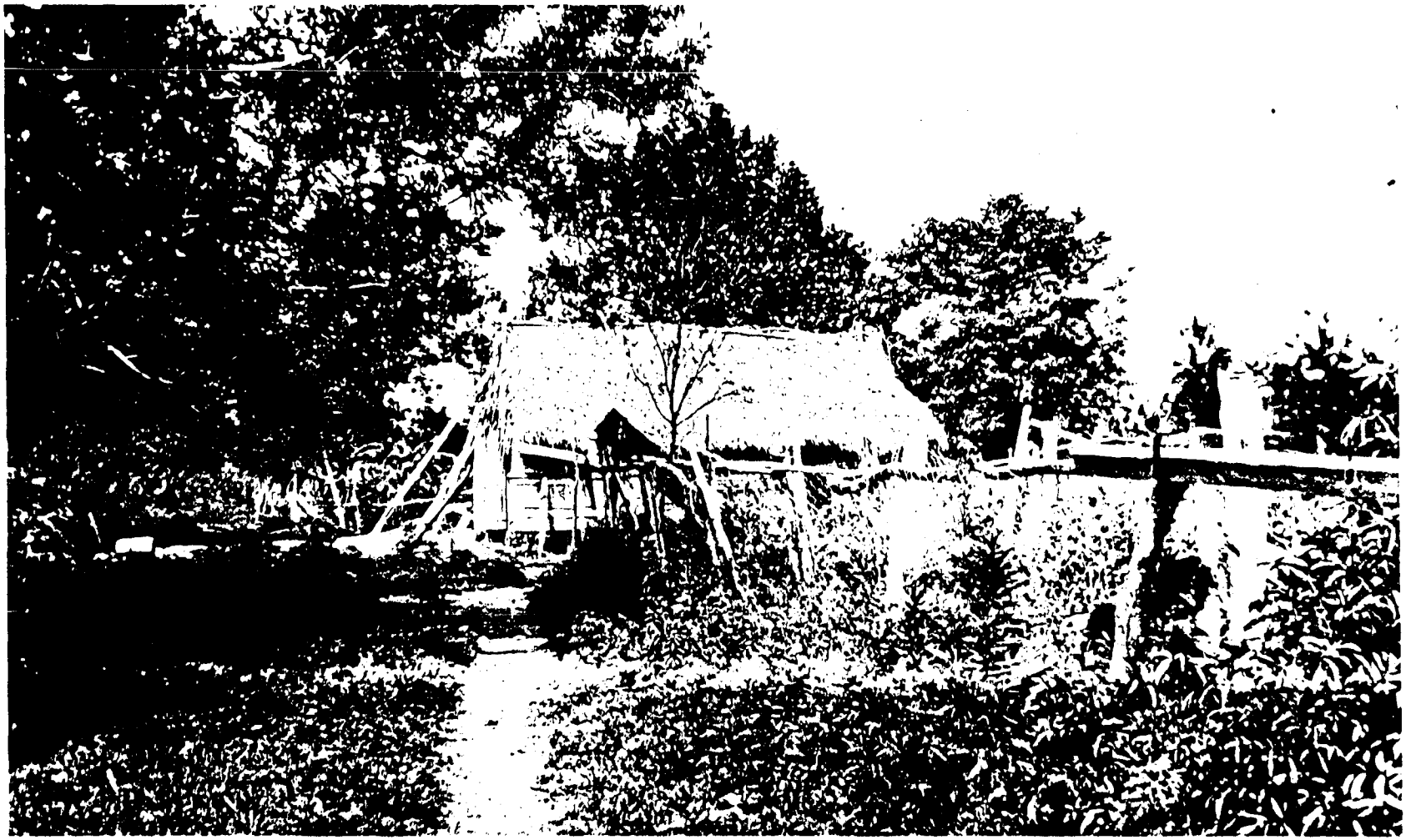
1. HOUMA INDIANS ON LOWER BAYOU LAFOURCHE, LA., 1907.



2. HOUMA INDIANS ON LITTLE BARATARIA BAYOU, LA., 1907.



Swanton #152



Swanton 153A

Swanton #154

In 1907 the Houma communities were visited by American anthropologist, John Reed Swanton, who published the following description of Houma tribe.

> They occupy six settlements on as many bayous, and are principally engaged in hunting the otter, mink, and such other animals as occur in their country, and in fishing and gathering shellfish. During the sugar season some of them work on the plantations, especially at crushing, and some cattle are raised, particularly by Bob Verret, a leading man among them. Mr. Verret gave the following estimate of their population: On Point au Barre, 28 houses and 165 people; Lower Point au Chien, 36 houses and 160 people; Champs Charles, 13 houses and 117 people; Lower Bayou LaFourche, about 25 houses and 175 people; Bayou de Large, 12 to 14 houses and 84 to 98 people; Bayou Sale, below Bayou Grand Caillou, at least 25 houses and 175 people; total, 139 to 141 houses and 876 to 890 people. For Point au Barre and Point au Chien this was a house by house statement, and is nearly complete. The Champs Charles band was estimated by Mr. Verret on a basis of 9 to the family and the others on a basis of 7. In view of the fact that the average for the two first mentioned is 6 and 4 1/2 respectively, this may seem high, but, in any event, the average is above the normal for an Indian tribe. According to tradition, moreover, these are the descendants of only a part of the ancient Houmma. When they first came across the Mississippi, it is said that they located near the city that bears their name, but, being driven out by whites, moved to their present situation. Being followed down by the settlers, all except three families, or possibly bands, went back north about one hundred and twenty years ago (?) and were never heard of again. The three families which were known by the French names "Courteaux," "Billiout," and "Verdine," held their ground and it is from them that all the Houmma of Terre Bonne and La Fourche are descended. In spite of a mixture of whites and negroes, they form a distinct class of the population, and prefer to be called "Indians." The rate at which they have increased in recent years shows either that they have been protected by their isolation or that the mixture has chanced to be a very virile one.

> Although they call themselves "Houmas," or, rather, "Homas," it has been intimated above that remains of several other tribes, such as the Bayogoula and Acolopissa, have been incorporated with them. To these must be added Biloxi and Chitimacha (pronounced by them "Sitimacha"), who were often introduced in the capacity of slaves, and probably the remnants of the Washa and Chawasha, besides individuals from a number of other Louisiana and Mississippi peoples. The family history of the writer's oldest informant, Felicité Billiout, will serve to illustrate this tribal complexity. Her grandmother, whose Indian name was Nuy'un, but who was baptized "Marion" after her removal to Louisiana, was born in or near Mobile; her grandfather, Shulu-shumon, or, in French, Joseph Abbe, and more often called "Courteaux," was a Biloxi medal chief; and her mother "an Atakapa from Texas." In addition, she said that Cherokee ("Tsalaki"), Choctaw, and Alibamu had all married with her people. Among other tribes she had heard of the Chickasaw ("Shikasha"), Tallapoosa ("Talapush"), and Tunica. Her grandmother, whom, she said, had moved successively to the Mississippi, "Tuckapaw canal," Bayou La Fourche, Houma, and the coast of Terre Bonne, was evidently among the Indians who migrated from the neighborhood of Mobile after 1754, in order not to remain under English rule. It is plain that remnants of all sorts of tribes joined the Houma before and at this period, though it is certain that most of these were Muskhogean, and that the Houmas were always the dominating element (Swanton 1911: 291-2).

In addition, Swanton recorded a sizeable Houma vocabulary taken from an elderly Houma woman. He argued that the Houma language was related to Choctaw (Ibid: 28-29). He also took nearly fifty photos which are the earliest photographic record of the Houma. These depict the isolation of the Houma communities from other settlements, and something of the lifestyle of the Houma. The photos were taken at Pointe aux Chenes, Point Barre, lower Bayou Lafourche, Grand Caillou Bayou, Lake Salvador,

and Little Barataria Bayou. They show a population that lived primarily off the land, depending on fishing and trapping for cash income, living in houses made of daub and wattle, or with plank walls, and palmetto roofs (Swanton 1946 BAE 137: Pl. 22-25).

Between 1960 and 1984 five researchers -- Ann Fischer, Janel Curry-Roper, Bruce Duthu, Gregory Bowman, and Jack Campisi -- collected data on the beliefs, traditions, and social and political affairs of the Houmas in the first decades of the twentieth century. These findings are summarized below.

Throughout the nineteenth century the Houmas were subjected to racial prejudice. The effort was made to categorize them with blacks, an effort strenuously resisted by members of the Indian communities. Houmas were not allowed to shop at local stores, go to local bars and dances, or attend church on an equal basis with whites (OH 14, January 28, 1979). They refused to accept the status as black and were unable to achieve one equal to that of the whites. Whites could marry in although few did after the Civil War. Individuals who married blacks were forced to leave. They formed a third social group, that of Indian, often more dispised by the whites than the blacks. As the census data indicate, many were classified by whites as Indians. Wilton Parfait, who was born in 1920, gave

Bruce Duthu the following description of white attitudes toward the Houmas:

> In my father's time, when he was young, you could call a chicken in the yard a "sabine." It's the same when you call an outhouse, or a pig, a "sabine." That's what it was. As far as people being called "sabines" there were no people called that, no Indians. It's just the people had a word they used to call the Indians - "Sabines." It meant the Indians were worth nothing. They weren't anything at all. That's the way they (the non-Indians) wanted it. There were a lot of people who called me "sabine" (OH 26, June 12, 1978).

This segregation had a number of results, including an intensification of the Houmas sense of themselves as Indians. Intra-tribal marriage resulted in extensive and complex kin networks which tied the many settlements together into a single social and cultural unit -- the Houma tribe. Monsignor Henry C. Bezou, who served in Terrebonne Parish in the 1930s, saw this isolation as the principal factor in the preservation of identifiable Indian settlements. He told an interviewer in 1979 that

> In the lower regions of Bayou Terrebonne, about 8 to 10 miles from the Gulf of Mexico, there was a colony of Indians, deprecatingly called "Sabine," by the people living on the upper part of Bayou Terrebonne. They were extremely poor, generally speaking, illiterate, and whose own children were illiterate. At the end of Bayou Pointe aux Chenes, there was yet another colony of Indians or Sabines as they were also called, and from the edge or the end of the almost impassable end of Bayou P-a-C, one could take a boat or a skiff or a pirogue to Ile Jean Charles, which is possibly the most primitive of the Indian settlements in Terrebonne. There is reason to believe that that community, which was pretty integrated, in terms of being unified, and not dispersed, and had a relatively small number of families, very closely allied, it's quite

> probable the first to settle at the Ile was a Naquin, Jean Charles Naquin. According to research I have read, Jean Charles Naquin, a Frenchman, married the descendant of an Indian and because of the mixture of the races, he was looked down upon by his relatives and friends and took refuge on this lower part of Terrebonne, which became known as Ile Jean Charles ... (the families) were all self-sufficient. No one was employed by anyone else. They lived off fishing, primarily, and also the catching of muskrats. They had been there when I went there for at least 140 years. There is some reason to believe that Jean Charles settled about 1800 and propagated the island. The people living there are all considered relatives -- cousins -- who had been there for generations. I found that there French was a form of 17th century French, using expressions of the era (OH 37, August 20, 1979).

The Monsignor's comments are noteworthy for a number of reasons. First is the recognition that these Indian settlements were well established and of long duration. Second, he reinforces the perception of the Houmas that there were overwhelming barriers to their integration into the general society. Third, not only were the settlements isolated by social barriers, they were effectively isolated from non-Indian society by physical barriers. Even at places like Dulac and Montegut, there were few roads and fewer bridges. The Indian settlements were seldom visited by parish authorities or state officials. Only whites who had business to transact in the communities made any efforts. Between the geographical and social limitations the Houma settlements were almost unknown to the general population.

It is ironic that the geographical features which precluded contact between whites and Indians served to facilitate intra-community communication. As can be seen from Map #15 Bayou Lafourche flows south from Donaldsonville, dividing at Houma into Bayou Terrebonne, This bayou then divides into Bayou Pointe aux Chenes, Bayou Petit Caillou, Bayou Grand Caillou, and Bayou Dularge. Between these distributaries were expanses of marshland and swamp, intersected by hundreds of small streams and lakes. It was in these back areas that the Houma families trapped mink and muskrat during the winter. To get to their trapping areas groups of men, generally family members, dug narrow canals, called trenasses (OH 1, Sylvester Billiot November 26, 1978). While the canals served the primary function of allowing trappers to reach their trapping areas, it had a second and perhaps more significant use. For those who knew the swamplands, the trenasses provided a network of waterways that enabled tribal members to push-pole a piroque from Bayou Dularge to New Orleans. Canals connected Bayou Dularge to Bayou Grand Caillou (where the present pontoon bridge is located). Bayou Grande Caillou was connected to Bayou Little Caillou, while another trenasse connected Bayou Terrebonne to Bayou Petit Caillou near the city of Houma. According to elderly members of the tribe, it was possible to move from Bayou DuLarge on the west to Golden Meadow on the east within a

day. From there individuals could paddle a pirogue to Lafitte or New Orleans. It took but a couple of hours to pole a pirogue from Pointe Barre or Isle Jean Charles to either Dulac or Golden Meadow. Thus, while the Houma were isolated socially from the non-Indian community, they had easy access among the various settlements that made up their tribe (Campisi 1983 fieldnotes).

The digging and maintaining of a trenasse was an important part of the Houma community. While non-Indians used these canals, they did not dig them; they were a uniquely Houma development. The canals were five to six feet wide, three feet deep, and extended from one-half to three miles in length (Campisi 1984 fieldnotes). A team of men could dig about six feet of canal in a day. Each year the canals were cleaned, and sometimes extended, by teams of men under the leadership on the individual who dug the canal or took it over from another (Campisi 1983,1984 fieldnotes).

The maintenance of the trenasse is but one example of communal activity among the Houma. They worked together in building houses, repairing roofs, and making taso.

> If somebody had a canal to dig, everybody would get together and help. We would also get together when somebody had a chimney to build. There would be a big hole where they would mix mud and moss, which would be placed in between the boards. They would walk in the hole to mix the moss and mud. That was fun (OH 1, Sylvester Billiot, November 26, 1978).

> Used to visit a lot. If someone needed help, would get together, like to pull a boat or

> shingle a roof or build a mud chimney. The women would get together to make a mattress of Spanish moss (mosse noir) or of duck feathers (mattress plume). Women would also make blankets with cotton inside called couvert pique, like a quilt. Would put it on a frame (OH 3, Immanuel Nichol Naquin, December 12, 1978).

Another communal activity that had strong social and cultural overtones was the annual taso-making. Taso (dried fish) is made by cutting fish into strips and drying and smoking it over a fire of Spanish moss. In 1938 Tostan Dardar, then seventy-nine, recalled in detail the process. He told a reporter for the New Orleans Times-Picayune how every spring a fleet of pirogues would leave the bayous and sail to the Gulf. There they would set up temporary camps. Although the fish could be caught with nets the Houmas adopted a more efficient method, one that required communal labor.

> Slender branches were cleared of their leaves. A frame of stouter limbs was laid out on the sand, and the open space was filled with interwoven branches; skill was required to weave them together, bending,but not breaking, as they became warp and woof of the fish gates. For this was the use to which the Houmas put the willows: to form the traps that caught the fish for taso-making.
>
> Numerous small bays indented the shore, deep at fulltide, but empty or nearly so at the ebb. At high water the Indians set their gates across the bay, length after length to cut off the indentation. The tide dropped, and the fish inside fled toward the open sea, only to find the way barred. The smaller fish could escape through the open meshes of them, but the more desirable sizes were trapped within.
>
> The Houmas had only to splash through the shallow water to pounce upon the floundering

fish. Each receding tide left an abundant harvest behind.

Sharp knives slashed the fish into suitable thin strips of white flesh. The grills were set up on the beach, and the children gathered driftwood to feed the fires. The damp wood did not burn freely and the smoke dried the fish and gave it a distinctive tang. Incidently the smoke made the taso encampment comfortable at night by driving off swarms of voracious mosquitoes.

Some of the fish, for variety, were hung in the sun to dry; this curing being as effective as smoking, but giving a different flavor to the taso.

Taso time was courting time.

During the rest of the year the Houmas were scattered through the swamps. But since taso-making was a communal affair, the young folks were brought together in close intimacy that led to romance. Tostan Dardar recalls his own romance with Ella Beyo <Billiot> during the taso month some 60 years ago (New Orleans Times-Picayune April 17, 1938: 1,3).

When asked if he remembered making taso Louis Naquin (born in 1897) gave the following description:

Yes, with some garfish. They'd cut it in strips then they would put it to dry. They would do it in this month, April or May. They used it to make all kinds of tasso -- red fish, trout. They'd put that in the sun to dry. Up to 3 or 4 foot long for the garfish. About 10 lbs. and up for the red fish and drum. They had some tame pigs and some wild ones. When they'd see a wild one, they'd kill it. They'd use the fat for oil..... They'd salt all kinds of meat. Where did they hang it to dry? Tie strings up and then fasten meat to it for 2 or 3 days. In those times of gathering and drying was it a fun time? They fixed it like some kind of festival. It was to share with everybody and everybody would have fun in that season, swimming and stuff like that. They'd make enough to last them all year until that season again. They'd know when they ran out of it it was time to do it again....

> Was taso time for courting? Ya. All the children would wait to get married until that day, around that time, it was a fun time. They'd sing. They would have like a parade.
> Details? Would paint themselves. Just the men. Everybody would do the same thing. They had some big long coats with some tails on them. They was long. It was like a costume. They would dance like some honky tonks. they would parade after they knew they had everything they wanted.
> Would the men catch the fish and the women dry them? Yes.
> Did they learn the things of tasso time from the old Indians or somebody else? From their ancestors. (OH 16, April 18, 1978).

Taso-making brought together families from different settlements and combined communal work and sharing with an extended round of social activities. Similarly, there appeared to have been a tradition to gather at Isle Jean Charles at Easter time for three days of dancing and celebrating. Individuals came from all of the bayou settlements, and, like taso-time, marriages occurred. This was accomplished by "broom jumping," a borrowing from the Cajuns. Afterwards, the couple might hold a more formal marriage before a priest (Campisi 1983 fieldnotes).

In addition, there were frequent dances held in each of the settlements attended by individuals from the other settlements. Each dance had a leader called the "maitre du danse" who owned the property and organized the dance. He was also responsible to see that order was kept. According to Alexander Billiot (born in 1912), there were dances every Saturday at different people's houses and upwards of

100 people would show up (OH 18, April 24, 1979). Music would be furnished by tribal members playing violins or accordions. There was food served and the leader collected a small fee from each of the participants (Campisi 1984 fieldnotes). Although informal, these dances were an important mechanism in community integration, bringing together members from the different Houma settlements, facilitating courtship and marriage, and keeping the extended families in close contact.

Of all the factors holding the tribe together, treating was by far the most important. Each settlement had several "traiteurs," some of whom specialized while others were more like general practioners. Some cured by using prayers only, while other brought into play a wide range of herbal medicines. As Speck has noted, most of the herbs used were of local origin (1941a: 67). The practice of curing using prayer is documented by Gravier (HO 10) and it, too, is of native origin. While it is true that the Cajuns also had traiteurs, the two systems were separate, although Cajuns and blacks sometimes availed themselves of the Houma curers.

Nearly every member of the Houma community has had some experience with treaters. Every family has at least one member who has treated. Parents and relatives handed the skills down to chosen members of the family. But not all were interested.

I never wanted to be a treater. My father was

[redacted]

1. Fever, bleeding, burns, cuts, sores, problems of the feet and hands.
2. Prayers, herbs, teas, salves.

1. Unspecified ailments.
2. Prayers, herbs, teas, salves.

1. Unspecified ailments.
2. Herbs only.
3. Learned from his father Willie Dardar and sister Agnes Dardar.

1. Unspecified ailments.
2. Herbs only.
3. Learned from her father Willie Dardar.

1. All ailments.
2. Prayers, herbs, teas, salves, medicine objects.

1. Bleeding and unspecified ailments.
2. Prayers, herbs, teas.

1. All ailments particularly goiters, blood problems, toothaches, sore throats.
2. Prayers, herbs, teas.

1. All ailments.
2. Prayers, herbs, teas, salves.

1. All ailments.
2. Prayers, herbs, teas, salves, medicine objects, ceremonies/rituals.

1. All ailments particularly bleeding and worms.
2. Prayers, herbs, teas.

1. All ailments.
2. Prayers, herbs, teas, medicine objects.

(Campisi 1983-1985 fieldnotes)

[redacted]

2. Prayers, herbs, teas.

1. Unspecified ailments.

1. Toothache only.
2. Prayers, herbs.

1. Unspecified ailments.

1. Unspecified ailments.

1. All ailments particularly fevers, sunstroke, bone and joint problems, but not worms.
2. Prayers, herbs, teas.

Jefferson Parish and Surrounding Area

[redacted]

1. All ailments particularly sunstroke, ring worm, worms, fevers, stomach problems, blood problems, shingles, snake and insect bites, but not nose bleeds.
2. Prayers, herbs, teas, medicine objects.

1. All ailments.
2. Prayers, herbs, chants.
3. Learned from his uncle Louis Creppel.

1. All ailments.
2. Prayers, herbs, teas.

1. Warts.

1. Sunstroke, warts, unspecified ailments.
2. Prayers, herbs, teas.
3. Learned from Olympe Billiot, Sambo Fitch, William S. Billiot.

1. All ailments specializing in warts, and shingles.
2. Prayers, herbs, teas, salves.

1. Unspecified ailments.
2. Herbs only.
3. Learned from parents and grandparents.

1. Unspecified ailments.
2. Herbs only.

[redacted]

1. All ailments, specialized in shingles, sunstroke, worms, blood poisoning, stomach problems, skin infections, "women's disorders."
2. Prayers, herbs, teas.

1. All ailments, midwife.
2. Prayers, herbs, teas.
3. Learned from father, Sambo Fitch.

1. All ailments.
2. Prayers, herbs teas.
3. Learned from father and mother-in-law.

1. All ailments
2. Prayers, Herbs, teas, rituals.

1. All ailments.
2. Prayers, herbs, teas, salves, oils.
3. Learned from a number of people including Lucy Foret.

1. All ailments.
2. Prayers, herbs, teas.

1. All ailments, midwife.
2. Prayers, herbs, teas.

1. All ailments except worms.
2. Prayers, herbs, teas.

1. All ailments.
2. Prayers, herbs, teas.

1. Warts, and a few other unspecified ailments.
2. Prayers, herbs, teas.

1. Unspecified ailments.
2. Prayers, herbs, teas.
3. Daughter of Eva Gregoire.

1. Unspecified ailments.
2. Prayers, herbs, teas.

Lafourche Parish

1. All ailments except snake bite, midwife.
2. Prayers and herbs.
3. Learned from uncle and husband.

[redacted]

1. Fever and other ailments.

(Speck 1941: 53).

1. Unspecified ailments.
2. Prayers, herbs, salves.

1. Unspecified ailments.
2. Prayers, herbs, salves.
3. Son of Julian Billiot.

1. All ailments, particularly snake bites.
2. Prayers, herbs, teas.

1. All ailments, particularly shingles, also known as a seer.
2. Prayers, herbs, teas.

1. Bites, blood poisoning, sunstroke, "women's ailments," midwife.
2. Prayers, herbs, teas.

1. All ailments, including what was termed "cancer."
2. Prayers and herbs.

1. All ailments except ringworm.
2. Prayers, herbs, medicine objects, teas.

1. All ailments particularly worms, sprains, problems of the joints, snake bite, blood problems, ringworm, warts, shingles, and sunstroke.
2. Prayers, herbs, teas.

1. All ailments except worms and spider bites.
2. Prayers, herbs, teas, salves.
3. Learned from mother, Eva Gregoire.

1. Worms, colic, "women's ailments," susnstroke.
2. Prayers, herbs, teas.

1. "Women's ailments," midwife.
2. Prayers, herbs, teas.

1. Sunstroke, "women's ailments," midwife.

Chart #1. - Houma Treaters - Late 19th and 20th Century

| Name | 1. Ailment-2. Cure-3. education |
|---|---|
| | Terrebonne Parish |
| [redacted] | 1. All ailments.<br>2. Prayers and herbs.<br>3. Learned from father. |
| | 1. All ailments.<br>2. Prayers and herbs.<br>3. Learned from uncle and father. |
| | 1. Ear and throat. |
| | 1. Stomach worms. |
| | 3. Learned from mother. |
| | 1. "Women's ailment," midwife.<br>2. Prayers and herbs.<br>3. Learned from mother. |
| | 1. Sunstroke. |
| | 1. All ailments.<br>2. Herbs. |
| | 1. Sunstroke, headache.<br>2. Herbs only. |
| | 1. Blood poisioning.<br>2. Herbs only. |
| | 1. Midwife.<br>(Speck 1941: 51). |
| | 1. Sunstroke, glands.<br>2. Herbs only. |
| | 1. Swollen liver. |
| | 1. Blood poisoning, glands, liver, stroke. |
| | 1. All ailments.<br>2. Prayers, herbs, teas. |

> one and my grandmother was a treater. He wanted to teach me how but I said, "Oh, no!" You know why I didn't, I'll tell you why. My father, he was called at all hours of the night and he had to go. And I say, "Oh, no." I like to sleep. When I go to bed, it's to sleep -- not to get up. And when you're a "traiteur," and someone calls you at any hour of the night, you have to go. If you don't go it's over. Your treatments are no longer good. And I knew that. I treated my own family -- but that's all. I treated for toothaches, that's all. You put the fingers over the tooth and say an Our Father. You ask that the pain be taken away in the name of Jesus, and it's gone. It's not hard to learn how to treat. You said one Our Father, and if the pain didn't go away, you said another prayer. (Another Our Father) You could also treat on a person's name in case he wasn't there (OH Valentine Dardar, June 27, 1978).

Perhaps the best known and most respected of the Houma treaters was Lucy Parfait Foret, who died in 1981 at the age of 107. She acquired her knowledge from her father and used a combination of prayers and herbal medicines. She was, in addition, a midwife. She was so well renowned that people came from every bayou settlement for her assistance. Among other things, she treated headaches, sun stroke, menstrual cramps, snake bite, worms, toothache, earache, whooping cough, and stomach ailments. Until her death she resided at Dulac on Bayou Grand Caillou (Houma Daily Courier May 5, 1981; Campisi, 1984). Another well known treater was Mrs. John Billiot, called affectionally Tante Utema, who lived at Golden Meadow. She learned her skills at the age of seven from an uncle and practiced for the next sixty-five years, until her death in 1980. Like Lucy Foret she treated a wide range of illnesses with prayers

and herbs. Some of her treatments she learned from her husband. She was also a widely known mid-wife (Thibodaux Comet 1980).

There were many others, as well. Some only treated in the family while others were sought out by individuals from other settlements. None of them charged fees, although they would accept small gifts of food and money. The rationale for this was that the gift of healing came from God through them to the individual in need. Below is a list of some of the many traiteurs, their principal residence, and the types of maladies they cured.

Besides the medicines they gave out and cures they made, treaters acted as a cohesive force and focal point of Houma identity. The view that their gift of treating was a manifestation of God's will gave them special status in the community and this status often translated into positions of leadership. They were looked to for advice on matters other than medical. In a non-literate society they provided a means of disseminating news, opinions and values among the members of the various settlements.

## Twentieth Century Houma Settlements

From 1900 on the Houmas faced a number of significant ecological changes to which they had to adjust. Hurricanes in 1909 and 1926 devastated some of the settlements forcing



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the inhabitants to move up the bayous. As a result of the 1926 hurricane the Houmas abandoned their settlement at Pointe Barre, moving to Montegut and Pointe au Chenes. In 1904 the Corps of Army Engineers dammed Bayou Lafourche at Donaldsonville cutting off its fresh water supply and making it "... a still, lifeless stream, choked with water hyacinths (locally known as water lillies) from bank to bank" (Davis 1968: 124). This cut off the water to all of the bayous -- Grand Caillou, Petit Caillou, Terrebonne, Blue, Dularge, and Pointe aux Chenes -- turning them all into stagnant waterways.

There were more disastrous results. Without the flow of fresh water salt water moved up the bayous and swamplands killing the grasses. This, in turn, drove out the muskrats and opened the land to erosion. The decline of the muskrat population seriously affected the economic well-being of the Houmas, although its full impact was not felt until the late forties. Added to the woes of the Houma trapper was the accidental introduction of nutria (Coypu), a large fur bearing animal similar to the beaver that partially replaced the muskrats. Only the belly portion of the hide is commercially usuable on this animal, which is usually three feet long and weighs upwards of twenty pounds. The animal drove out its competition; its voracious appetite led ~~the~~ the destruction of the protective grasses and its large burrows destroyed the

banks of the waterways.

In addition to the salinization there is the problem of subsidence. Denied the silt-ladened water from the Mississippi river, the entire delta area is sinking at an alarming rate, allowing the intrusion of the salt water. As the salt water moved inland it not only killed off the grasses and drove out the muskrats, it also destroyed vast areas of oyster beds, a main source of Houma income. The sinking of the land cost the Houmas much of the their farmland placing them in further economic jeopardy.

Oil exploitation began in the 1920s and it too adversely affected the ecology of the area and the economic life of the Houma. The oil companies cut canals across the marshlands in order to locate their wells. The banks of these waterways quickly eroded sometimes turning them into lakes. It is estimated that the canals double in width every seventeen years. Oil spills and other pollutants killed off plant life and destroyed water fowl, shrimp, and oysters. The large crew boats which service the off-shore oil platforms created additional havoc by tearing up the shoreline of the bayous. The effect of all this is that Louisiana loses some forty-seven square miles of coast line each year and salt water has penetrated as far north as the city of Houma, some fifty miles from the Gulf. Rushton provides the following bleak illustration of the ecological disaster in process.

> One other irritating nutria problem: in

recent years, the marsh has become infested with an unusual cocklebur that gets embedded in the nutria's fur and can cause wounds that can become terminally infected. The carcass rots and fertilizes a whole new plant of them. Seemingly innocent ecological transformations like nutrias and cockleburs have assaulted the marsh balance continuously over the past century, and the result has often been a net loss of resources. Terrebonne old-timers can recall the days when the sugar lands and orange groves extended far below Houma, the Terrebonne Parish seat, but salt-water intrusion has wiped them out in some areas. That intrusion has come principally from widening bayous into navigation canals, and from dredging an interconnected network of drilling and pipeline canals for the oil industry, both of which have made the area more vulnerable to everything from simple high tides to hurricane storm surge. On some days, the canals also bring salt water into the water supply of Houma, which draws its water from bayous twenty-five miles from the Gulf. Industrial and private marsh buggies, a Louisiana cross-breed of tractor parts and tank treads, roll blithely over muskrat tunnels, crushing them underground. They also scar the marshland, which is as fragile as the tundra of the north that it so closely resembles. Levee building for land reclamation and title-claiming purposes in the marsh has engendered all kinds of disruptions and conflicts, including one brief armed struggle remembered in Terrebonne as the Trappers' War.

Much of the land south of Houma that once supported a large population of fur-bearing animals can accomodate only a small number of them now, because excessive salt-water intrusion from careless manmade changes has killed off the three-cornered grass several kinds of marsh animals eat. All along Terrebonne's bayous, intrusion-prone drainage canals were dredged during the administration of Governor Sam Houston Jones. The canals were dredged back into the marsh parallel to the natural water bodies, permitting well-drained sugar and orange fields to be developed in the narrow strips between the bayous and the canals. But subsequent salt-water intrusion into those ditches by way of the oil industry's navigation channels and pipeline canals has limited what little cane still survives along Bayou Du Large to the very highest and closest edges of the road (1979: 100-1).

During the first two decades of the twentieth century the Houmas achieved a modicum of prosperity. In the latter part of the previous century a Chinese immigrant had introduced to them a process for preserving shrimp. The shrimp were spread out on a platform, allowed to dry, and then individuals stomped through the pile causing the shells to break away. The loose shells were then winnowed away and the remaining shrimp packaged for sale. Houma families joined in the preparation of the shrimp turning the event intc a kind of community festival.

A second major source of income came from trapping, particularly muskrat. This fur was not regarded as commercially valuable until the end of World War I when its price began to rise. However, this prosperity was shortlived. In 1895 non-Indians purchased the swamplands from the Atchafalaya Levee District and when the price of furs rose they instituted a lease system. The Houmas organized to oppose this and there were pitched battles between the Houma trappers and the guards for the land owners, but in the end the owners prevailed (HO: 54). The trappers found themselves either working for a daily wage, leasing the land for a percentage of the crop with no option to sell to other fur buyers, or trapping illegally and running the risk of losing their sets. The net result was a loss of income for the tribal members.

By 1930 the tribal members were in desperate straits. Impoverished, largely illiterate due to their denial of educational opportunity by the school boards, and isolated by racism, tribal members sought relief from the federal goverment. The Department of Interior responded to the plight of the Houma and other Indian tribes of Louisiana by naming a special investigator. The department's announcement that it was sending Roy Nash to investigate conditions among the Houma and other tribes in Louisiana (New Orleans Picayune-Times April 26, 1931) evoked considerable local interest and support (NA RG75 File No. 25436-1931-150). In particular, the secretary of the Houma-Terrebonne Chamber of Commerce, Eugene Dumez, wrote the Department of Interior to offer his help, pointing out the difficult conditions under which the Houma lived. "Due to the low market value of pelts last season and the stringent trapping contracts by lessors of marsh lands," Dumez wrote, "these Indians have barely earned a sustenance and they are not in good circumstances, financially" (Ibid). He went on to praise the department for its efforts to help the Houma.

Nash visited two tribes while in Louisiana, the Coushatta and the Houma. Most of his time and report were devoted to the Coushatta, but he did spend four days (June 12-16) in the Houma settlements. His report, entitled "Indians of Louisiana in 1931," was submitted to the

commissioner on June 12, 1931. The section referring to the Houma appears below.

CHAPTER II
LOUISIANA'S THREE THOUSAND INDIAN OUTCASTS

Were it not for the levees which hold the mighty river in a course acceptable to man, the mouths of the Mississippi would define a delta from Lake Bourgne to the Atchafalaya. All the bayous of Terrebonne and La Fourche are potential exits which have been used by the meandering giant in years past, building up narrow banks of high land along each stream as is the way of great rivers which overflow. Settlement and cultivation is marginal to all these streams, because, except for these bayou banks, the hinterland for from twenty to forty miles from the Gulf of Mexico is marsh like the Everglades of Florida --- the greatest fur-bearing marshes in the United States.

A glance at a road map of Louisiana will reveal that all the roads stop short of open water throughout this vast lowland. Proceed from Houma down any of the roads which parallel the bayous, and as one nears the end of the road he encounters the descendants of Houma Indians. They are on Bayou Caillou from Dulac south, on Little Caillou, on Bayou Terrebonne around Montegut, on Point au Chien, on Bayou LaFourche --- not forgetting the strangest colony on the American continent which occupies the island called Jean Charles.

French is their language; they speak no English except in rare instances. Their cypress dugouts are pirogues. In the winter time they are trappers of muskrat; in the summer, fishermen and casual laborers. There are close to three thousand of them in the delta region.

These are all mixed bloods. French and Indian is the characterristic cross, a mixture which in Canada is considered pretty fine. But there is a five per cent which shows unmistakable Negro blood, and that is where all the trouble lies. The whites will not admit any of the Indian mixed breeds to their school because of the possibility of admitting some one with a few drops of colored blood; the "Indians" will not attend colored schools. The result is that none

of those with Indian blood ever attend any school whatever.

After I familiarized myself with the situation, I met with the school board of Terrebonne Parish in Houma. All the schools in a parish are handled by one board. These men readily admitted the pathos of the situation and agreed to try next fall a school organized solely for those of Indian descent, but expressed scepticism that the Indians would attend. I also saw the State Superintendent of Public Instruction in Baton Rouge, and he, too, promised to use his influence toward getting schools for these social outcasts.

If these Indian mixed bloods were concentrated in any one place, it might be possible for the Federal government to afford them school facilities; but they are scattered widely through Louisiana. In addition to those of the Delta region, there are many in St. Mary's Parish; they are along the Calcasieu River in western Louisiana; there is a settlement at Bayou Lacombe in St. Tammany, north of Lake Ponchartrain; and there are a few Tunica Indians about Marksville, in Avoyelles Parish. The problem is similar everywhere. One can only pity a state where three sets of public schools are required to educate American citizens.

Respectfully submitted,
Roy Nash
Special Commissioner

Hon. Charles J. Rhoads,
Commissioner of Indian Affairs.

(Nash 1931: 10-12)

Nash's report was filed with a note from Assistant Commissioner Daiker saying "No action is recommended, although the Indians are poor, etc. apparently except to inform ourselves and others who may inquire, there is nothing to do on this report."

The first opportunity to use the report came early in January, 1932. Congressman Numa F. Montet had written the

department concerning the condition of the "... some 900 Indians in Terrebonne Parish, Louisiana, who because of the lack of educational facilities, are living in ignorance and deplorably unhealthy conditions." He asked what steps could be taken to improve their lot and "... bring them under your jurisdiction" (Ibid). Commissioner C.J. Rhoads answered that if the federal government assumed jurisdiction over the Houma, it would have to assume it over all the Indians of the state and since there were few concentrated settlements this would present great logistical problems. He likened the condition of the Louisiana Indians to that of the blacks saying:

> A main objective in the work of the Federal government for the Indian is to bring him to the point where he can stand on his own feet in whatever community his lot happens to lie. Admitting the dire poverty and deplorable health conditions to which you call attention, we would question whether the Indian is any worse off than thousands upon thousands of Negroes and poor whites in the same environment. Without Federal aid the Indians of Louisiana exist, free of the handicaps of wardship; to impose wardship upon them would be to turn the clock backward.
>
> Even though you do not assent to that last proposition, how, we ask, can the Federal government assume jurisdiction of little groups of five, ten, fifteen, scattered all over Louisiana? The Coushattas and the little colony on Jean Charles are the only two compact groups.
>
> Federal aid to education and health for backward rural communities is probably a sound proposition, applicable to much of our rural south; legal obstacles aside, we do not believe that for the Federal government to assume jurisdiction over the Indians of Louisiana today would be any kindness to these Indians.

> As you correctly pointed out, ignorance is the fundamental disease among the Indians of Terrebonne - with the reasons for the situation only Louisiana can deal (Ibid).

Rhoads then proceeded to quote that section of the Nash report relating to their status as mixed bloods and their refusal to go to schools established for blacks.

There are several conclusions to be drawn from Commissioner Rhoads' letter. He recognized that there are Indians in Terrebonne Parish and implied that the federal government could extend its jurisdiction to them, were it not for certain geographical and legal obstacles. While Nash's report made it clear that there were concentrations of Houmas besides that at Isle Jean Charles, Rhoads ignored this point and made it appear as though there were only scattered settlements of individual families to serve. The legal obstacle to which he referred quite clearly was the segregation laws. Any attempt by the federal government to provide education for the Houmas would have resulted in support for a separate school, a position adamently opposed by the parish school board.

Rhoads' statement that the Houmas were no worse off than blacks and poor whites was grossly in error. What he failed to note was that these groups were provided with some education, though segregated, while the Houmas were receiving none. Had he and Nash pressed for more information they would have discovered that from 1913, when Henry L. Billiot tried to open the white schools to his

children and was denied because of alleged black ancestry, the Houma community had made repeated efforts to secure education for their children. Below are examples of some of these efforts.

> April 5, 1913 - Henry Billiot and others from Bayou DuLarge appeared before the Board and requested that their children be allowed to attend the Falgout School located in their neighborhood; claiming that their ancestry was pure white and Indian blood and that there was no negro blood in them at all. The Board took no action on the request (Proceedings of the Board of School Directors, Terrebonne Parish 3: 15).
>
> April 5, 1913 - Mr. A.C. Lassiegne appeared before the Board with a petition from citizens of Bayou Jean Charles in the Sixth Ward requesting that a school be established there. On motion of Dr. Sandoz, seconded by Mr. Chauvin, action was deferred on the petition until the July meeting of the Board (Ibid: 22).
>
> January 4, 1914 - No action was taken on a petition from citizens of Point Barre requesting that a school be established in thier (sic) vicinity. The petition was ordered filed for future reference (Ibid: 28).
>
> August 12, 1924 - The Board considered a petition from Indian (sic) on Bayou DuLarge for a school for their children. Action was postponed on the same (Ibid: 292).
>
> October 10, 1930 - On motion of Dr. H.P. St. Martin, seconded by Mr. E.L. Theriot, the Superintendent was authorized to survey the school of the Indians living below Dulac, and, if conditions warrant, provide a school for their children (Ibid: 384).
> October 16, 1934 - Mr. J.C. Munson, representing the so-called Indians of Terrebonne Parish, appeared before the Board at this time to request the Superintendent's reasons for excluding the children of the so-called Indians from the white public schools of Terrebonne Parish (Ibid: 560).

It is unfortunate that the school district failed to

preserve these examples of the Indian community efforts to achieve educational equality. Nonetheless, the records show that repeated efforts were made by the various settlements over a twenty year period and that there was a strong community sense about its identity as Indian to prevent their being categorized as black. Finally, there is no doubt that Secretary Rhoads acknowledged that the Houma, as well as others in Louisiana, were Indians.

The state also recognized the presence of Indians within its borders. In 1932 T.H. Harris, Superintendent of Louisiana Education wrote Secretary of Interior Ray Lyman Wilbur reiterating that there were many Indian children in Terrebonne Parish who could not receive an education because of their isolation and requesting federal assistance (NA RG75 Central Files, 1907-1939. 68776-1931-800 Gen. Ser. Part I). The following year an Indian education supervisor, Samuel Thompson, met with Harris and others, and informed the Commissioner of Indian Affairs that "There is not, of course, a great deal more to be said than what Mr. Nash gave in his report" (Ibid: 254336-1931-150 Gen. Ser.).

But matters did not rest there. In September, 1933 Dumez wrote the department requesting educational assistance for the "remnants of the Choctaw and Houma tribes of INDIANS living near Houma, down our bayous." His interest was motivated less by a concern for equality than

cost. He wrote:

> You sent an investigator here to look into the matter and he submitted a report, a copy of which we would like for you to send us.
>
> We understood, at the time, that the report indicated a mixed race resulting from miscegination or other causes.
>
> We are NOW interested because some of these persons claiming to be INDIANS say they they are denied admission to White public Schools and they will not attend the Negro schools. It looks as if the School Directors of this Parish, (COUNTY) will have to provide them witha school, UNLESS YOU FIND A WAY TO ESTABLISH AN INDIAN SCHOOL DOWN HERE?
>
> Terrebonne Parish, in the 1930 U.S. Census shows more INDIANS, (they are classified as INDIANS) than any other Parish in Louisiana. If the Census authorities admit that they are INDIANS, the classification must or should stand?
>
> Kindly check up on this. If you can do anything to help these poor fellows who are trappers and fishermen by occupation, you will be doing a good job (Ibid).

With the change in federal administration in 1933 came new legislation affecting Indian tribes and a renewed concern within the bureau about the many Indian communities in the southern states. In 1934 W. Carson Ryan, Director of Education for the BIA, prepared a lengthy report on the subject.

> April 3, 1934.
>
> Memorandum on Indian groups in the southern States:
>
> We have never had, as I understand it, a definite Office policy regarding the numerous groups of Indians in the southern states. During the Wilson Administration an attempt was made to

round up these various groups and find out whether anything should be done for them by the Federal Government. It is chiefly from this period that our present work with the Seminoles of Florida and the Choctaws of Mississippi dates. Three years ago Roy Nash made his interesting study of the Seminoles of Florida and subsequently Mr. Nash visited the remnants of Indian tribes in Louisiana and Texas. This was part of a plan for analysing the situation and finding out what steps, if any, should be taken, but the plan was never followed out.

It is customary to refer to these Indian settlements as "small, scattered groups". As a matter of fact, however, there are between 5,000 and 9,000 people of Indian blood in the group usually known as "Croatans" (in and around Pembroke, North Carolina); Louisiana is estimated to have 3,000 people of more or less mixed Indian blood; there are, according the Frank Spelk <sic>, from 12 to 15 Indian communities in Virginia, several of which are well established on ancient reservations; and Alabama must have a considerable number of people of Indian blood about whom very little is actually known. These of course, are in addition to the several thousand Cherokees in the Eastern Band of North Carolina, the 1727 Choctaws in Mississippi, and the 550 Seminoles in Florida.

In view of the pending Wheeler-Howard Bill (which interests many of the Indians in these groups very much), and the present difficulties in securing educational and other services for people of Indian blood in the southern states, it seems especially important to have some data on hand as a basis for a policy. In any recommendations that appear in the following statements, I have assumed as an Indian Service policy that, while we do not desire unduly to interfere with an existing situation, particularly with a satisfactory situation, "the Fedral Government has an obligation to all people of at least one-fourth Indian blood who have a diminished social, health, and educational service in the communities in which they are living as a result of the fact that they are Indian. We sometimes refer to Indians as adequately "adjusted" when what we really mean is that they are resigned to a discrimination that is neither fair nor socially desirable" (NA RG75 10199-43-042).

Speaking of the Houmas, he noted that there are four to five hundred children in Terrebonne parish, of whom only twenty-three were attending public schools. These were to be removed because they were considered non-white. The school superintendent, H.L. Bourgeois, reported that when federal funds were made available for an adult education program "... a delegation of 'Indians' stated that if this meant segregated schools for them they would not accept the schools." In Ryan's opinion, the situation called for a detailed study because "... literally hundreds of children are being deprived of schooling" (Ibid).

Others appealed for help during this period. In 1935 a local resident named Carolyn Dorman wrote to Commissioner John Collier congratulating him on his efforts to improve the conditions of Indians and urging him to assist the tribes in Louisiana. She offered to conduct a survey for the bureau detailing her long interest in and extensive knowledge of the Houma and other tribes, giving the name of John Swanton as a reference. "One more request," she wrote, "please do not delegate some one from Washington or even some uninformed person from Louisiana (I mean uninformed as to our Indians), to investigate these questions. I know from the past what this means... worse than nothing. The Indians resent a stranger prying into their affairs, and the report that goes back to Washington is an empty affair. Better to do nothing than to do this"

(NA RG75 File 37717-1935-042).

Collier responded saying that he had discussed her offer with John Swanton and Duncan Strong of the Bureau of American Ethnology and they had expressed confidence in her ability. He went on to say that because of their limited resources he did not know when they could undertake a survey. "There are several of our staff members who are aware in general of their problems, and who would like to see a careful study undertaken in preparation for any possible federal program. If such a study does become feasible, we shall, of course, get in touch with you" (Ibid). In a letter to the bureau Strong acknowledged Dormon's ability but expressed concerned about whether she could avoid emphasizing "... the emotional or perhaps the romantic side of the picture" (Ibid). He suggested that this work be given to Fred Baker of the bureau, who was conducting a study of the Lumbee at that time. As a postscript, he included a memo from Dr. Ryan, Director of Research on Planning and Development, in which he recommended that the bureau make another survey to determine if there had been any change in the educational conditions of the Louisiana Indians (Ibid).

The tribal members increased and extended their activities. In addition to maintaining a boycott of the segregated schools and petitioning local officials for change they wrote to state and federal officials for help.

Perhaps the most noteworthy was David Billiot, from Montegut and later Golden Meadow who, from 1934 through 1938, sent letters to nearly every public official seeking assistance. One person with whom he and other members of the tribe had an extensive correspondence was Dr. Frank Speck, University of Pennsylvania.

Speck became interested in the Houmas sometime during the mid-1930s. He carried on an extensive correspondence with Houma leaders, most notably David Billiot (BIA RG75 68776-1931-800). From these exchanges, as well as his own experience, Speck took steps to draw the bureaus attention to the plight of the Houma. On September 27, 1938, he wrote to Billiot to tell him that he had fulfilled his promise and gone to Washington at his own expense to meet with the Department of Education of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. He reported that the bureau was "... deeply interested in the report I gave them, and as soon as it can be arranged, they will try to send a representative of the Bureau to Houma or to some place which you may specify to meet with your leaders and the people to make observations and to prepare a report of your needs" (Frank Speck Collection, Box 16).

In October, Ruth Underhill, Associate Director Indian Education, made the promised investigation. Her report, which was discussed earlier (HO : 58-60), demonstrates that the Houma were continuing to live in settlements along the

AT DULAC, CA 1938



KOSMA- INDIAN CHILDREN WITH GUN-U (?) LOG NOTATE- A FOUNDER

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SCHOOL CHILDREN - HERMAN DE VILLE SCHOOL - POINTE DU CHIEN



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CHILDREN COMING 12 MILES TO SCHOOL. L'ISLE À JEAN CHARLES



BAYOU JEAN CHARLES - NEAR MONTEGUT (3)

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BAYOU BLUE - CHILDREN IN PIROGUE - ULFFIN FAMILY



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UNTITLED MEN

EVELYN ELLIOT (VERPET) COURTEAU - 1938
WIFE OF FRANK ELLIOT. DIED AT 50





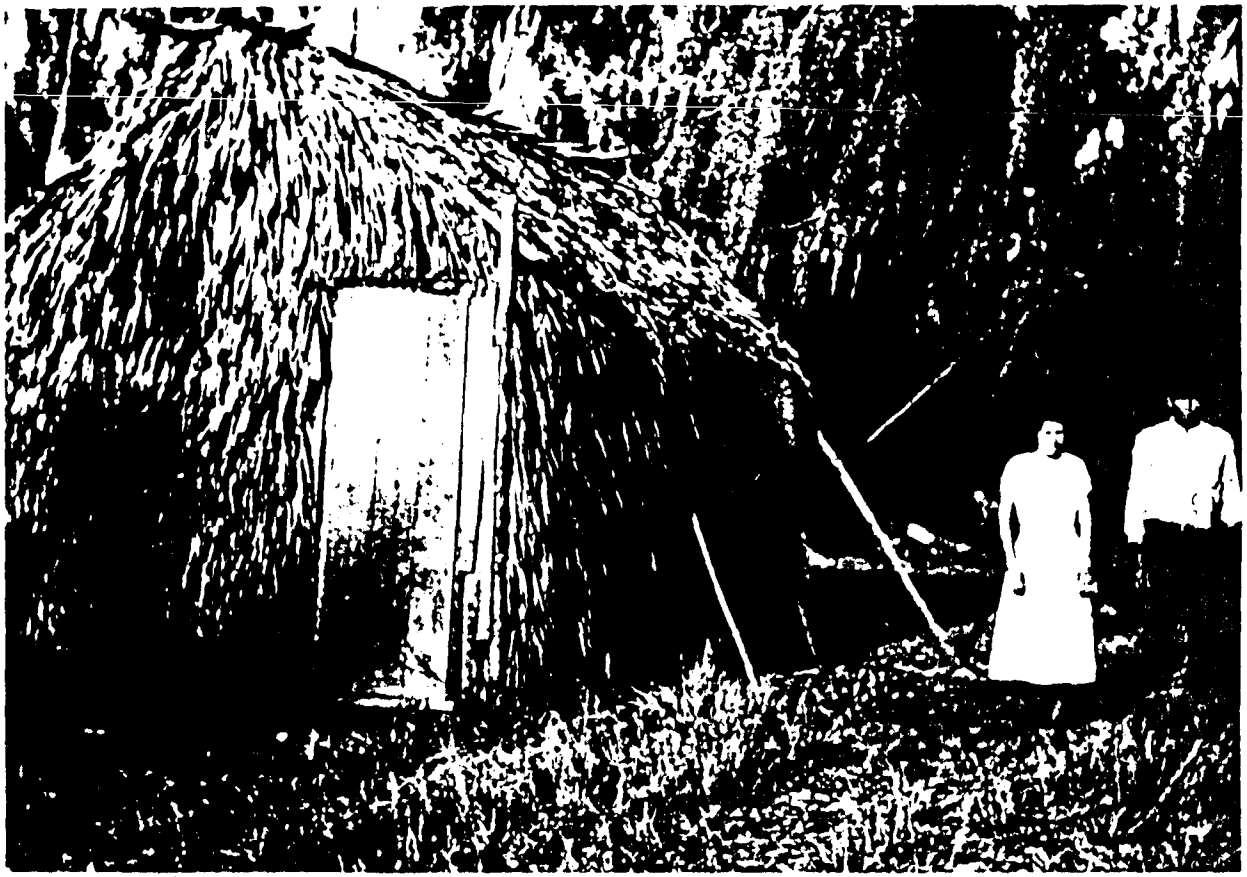
AXOUNI & MARY DU RANTIS (SISTERS) & BROTHER

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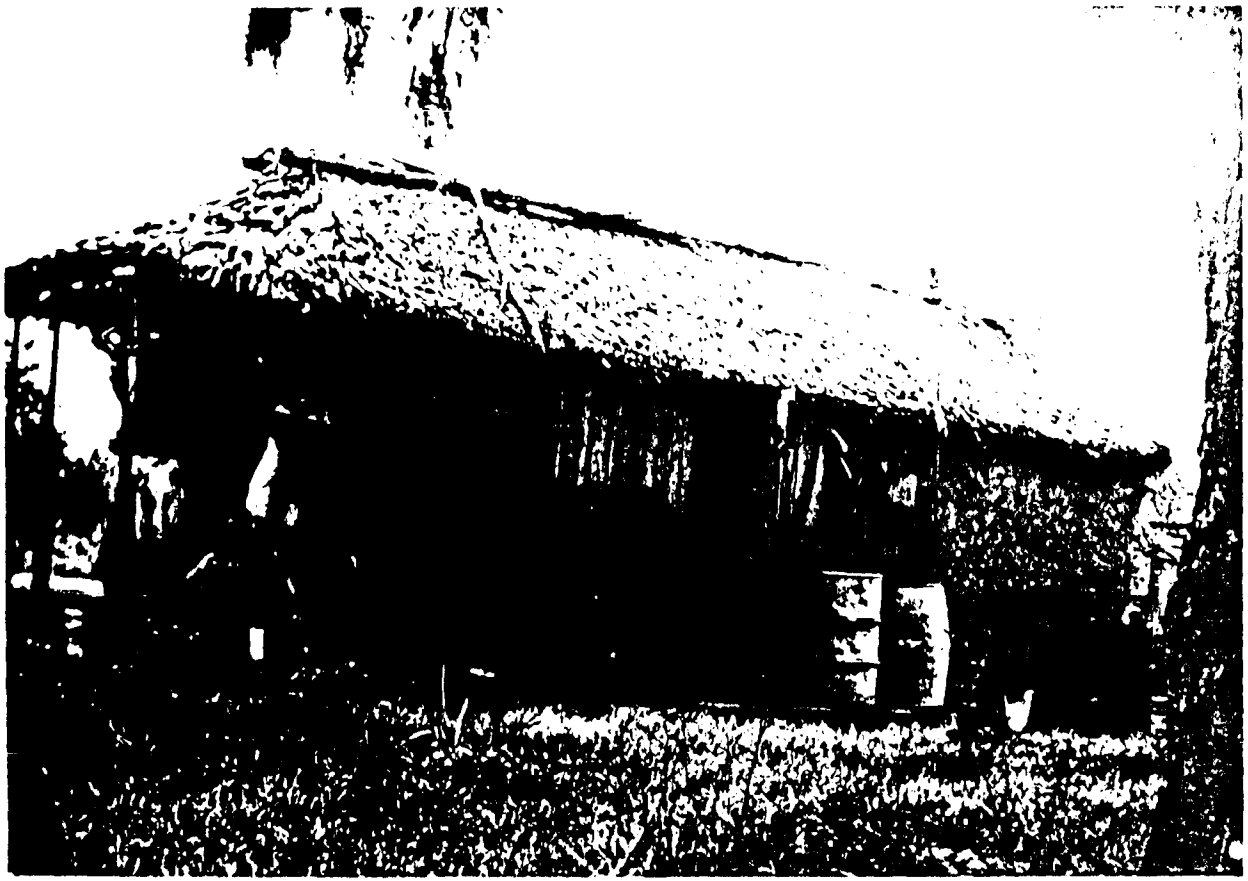
BUILDING - THATCHING AND PLANTS

# 56/56A/56B UHN-PFH-V001-D0001 Page 160 of 173



HOUSE WITH THATCHED ROOF AND WALLS

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PLANK- HOUSE WITH THATCHED ROOF - PART WATTLE AND DAUB

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UNTITLED PERSON



GEORGE VERDIN & FAMILY BRUCE BLUE



MICHELE WAZIYAH - WITH HER BEADED FEATHERS



UNTITLED GIRLS

bayous Grande Caillou, Pointe aux Chenes, Terrebonne, DuLarge, and Lafourche, and at Isle Jean Charles. For income they relied upon trapping and fishing; their standard of living was the lowest in the area and public educational opportunies non-existent. It was her recommendation that a full time worker be sent to Louisiana to advise the groups and coordinate these activities. The Houma needed, in her opinion:

> Continued agitation on the subject of schools.
> Analysis of their economic situation and advice as to where to market.
> Possible assistance in establishing cooperative canning and handicraft work.
> Precise information as to their land situation (Ibid: 20).

It is clear from her report that Underhill, a trained anthropologist, considered the Houma to be an Indian tribe.

So did the noted anthrologist, Frank G. Speck. Over the course of the years from 1937 through 1943, Speck carried on a number of investigations among the Houma, as described previously (HO: 60-63). Speck's work reaffirmed the existence and stability of the Houma Indian community, the role of kinship in integrating the various settlements, their isolation from the non-Indians, their lack of educational opportunities, their resistance to racial categorization and the richness of their traditions and beliefs. Speck wrote of them in 1943:

> The cultural pattern to which the Houma have been long habituated, and through which they have achieved a balanced economic and social adjustment is a mode of life determined largely by conditions of the coastal fringe of marshes.

> The essential elements of the cultural life of a group of people thrust off into a peculiar economic set-up, thrust down by political and social conditions brought upon them by agressive Europeans, have apparently been answered in the evolution of the Houma people and culture in the Bayou country. As a people they have solved the vital issues of subsistence, protection and propagation to a degree of satisfactory maintenance balance in securing for themselves the benefits of natural resources and means of providing seafood in relative abundance. They have housing, transportation and shelter methods well adapted to climate and location; social mores and community consciousness internally satisfying and unifying enough to have preserved pride of tribal lineage and ideals, personal character as well as honor (1943: 140-141).

Concerning subsistence, Speck found that the Houma had made a remarkable adjustment to their enviroment and that their economic problem was not due to a lack of resources, but rather, their inability to market their product.

> In ecologic balance with the biota of the low country the Houma should be, and are in part, a relatively well nourished people. They have provided themselves, through cultural self-progression with competent inventions and knowledge of their enviroment to sustain themselves comfortably, barring the handicaps of marketing their produce in competition with capitalized groups and the local tendency to exploit them as inferiors, "people of color". This sinister classification is a fixed one in Louisiana and includes negroes, mulattos and Indians indiscriminately. It will obviously not change for a long period of time to come, except, as one may envision it, through their gradual recognition as Indians, apart from negroes, by the white authorities and by leading persons and groups on the outside. Such recognition can be acquired gradually by raising the economic and social status of the Indians as such not as negroes or mulattos, and not as whites.

Speck found that the Houma had adjusted in other ways

to this ecological niche. Many had adoppted a seminomadic existence; some living on houseboats, and others along the bayous in structures made of palmetto, which cost nothing to construct and could be ut up in a day or so by an extended family. More permenent residences were made of daub and wattle or slab siding.

In sum, Speck found that the Houma had made a remarkable adjustment to their environment and had maintained their identity in spite of efforts to deny their existence. In his opinion:

> The Indian units of society seem destined to continue to survive. The Houma, for instance, are increasing in number and virility (Swanton, op. cit. p. 292). They have persisted through the most serious adversities of ethnic economic and social oppression, through crisis as severe as any which mankind has had to face, from times of first contact with Europeans down to the present. That they have not been obliterated in blood and character furnishes the testimony upon which we base a claim for support of the social projects for their betterment (Ibid).

## The Houma Community in The Post-War Years

World War II brought few changes to the Houma community. Settlements like Isle Jean Charles raised victory gardens, and collected scrap metal, but relatively few of the men were drafted, at least in the early part of the war. This was a result of the language barrier -- most were monolingual Cajun -- and the high levels of

illiteracy. Oil and gas production in the area did increase significantly with a resultant increase in non-Indian settlement. The road system expanded as did the disruption of the marshland and bayous. Despite these changes the Houma continued their insular lifestyle.

Securing a decent education for their children continued to be a major objective of the Houmas. Since they were prohibited from attending white public schools, those who wished to have their children educated had three alternatives besides sending them to segregated schools. Some opted to move to New Orleans where they could find work and enroll their children in white schools. A few hired private tutors whom they paid a dollar and a half a month, a paltry sum but beyond the resources of most. The third alternative was to send the children to one of a number of denominational schools that had been established specifically for the Houma.

The Methodist were the first to provide classes for the Houma. Their missionary work among the Houma began in 1910 and they provided some sporadic teaching during the 1920s, but it was not until 1930 that they established a school at Dulac. The Baptist Church soon followed establishing schools at Pointe aux Chenes, Bayou Grand Caillou and Bayou Dularge, while the Catholic Church had schools at Lower Bayou Terrebonne, Pointe aux Chenes, and on Bayou Lafourche below Golden Meadow (Bowman 1982: 41).

The constant efforts by Houma community leaders and others to force Terrebonne parish to admit Houma children had little success during the 1930s. In 1934 the federal government allocated $920 toward the construction of a one-room school, which the parish accepted. But no school was built (Ibid). In 1939, the parish school board authorized the school superintendent to provide adult literacy classes and operate schools for the Houma on Isle Jean Charles, Bayou Terrebonne, Bayou Grand Caillou, and Bayou Dularge (Ibid). Except for the school in Montegut on Bayou Terrebonne, there is no evidence that the other schools were ever established.

Matters worsened during the 1930s in Lafourche Parish. While it appears that Indian children were being educated in white schools at the beginning of the decade, by its end they were not. In 1938 an Indian child was dismissed from school "... for the reason that the child was of Indian descent" (Lafourche Parish School Board, Record Book 4/13/1929 - 3/15/1939: 459, 461). In the fall of the next year the parish opened up a two room school for the Houma (Ibid. Record Book 4/5/1939 - 11/30/1944: 43).

In September, 1941, the Terrebonne Parish School Board issued a report on the enrollment of Indians in the parish. The report was in response to a request for transportation from a Catholic priest. The report found that of the 526 school age children, 345 were enrolled in private schools

and another 26 in public schools, leaving another 155 who were not enrolled (Ibid 1941: 281). The report went on to say:

> The question of educating these so-called Indian children has been a vexatious one in this parish. Their parents have repeatedly requested school facilities, and, when these were offered, refused them. Our school on Lower Bayou Terrebonne has proved the only exception in this regard. They have constantly opposed separate public schools for their race and have demanded the inclusion of their children in the white public schools of the parish. Yet, while maintaining this attitude, they have and are accepting without question schools which various churches, regardless of denominations, have organized for them.
>
> If the so-called Indians of the parish, refusing to accept separate public schools for their race, will attend private schools operated by churches, it behooves our board to facilitate their attendance at the latter. We are fortunate in having private schools, under these circumstances, provide instruction at the cost for 345 of these neglected children. We should wish to see the number increase (Ibid).

The figures seem overly generous, but the report does accurately reflect the school board's attitude toward the Houma.

Federal concern for the educational problems of the Houma continued and resulted in another federal review. In December, 1941, Willard W. Beatty, Director of Education, Office of Indian Affairs, visited Terrebonne Parish in the company of Joe Jennings, Superintendent of Indian Education for the Southeastern Area, and Archie McMullen, Superintendent of the Choctaw Agency. They spoke with the superintendent of schools for the parish and visited both

public and private schools.

On the basis of the facts accumulated and checked against information previously received from Dr. Frank Speck of the University of Pennsylvania and the report of our own Dr. Ruth Underhill, both of whom spent considerable time in the area, it is estimated that there are about 1,000 persons of Indian descent living up and down the bayous, trapping, fishing, and shrimping. Aside from the 23 students registered in the public school of Montegut, there are no Indian children in the public schools of Terrebonne Parish.

The mission schools claim rather large enrollments but attendance appears to be quite irregular and the teaching staffs and facilities are totally inadequate for the numbers they are attempting to handle. I found students in the Point du Chien mission schools who had come seven or eight miles by pirogue to attend school which would indicate a considerable desire on the part of the Indians for education.

In view of the fact that it is quite generally assumed that the Indians remaining in the south have intermarried rather largely with Negroes, we made it a particular point to look for Negroid features among the several hundred persons of Indian blood whom we saw. Such evidences were almost entirely absent and it is our impression that the blood admixtures are largely Spanish and French. This contrasts with a group of Indians in Alabama, north of Mobile, where a great deal of Indian admixture is apparent. We were told by a number of residents in the area that many of the Indians completely avoided social contact of any kind.

After our visit to the schools and Indian communities we had a personal conference with School Superintendent H.L. Bourgeois at Houma. Mr. Bourgeois expressed his great concern over the fact that several hundred Indian children were not in public school. He said that because of the fact that some Indians had Negro blood, the group as a whole was not acceptable in white schools, and that they steadfastly refused to enroll in Negro schools. He further stated that at one time the Parish had opened one or more special schools for Indians -- one at Dulac and I believe one other. After attending for a short

period of time the Indians had objected to the segregation when they found that there were no whites attending and had eventually ceased to send their own children. While he desired to get the Indian children into school, he hesitated to ask the Terrebonne school board to go to the expense of providing facilities unless he had some assurance that they would be utilized by the Indians once they were built.

After considerable discussion it was proposed that the parish school board erect suitable classroom facilities with staff quarters at the places of greatest Indian concentration provided the federal government could see its way clear to staffing the schools. Mr. Bougeois felt that with federal sponsorship for Indian schools in Terrebonne Parish, the Indians would probably accept the schools in the same way that the Indians at Charenton and Elton had. I made it clear that the federal Indian Service had no immediate funds available for such a purpose but that if such funds were specifically added to our appropriation by Congress, we would be very happy to cooperate with Terrebonne Parish in the establishment and maintenance of Indian schools where they could prove most useful. It was suggested by Mr. Bourgeois that the entire matter be laid before Senator Ellender of Louisiana who is a resident of Terrebonne Parish and who, he believed, would be interested in the problem of Indian education in that area.

The proposal was to be that the parish would find funds for the erection of school facilities, would furnish transportation of the Indian children to these schools, and would furnish the state text books which in Louisiana are to be furnished publicly to pupils regardless of the schools which they attend, provided the federal government furnished the teaching and custodial staff for the schools. Mr. Bourgeois suggested that if such an arrangement could be worked out, the first school be erected on Isle de Jean Charles, where it is estimated that there are 60 or more Indian children of school age most of whom are today without any school facilities. If the school at Isle de Jean Charles proved successful, he would then recommend to the parish the erection of schools at Dulac and at other Indian centers to be decided upon by himself and representatives of the federal Indian Service.

I later had the opportunity to discuss this proposal with John E. Coxe, State Superintendent of Public Education. Mr. Coxe stated that he felt that the state of Louisiana had a definite obligation in regard to the education of its Indian citizens and that the state was making its contribution through the state allotment for educables to Terrebonne Parish on behalf of Indians as well as other residents and that some service should be furnished. He stated that he would be very glad to approve any such arrangement as that growing out of our discussion with Superintendent Bourgeois and would like to be informed as to the progress of any proposals to make it effective.

The federal appropriations for the education of Indian children are based upon unit allowances per 30 pupils which are presumed to be a classroom enrollment. The allotment for a one-room school is $3,450, for a two-room school, $6,900. This represents the employment of a teacher at a net salary of $1,440 (assuming that the government furnishes quarters) and an Indian Assistant or Housekeeper at $660. It also covers supplies and materials at the rate of $40 per pupil assuming that we furnish a noon lunch, heat and light for the building, and quarters, furnish clothing to needy children, and purchase needed school supplies. This also includes an allowance of $150 for miscellaneous items. Needed furniture for classroom and quarters is purchased from time to time out of the supply allowance. It is estimated by Superintendent Bourgeois that the proposed school at Isle de Jean Charles would require two teachers for there are 60 or more children of school age believed to be living on the island. These estimates are concurred in by representatives of the Louisiana State Department of Education. Assuming they are correct, an appropriation of $6,900 would therefore be required for the federal share in the operation of this proposed school. I personally believe that an operating arrangement such as that proposed would constitute a desirable solution for the problem of supplying school facilities to the Indians of Terrebonne Parish, Louisiana. I believe that such economic assistance for these Indians as may be indicated should come through the activities of the Farm Security Administration, rather than the Indian Service (BIA RG75 4834-42-800).

In June, 1942, Beatty informed Bourgeois that the Department of Interior had included the necesary funding in its appropriation bill and had received the support of Senator Ellender (Ibid). On June 25, Ellender wrote to Harold Ickes, Secretary of Interior to tell him that the Senate had included $6900 to establish a two-room school in Terrebonne Parish, but the item had been removed in the conference. The House of Representatives objected because the item had not been approved by the budget director and because there had been no formal study of the Indian population. Ellender went on to say, "I feel very confident that if the request for establishment of an Indian school in Terrebonne Parish were to be presented through the regular channels there would be no difficulty in obtaining the approval of both House and the Senate" (Ibid). He urged the secretary to re-introduce the bill and to conduct a "full survey of the Indian residents of Terrebonne Parish..." (Ibid).

In late summer there was another exchange of letters between Bourgeois and Beatty. Bourgeois sent a survey of the educable Indians in the parish (457) as well as a description of their location. Beatty reponded, thanking Bourgeois for the survey, adding, "I am assuming that our original understanding that the parish would supply the physical facilities of school building and quarters for teachers if the federal government would undertake to

finance the operation of the school will still hold and that I am safe in quoting that understanding in presenting the matter to the Budget Bureau this fall" (Ibid). Bourgeois answered that the parish could not afford to assume the capital expense and hoped that the federal government would assume the full cost of construction and operation. On September 21, Beatty wrote to Bourgeois, to tell him that it was impossible, because of the war, for the federal government to start any construction, but it was willing to fund the operation as promised. Beatty, clearly disappointed by Bourgeois' withdrawal from the project wrote the state's education department asking for assistance, but here to, he was turned down (Ibid).

There matters rested until 1945, although David Billiot, a member of the tribe continued his campaign to secure federal assistance. With the end of the war Beatty renewed his efforts to secure education for the Houma. He contacted the state and parish authorities asking for their assistance in securing land upon which the federal government could build an Indian school. However, nothing came of this effort. In 1948, after another letter from David Billiot, Beatty reopened the subject with another memo, but this too, died without action (Ibid).

This exchange of correspondence leads to one incontrovertible conclusion: the Congress, federal administration, state government, and parish all

acknowledged the existence of an Indian community in Terrebonne Parish. Between the Nash Report and the reports of Beatty there was a shift of viewpoint on the part of the federal government toward the Houma and an increase in understanding of their community, its culture and its needs. There is no guestion that the Houma community was an Indian community. There is a grudging admission of this by the parish and the state. The failure to provide services to the Houma was a function of war and racism. The parish school system appeared to have no objection to Indian schools so long as they were outside the existing educational system. It would not utilize its resources to accomplish that end. School authorities denied access to white schools, but they did not enforce the compulsory attendance law thereby forcing Houma children to attend black schools. The argument had been made that the intent of school authorities was to keep the Houmas illiterate so that they might more easily be exploited and so they could not institute land claims. While there is no documentary evidence of such a policy, the effect of their actions was to deny educational opportunities to most of the population. Ann Fischer has argued that the failure of the school district to establish schools for the Houma was, in reality, a means to avoid recognizing them (1979: 222). However, this does not appear to be the case; the parish recognized the existence of an Indian community, but it

assumed no responsibilty for its education. From the point of view of the parish it was not important what the Houmas were; it was what they were not that counted. They were not white.

Beginning in the late 1930s and continuing for the next four decades the Houma were visited and studied by a succession of sociologists whose theoretical orientation was significantly different from that of the anthropologists who preceded them. Unlike Swanton, Speck, and Underhill, who saw the Houma as a viable Indian community, the sociologists saw them as a tri-racial isolate, a remnant community ostracized by the surrounding white population.

The first of a series of articles on the Houma community was published in Social Forces in 1950 and entitled "The "Sabines": A Study of Racial Hybrids in a Louisiana Coastal Parish" (Parenton and Pellegrin 1950). Parenton had first come in contact with the Houma in 1937 when he was conducting research for the Louisiana State University Experimental Station on the sugar producing parishes of Louisiana. During the following year he collected some fieldnotes at Isle Jean Charles and then left to complete his doctorate. He planned to return for more research but was prevented by the advent of World War II. He served in the Pacific Theatre where he lost his eyesight. It was not until 1948 that he was able to renew

his contact with the Houma community. The impetus for this came from a graduate student, Roland J. Pellegrin, who was a native of Houma, Louisiana (Letter, Vernon J. Parenton to Greg Bowman, July, 1981).

Pellegrin provided Bowman with the following description of himself and his methodology:

> As a native of Terrebonne Parish, I cannot remember when I first heard of the Sabines. I became actively interested in them about the same time I started graduate study in sociology (1947). At that time my sister was teaching in a public school for Sabines on Bayou DuLarge, south of Houma. I remember visiting her class and being surprised at the startling differences in the physical characteristics of the students. I remember also that my sister had collected school photographs of each child she had taught.
>
> My father, who was an elementary and junior high school teacher and principal in Terrebonne Parish for 45 years, knew a great deal about the Sabines. He began his career in the public school (for whites) at Bayou DuLarge in 1913. From the early 1940's until his retirement in 1958, he served as the principal of the elementary and junior high schools in Pointe-au-Chien and other locations in the southern part of the parish. He also took the U.S. Census and school censuses among the Sabines on Isle Jean Charles during the 1940's and 1950's.
>
> I interviewed a sample of the Sabine population along Bayou DuLarge in 1948. At that time, I was planning to write my master's thesis on the people there and on Isle Jean Charles; this plan was dropped because I lacked the resources for a project of that magnitude. Dr. Parenton and I focused our efforts mainly on Isle Jean Charles. At that time only Sabines lived there. The island was isolated and could be reached only by boat. As I recall, we interviewed the people in many households, but I do not remember the sampling details. The non-Indians interviewed were school officials, priests and ministers, storekeepers, parish officials, fish and shellfish buyers who had

> business dealings with the Indians and other people recommended to us who had knowledge of local history and/or had extensive relationships with the Indians over a long period of time.
>
> Our statement in the article about the loss of racial identity was based on our interviews with the Sabines, the historical materials cited, and observations of physical characteristics. I am not familiar with Speck's work we relied heavily, as you know, on Swanton (Letter, Roland J. Pellegrin to Greg Bowman July, 1981).

Given the extensive contact that the authors had with the Houma community, it is disturbing that they should identify the members of the tribe with the name they found most perjorative. In part, this was a function of the authors' objective: to describe the Houma not as an Indian community but, rather, as a mixed racial group. It is difficult to understand how the researchers could not have been aware of the efforts of Underhill and Speck, since both were in Terrebonne Parish when Parenton was conducting his research.

While the article can hardly be viewed as a favorable depiction of the Houma community, it does, nonetheless, support the contention that a separate Indian community existed. The article is divided into four parts: Historical Background, Population Characteristics, Organizational Characteristics, and Social Change. Under Population Characteristics the Houma are described as living in "... groups or settlements at intervals along the bayous .... a line village pattern, occasionally interspersed among white families" (Parenton and Pellegrin

1950: 150). Others lived in the marshes in isolated homesites. The authors identified the Houma as a "tri-racial people," with a significant number exhibiting "... some of the identifying features of the Indian" (Ibid). The authors give no clue as to what they perceived as these "identifying features." They go on to note that some exhibit characteristics of white people while others have "... dominant Negroidal characteristics." They found that the Houma population was concentrated in the younger ages, that they had a high fertility rate and death rate and that the population was showing a pattern of rapid growth (Ibid: 150-151). For evidence, they relied upon 1940 federal census.

In terms of social organization, Parenton and Pellegrin found that the Houmas few cultural traits which could be identified as Indian. Yet, they were a separate group, held together by language and a sense of themselves as ethnically different. "As a matter of fact, the language bond is second in importance only to racial "consciousness of kind" in fostering some degree of solidarity" (Ibid: 152). While nominally Catholic, "... these "Indians" have remained generally apathetic toward religious matters" (Ibid), and tended to use the various denominations for economic gain. Under a section entitled "Education" the authors pointed out that the Baptist and Catholics had provided schools for the Houma children; they

did not mention the efforts of the Methodists nor did they appear aware of the impact of this schooling on the community. Nor did they discuss the efforts of the parish to prohibit the Houmas from entering the white schools. In the remainder of the article they present the Houma as a shiftless, lazy and wasteful people who have suffered more from their occasional prosperity than they have benefitted from it. In spite of material improvements, the patterns of life have remained unchanged. The one change they note relates to an increase in drinking.

> Because of the prevailing social distance <segregation>, and because of the recently increased earnings of the Sabines, white entrepreneurs have made available to them in their own geographical and social surroundings these opportunities and facilities for relieving themselves of the "burden" of financial affluency to which they are unaccustomed. Consequently, dissipation is no longer an infrequent practice (Ibid: 154).

It would be easy to dismiss this article as theoretically bankrupt and methodologically flawed beyond redemption. And to be sure it is all of that - and more. Yet, despite the biases brought to the research by the authors, they have provided a description of the Houma as a separate community that asserted its Indian identity, was largely endogamous, and had a strong sense of itself, what the authors referred to as its "consciousness of kind." It is unforunate that Parenton and Pellegrin were unable to perceive the unique aspects of Houma culture as described a few years earlier by Speck (1943).

Over the course of the next three decades the Houma settlements were repeatedly visited by researchers. Their interests fell into two general categories: studies of specific Houma settlements, and studies of the culture, social organization, history and contemporary problems facing the Houma tribe. In the former category are the works of Edison Peter Roy (1959), Max Stanton (1971, 1979), Forrest A. Deseran and Gary M. Stokely (1976) and Frank Correl (1984). In the latter category are the researches of Ann Fischer (1965), Jessica Parks (1974), Ewell P. Roy and Don Leary (1977), Jan Curry (1979), Spitzer (1979) and Greg Bowman (1982). Without exception these studies identify the Houmas as the Indian descendants of the Houma tribe. The studies differ most in their breadth and their emphasis.

Roy (1959) studied the Houma settlement at Dulac. He challenged the thesis of Parenton and Pellegrin that the Houma were a tri-racial isolate, arguing that they resided in a tri-racial setting but maintained separate and identifiable boundaries between themselves, and blacks and whites (Ibid: 29-30). Roy noted that there were strong pressures for outmigration -- racial prejudice and lack of employment and educational opportunities -- but he also described the strong sense of social solidarity exhibited by the Houma. This he attributed to the extensive nature

of Houma kinship ties. He summarized his results as follows:

> Some of the general findings and conclusions of the study are: (1) the way of life of the Indian people in the Dulac community is relatiely simple; (2) a complex pattern of race relationship in the community are influenced by a racial phenomenon; (4) a social stratification pattern has existed throughout most of the history of this community; (5) the educational status of the community's inhabitants is extremely low; (6) educational endeavors of the Methodist Mission school were very helpful in exerting a powerful influence on the Dulac Indians; (7) the family is the most stable institution in the community; (8) the attitudes of the people toward their fellow men are greatly influenced by the racial dilemma which engulfs them and; (9) the present generation seems more tolerant, but desires equal educational and public facilities to those which are offered to other people in the parish (Ibid: VIII-IX).

Ten years after Roy's study Max Stanton conducted an investigation of the same community. Stanton spent six weeks in the summer of 1969 working in Dulac as a community worker. He published his findings in two articles in 1971 and 1979. In the interim, he conducted no additional fieldwork, but he did make brief visits to the area in 1971 and 1973.

Stanton's main point is that the Houma Indians have gone through a series of stages from geographical and social isolation to a stage of "closer association with the rest of the Nation" (1971: 88-89). He concluded that because of this closer association there would be a diminution of unspecified "... traditional Indian norms and values" and a decrease in the individual's dependence on

the group (Ibid: 90). In his second article (1979) he expanded on and modified his arguments and added some material on leadership and sense of community. He concluded:

> However, such a lack of communal effort is not surprising when one recalls that these people have not experienced a strong sense of tribal belonging since the 1830s. This is not to suggest that their "Indianness" be discounted, their Indian awareness has simply been focused on the extended family and extended only weakly to a common ingroup identity, recognizing the mere presence of other families that share a common heritage. It is not, therefore, surprising to discover that even in Dulac, in which one-third of all the Indians in the area live, attempts to coordinate activities on a scale larger than the extended family have only recently taken form.
>
> It is to be expected that the Houma will exhibit a more unified group awareness than in the past. There is still a three-way racial stratification in all communities where Indians live in southern Louisiana, and because they are still set apart from whites and blacks, they form a separate group wherein their identity as Indians is emphasized.
>
> Virtually all the Houma families live within easy access of hard-surface, all-weather roads and have an automobile or truck. This allows greater contact and communication within a community and with other communities. However, because of the informal segregation which is still the general rule, the extended network of communication is primarily among other Indians in the area (Ibid: 106-107).

Stanton's perception of the Houma as a tribe is influenced by his understanding of what constitutes a tribe. While he does not provide a definition, he sees as a critical attribute the need for a formal, centralized structure. He does recognize that the Houma have acted

through informal leaders, have a sense of themselves as a tribe, and maintain separate social boundaries from whites and blacks in the area.

This separate identity of the Houma is described in some detail by Forrest A. Deseran et al (1979). In a study entitled "An Assessment of Housing of Indian, White, and Black Residents in Two Rural Louisiana Communities," the researchers surveyed approximately 50 percent of the households in the Dulac area and 25 percent in the Grand Caillou-Bobtown area. In general, they found that Houma households were larger than either white or black, their heads were younger and less educated, and the homes had fewer conveniences. They attributed the lower standard of Houma housing to the fact that while most of the homes were occupant owned, the land on which they stood was not. This made their tenancy uncertain at best. Added to this was the tographical factor that the area is highly susceptible to floods. The authors concluded that the variations in housing were not due to differences in the values of the three populations. The report affirms the existence of a separate Houma community.

The last study of this type was done by Frank Correl in 1984. His work was limited to the Dulac settlement where he spent approximately a month interviewing. The report consists of a cursory review of the history of the settlement, but Correl does acknowledge the separateness

and cohesiveness of the Indian community.

Ann Fischer came to the Houma in the dual capacities of researcher and advocate. A member of the anthropology department of Tulane Uniersity, Fischer began her research on Houma medicine, folklore, and ethnohistory in the late fifties. She spent the summer of 1960 doing fieldwork in the community where she became increasingly involved in the economic and educational problems facing the Houma. She provided the following description of her shift to advocate:

> When I came to the Houma, the middle-aged people were most interested in soliciting my help for them. Once they were convinced that I was not an investigator sent to arrest illegal medical practitioners, they quickly told me about their problems. I wanted to learn about the local remedies, but the Houma were interested only in gaining help with their land claims. For every ounce of knowledge I painfully acquired about herbal medicines, I received pounds of volunteered information on land frauds. After they made many appeals to my sense of justice, I agreed to contact the Association for American Indian Affairs, naively stating that this was as far as I intended to go. (1968: 228-229).

Fischer's letter to the Association of American Indian Affairs had the desired result. The organization enlisted the services of an attorney, John P. Nelson. While Nelson was enthusiastic, he soon came to the conclusion that the legal bars to land recovery were virtually insurmountable. Fischer and Nelson did not give up. Instead, they turned their attention to the problem of segregated schools. After conducting a study of the problem, Nelson agreed to

file an action on behalf of the Houma to force the integration of the Terrebonne Parish schools (Bowman and Curry 1982: 50). The case, Margie Willa Naquin, et al, v Terrebonne Board of Education, was filed in April, 1963. Nelson demonstrated that Houma children were systematically discriminated against because of their Indian ancestry and that the separate schools established for their use were inferior to those established for the white children. The federal court ruled in favor of the Houma and set up a schedule for integration, beginning with grades 11 and 12 in the first year, 7 through 12 in the second, and the elementary grades in the third year.

Ann Fischer died before she could publish the bulk of her findings on Houma medicine and folklore. In the one article she published she took the position that the Houma viewed themselves as Indians and had a sense of themselves as a separate social entity (1965: 213-216). She recognized that individual members were able to escape the poverty and illiteracy by moving away, and she saw the activism of some members of the tribe as a function of their desire to improve their condition. Her involvement in the social injustices faced by the tribal members influenced her approach to the article, laying its emphasis on the difficulties they faced and not on the social organization they possessed.

## Contemporary Community

The United Houma Nation, Inc. has over 8000 members, most of whom live in five parishes in Louisiana. Chart # provides a breakdown on the population of the tribe by parish. As can be seen from the chart, most of the Houma population live in the two parishes of Terrebonne and Lafourche. Within these parishes the tribal members are concentrated in seven settlements: Houma, Dulac, Grand Caillou, Montegut, Pointe aux Chenes, Isle Jean Charles and Golden Meadow. A breakdown of the number of Houmas residing in each settlement is shown in Chart# 2 . Because of their proximity, Point au Chenes, Isle Jean Charles, and Montegut are treated as a single entity

Chart #2

Houma Indian Population, by Parish - 1985

| | |
|---|---|
| Lafourche | 1950 |
| Terrebonne | 3847 |
| St. Mary | 426 |
| Jefferson | 1489 |
| St. Bernard | 268 |
| Others in Louisiana and elsewhere | 735 |
| Total | 8715 |

Source: United Houma Nation, Inc. tribal records, 1985.

Chart # 3

Distribution of Houma Population in Terrebonne and Lafourche Parishes - 1985

| Settlement | # Households | # Residents | |
|---|---|---|---|
| In Terrebonne Parish | | | |
| Dulac | 172 | 751 | |
| Isle Jean Charles | 76 | 370 | |
| Pointe aux Chenes and Montegut | 92 | 349 | |
| Grand Caillou | 262 | 1072 | |
| Houma | 229 | 860 | |
| Other Houma Community in Terrebonne Parish | | | |
| Theriot | 59 | 211 | |
| Bourg | 26 | 109 | |
| Chauvin | 18 | 74 | |
| Schriever | 5 | 24 | |
| DuLarge | 4 | 18 | |
| Gibson | 2 | 9 | |
| Total in Terrebonne Parish | | | 3847 |
| In LaFourche Parish | | | |
| Golden Meadow | 97 | 732 | |
| Cut Off | 74 | 295 | |
| Galliano | 68 | 251 | |
| Montegut | 47 | 223 | |
| Lockport | 41 | 157 | |
| Larose | 31 | 126 | |
| Bourg | 26 | 81 | |
| Raceland | 7 | 39 | |
| Thibodaux | 13 | 33 | |
| Mathews | 5 | 13 | |
| Total in Lafourche Parish | | | 1950 |

Source: United Houma Nation, Inc. tribal records.

The present-day Houma settlements differ little from those studied by Swanton, Underwood, and Speck. There has been a tendency for the Houmas to move up the bayous as the effects of salinization, erosion, and subsidence have become more pronounced. The movement up the bayous has resulted in increases in the Houma population in the settlements of Bourg, Theriot, and Houma. Some

settlements, such as Pointe Barre and Fala, have virtually disappeared, while others, like DuLarge, have lost most of Houma residents. The remainder of the Houma settlements have remained relatively stable and intact.

As noted by other researchers, the key factor in the stability of the Houma community has been, and continues to be, the nature of its family organization. Membership is determined through either the father's or mother's line, and an individual must be able to trace his or her descent from one of several nineteenth century families that are accepted as Houma.

Houma families are larger than either the white or black population in the area. One survey, conducted in the 1970s, found that 53.9% of the Houma households in the Grand Caillou-Dulac area had five or more occupants, as compared with 25.6% for whites and 42.8% for blacks (Deseran et al 1979: 13). As the genealogical data indicate, families with six or more children are not uncommon. There is a tendency for the children, when they start families of their own, to live close to their parents. Thus, there are almost daily contacts among the the parents and their offspring, as well as among the siblings.

For most of their history the Houma have tended to marry within the group. In part this was a function of the racial segregation prevalent in Louisiana. Until recently

Houmas could not easily marry whites and members who married blacks were ostracized. Houmas who moved out of the parishes and relocated in places like New Orleans found they were able to associate with whites, and some marriages occurred. But many returned to the Houma community and married its members. Since 1960 there has been a greater tendency for Houmas to marry whites, but this has not been a significant ortion of the population. The majority of Houma continue to marry other members of the tribe.

Most commonly, individuals marry persons from other settlements. In earlier days this process was facillitated by the nearly weekly private dances and the taso-making occasions previously described. Now, regional schools, extended family gatherings, parties, and the like, provide the means for social contacts. As in the past, Houmas generally married out of their settlement thereby creating linkages to other Houma settlements. Houma family networks are extensive, and every Houma can trace his or her kin ties to any other one.

Until recently, Houmas maintained communications through a number of mechanisms. There was, first of all, the system of hand-dug canals that allowed easy access to the Houma settlements. These canals, in turn, facilitated inter-settlement dances, parties, and informal family gatherings, as described earlier in this section. By the 1950s all weather roads and telephones, along with the

bayous, had replaced the trenasse as the principal means of transportation and communications.

With a decline in the overt features of segregation aspects of Houma culture such as the dances in private homes ceased, replaced by other forms of entertainment. But the ability to participate on an equal basis with non-Indians has not seriously affected the sense of kinship among tribal members. When asked why he did not move away from the bayous in order to get a better job, one individual responded by saying that he had, but that "the road runs both ways. And I always come home to be with my family" (Campisi 1984, fieldnotes). This sentiment concerning family is the most commonly expressed value when individuals are asked why they remain or why they have returned.

Along with the strong sense of family there is an equally strong sense of themselves as Indian. Although individuals may be vague about the details of their tribal history, there is no uncertainty among them that they are Houma Indians, descendants of Rosalie Courteaux. Nearly every adult one meets will recount stories about Rosalie Courteaux. Added to this is a strong sense of injustice and a pride among members in the way they have struggled to maintain their identity. This includes their battles to get equal education, be accepted as Indians, secure the return of lost land, and the efforts to protect the lands

they have, which they feel is in constant jeopardy.

For many of the Houma their lifestyle has changed little over the past decades. Trapping and farming have declined because of the changes in the ecology of the bayous, but the principal activities of fishing and shellfishing have continued as the principal occupations of most families. Generally, members of the immediate family work together on the boats, sharing in the cost and profit. Income from these sources in uncertain, and there is considerable pooling of resources.

The Houma share other aspects of social life. Most speak a form of Cajun, which they say is different in significant ways from that spoken by the Cajuns in the area. It is their view that the form of the language they use contains a number of Indian words not found in the standard Cajun spoken. Further, they say that even some of the French words are different, deriving from their earlier contact with a different group of French speakers. Several individuals asserted that they could distinguish a member of the tribe from a non-member Cajun speaker by the language used as well as the way it is spoken. Without extensive linguistic research it is impossible to demonstrate any difference. However, regardless of the empiric data, it is an important factor contributing to the Houma sense of community.

Another factor, perhaps of greater importance, is the

continued use of traiteurs by members of the community. As pointed out previously, the Houma have an extensive pharmocological inventory, and large number of practitioners. Without exception, every adult with whom this researcher came in contact, placed great value on the efficacies on these cures. There is an equivalent group of traiteurs among the Cajun population, and on occasion, individuals will go to a curer outside the group. This is particularly true for non-Indians. The belief of the traiteurs that they have a gift from God prevents their denying service. However, Houmas say that their cures are different from those of the Cajun, that they are of natie origin. This is borne out by Speck's observation that "... out of the total of over seventy herbals and one hundred and five applications in the list there are but four of European nativity adopted for use by the Houma, and their application does not coincide strictly with the remedial uses by Europeans" (Speck 1941a: 67).

The traiteurs and their specialties are well-known in the Houma community. Every family has individuals who cure headaches, sun stroke, and the like. As in the past, there are individuals who are better known for specific cures, and individuals in need frequently travel to other settlements to secure help.

In summary, the Houma community consists of the seven principal settlements in Lafourche and Terrebonne parishes,

in addition to a number smaller units. There are, in addition, population concentrations in three other parishes, and a sizeable number of individuals who live elsewhere in and out of state. The population is linked together by family ties, shared values, and more or less frequent association. People who live out of the community return often for vacations and family gatherings. The Houmas exhibit a strong sense of themselves as a community separate from the others in the area. While the manifest barriers of segregation have diminished, the Houma have maintained their separate identity. Since the formation of the incorporated tribal council (see 83.7(c)) there have been more organized expressions of their sense of themselves as a community. But it is clear that they have been continuously viewed as an Indian community by the surrounding communities, that they have continuously viewed themselves as an Indian community, and that they are the descendants of the Houma tribe that occupied the area during the latter part of the eighteenth century and early part of the nineteenth century.

83.7(c) A statement of facts which establishes that the petitioner has maintained tribal political influence or other authority over its members as an autonomous entity throughout history until the present.

Little is known about the specifics of the Houma political system at the time of contact. D'Iberville found they had a chief who, in the company of two others described as "important persons," greeted him on his arrival in the Houma village, in 1699. The chiefs acted as spokesmen rather than rulers (HO: 4-6). Father Gravier, who accompanied d'Iberville, reported that the Houma had three chiefs (HO: 6). The following year the Jesuit order set up a mission among the Houma, first headed by Father Du Ru, and later by Father Gravier. He reported that a woman had died the previous year who had distinguished herself as a leader and had been granted the honor of occupying "... the first place in all Councils" (HO: 10). Interestingly, d'Iberville, who was in the community the previous year, makes no mention of this leader.

The European conflicts had exacted a heavy toll on the tribes by the 1730s, forcing a variety of tribal segments to join together for protection. This tendency to form alliances was common along the eastern seaboard. The

Colapissas and Bayogoulas joined the Houma, but kept separate political leaders (HO: 16). The Houmas maintained a separate tribal identity throughout the century, although they were forced to move frequently and were joined by individuals from other Muskhogean-speaking groups. The Houma leaders met with both Spanish and English officials, accepted gifts, smoked the calumet, and gave or denied their support as the occasion warranted (HO: 16-18).

It was not umtil the 1700s that Houma leaders appeared by name. In that period a split developed in the tribe, with the result that a number of leaders vied with each other for power. The most frequently named individual was Calabee, who was reputed to be the son of Poucha-Houmma. According to legend, Calabee was to be put to death for having killed a Choctaw chief, but his father took his place. The presumed act of heroism provided the theme for an early play (Villeneuvre 1964). Whether true or not, Calabee did succeed Poucha-Houmma, and was the leader who sold the Houma Claim to Conway and Latil (HO: 21). Other leaders during this time were Matiabee and Tiefayo, each of whom led a village (HO: 22-23).

The division became more pronounced during the American Revolution with Calabee and another chief, Thioutioupacphee, siding with the British, and Matiabee and Tiomoabee with the Spanish (HO: 27-28). At least one other leader, Natchiabe, is identified in the historical records

of the period (HO: 26).

With the end of the American Revolution and the purchase of Louisiana by the United States, a new leadership emerged. In 1811, Chac-Chouma met with Governor Claiborne, who gave them gifts and supplies in the name of the United States (HO: 30-31). Louis le Sauvage succeeded Chac-Chouma and brought a claim against the United States for title to a vast section of southern Louisiana (American State papers 1832 2: 432). After his death, around 1820, Rosalie Courteaux, his niece, became the tribe's leader (Ho: 34). Rosalie Courteaux led the tribe until her death in 1883. Originally she lived in the city of Houma, but as the result of repeated attacks by whites she was driven south along Bayou Terrebonne until she finally settled on one of its distributaries, at Pointe Barre (HO: 34-39). It appears that Rosalie's sons were looked to as leaders following her death.

By the middle of the eighteenth century the Houma tribe had sub-divided into a number of villages, each with its own leadership. This fragmentation was the consequence of conflicting pressures from England, France, and Spain. The establishment of a number of settlements along the lower reaches of the bayous, in the nineteenth century, resulted from a different cause. Hostility against the Houmas forced them to relinguish their lands on the upper parts of the bayous, - lands suitable for farming - and to

settle on land with little agricultural value. This, in turn, resulted in a shift to an economy based on hunting, fishing, and trapping. The political organization of the tribe adjusted to the new settlement pattern. The old form of village organization gave way to a more decentralized one operating around a number of more or less permanent settlements (HO: 42-43). Each settlement had its prominent individuals -- heads of households, traiteurs, etc. -- who gave direction and maintained order. Only when issues arose that involved the non-Indian community did their names become part of the public record.

Just how isolated this area was is indicated by a federa survey map completed in 1860 (NA RG75 Map No. 462). This map shows that more than half the area south of Houma was "unsurveyed and unfit for cultivation."

The movement of the Houma southward along the bayous and into their adjoining marshlands was an attempt to escape persecution. The fact that so many moved into the same general area, settling around and on land owned by a few of the leaders suggests a conscious effort to remain a tribal unit. Some Houmas, most notably Marianne Sauvage, Marianne Nerise, Sauvage Courteaux, and Rosalie Courteaux, owned sizeable tracts of land, particularly along Bayou Terrebonne. It is not clear how they acquired the funds to purchase these tracts. It has been suggested by Curry (1979: 18) that some of these purchases were made in the

name of the tribe's leader, Rosalie Courteaux, for the benefit of the Houma tribe. Absent a pooling of the resources of tribal members, it is difficult to explain how individuals could secure the funds necessary to purchase so much land, even taking into account its probable low price.

At Isle Jean Charles, Jean Victor Naquin was the recognized leader from the late nineteenth century through the 1940's. He was born shortly after the Civil War, and spent his entire life on the island. He maintained order on the island, saw that those in need received help, and directed communal labor such as the annual clean-up of the trenasses (nettoyer le canal). When outsiders came to the island, it was obligatory that they receive approval from Victor Naquin. One visitor in the late 1920s referred to him as the "... patriarch of this strange place.... "da bos" of the island through heritage..." (Ramsey 1946: 46). For example, in 1942 representatives of the Farm Security Administration traveled to the island to enlist the Houma in the Department of Agriculture's "Food for Freedom" program. Victor Naquin assured the officials of the community's support (New Orleans Times-Picayune May 12, 1943). The following year the same paper ran an article in which it described Naquin as "dean, leader and advisor to the community" (Ibid January 16, 1943).

At Pointe aux Chenes, the first leader was reported to have been Alexandre, the son of Rosalie Courteaux. He was

succeeded by Joseph Aubert (Aubin) Billiot, grandson of Rosalie (O.H. 18). He referred to himself as "le pur, pur Indien du bois de la point" (the pure, pure Indian of the woods). He was, in addition to being the settlement's leader, a curer (Ibid). He relied upon his uncle Eulise Billiot to see to it that his decisions were carried out (O.H. 18). He was succeeded by Sidney Verdin and Abbe Billiot.

In the Dulac-Grand Caillou area the most prominent leader was Jean Baptist Parfait. Born in 1870, by the turn of the century he was recognized as a community representative. He performed much in the same manner as Victor Naquin. He saw to it that the trenasses were cleaned and repaired, that help was given to the needy, and that the community's interests were presented to outsiders. Unlike Naquin, he was a noted traiteur, and this added significantly to his influence (O.H. 48, 17). In one instance in 1922, he led a delegation to meet with U.S. Representative Martin to seek assistance in getting federal recognition. Nothing came of the meeting, in part because Parfait declined the designation as the principal representative. "Judge Martin called a meeting at the Thibodeaux Courthouse," Tom Dion recalls, " A lot of people went. J.B. Parfait and others went. He <Martin> recognized them as Indians. They needed a chief. All looked to Parfait to be chief but he declined" (Campisi

1984 fieldnotes). It was customary among the Houma to look upon leadership as something which is thrust upon an individual, like treating, more an obligation than an honor (Campisi 1984 fieldnotes).

A second important leader in this settlement during the 1920s was Paul Thomas Dion, who with J.B. Parfait, attempted to recover some of Rosalie Couteaux's land. Like Parfait, he was an advisor, leader of community work crews, and an influential voice in Houma affairs (Campisi 1984 fieldnotes). Paul Dion was succeeded by his son Tom, who has devoted much time and energy to Houma tribal affairs over the course of some fifty years. Among other efforts, Tom Dion organized legal actions against the oil companies (Dion et al v. Humble Oil and Refining Co. U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Louisiana. cv 2-2835), led the fight for public education for Houma children, and worked with others to form a shellfish cooperative in order to improve the living conditions of Houma fishermen. According to Tom Dion, this pattern of consensual leaders existed throughout all of the Houma settlements. In his words:

> Her son Alexandre took over after Rosalie. After Alexandre died (ca 1900) his brother called Barthelmy (Jacque Constant) pushed for land. In 1919 had a suit - Dupont v. Atlas Oil - went to court, Emile <who was Barthelmys son and had succeeded him> testified.
>
> Alec <Emile's son> took over from Emile - He opposed the people who were controlling trapping. Got lawyer McGinnis in the mid-twenties.

Charles Billiot and David Billiot worked for schools - Pointe aux Chenes and Montegut. David lived in Point aux Chenes and Charles Billiot in Houma. Speck came to give them a hand.

My daddy was hired by Humble Oil to lease property. After they had what they wanted they filed quitclaims for the land - beat people out of it.

In the 1950s we pushed for a school. I went for the land, went to court in 1963-64. In court 4-5 years. It never went anywhere. Judge Greenberg made a ruling but he was prohibited from hearing the case. I filed another in 1973-74 - class action suit. The judge threw it out. I appealed and it's still in appeal.

Grand Caillou - J.B. Parfait was a kind of leader in Dulac area. A lot of people went to him for advice. On each bayou they depended upon them <someone>.

Pointe aux Chenes David Billiot who could read. Isle Jean Charles - Victor Naquin - called him chief. Montegut - Emile and Alec Billiot (Campisi 1984 fieldnotes).

There were other leaders in other settlements who performed similar functions. Toussant Verdin was the recognized leader in the Bayou DuLarge-Mauvais Bois area. Among other things he directed the construction of one of the longest trenasse in the area, from Mauvais Bois to Bayou du Cade. It is now Known as the Billiot Canal (T. Baker Smith & Sons, Lay-out Map, 1972). Verdin was assisted by Duncan "Donc" Billiot, who acted as his "constable" (O.H. 35).

On Bayou Lafourche the most important leader during the 1930s was David Billiot. He grew up at Pointe aux Chenes, but spent much of his adult life near Golden

Meadow, eventually moving to lower Barataria, where he died in the late 1940s. For over twenty years he was the undisputed leader at Golden Meadow.

> They <the Houmas> used to go to him for just about everything. He had a phone in his house <and> he was a boat builder (O.H. 13).
>
> He tried, but he had no education. He was smart but they laughed at him because he had no education. He tried to bring people together (O.H. 30).
>
> He tried to help people. He made boats. He used to trap and to hunt. He tried to get us a school. He tried to find the Spanish land grant (O.H. 31).

David Billiot was assisted in his efforts by Charles Billiot, a distant relative. Charles Billiot wrote letters to the Bureau of Indian Affairs seeking educational assistance for the Houmas. He helped to organize petitions to be delivered to the legislature in Baton Rouge, and generally took over after the death of David Billiot (O.H. 44; Campisi 1984 fieldnotes).

Two values underlie the attitudes and actions of the members of the Houma tribe. They are that the members are Indian and should not have been subjected to racial segregation as blacks, and that the members have lost large tracts of valuable land through fraud and theft. Many Houmas see the two as inter-related. The school systems sought to deprive them of an education so as to prevent the assertion of their property and civil rights.

Whatever the reason, soon after the establishment of

compulsory education in Louisiana, the Houmas found that their children were not allowed to attend the schools set aside for white pupils. Led by Henry Billiot, tribal members petitioned the school board of Terrebonne Parish to allow their children "... to attend the Falgout School located in their neighborhood; claiming that their ancestry was pure white and Indian blood and that there was no negro blood in them at all" (Proceedings of the Board of School Directors, Terrebonne Parish 3: 15; 83.7(b): 96-97). When the school board failed to take action on the request, Billiot attempted to enroll his children in the all-white school. Prevented, he brought a lawsuit.

The lawsuit revolved around whether or not Billiot had any black ancestors. By implication, it raised the same question concerning all tribal members. After extensive testimony, the jury ruled in favor of the parish denying access to the white schools to tribal members (H.L. Billiot v. Terrebonne Board of Education CV No.7876).

Until World War II the efforts by the various settlement leaders were hampered by a lack of central organization. This was in part a result of the political structure under which they were forced to operate, in part a result of the difficulty in establishing quick communication among the various settlements, and in part due to their poverty, and their lack of education and organizational skills. Following the war, a new group of

leaders attempted to remedy these deficiencies. Among these were Lovince Billiot and Jack Creppel. Billiot had been raised at Pointe aux Chenes, but had moved to New Orleans where he met Creppel. They sought to organize the Houmas living in and around New Orleans (O.H. 39). In addition, he pursued efforts to regain a part of Pointe aux Chenes called Paradise Island, claiming that it had been illegally taken from the tribe. His efforts were the forerunner of the present tribal organization. It is interesting to note that the first attempt to establish a formal political structure came out of the urban area.

The present tribal organization has its origins in the American Indian Conference, which was held in Chicago, in 1963. Frank Naquin received notice of the conference, and discussed the possibility of sending representatives from the tribe. Helen Gindrat and Dolores Terrebonne went, and on their return, recommended that the tribe establish a more formal organization. This was occurring coincidental with the tribe's struggle for improved education for its children in Terrebonne and Lafourche parishes. There was also the continuing efforts of Tom Dion, Lovince Billiot, and others to secure the return of land lost to the oil companies. In that connection, a individual by the name of Ralph Scofield had arrived in southern Louisiana, had formed the Golden Arrow Oil Company, and offered to assist the Houmas in getting their oil lands back. He urged the

tribe to set up a formal organization. Additionally, the younger leaders realized that the Houma would be at a decided disadvantage in their efforts to assert their rights, without a leadership that could speak for the membership (Campisi 1983 fieldnotes).

As a result of these crosscurrents, the Houma Tribe, Incorporated, was formed. Its first chairman was Frank Naquin. The organization was designed to serve Lafourche, Jefferson, and part of Terrebonne parishes. It concentrated its efforts on providing adult education programs in these areas. A split soon developed in the organization, and in April, 1974, a rival organization, the Houma Alliance, Inc., was formed (Houma Daily Courier April 25, 1974). The group, which was centered in the Dulac-Grand Caillou area, was organized by Howard Dion, son of Tom Dion, and had as its principal objective to improve the economic conditions of the Houma Indians. Thus the split in the tribe resulted from differences in perception of the Houmas most pressing need.

The two organizations operated for five years, but it was clear to members of both groups that the division served no one's interests. Early in 1978 members of the Houma Tribe began discussing the possibility of merging the two organizations (TM February 25, 1978). Similar discussions were going on among the leaders of the Houma Alliance (Campisi 1984 fieldnotes). In June, the first of

a series of meetings was held between the leaders and, over the course of a year, a plan for merging the organizations was worked out. Finally, in 1979, the leaders of the two groups agreed upon a merger (Thibodaux Daily Comet April 13, 1979). The plan was submitted to the membership which voiced approval. The plan called for the establishment of a tribal council with representation apportioned according to population. On June 1, 1979, The United Houma Nation, Inc. held its first meeting with Kirby Verret, from Dulac, as chairman. Work began immediately on drafting a new constitution for the tribe. After nearly two years of discussion and debates, the new constitution was presented, amended, approved, and went into effect on June 27, 1981 (TM April 25, 1981).

The present tribal council is made up of representatives from the five parishes: Lafourche and Jefferson have 3 seats, Terrebonne has 5, St. Mary's 2, and St. Bernard 1. Within the parishes, there are election districts. Elections are for a two year term, and the chairman and other officers are selected from among the elected councillors by the tribal council.

The tribal council is the policy-making branch of the tribal government. It approves all hiring, applications for grants, the expenditure of funds, and speaks for the tribe. It leases the old Indian school building in Golden Meadow, which it uses as an administration building, and

owns another former Indian school building in Montegut, which it intends to develop as a community center for tribal members in that area. In addition, it has the use of a community center in Dulac.

The tribe operates through a series of standing committees. They include planning, operations, budget, cultural traditions, physical facilities, legislative lobbying, and personnel. In addition, there are numerous committees formed as new problems arise. These have dealt with (and in most cases, continue to deal with) by-laws, recognition, Indian crafts, preservation of the Indian mounds, land claims, jobs, education, and recreation. Over the years the tribe has received a number of grants including CETA, weatherization, tribal administration, housing, recreation, and the like. To administer these activities the tribe has developed a small staff, in part paid, and in part volunteer. The growing administrative reponsibilities have resulted in a natural tension between the council and the chairman over who has authority to address the daily issues of tribal management, and the degree to which the chairman may speak for the tribe. These issues have, in the past, resulted in the resignation of one chairman, and the criticism of others. Recently, the tribe has hired a tribal administrator to overcome this problem.

The United Houma Nation, Inc. has demonstrated that it

has maintained a continuous, though changing, political organization since first contact. The form that organization has taken has varied depending upon ecological, political, and social conditions, but there is no doubt that the tribe has maintained a continuous political existence. Based on the evidence, the United Houma Nation, Inc. submits that it has satisfied the requirement under 83.7(c).

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"Woman of Houma Descent Weaving Basket on Shore of Little Barataria."
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Photo caption under photograph showing Jim Courteaux, grandson of Houma chieftan and his grandson, Jimmy.

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Puneky, Claire.
1962. "Bravery of Houmas Indians Hailed by Early Explorer," New Orleans Times-Picayune, July 29.

Reese, Louis M.
1971. "Indian Folklore in the Bayoulands," New Orleans Clarion Herald, June 10(2):1.

Photos by Frank Methe: Photos of construction of fishing spears, weaving trawl nets, making hollowed-out pirogue, making red crawfish symbol on coon skin, hoe of buffalo hip.

"Relics Throughout Louisiana Recall Indian Civilization."
1969. Baton Rouge Sunday Advocate, February 2.

"Report Houmas Indians to Claim $15,000,000 in Mineral Royalties."
1964. , May 1.

Claim 2,940 arpents from heirs of Jean Pierre Billiot.

"Report Houmas Indians to Claim $15,000,000 in Mineral Royalties."
1964. Franklin Banner-Tribune, May 3:1.

"She Studies to be School Marm for Bayou Indians."
1947. New Orleans Times-Picayune, December 21(2):15.

Laise Ledet, taught at Pointe-au-Chien 3 years at Isaac Jacques Parochial School before war. Indian kids paddled 6 miles from Isle de Jean Charles, 6 miles back. Now public school there, with school boats to haul kids.

"The Sordid Story of the Houma Indians."
1973. Louisiana Indian News, August-September:1.

A review by Irving Ward-Steinman of The American Indian Today--not on newsprint but on semi-gloss white paper, like magazine, in Sarah Peralta's scrapbook.

"State Indian Tribes Will Meet in Dulac."
1970. Baton Rouge State Times, May 6.

"State Tax Sales of Movable Property: Ward 6."
1937. The Houma Courier, June 4.

Notice as follows: "No. 3780 Estate Celestin Billiot 7-8, Montegut, La., 40 arpents on the right bank of Bayou Point au Chien, bound above by Cambon Bros., formerly below by Alexander Billiot."

"Suit Seeks Halt of Parish Tri-racial School System; Parents of 56 Indian Children Are Plaintiffs in Civil Action."
1963. The Terrebonne Press, April 2:1, 7.

"Superintendent Bourgeois Says Parish Schools Need More Buildings."
1950. The Houma Courier, February 17(2):7.

Has section subheaded "Indian Schools."

Taylor, Paul.
1978. "Adult Learning Project Educates Area Indians," The Houma Courier, December 3: 1, 16.

Teeter, H. B.
1966. "Mission on the Bayou," New Orleans Times-Picayune, May 10.

"Terrebonne Parish Courthouse."
1938. The Houma Sun, August 25:8.

Photo shows image of male chief in feather regalia central in plaque for new courthouse, between images of former courthouse and new building.

"This Man Might Own Everything from the River to the Gulf."
1975. New Orleans, September:57-65.

"Tribal Center Graduates First Students in Program."
1976. Houma Daily Courier, July 24.

Truehill, Eric.
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The Houma Courier, March 5(C):2.

Wagner, Phyllis.
1973. "A Day with the Houma Indians," Baton Rouge Journal, April 12:3.

Wardlaw, Jack.
1977. "House Buries the Tomahawk," New Orleans States-Item, June 29:9.

"Warm Days in Marsh Recall Task-making of Indians: Totsan Dardar Reveals System of Trapping and Smoking Prey."
1938. New Orleans Times-Picayune, April 17 (2):1.

Totsan lived in Grand Bois area, was 79 years old, with pictures of wooden woven gates put across marsh ponds to trap fish at low tide.

"Waterways of Terrebonne Made History; Are Making It Now and Will Make It."
1938. The Houma Courier, August 28(Hist.):1.

Wilson, D. J.
1977. "Houmas Indians Recognition Could Lead to Federal Funds," Houma Daily Courier, July 18.

Wolfe, Dave.
1963. "Ft. Polk Plays 'Santa' to Dulac; Soldiers Contribute $1,000 Check to Community Center." The Terrebonne Press, December 24:1, 5.

"Woman of Houma Descent Weaving Basket on Shore of Little Barataria."
1939. New Orleans Times-Picayune Dixie Magazine, February 26.

Photo.



UNTITLED GROUP

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UNTITLED GROUP

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UNTITLED MAN



O JAUTE BIGHT - VOODOO SINGER



UNTITLED MAN



UNTITLED WOMAN AND BOY

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TWO GIRLS INSIDE WATTLE & DAUB HOUSE



UNTITLED GROUP



GEORGE BISSET AND WOMAN

# 56/56A/56B UHN-PFH-V001-D0002 Page 104 of 197



HELMA BENSON IN USE



IBUNA CAST NET IN POSITION TO BE THROWN

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UNTITLED GROUP

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UNTITLED GROUP

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UNTITLED GROUP WITH PLANT-HOUSE

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UNTITLED GROUP



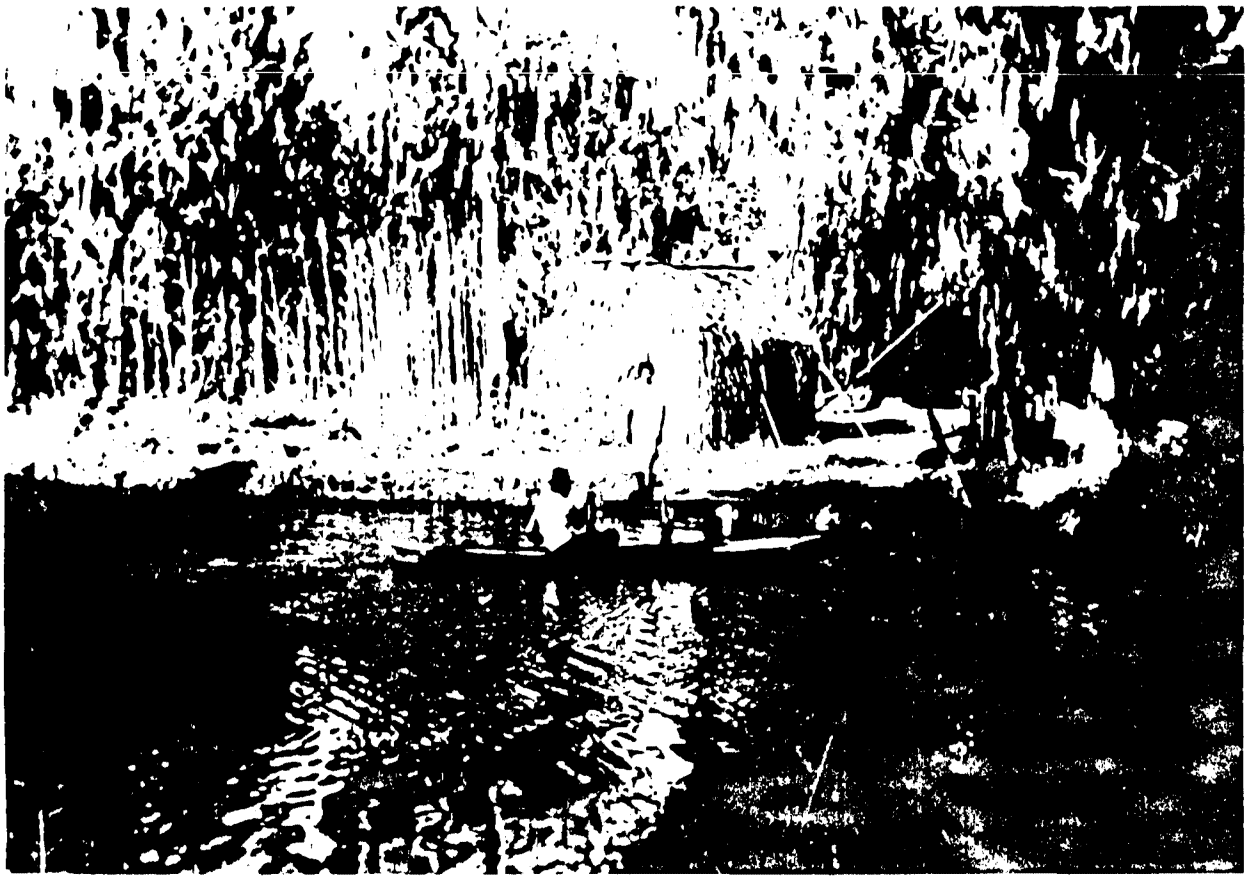
JOHNSON MEMORIAL BAPTIST CHURCH

# 56/56A/56B UHIN-PFH-V001-D0002 Page 112 of 197



UNTITLED GROUP BESIDE HOUSE

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HOUSE WITH THATCHED ROOF & CACTUS

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OPEN SHELTER, THATCHED ROOF - HOUSE WITH THATCHED ROOF [illegible]



PLANK HOUSE WITH THATCHED ROOF

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BAYOU LA COMBE, LA.

MOUND AT PEARL RIVER NEAR INDIAN VILLAGE





BA[illegible] UNTITLED)



FAMILY OF VICTOR DARDAR - WAITING FOR DRUGS INSIDE

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FAMILY GROUP AT GOLDEN MEADOWS - PARK HOUSE

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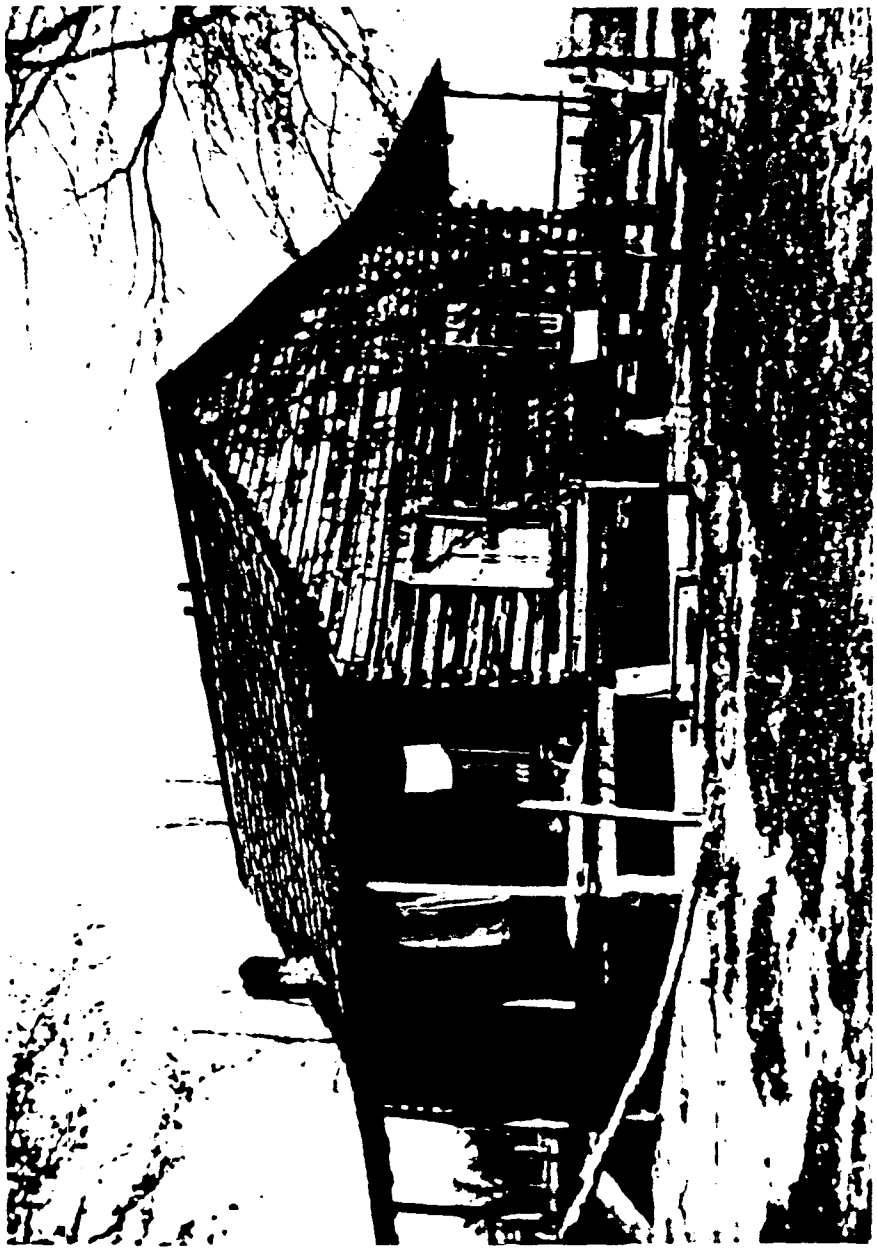
GEORGE BILLIOT, BAYOU GRAND CAILLOU
MONTEGUT, POINTE DU CHIEN, LA.



GROUP AT BAYOU GRAND CAILLOU, HOUMA, LA 1978



ACADIE DU PELS (LFT.) MME. GEORGE BILLIOT, GIRL, MME. HILTON DUPLAN

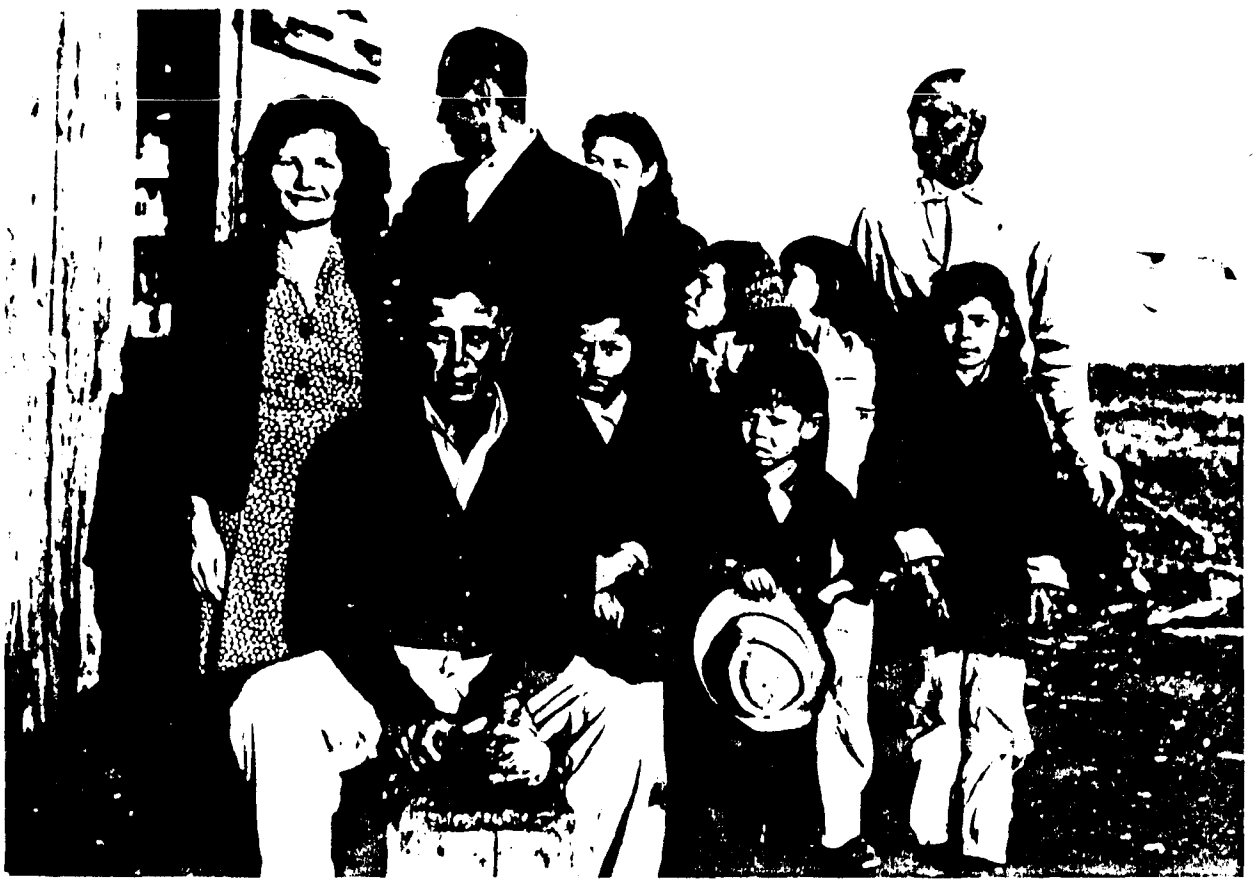


VENTILATED HOUSE



UNITED CHURCH AND HOUSE

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UNTITLED GROUP

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UNTITLED GROUP

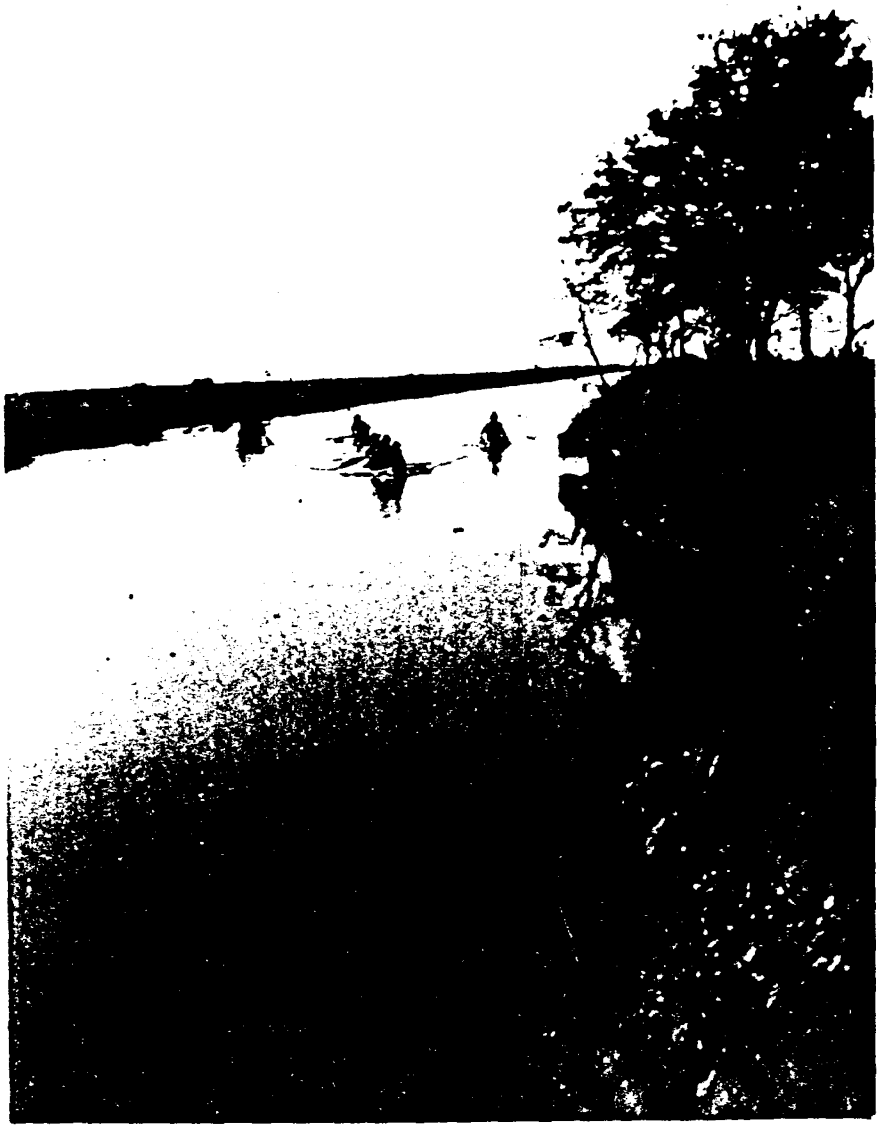
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FAMILY OF OCTAVE VER-DIN, HAITIAN REFUGEE, NO SCHOOL

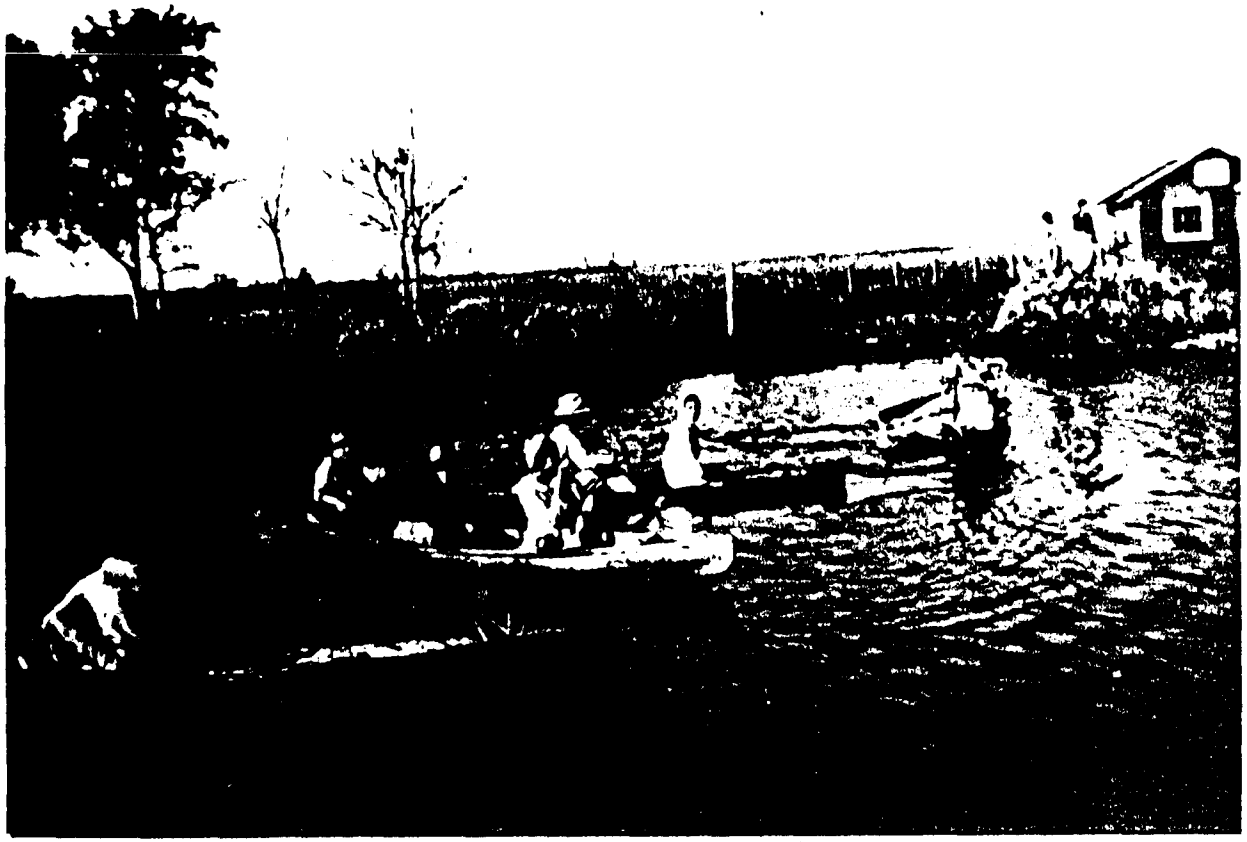
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CANAL SCENE





MICHELE DUPLAIX GOES TO SCHOOL ; FOUDIA MAHAMA'S



ON THE BAYOU - NEAR MONTEGUT (?)

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HOME OF LAURENT VERDIN, BAYOU BLUE. HOUSE ALL OF WOOD



Removed from envelope
"Leonce A. Plaisance
Group 2A."

Box 4

4-1-a
-b
-c

4-1-

(a) School children of Berkman de Villis School at Pointe du Chien.

(b) Bayou Blue. Children in piroque, Verdin family.

(c) Home of Laurent Verdin, Bayou Blue. House all of wood.

(d) Wife of David Billiot. Golden Meadows.

(e) Mephile Verdin, Bayou Blue. No school. Home scene.

(f) Children coming 12 miles to school. L'Isle à Jean Charles, Bayou Jean Charles near Montegut (?) †

(g) On the canal at Bayou Jean la Croire near Bayou Pte. du Chien.

(h) George Verdin & family. Bayou Blue. No ecole.

(i) Wife of Octave Verdin, aged 60's. Bayou Blue.

(j) Mehir (Mejir). Golden Meadows. Their father speaks Spanish. Interpreter in French & English...

(k) David F. Billiot.

(l) Michele Dardard. Golden Meadows. Braided hair. 15 yrs. Feathers of hawk bussard.

(m) Octave Verdin. Bayou Blue. 65 yrs? Jan. 1941. †

(n) Michele Dardard. Golden Meadows. Goes to school. Curly hair caused by braiding. †

(o) Michele Dardard with hawk feather cap old tradition.

† includes negative

Houma (#1)

Box # 4-1 copied 17

Houma (#2)

4-2-

✓ (a) [redacted] Same as ① [canal scene].
(b) [redacted] Laurent Verdin at Bayou Blue. Trapper & fisher...
(c) [redacted] Iselia Verdin. 22 yrs. Daughter of Octave Verdin. Bayou Blue. No school.
(d) [redacted] Unid canal scene.
(e) [redacted] Unid girls.
✓ (f) [redacted] Children at Bayou Blue. Not school.
(g) [redacted] Daughter of Oct. Verdin. Vanicia Verdin. 19 yrs. No school.
(h) [redacted] Bayou Blue. Not any school.
X ✓ (i) [redacted] Family of Octave Verdin. Bayou Blue. No school.
(j) [redacted] Bayou Blue. Mephile Verdin & family. No school.
(k) [redacted] Lucy Verdin. Golden Meadows. Commenced school last year, 1940, when school opened.
X ✓ (l) [redacted] Houma Indian children with gnrn (?) log mortar & pounder at Du Lac, La. 1938... †
(m) [redacted] similar to (aa). Negative only.
X ✓ (n) [redacted] Unid girls. †
X ✓ (o)-(p) [redacted] Unid group. †
X ✓ (q) [redacted] Unid church & house. †
X X ✓ (r)-(v) [redacted] Unid persons, house. Negatives only.

Box 4-2

† includes negative.

(p) Uni'd scene.
(q) Moss.
(p) & (q) removed from envelope 'Looking east on coast near Mobile Bay, territory of Biloxi, Siouan. 1938.'

~~(r) Lost (cd).~~

4-3-

(a)-(b) Houma man, Anbony Billiout, Houma, La. 1938.

(c) Houma Indian. David Billiout, son of George Billiout, Pointe de Chien, La. David B. Leirs at Golden Meadow, La.

(d) Daub and wattle house of Victor Dardar, Golden Meadow. (Photo by R.R. Solenberger. † (2 copies: 4-3-d-1 and 4-3-d-2).

(e) Michele Billiot; Lucile du Plantis. †

(f) Arwin and Mary du Plantis †

X ✓ (g) Group at Bayou Grand Caillou. Houma La., 1938. Alcide du Pres (right), Mme. George Billiout, girl (?), Mme. Hippolyte Dardard. †

X ✓ (h) George Billiot, Bayou Grand Caillou. Montegut, Pointe de Chien, La. †

X ✓ (i) Houma group. At Golden Meadow, plank house. †

X ✓ (j) Family of Victor Dardar in front of daub & wattle house. (Photo by R.R. Solenberger.

X ✓ (k) Uni'd scene on bayou.

(l) Probably New Orleans area to be classified W. Houma. Cf. hair-style, earlobes, labrets.

(m) Photo of drawing. Desseins de Sauvages de Plusiens Nations, N^lle Orleans 1735. †

(n) Temple des Sauvages...; Cabane du Chef... Photo of drawing. †

(o) Houma moss spindle. Cypress wood. Drawing by Miss Louise Barrett. †

† includes negative

Houma (#3)

4-4-

(a) Uni'd scene. Removed from envelope 'Bayou La Combe La. Mound at Pearl River, near Indian Village.' †

✓ (b)-(e) Uni'd scenes. Removed from envelope 'Films Houma Tunica'. Negatives only.

(f)-(j) Uni'd water scenes. (f)-(i) include man in boat. Negatives only.

Houma (#4)

† includes negative

14-5-

Removed from envelope
'Houma House Photos'

(a) 4 uni'd persons in front of small house with thatched roof. †
(b) Uni'd woman in front of thatched structures. †
(c) View of underside of thatched roof. †
(d) Daub & wattle house in disrepair. †
(e) 2 uni'd men in early stages of constructing thatched roof. †
(f) Different view of house in (d). †
X ✓ (g)-(h) Plank house with thatched roof. †
X ✓ (i) Plank house with thatched roof; part may be daub & wattle. †
(j) Plank house with thatched roof. †
X ✓ (k) House with thatched roof & walls. †
(l) House with thatched roof & walls. †
(m) Open shelter with thatched roof. †
X ✓ (n) Open shelter with thatched roof & house with thatched roof & walls. †
(o) Uni'd man placing material on fire in small oven(?). †
(p) Like (e).
(q) Like (c).

Houma (#5)

† includes negative

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Houma Houses.
All are negtive only.

(h) ✓

(a)-(c) House with thatched roof & walls – viewed across canal.
(d) View of inside of pirogue; uni'd thatched structure.
(e) Uni'd structural detail.
(f) Uni'd structures.
(g) Building with thatched roof & walls & partly plank, partly thatch.
(h)-(j) Uni'd man beside house with thatched roof & walls.
(k) Plank structure with thatched roof.
(l) daub & wattle house in disrepair.
(m) View of under side of thatched roof.

4-6-

Houma (#6)

Following removed from envelope 'La. Films – Houma Tunica'. All are negative only.

(n)-(o) Uni'd woman beside & in doorway of daub & wattle house with thatched roof.
(p) Daub & wattle house in disrepair.
(q)-(r) Views of house with thatched roof & walls.
(s) Uni'd group beside house.
(t)-(u) Interior details of daub & wattle house with thatched roof under construction.
~~(v) Print of (b)~~

AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY LIBRARY. PERMISSION NECESSARY FOR REPRODUCTION.

Frank G. Speck Coll.

4-7-

Houma (#7)

(a) Uni'd group.
(b) Uni'd man & boy.†
X ✓ (c) Akwin & Mary de Plantis (sisters) & brother.†
(d) Uni'd girl.†
(e) 2 houses (plank).
X ✓ (f) 2 uni'd women with sue(?) Johnson Memorial Baptist Mission School in background.
(g) Uni'd view of houses across water.
(h) 4 uni'd men.†
[redacted]
(i) Houma girls. Du Lac School. Marie Billiot & Marie Parfait.
(j) Uni'd scene.†
(k) Uni'd group. & folder #6
(l) Uni'd scene.†
X ✓ (m) Uni'd group.†

† includes negative

Box 4-7 copied 21

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Frank G. Speck Coll.

4-8-

(n) Uni'd children.
(o) Rita Dean, Perlie Verdin, & Marie Lodrigue (?).
(p) Elaine Verdin.
(q) Marie Parfait & Harry Billiot, Du Lac School.
(r) Uni'd group in front of thatched house. †
X ✓ (s) Uni'd group with plank house in background. †
X ✓ (t) Uni'd group by plank house. †
X ✓ (u) Uni'd group with plank house in background. †
(v) Uni'd group. †
X ✓ (w) Uni'd group with daub & wattle house (thatched roof) behind. †
(x) Uni'd scene. †
(y) Uni'd girls. See 'Houma (#2) (n).'

Houma (#8)

Box #4-8 cont'd

† includes negative

Frank G. Speck Coll.

(a) George Billiot
(See folder (#3)(N) for negative.)

✓ (b) Evelyn Billiot (Verret), Courteau.
(See folder (#10) (m) for negative.) Large negative included here also.

14-9.

Houma (#9)

Houma (#9)

AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY LIBRARY. PERMISSION NECESSARY FOR REPRODUCTION.

Frank G. Speck Coll.

14-10-

Houma (#10)

(a) Houma cast net in position to be thrown. †

(b) Similar to (a). Negative only.

(c) Houma blowgun in use. †

(d) Golden Meadow, La. R to L: A visitor, Rudolf Mafia, Victor Dardar, & his daughter. [redacted]

(e) [redacted] Golden Meadow, La. L. to R.: David Billiot & R. Solenberger.

(f) [redacted] Children of Victor Dardar.

(g) Golden Meadow, La. Pirogue at V. Dardar's.

(h) Similar to (g).

(i) Golden Meadow, La. Porch of Victor Dardar's old house (thatched).

(j) Golden Meadow, La. Palmetto thatch from underneath, porch of Victor Dardar's old house.

(k) George Billiot & woman. Negative only.

(l) Mme. Hippolyte Dardar, Bayou Grand Caillou, sister of Paul Dardar. Pointe de Chien, La. 1938. †

(m) Evelyn Billiot (Verret), Courteau. (Wife of Frank Billiot [redacted] – died 50 yr. of age ... 1935. †

(n) Alfred Billiot (14 yrs old, 1938), brother of Maurice B. & son of Evelyn (Verret) Billiot, Courteau band, Houmas. †

† includes negative

AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY LIBRARY ... FOR REPRODUCTION.

Frank G. Speck Coll.

(a)-(c) Removed from paper 'Photos by R. Selenberger'.
(a) Thatched shed with boat.†
(b) Uni'd group.†
(c) Uni'd group.
(d) Similar to (c). Negative only.
(e)-(t) are negatives only.
(e) Uni'd group
✓ (f) 2 uni'd men about to begin thatched roof. Frame completed.
✓ (g) Uni'd persons in boats
✓ (h) 2 girls beside daub & wattle house.
✓ (i) Uni'd woman & boy.
(j) Uni'd man.
(k) 2 uni'd men.
(l) Uni'd man (bust).
(m) Uni'd man with basket.
(n) Uni'd group.
✓ (o) Uni'd man with uni'd instrument.
✓ (p) Uni'd man (side view).
(q) 3 uni'd girls.
(r) Uni'd group of children with mortar & pestle.
✓ (s)-(t) Removed from envelope 'La. Films – Houma, Tunica, O Jante Billiot, Voodoo singer
(s) ~~Uni'd woman & child.~~
(t) Uni'd man & woman on log.
(u)-(v) Baskets with lids. Chitimacha or Houma.

14-11-

Houma (# 11)

Box # 4-11 copied :4

† includes negative

83.7(d) A copy of the group's present governing document, or in the absence of a written document, a statement describing in full the membership criteria and the procedures through which the group currently governs its affairs and its members.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

# State of Louisiana

## Paul J. Hardy

SECRETARY OF STATE

*As Secretary of State, of the State of Louisiana, I do hereby Certify that*

a copy of an Act of Correction to the Articles of Incorporation of

UNITED HOUMA NATION, INC.,

A Louisiana corporation domiciled at Golden Meadow, correcting

Article VI,

Said Act of Correction being by Act before a Notary Public in and for the Parish of East Baton Rouge, on August 4, 1979,

Was recorded in this Office on September 7, 1979, the date the Act of Correction became effective, and filed in the Record of Non-Profit Corporations Book 49.

*In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of my Office to be affixed at the City of Baton Rouge on,*
September 7, 1979.

Paul J. Hardy
*Secretary of State*

STATE OF LOUISIANA · UNION JUSTICE AND CONFIDENCE · SECRETARY OF STATE

CERTIFICATE SS 102

FRANKLIN PRINTING CO INC

ACT OF CORRECTION

OF

ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION OF UNITED HOUMA NATION, INC.

STATE OF LOUISIANA

PARISH OF EAST BATON ROUGE

BEFORE ME, the undersigned Notary Public, duly commissioned and qualifi in the Parish of East Baton Rouge, State of Louisiana,

PERSONALLY CAME AND APPEARED:

THE HOUMA ALLIANCE, INC., herein represented by its President, Howard J. Dion, and

THE HOUMA TRIBE, INC., herein represented by its President, Helen D. Gindrat,

being the original incorporators of UNITED HOUMA NATION, INC., who declared that: WHEREAS,

An error was made in the articles of incorporation of United Houma Nation, Inc., which were filed and recorded on July 27, 1979 in Corporation Book 33, Entry No. 602046 in the office of the Clerk and Recorder for the Parish of Terrebonne, State of Louisiana, in that Article VI-A was stated therein as follows:

"ARTICLE VI-A

ORIGINAL INCORPORATORS

The original incorporators are: The Houma Tribe, Inc., herein represented by its President, Howard J. Dion; and The Houma Alliance, Inc., herein represented by its Vice-President, Helen D. Gindrat."

NOW, THEREFORE, pursuant to the provisions of the Louisiana corporation law, and by a resolution duly adopted by the board of directors of United Houma Nation, Inc., said appearers do hereby correct said articles of incorporation of United Houma Nation, Inc., Article VI-A to read as follows:

"ARTICLE VI-A

ORIGINAL INCORPORATORS

The original incorporators are: The Houma Alliance, Inc., herein represented by its President, Howard J. Dion; and The Houma Tribe, Inc., herein represented by its President, Helen D. Gindrat."

The date of incorporation was July 19, 1979.

The Articles of Incorporation of UNITED HOUMA NATION, INC., domiciled at Golden Meadow, Louisiana, Parish of Lafourche, a corporation organized under the provisions of R. S. 1950, Title 12, Chapter 2, as amended, by act before a Notary Public in and for the Parish of East Baton Rouge, State of Louisiana, on May 12, 1979, was recorded on July 18, 1979, the date when corporate existence began, and filed in the Record of Non-Profit Corporations Book 49, in the office of the Secretary of State of the State of Louisiana, and also filed of record July 30, 1979 as Entry Number 502154 in the office of the Clerk and Recorder for the Parish of Lafourche, State of Louisiana.

FURTHER:

BEFORE ME, Notary,

PERSONALLY CAME AND APPEARED:

UNITED HOUMA NATION, INC., herein represented by its President, Kirby Verret, and by its Secretary, Charles A. Duthu, being duly authorized,

who joins in this act of correction for the purpose of correcting said articles of incorporation of United Houma Nation, Inc. as statd herein-above, pursuant to the resolution of, and duly adopted by, the board of directors of United Houma Nation, Inc.

The date of resolution is August 4, 1979.

THUS DONE AND SIGNED before me, Notary, and undersigned competent witnesses on the 4th day of August, 1979, after due reading of the whole.

WITNESSES:

The Houma Alliance, Inc.

By: Howard J. Dion
Howard J. Dion, President

The Houma Tribe, Inc.

By: Helen D. Cindrat
Helen D. Cindrat, President

UNITED HOUMA NATION, INC.

BY: _____
President

BY: _____
Secretary

NOTARY PUBLIC

A TRUE COPY

NOTARY PUBLIC

STATE OF LOUISIANA
PARISH OF TERREBONNE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the within and foregoing is a true copy of the original on file in this office and recorded SEP 24 1979 at 10:25 o'clock A M., in Corporation Book No. 34 folio —, et seq. Under Entry No. 606877

Office of Clerk of Court and Recorder
Houma, Louisiana SEP 24 1979

Deputy Clerk of Court

CONSTITUTION OF

THE UNITED HOUMA NATION, INC.

PREAMBLE

Recognizing the principals that as time goes on, new conditions and problems arise, we, THE HOUMA TRIBE, INC. and THE HOUMA ALLIANCE, INC., being duly consolidated as one organization to be known as THE UNITED HOUMA NATION, INC., desiring to establish an organization for our common welfare and benefit, have earnestly and seriously written into this Constitution and By-Laws rules which best adapt themselves to our present and future condition that will:

(a) Promote the fair interest of our fellow tribesmen;

(b) Reaffirm and declare certain fundamental truths, and

(c) Finally, uphold the dignity and honor of all our fellow tribesmen.

ARTICLE 1 - NAME

The name of this organization shall be THE UNITED HOUMA NATION, INC.

ARTICLE 11 - JURISDICTION

The jurisdiction shall extend to any parish where any Houma Indian may reside and particularly to any lands hereafter acquired by or for the Houma Indians as tribal assets.

ARTICLE 111 - MEMBERSHIP

Section 1 - The membership of THE UNITED HOUMA NATION, INC.

shall consist of:

(a) All Houma Indians who are living in the territorial limits defined by Article 11, and who at the time of the ratification of this document possess one-eight (1/8) degree or more of Houma Indian blood shall be admitted to membership in the United Houma Nation, Inc. of Louisiana.

(b) All persons officially registered as Houma Indian at the time of the ratification shall be recognized as members of the United Houma Nations, Inc.

Section 11 - The Tribal Council shall have the power to pass ordinances governing future membership, loss of membership, and the adoption of new members. Providing, that no person of less than one-eight (1/8) degree Houma Indian blood shall be admitted to membership in the United Houma Nation, Inc. of Louisiana.

Section 111 - The burden of proof rest upon the applicant to establish his eligibility for enrollment.

Constitution of the United Houma Nation, Inc.

## ARTICLE IV - GOVERNING BODY

Section 1 - Governing body of the United Houma Nation, Inc. shall be a Tribal Council which shall be elected every two years (2 years) by secret ballot by the qualified voters of the tribal organization. There shall be fourteen (14) members on the Council; any member of the Tribal Council shall be of one eight (1/8) degree or more of Houma Indian blood. The following communities shall be entitled to elect members to represent their respective parish: Terrebonne five (5), Lafourche three (3), Jefferson three (3), St. Mary two (2) and St. Bernard one (1); however, other parishes may be included if necessary, except that the interim board shall consist of 12 members who will serve until the first fourteen (14) member Tribal Council shall be elected.

## ARTICLE I DUTIES OF OFFICERS

Section 1 - The chairperson shall preside over all meetings of the Council, shall act as the official spokesman for the tribe on matters specifically authorized, shall engage in public relations and serve as coordinator of overall activities, and exercise any authority delegated to him or her by the Tribal Council. The chairperson shall not vote on the Council except in case of a tie vote. The chairperson shall not succeed himself or herself for more than two (2) consecutive terms or no chairperson shall serve more than eight (8) years. The ex-chairperson shall then serve as exofficio member (with no voting powers) on the Tribal Council.

Section 11 - The vice-chairperson shall assist the chairperson when called upon to do so and in the absence of the chairperson shall preside. When so presiding the vice-chairperson shall have all rights, privileges and duties as well as the responsibilities of the chairperson. The vice-chairperson will be on duty in the absence of the chairperson.

Section 111 - The secretary of the Council shall conduct all Tribal correspondence and shall keep an accurate record of all matters transacted at Council meetings.

Section IV - The treasurer shall accept, receipt for, preserve and safeguard all Tribal funds or special funds for which the Council is acting as trustee or custodian. The treasurer shall deposit all funds in such properly insured depositories as the Council shall direct and shall make or preserve a faithful record of such funds, and shall report on all receipts and

expenditures and the amount and nature of all funds in their possession and custody at each regular meeting of the Tribal Council, also at the regular Tribal meetings. An audit of accounts shall be made once a year and at such other times as the Tribal Council may require.

All checks of this Council will be handled according to current accounting procedure manual approved by the Tribal Council.

The treasurer shall be required to give satisfactory bond to the Council, such bond being paid for from the Tribal funds.

## ARTICLE VI - COMMITTEES

Section 1 - The duties of all committees, and their officers appointed by the Tribal Council shall be clearly defined by resolution of the Council at the time of their creation or appointment. Such committees, and their officers shall report to the Council from time to time as required and their activities and decisions shall be subject to review by the Tribal Council.

## ARTICLE VII - MEETINGS

Section 1 - The Tribal Council shall have the power to determine time and place regular meetings shall be held; the chairperson shall have the power to call a special meeting of the Tribal Council, for the purpose of transacting any business designated in the call or as prescribed in the by-laws.

Section 11 - A majority of the members of the Tribal Council shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of tribal business.

Section 111 - The Tribal Council in the conduct of its business shall be governed by Robert's Rules of Order as revised by the Tribal Council.

## ARTICLE VIII - ELECTIONS

Section 1 - Any member, male or female, eighteen (18) years of age or more and registered with the Tribal organization is eligible to vote.

Section 11 - The Tribal Council shall prescribe rules and regulations governing Tribal elections. The Tribal Council shall appoint commissioners to conduct voting in their respec-

tive ~~tive~~ community. It shall be the duty of each commissioner to see that all voters must sign the ledger before casting their ballot and that all members must register and vote in his own district.

Section 3 - The present Tribal councilmen shall remain in office until their successors are duly elected and seated. The first regular election under this constitution and by-laws shall be held on the 27th day of June, 1981. On the second Saturday following the date of election, there shall be a special meeting for installation of officers. The regular meetings thereafter shall be held monthly. Elections shall be held on the first Saturday of June each year. Seven Tribal Council members shall be elected on even numbered years and seven (7) Tribal councilmen shall be elected in odd numbered years.

## Articles of Incorporation

The corporate power and management of this corporation shall be vested in, and exercised by, a Tribal Council of fourteen (14) members, to be elected annually, at a general meeting of the members, on June 27, beginning with the year 1981, to be held at the registered office of the corporation, or at such other place within the State of Louisiana, as may be provided in the by-laws.

Section IV - Any registered member of the United Houma Nation, Inc. who is 18 years of age, 1/8 degree Houma Indian blood and has not been convicted of a felony five years prior to the time of consideration will be eligible for election to the Tribal Council.

## ARTICLE IX - VACANCIES & REMOVAL FROM OFFICE

Section 1 - If any vacancy occurs in the membership of the Tribal Council, it shall be the duty of the chairperson of the United Houma Nation, Inc. to fill such vacancy by appointing a member from the community in which such a vacancy occurs and such appointee shall hold office until his successor is duly elected by voters of such community either at a special election or a regular election, subject to approval of the Tribal Council.

Section 11 - If a vacancy occurs in the office of the chairperson, then such position shall be filled by vice-chairperson until this term expires. The vice-chairperson's position shall then be filled by Council appointment for the remainder of the term.

Section 111 - Any member of the Tribal Council or any appointed official of the United Houma Nation, Inc., during the term for which he is elected, is convicted of any felony, shall be given a review by the Tribal Council to determine whether or not he should remain in office. Such member shall be given a written statement of charges against him at least thirty (30) days before the meeting of the Tribal Council before which he is to appear and he shall be given an opportunity to answer any and all charges at the designated Council meeting. The decision of the Tribal Council shall be final.

Section IV - Any of the four individual Indian communities or any other Indian community which may necessarily be included, may petition for the recall of a Council member elected by the community. Upon receipt by the Tribal Council of a petition

signed by thirty (30%) per cent of the eligible voters from that community demanding recall of a member, and at least six (6) months prior to expiration of such member's term of office, it shall be the duty of the Tribal Council to call a special election in that community upon the question of recall. Such special election shall be called and held within a period of sixty (60) days after receipt of petition. No Council member may be recalled except by a majority vote in an election in which at least fifty (50%) per cent of the eligible voters in that community voted.

## ARTICLE X - COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

Section 1 - It shall be the duty of the councilmen from each community to report regularly all the actions and decisions to the Tribal Council.

## ARTICLE XI - POWERS OF THE TRIBAL COUNCIL

Section 1 - Enumerated Powers. The Tribal Council of the UNITED HOUMA NATION, INC. shall have the following powers, subject to any limitations imposed by the laws or the Constitution of the United States, and the state of Louisiana.

(a) To negotiate with federal, state and local governments.

(b) To employ legal counsel, the choice of counsel and the determination of fees.

(c) To approve or veto any sale, disposition, lease or encumbrance of Tribal land, interests in land, Tribal funds, or other Tribal assets, except those lands in Terrebonne Parish donated by the Methodist Church for a reservation or Tribal center in Dulac, Louisiana.

(d) To appropriate any available Tribal funds for the benefit of the UNITED HOUMA NATION, INC.

(e) To supervise and manage Tribal economic affairs and enterprises in accordance with this constitution and by-laws.

(f) To pass and reinforce rules and regulations in accordance with applicable federal or state regulations, providing for the management of Tribal lands, including the making and revocation of assignments, disposition of timber, oil and mineral resources.

(g) To promote and protect health, peace, morals, education and the general welfare of the community and its members.

(h) To do such acts of a government and public nature as are not prohibited by applicable laws or by this constitution and by-laws.

(i) To establish and regulate subordinate organizations for social and business purposes.

(j) To pass ordinances and resolutions necessary or incidental to the exercise of any of the foregoing powers.

(k) To propose amendments to the constitution for referal to the people of the United Houma Nation, Inc. for ratification.

## ARTICLE XII - RIGHTS

The protection guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States of America and the Constitution of the State of Louisiana shall not be amended.

## ARTICLE XIII - INITIATIVE AND REFERENDUM

Section 1 - Reserved powers - determination of percentages. The first power reserved by the members of the tribe is the initiative; and (15%) per cent of regular voting members shall have the right to propose amendments to this constitution and to propose ordinances and resolutions.

Section 11 - The second power is the referendum which may be ordered upon petition signed by fifteen (15%) per centum of the registered voters.

Section 111 - Petitions. An election on an initiative or referendum petition shall be called by the chairperson after ascertaining that a sufficient number of registered voters have signed.

Any measure referred to the Tribe by the initiative or by the referendum shall take effect and be in force when approved by a majority of the votes cast in such election in which at least thirty (30%) per cent of the registered voters voted. All measures referred to the Tribe shall begin with the words: "Be it enacted by the Members of THE UNITED HOUMA NATION, INC."

## ARTICLE XIV - AMENDMENTS

This constitution and by-laws may be amended by a majority

vote of the qualified voters of the tribe voting at an election called for that purpose, providing that at least thirty (30%) per cent of those entitled to vote shall vote in such election; but no amendment shall become effective until it shall have been approved as provided in Article XIII.

# UNITED HOUMA NATION

# BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I

NAME OF ORGANIZATION

The Name of this Organization shall be the United Houma Nation, Incorporated.

ARTICLE II

PURPOSE

The purpose of this organization shall be; To promote unity, to preserve the heritage, to provide self-determination, and economic self sufficiency for the Houma Indian People.

ARTICLE III
MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Composition of Organization

A. The membership of the United Houma Nation Inc. shall consist of;

A-1. All persons officially registered as Houma Indian at the time of the Ratification of the Constitution of the United Houma Nation, Inc.

A-2. All persons possessing 1/8 degree or more Houma Indian blood shall be admitted to membership in the United Houma Nation, Inc.

Section 2. Eligibility

A. The burden of proof shall rest upon the applicant to establish his eligibility for enrollment.

B. Upon providing proof of his eligibility for enrollment, an application for membership shall be determined by membership guidelines established by resolution of the United Houma Nation Tribal Council.

Section 3. Voting Rights

A. Any member, male or female, eighteen (18) years of age or more and registered with the Tribal Organization is eligible to vote at all elections and on all issues brought before the Tribal Community for it's consideration.

B. Initiative & Referendum

B-1. Reserved powers--Determination of percentages. The first power reserved by the members of the tribe is the initiative; and (15%) per cent of regular voting members shall have the right to propose amendments to the constitution of the United Houma Nations, Inc. and to propose ordinances and resolutions.

B-2. The second power is the referendom which may be ordered upon petition signed by fifteen (15%) percentum of the registered voters.

(CONTINUED)

B-3. Petitions--An election on an initiative or referendum petition shall be called by the chairperson after ascertaining that a sufficient number of registered voters have signed.

Section 4. Termination of Membership

Willful falsification of information contained in

----Application for membership will constitute grounds for termination of membership.

Section 5. Resignation

----Anyone may resign from the United Houma Nation Organization at will - however, all resignations shall be in writing.

ARTICLE IV

THE TRIBAL COUNCIL

Section 1. The Governing Body

A. The Governing Body of the United Houma Nation Inc. shall be a Tribal Council which shall be elected every two (2) years by secret ballot of the qualified voters of the tribal organization.

B. The Tribal Council shall have authority to designate the number of representatives according to parish needs.

C. Candidates for Tribal Council positions shall be selected from tribal registry.

D. Qualifications for the United Houma Nations, Inc., Tribal Council shall be:

1) A high school diploma or equivalent
2) A majority of signatures of their registered members voting in their district to replace Dip.are Equi.
3) A member in good standing for two years

Section 2. Jurisdiction

A. The following parishes shall be entitled to elect members to represent their respective parish; Terrebonne Parish, Lafourche Parish, Jefferson Parish, St. Bernard and St. Mary. Other parishes may be included if necessary.

Section 3. Vacancies

A. If any vacancies occur in the membership of the tribal council, it shall be the duty of the chairperson of the United Houma Nation, Inc. to fill such vacancy by appointing a member from the parish in which a vacancy occurs and such appointee shall hold office until his or her successor is duly elected by voters of such parish either at a special election or a regular election, subject to approval of the tribal council.

B. Such appointee shall only serve the unexpired term.

Section 4. Removal

A. Any member of the tribal council or any appointed official of the United Houma Nation Inc., during the term for which he is elected, if convicted of any felony, shall be given a review by the Tribal Council to determine whether or not he or she should be removed from office.

B. Any member of the Tribal Council accused of unethical activities while performing his or her duties as a councilman, or any other activities deemed detrimental to the goals & objectives of the United Houma Nation, Inc. shall be given a review by the Tribal Council to determine whether or not he or she should be removed from office. Such member shall be given a written statement of charges against him at least (30) days before the meeting of the Tribal Council which he is to appear and he shall be given an opportunity to answer any and all charges at the designated council meeting. The decision of the Tribal Council shall be final.

C. Any member missing three unexcused regular or special meetings shall be subject to a review by the United Houma Nation Tribal Council to determine whether or not he or she should be removed from office. Such member shall be given a written statement of charges against him or her concerning the missing of meetings no later than five (5) days before the meeting of the Tribal Council which he is to appear and he shall be given an opportunity to answer any and all charges at the designated council meeting. The decision of the Tribal Council shall be final.

ARTICLE V
OFFICERS

Section 1. Officer's Name

Officers of the Tribal Council shall consist of:

A. Tribal Chairperson, Tribal Vice-Chairperson, Tribal Secretary, Tribal Treasurer, and Parlimentarian

Section 2. Officers shall be elected by the Tribal Council.

Section 3. Term of office of each Tribal Council member shall be for two years except that when any board member is elected to the position of Tribal Chairperson his or her term of office shall be for four (4) years.

Section 4. Removal for officers shall be as provided in Article IV, section four (4) of the By-Laws.

Section 5. Vacancy for Officers

A. Shall be as provided in Article IV, section three (3) of the By-Laws except in the case of the office of chairman.

B. In a case involving vacancy of position of Chairman the Vice-Chairman shall assume the office of the Chairman as provided in Article IX, section two (2) of the Constitution of the United Houma Nation, Inc., and shall remain in office until a successor is duly elected.

Section 6. Duties of Officers

A. Chairperson's duties shall be as provided in Article V, section one (1) of the United Houma Nation Inc.

1. The Chairperson shall preside over all meetings of the council.

2. Shall act as official spokesman for the tribe on matters specifically authorized by the Tribal Council.

3. Shall engage in public relations affairs.

4. Shall serve as coordinator over all tribal activities.

5. He or she will exercise any authority delegated to him or her by the Tribal Council.

B. The Vice-Chairperson's duties shall be as provided in Article V, section two (2) of the Constitution of the United Houma Nation, Inc.

1. The Vice-Chairperson shall assist the Chairperson when called upon to do so.

2. In the absence of the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson shall preside as provided in Article V, section six (6),part A,items 1,2,3,4 & 5 of the by-laws.When so presiding,the Vice-Chairperson shall have all rights, priviledges and duties as well as the responsibility of the Chairperson.

C. The Secretaries duties shall be:

1. To conduct all tribal correspondence related to Tribal Council business.

2. Keep an accurate record of all matters transacted a Tribal Council meetings.

3. To maintain on file in the tribal council office all records pertaining to tribal affairs.

4. To provide all tribal council members with minutes of all tribal council meetings no later than ten (10) days after a meeting has been held.

5. To review all tribal council correspondence within fourteen (14) days of receipt of mail.

6. After tribal council correspondence has been reviewed , he or she shall colaborate with the Chairperson to determine what information should be brought to the immediate attention of the Tribal Council, and all other agencies of the United Houma Nation Inc., to be properly & promptly informed.

D. The tresurer's duties shall be:

1. To insure that financial depositories are recorded as directed by the Tribal Council & shall report on all receipts & expenditures, & the amount & nature of all funds at each regular meeting of the Tribal Council.

E. The duties of the Parliamentarian shall be:

1. To assist the Chairman in making decisions on correct use of the rules of order adopted by the Tribal Council & will function only in an advisory role to the Chairperson.

## ARTICLE VI

## THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Section 1. Composition of Membership

A. A member of the executive committee shall be a member of the Tribal Council.

B. There shall be one member from each of the tribal parish areas.

C. Each member shall be designated by the council members of their respective parish service areas.

D. The Chairperson of the Tribal Council shall serve as Chairperson of this committee.

Section 2. Duties of the committee

A. The committee will have the power to act on behalf of the Tribal Council on emergency issues as designated in the agenda of a special meeting called subsequently to regular meeting; provided there is no quorum of the Tribal Council at this special meeting as provided in Article 8,section four (4) of the by-laws.

Section 3. Quorum

A quorum shall be a majority of members present.

Section 4. Vacancies

Vacancies shall be filled as per procedures for designation of members, as provided in Article VI, Section 1, Part C, of the by-laws.

## ARTICLE VII

## STANDING & SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Section 1. Purpose

The Tribal Council will have the power to create special and ad hoc committees as needed to assist in the accomplishment of it's goals and objectives.

Section 2. Membership

The Chairperson of the Tribal Council shall make appointments to committees. (Except the Executive Committee)

Section 3. Term of Office

The term of office shall be for the duration of one year; subject to renewal each year at end of term.

Section 4. Duties of the Committees

The duties of all committees and their appointed officers shall be clearly defined by resolution of the Tribal Council at the time of their creation or appointment. Such committees and their officers shall report to the council from time to time as required and their activities and decisions shall be subject to approval by the Tribal Council.

All decisions involving expenditures or potential indebtness must be approved by the majority or members present in the meeting where the report is submitted.

Section 5. Committee Identification

The United Houma Nation shall have the following standing committees:

1. Budget Committee
2. Public Relations Committee
3. Operations Committee
4. Planning Committee
5. Personnel Committee
6. Recreation Committee

## ARTICLE VIII

## MEETINGS

Section 1. The Tribal Council shall have the power to determine time and place regular monthly meetings shall be held.

Section 2. Before adjourning any regular meeting the time and place of the next meeting will be set.

Section 3. The Chairperson shall have the power to call a special meeting of the Tribal Council for the purpose of transacting any business designated in the call.

Section 4. A majority of the members of the Tribal Council shall constitute a quorum for the transacting of tribal business.

Section 5. On any occasion that a quorum is not present at a regular meeting of the Tribal Council, the Chairperson of the council shall call a subsequent special meeting no later than ten (10) days after the regular meeting was scheduled to take place. The purpose to be to conduct business of an emergency nature as designated in the agenda prepared by the Chairperson of the Council for the special meeting.

On the call for the special meeting the presence of the executive committee will be requested for the purpose of transacting the business of the council at this special meeting in case there may be no quorum of the Tribal Council at this special meeting.

Section 6. The Tribal Council in the conduct of it's business meetings shall be governed by Robert's Rules of Order as revised by the Tribal Council.

Section 7. The rules of order may be suspended from time to time to specifically accommodate any special need. This would require a 2/3 majority vote of members present.

## ARTICLE IX

## EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

Section 1. Employment practices shall be in accordance with current personnel policies adopted by the Tribal Council.

## ARTICLE X

## ORGANIZATIONAL POLICY

Section 1. Fiscal Calendar

The fiscal calendar year of the United Houma Nation, Inc. shall begin January 1 and end December 31 each year.

Section 2. Indemnification

No one member of this corporation shall ever be held liable or responsible for contracts, debts, or defaults of this corporation; nor shall any mere informality in the organization have the effect of rendering the Articles of Incorporation null or of exposing the members to any liability other than as provided above.

Section 3. Dissolution of the Agency.

Upon the dissolution of the corporation, the Tribal Council shall after paying or making provision for the payment of all of the liabilities of the corporation, dispose of all the assets of the corporation in such manner, or to such organization or organizations organized and operated exclusively for educational or scientific purposes as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization or organizations under section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law), as the Tribal Council shall determine. Any such assets not so disposed of shall be disposed of by the Court of Common Pleas of the parish in which the principle office of the corporation in then located, exclusively for the purposes or to such organization or organizations, as said Court shall determine, which organized and operated exclusively for such purposes.

Section 4. Amending the By-Laws

The Tribal Council shall, at any meeting with a quorum present, have the power to make, amend and repeal by-laws for the governing and regulating of the affairs of the corporation; provided only that the by-laws will not be inconsistent with the Articles and Louisiana Law. All actions relating to the by-laws shall require a two thirds (2/3) vote of the Tribal Council members present and voting.

Any amendment shall be submitted to the Tribal Council members in writing ten (10) days prior to the date of meeting scheduled for consideration.

Section 5. Organizational Records.

Organizational record shall be obtained and maintained as provided in duties of the Secretary, Artcle V, Section 6, Part C of the by-laws.

## ARTICLE XI

## RATIFICATION

The by-laws shall be declared adopted by the Tribal Council when passed by two-thirds (2/3) of the full membership of the Tribal Council present at a regular meeting, or special meeting called for this purpose.

These by-laws are approved by the United Houma Nation Tribal Council at a regular meeting held August 20, 1983.

Chairman
United Houma Nation
Tribal Council

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

# State of Louisiana

## Paul J. Hardy

SECRETARY OF STATE

*As Secretary of State, of the State of Louisiana, I do hereby Certify that*

a copy of the Articles of Incorporation of

UNITED HOUMA NATION, INC.,

Domiciled at Golden Meadow, Louisiana, Parish of Lafourche,

A corporation organized under the provisions of R. S. 1950, Title 12, Chapter 2, as amended,

By Act before a Notary Public in and for the Parish of East Baton Rouge, State of Louisiana, on May 12, 1979,

Was recorded in this Office on July 18, 1979, the date when corporate existence began, and filed in the Record of Non-Profit Corporations Book 49,

And all fees having been paid as required by law, the corporation is authorized to transact business in this State, subject to the restrictions imposed by law, including the provisions of R. S. 1950, Title 12, Chapter 2, as amended.

*In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of my Office to be affixed at the City of Baton Rouge on,*

July 18, 1979.

*Secretary of State*

CERTIFICATE SS 102

FRANKLIN PRINTING CO. INC. N.O.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

# State of Louisiana

## Paul J. Hardy
**SECRETARY OF STATE**

*As Secretary of State, of the State of Louisiana, I do hereby Certify that*

the annexed and following is a copy of an Agreement of Consolidation between THE HOUMA TRIBES, INC., domiciled at Golden Meadow, Louisiana and THE HOUMA ALLIANCE, domiciled at Houma, Louisiana, forming

THE UNITED HOUMA NATION, INC.,

Domiciled at Golden Meadow, Louisiana,

As certified a true copy by James Wood, a Notary whose certificate appears on said document.

I further certify that the document was filed and recorded in this Office on July 18, 1979,

I further certify that the separate corporate existence of the consolidating corporations has ceased.

*In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of my Office to be affixed at the City of Baton Rouge on,*

July 19, 1979.

*Secretary of State*

AGREEMENT AND PLAN OF CONSOLIDATION OF

THE HOUMA TRIBE, INC.

AND

THE HOUMA ALLIANCE, INC.

THE HOUMA TRIBE, INC. and THE HOUMA ALLIANCE, INC., both non-profit Louisiana corporations (hereinafter collectively called the "Constituent Corporations"), hereby agree as follows:

I. The Consolidation

1. The Constituent Corporations shall be and are hereby consolidated effective on the 12 day of May, 1979, provided by the non-profit Louisiana Corporation Law, thereby forming a new corporation which shall be named THE UNITED HOUMA NATION, INC., whereupon the separate existence of the Constituent Corporations shall cease.

2. THE UNITED HOUMA NATION, INC. shall possess all the rights, privileges, powers, purposes and franchises possessed by the Constituent Corporations, or as contained in the by-laws.

3. On May 12, , 1979, each member of the Houma Tribe, Inc. and each member of the Houma Alliance shall become members of The United Houma Nation Inc., with all rights and privileges that attach thereto.

4. All of the property and assets of whatsoever kind of description, all debts due to the Constituent Corporations on whatever account, and all actions, claims and things in action belonging to the Constituent Corporations, except as otherwise specifically provided herein, shall be taken by and be deemed to be transferred to, and vested in THE UNITED HOUMA NATION, INC. without further act or deed.

5. THE UNITED HOUMA NATION, INC. shall be responsible for all of the liabilities and obligations of each of the Constituent Corporations.

6. Notwithstanding that the separate existence of the Constituent Corporations shall cease on May 12, , 1979, any officer or director of the Constituent Corporations is hereby authorized, directed or

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empowered at any time, or from time to time, as and when they are requested by THE UNITED HOUMA NATION, INC., or by its successors and assigns, to execute and deliver, or to cause to be executed and delivered in the name of the Constituent Corporations, all such conveyances, assignments, transfer, deeds or other instruments, or to take or cause to be taken such further or other actions and to give such other assurances and THE UNITED HOUMA NATION, INC., its successors or assigns, may deem necessary or desirable in order to evidence the transfer, vesting or devolution of any contract, property, right, privilege, or purpose, or to vest or perfect in or confirm to THE UNITED HOUMA NATION, INC., its successors and assigns, title to or possession of all the contracts, property, rights, privileges, powers, immunities, franchises and interests referred to herein, and otherwise to carry out the intent and purposes hereof.

7. Upon requisite approval being given by their respective members, each of the Constituent Corporations shall take, or cause to be taken, all action, or do, or cause to be done, all things, necessary, proper or advisable under the laws of the State of Louisiana, or the United States of America, to carry out and accomplish this Agreement and Plan of Consolidation.

8. All land presently owned or held in trust by the Methodist Church for the Houma Indians in Dulac, Louisiana, shall remain in its present state and the United Houma Nation, Inc. shall abide by any previous agreements concerning their use.

II. Articles of Incorporation and Initial Report of THE UNITED HOUMA NATION, INC., Directors and Officers of THE UNITED HOUMA NATION, INC.

1. The Articles of Incorporation of THE UNITED HOUMA NATION, INC. shall be substantially in the form and content of Exhibit A attached hereto and made a part hereof by reference.

2. The initial report of THE UNITED HOUMA NATION, INC. shall be substantially in the form and content of Exhibit B attached hereto and made a part hereof by reference.

3. The initial directors of THE UNITED HOUMA NATION, INC., shall be

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those persons named in its initial report, and such directors shall serve for the term specified in the by-laws. The initial officers of THE UNITED HOUMA NATION, INC. shall be those elected by its Board of Directors.

III. Initial Constitution and By-Laws of THE UNITED HOUMA NATION, INC.

The initial constitution and by-laws of THE UNITED HOUMA NATION, INC., shall be substantially in the form and content of Exhibit C attached hereto and made a part hereof by reference.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Constituent Corporation have caused this Plan of Consolidation to be executed by a majority of the directors of each corporation, as of this 12 day of May, 1979.

THE HOUMA TRIBE, INC.

Helen C. Verdin

THE HOUMA ALLIANCE, INC.

Howard J. Dion

CERTIFICATE OF ADOPTION

The undersigned Secretary of THE HOUMA ALLIANCE, INC. hereby certifies as to said Corporation, and the undersigned Secretary of THE HOUMA TRIBE, INC., hereby certified as to said Corporation, that the foregoing Agreement and Plan of Consolidation was approved by the shareholders of the respective Corporations in the manner required by the Louisiana Business Corporation Law.

Dated:

Secretary of THE HOUMA ALLIANCE, INC.

Secretary of THE HOUMA TRIBE, INC.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

STATE OF LOUISIANA

PARISH OF

BEFORE ME, the undersigned authority, personally came and appeared: Helen D. Gindrat, Houma Tribe, Inc., Chairperson, and Howard Dion, Houma Alliance, Inc., Chairman, who, being duly sworn, declared and acknowledged before me and the undersigned competent witnesses that they are the Presidents of THE HOUMA ALLIANCE, INC., and THE HOUMA TRIBE, INC., respectively, and who acknowledge that they were authorized to and executed the foregoing Agreement and Plan of Consolidation in such capacities for the purpose therein expressed, and as their, and said corporations, free act and deed.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the said appearers, witnesses and I have hereunto affixed our hands on this 12 day of May, 1979.

WITNESSES:

Jacque M Brunet

Howard J Dion

Donald Regist

Helen W. Gindrat

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ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION

OF

UNITED HOUMA NATION, INC.

STATE OF LOUISIANA

PARISH OF

BE IT KNOWN that on this the 12 day of May, 1979, before me, the undersigned authority, a Notary Public in and for the State and Parish aforesaid, duly commissioned and qualified, personally came and appeared: members of United Houma Nation, Inc., whose names are hereunto subscribed, all of full age, who severally declared that, availing themselves of the benefits and provisions of the Constitution of the State of Louisiana and the laws of said State relative to the organization of non-profit corporations, and particularly of the provisions of R.S. 12:201-269, inclusive, as amended, they have united to form, and do by these present form and organize themselves, as well as all other persons who may hereafter join or become associated with them or their successors, into a non-profit corporation for the objects and purposes and under the convenants, stipulations and agreements following, to-wit:

ARTICLE I.

NAME

The name of this corporation is UNITED HOUMA NATION, INC.

ARTICLE II.

PURPOSES

This corporation is organized in order to further the economic development of the tribe by conferring upon the said tribe certain corporate rights, powers, privileges and immunities; to secure for the members of the tribe an assured economic independence and further, in order that the tribe can become eligible for the receipt and benefits of certain grants an/or monies from the Federal Government as well as foundation grants and to do any and all things which a non-profit corporation is entitled to under the laws of the State of Louisiana.

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This corporation is a non-profit corporation as defined in Section 201 subsection 7 of Title 12 of the Revised Statutes aforesaid as amended. No part of the net earnings or other assets of this corporation shall inure to the benefit of any private shareholder or individual. This prohibition shall not apply to any other non-profit corporation.

ARTICLE III.

DURATION

This corporation shall enjoy corporate existence for the maximum period presently permitted, or which may hereafter be permitted by Louisiana Law.

ARTICLE IV.

REGISTERED OFFICE

The principal location and the post office address of the corporation's registered office is: Rt. 1 - Box 95 A
La. Hwy. 1
Golden Meadow, La. 70357

ARTICLE V.

REGISTERED AGENTS

The full name and post office addresses of the registered agents are:

1. Dolores N. Terrebonne
   Rt. 1 Box 96
   La. Hwy. 1
   Golden Meadow, La. 70357

2. James A. Wood
   658 St. Louis St.
   Baton Rouge, La. 70802

ARTICLE VI.

BASIS OF ORGANIZATION

This corporation shall be organized on a non-profit basis, without the issuance of stock.

ARTICLE VI-A

ORIGINAL INCORPORATORS

The original incorporators are: The Houma Tribe, Inc., herein represented by its President, Howard J. Dion; and The Houma Alliance, Inc., herein represented by its Vice-President, Helen D. Gindrat.

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ATTORNEY

ARTICLE VII.

MEMBERSHIP

The membership of this corporation shall be composed of all the members of the UNITED HOUMA NATION, INC., as provided in constitution and by-laws.

ARTICLE VIII.

TRIBAL COUNCIL

The corporate power and management of this corporation shall be vested in, and exercised by, a Tribal Council of nine (9) members, to be elected annually, at a general meeting of the members, on May 15, beginning with the year 1980, to be held at the registered office of the corporation, or at such other place within or without the State of Louisiana, as may be provided in the by-laws.

At all elections for council members, as well as at all other general meetings of the members, each member shall be entitled to one vote, and a majority of all such members casting ballots shall decide all elections or any question coming before any such meeting.

Any vacancy occurring among the Tribal Council of this corporation by death, resignation or otherwise, shall be filled, by election for the unexpired term at the next regular or special meeting of the Tribal Council, or as provided in the by-laws.

Failure to elect council members annually shall not dissolve this corporation nor impair its corporate existence or management, but the council members then in office shall remain in office until their successors shall have been duly elected and installed.

A majority of the tribal council shall constiture a quorum; and a quorum shall be necessary to consider any question that may come before any meeting of the Tribal Council. If a quorum is not present at a duly assembled meeting, a majority of those present may adjourn the meeting from time to time, but may not transact any other business until a quorum is secured. A quorum being present, the affirmative vote of a majority of the Tribal Council present shall be necessary to decide any questions.

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The Tribal Council shall have the power to make, alter and annul such by-laws, rules and regulations for the government of the affairs of this corporation as it may deem proper, as provided in the by-laws.

Special meetings of the members of this corporation may be called at such times and places as determined by the chairperson or as provided in the by-laws.

The time, place and manner of calling, notice requirements and formalities of conducting meetings of the Tribal Council, quorum shall be as prescribed in the by-laws.

Considering the purposes herein above set forth, the first Tribal Council shall consist of the following persons who shall serve as an interim board until their successors are elected and qualified: (This is an interim board and will consist of 15 members. They will serve until a nine-member board is elected to replace them. The interim board is acting in the period of transition; and by this does not expand the board to 12 members. At the date the members of the interim board are to be replaced, the permanent board shall consist of only nine members as stated above.)

1. **Kirby Verret**, Box 369, Theriot, La. 70397
2. **John A. Billiot**, 736 Weigand Dr., Westwego, La. 7009
3. **Charlie A. Duthu**, 104 Myrtle St., Houma, La. 70360
4. **Wilbert A. Billiot**, Rt. 4, Box 734, Houma, La. 7036C
5. **Dolores H. Terrebonne**, St. Rt. Box 96, Golden Meadow La. 70357
6. **John Anthony Parfait**, Box 115, Coast Guard Ave., Dulac, La. 70353
7. **Joseph A. Ledrigue, Sr.**, Rt. 4, Box 0813, Houma, La
8. **Joseph W. Billiot**, 639 Ave. B, Apt. D, Westwego, La 70094
9. **Donald Levell, Sr.**, 5537 Hudson Dr., Marrero, La. 7
10. **Howard J. Dion**, Rt. 6, Box 88 B, Houma, La. 70360
11. **Helen B. Gindrat**, St.Rt. Box 44A, Golden Meadow, La 70357
12. **R.A. Francis**, 103 Myrtle St., Houma, La. 70360
13. **Clyde Dion**, Route 4, Box 752, Houma, La. 70360
14. **Curtis J. Billiot**, 3204 Woodcress Dr., Houma, La.
15.

**ARTICLE IX.**

**OFFICERS**

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The officers of the Corporation shall be a tribal chairperson, a vice-chairperson, tribal secretary, and a tribal treasurer who shall all be elected by the Tribal Council. Their terms of office, succession privileges, duties, responsibilities and authority shall be as established by the by-laws.

ARTICLES X.

BY-LAWS

The Tribal Council shall, at any meeting with a quorum present, have the power to make, amend and repeal by-laws for the governing and regulating of the affairs of the corporation; provided only that the by-laws will not be inconsistent with the Articles and Louisiana Law. All actions relating to the by-laws shall require a two-thirds (2/3rds) vote of the Tribal Council members present and voting.

ARTICLES XI.

LIABILITY

No one member of this corporation shall ever be held liable or responsible for contracts, debts, or defaults of this corporation nor shall any mere informality in the organization have the effect of rendering these Articles of Inc. null or of exposing the members to any liability other than as provided above.

THUS DONE AND SIGNED before me, Notary and undersigned competent witnesses on the date first above written, after due reading of the whole.

WITNESSESS:

Jackie M. Bruneet — Howard J. Dion

Donald Dupuis — Helen W. Gladstone

NOTARY PUBLIC

True Copy
Notary

INITIAL REPORT

OF

UNITED HOUMA NATION, INC.

1. The corporation's registered office is located at Route #1, Box 95A, Golden Meadow, Louisiana.

2. Its registered agents are:

James A. Wood, 658 St. Louis Street, Baton Rouge, La.

Delores Terrebonne, P. O. Box 95A, Golden Meadow, La.

3. Name: Kirby Verret (President)
Address: Box 369, Theriot, LA 70397

Name: John A. Billiot (Vice-Pres.)
Address: 736 Weigand Dr., Westwego, LA 70094

Name: Charlie A. Duthu (Secretary)
Address: 104 Myrtle St., Houma, LA 70360

Name: Wilbert A. Billiot (Treasurer)
Address: Rt. 4 Box 734, Houma, LA 70360

Name: Dolores H. Terrebonne (Board of Directors)
Address: St. Rt. Box 96, Golden Meadow, LA 70357

Name: John Anthony Parfait (Board of Directors)
Address: Box 115, Coast Guard Ave., Dulac, LA 70353

Name: Joseph A. Lodrigue Sr. (Board of Directors)
Address: Rt. 4 Box 0813, Houma, LA 70360

Name: Joseph W. Billiot (Board of Directors)
Address: 639 Ave. B., Apt. D, Westwego, LA 70094

Name: Donald Lovell Sr. (Board of Directors)
Address: 5537 Hudson Dr., Marrero, LA 70072

Name: Howard J. Dion (Board of Directors)
Address: Rt. 6 Box 88 B., Houma, LA 70360

Name: Helen D. Gindrat (Board of Directors)
Address: St. Rt. Box 44 A., Golden Meadow, LA 70357

Name: R. A. Francis (Board of Directors)
Address: 103 Myrtle St., Houma, LA 70360

Name: Clyde Dion (Board of Directors)
Address: Rt. 4 Box 752, Houma, LA 70360

Name: Curtis J. Billiot (Board of Directors)
Address: 3204 Woodcress Dr., Houma, LA 70360

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May 12 1979

CONSTITUTION OF

THE UNITED HOUMA NATION, INC.

PREAMBLE

Recognizing the principals that as time goes on, new conditions and problems arise, we, THE HOUMA TRIBE, INC. and THE HOUMA ALLIANCE, Inc., being duly consolidated as one organization to be known as THE UNITED HOUMA NATION, INC., desiring to establish an organization for our common welfare and benefit, have earnestly and seriously written into this Constitution and By-Laws rules which best adapt themselves to our present and future condition that will:

(a) Promote the fair interest of our fellow tribesmen;

(b) Reaffirm and declare certain fundamental truths, and.

(c) Finally, uphold the dignity and honor of all our fellow tribesmen.

ARTICLE I - NAME

The name of this organization shall be THE UNITED HOUMA NATION, INC.

ARTICLE II - JURISDICTION

The jurisdiction shall extend to any Parish where any Houma Indian may reside and particularly to any lands hereafter acquired by or for the Houma Indians as tribal assets.

ARTICLE III - MEMBERSHIP

Section 1 - The membership of THE UNITED HOUMA NATION, INC. shall consist of:

(a) All Houma Indians who are living in the territorial limits defined by Article II, and who at the time of the ratification of this document possess one-eight (1/8) degree or more of Houma Indian blood shall be admitted to membership in the United Houma Nation, Inc. of Louisiana.

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(b) All persons officially registered as Houma Indian at the time of the ratification shall be recognized as members of the United Houma Nations, Inc.

Section 2 - The Tribal Council shall have the power to pass ordinances governing future membership, loss of membership, and the adoption of new members. Providing, that no person of less than one-eight (1/8) degree Houma Indian blood shall be admitted to membership in the United Houma Nation, Inc. of Louisiana.

Section 3 - The burden of proof rest upon the applicant to establish his eligibility for enrollment.

ARTICLE IV. - GOVERNING BODY

Section 1 - The governing body of the United Houma Nation, Inc., shall be a Tribal Council which shall be elected every two years (2 years) by secret ballot by the qualified voters of the tribal organization. There shall be nine (9) members on the Council; any member of the Tribal Council shall be of one eight (1/8) degree or more of Houma Indian blood. The following communities shall be entitled to elect three (3) members to represent their respective parish (Jefferson, Terrebonne & Lafourche); however other parishes may be included if necessary, except that the interim board shall consist of 12 members who will serve until the first nine member Tribal Council shall be elected.

Section 2 - The Tribal Council shall have authority to make changes in the number of representatives according to future community needs.

Section 3 - Officers of the Tribal Council shall consists of : a tribal chairperson, tribal vice-chairperson, tribal secretary, and tribal treasurer.

ARTICLE V. - DUTIES OF OFFICERS

Section 1 - The chairperson shall preside over all meetings of

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the Council, shall act as the official spokesman for the tribe on matters specifically authorized, shall engage in public relations and serve as coordinator of overall activities, and exercise any authority delegated to him or her by the Tribal Council. The chairperson shall not vote in the Council except in case of a tie vote. The chairperson shall not succeed himself or herself for more than two (2) consecutive terms or no chairperson shall serve more than four (4) years. The ex-chairperson shall then serve as exofficio member (with no voting powers) on the Tribal Council.

Section 2 - The vice-chairperson shall assist the chairperson when called upon to do so and in the absence of the chairperson shall preside. When so presiding the vice-chairperson shall have all rights, privileges and duties as well as the responsibilities of the chairperson. The vice-chairperson will be on duty in the absence of the chairperson.

Section 3 - The secretary of the Council shall conduct all Tribal correspondence and shall keep an accurate record of all matters transacted at Council meetings.

Section 4 - The treasurer shall accept, receipt for, preserve and safeguatd all Tribal funds or special funds for which the Council is acting as trustee or custodian. The treasurer shall deposit all funds in such properly insured depositories as the Council shall direct and shall make or preserve a faithful record of such funds, and shall report on all receipts and expenditures and the amount and nature of all funds in their possession and custody at each regular meeting of the Tribal Council, also at the regular Tribal meetings. An audit of accounts shall be made once a year and at such other times as the Tribal Council may require.

All checks of this Council will be handled according to current accounting procedure manual approved by the Tribal Council.

The treasurer shall be required to give satisfactory bond to the Council, such bond being paid for from the Tribal funds.

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ARTICLE VI. - COMMITTEES

Section 1 - The duties of all committees, and their officers appointed by the Tribal Council shall be clearly defined by resolution of the Council at the time of their creation or appointment. Such committees, and their officers shall report to the Council from time to time as required and their activities and decisions shall be subject to review by the Tribal Council.

ARTICLE VII. - MEETINGS

Section 1 - The Tribal Council shall have the power to determine time and place regular meetings shall be held; the chairperson shall have the power to call a special meeting of the Tribal Council, for the purpose of transacting any business disignated in the call or as prescribed in the by-laws.

Section 2 - A majority of the members of the Tribal Council shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of tribal business.

Section 3 - The Tribal Council in the conduct of its business shall be governed by Robert's Rules of Order as revised by the Tribal Council.

ARTICLE VIII. - ELECTIONS

Section 1 - Any member, male or female, eighteen (18) years of age or more and registered with the Tribal organization is eligible to vote.

Section 2 - The Tribal Council shall prescribe rules and regulations governing Tribal elections. The Tribal Council shall appoint commissioners to conduct voting in their respective community. It shall be the duty of each commissioner to see that all voters must sign the ledger before casting their ballot and that all members must register and vote in his own district.

Section 3 - The present Tribal councilmen shall remain in office until their successors are duly elected and seated. The first regular election under this constitution and by-laws shall be held on the 12 day of May, 1979. On the second Saturday following the date of election, there shall be a special meeting for installation of officers.

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The regular meetings thereafter shall be held monthly. Elections shall be held on the first Saturday of June each year. Five Tribal Council members shall be elected on even numbered years and four Tribal councilmen shall be elected in odd numbered years.

Section 4 - Any registered member of the United Houma Nation, Inc. who is 18 yrs. of age, 1/8 degree Houma Indian blood and has not been convicted of a felony five years prior to the time of consideration will be eligible for election to the Tribal Council.

ARTICLE IX. - VACANCIES & REMOVAL FROM OFFICE

Section 1 - If any vacancy occurs in the membership of the Tribal Council, it shall be the duty of the chairperson of the United Houma Nation, Inc. to fill such vacancy by appointing a member from the community in which such a vacancy occurs and such appointee shall hold office until his successor is duly elected by voters of such community either at a special election or a regular election, subject to approval of the Tribal Council.

Section 2 - If a vacancy occurs in the office of the chairperson, then such position shall be filled by vice-chairperson until this term expires. The vice-chairperson's position shall then be filled by Council appointment for the remainder of the term.

Section 3 - Any member of the Tribal Council or any appointed official of the United Houma Nation, Inc., during the term for which he is elected, is convicted of any felony, shall be given a review by the Tribal Council to determine whether or not he should remain in office. Such member shall be given a written statement of charges against him at least thirty (30) days before the meeting of the Tribal Council before which he is to appear and he shall be given an opportunity to answer any and all charges at the disignated Council meeting. The decision of the Tribal Council shall be final.

Section 4 - Any of the four individual Indian communities or any other Indian community which may necessarily be included, may petition for the recall of a Council member elected by the community. Upon receipt by the Tribal Council of a petition signed by thirty (30%) per cent of the eligible

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voters from that community demanding recall of a member, and at least six (6) months prior to expiration of such member's term of office, it shall be the duty of the Tribal Council to call a special election in that community upon the question of recall. Such special election shall be called and held within a period of sixty (60) days after receipt of petition. No Council member may be recalled except by a majority vote in an election in which at least fifty (50%) per cent of the eligible voters in that community voted.

ARTICLE X. - COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

Section 1 - It shall be the duty of the councilmen from each community to report regularly all the actions and decisions to the Tribal Council.

ARTICLE XI. - POWERS OF THE TRIBAL COUNCIL

Section 1 - Enumerated Powers. The Tribal Council of the UNITED HOUMA NATION, INC. shall have the following powers, subject to any limitations imposed by the laws or the Constitution of the United States, and the state of Louisiana.

(a) To negotiate with Federal, State and Local governments.

(b) To employ legal counsel, the choice of counsel and the determination of fees.

(c) To approve or veto any sale, disposition, lease or encumbrance of Tribal land, interests in land, Tribal funds, or other Tribal assets, except those landsin Terrebonne Parish donated by the Methodist Church for a reservation or Tribal center in Dulac, Louisiana.

(d) To appropriate any available Tribal funds for the benefit of the UNITED HOUMA NATION, INC.

(e) To supervise and manage Tribal economic affairs and enterprises in accordance with this constitution and by-laws.

(f) To pass and reinforce rules and regulations in accordance with applicable Federal or State regulations, providing for the management of Tribal lands, including the making and revocation of assignments, disposition

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of timber, oil and mineral resources.

(g) To promote and protect health, peace, morals, education and the general welfare of the community and its members.

(h) To do such acts of a government and public nature as are not prohibited by applicable laws or by this constitution and by-laws.

(i) To establish and regulate subordinate organizations for social and business purposes.

(j) To pass ordinances and resolutions necessary or incidental to the exercise of any of the foregoing powers.

(k) To propose amendments to the constitution for referal to the people of The United Houma Nation, Inc. for ratification.

ARTICLE XII. - RIGHTS

The protection guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States of American and the Constitution of the State of Louisiana shall not be abridged.

ARTICLE XIII. - INITIATIVE AND REFERENDUM

Section 1 - Reserved powers - determination of percentages. The first power reserved by the members of the tribe is the initiative; and (15%) per cent of regular voting members shall have the right to propose amendments to this constitution and to propose ordinances and resolutions.

Section 2 - The second power is the referendum which may be ordered upon petition signed by fifteen (15%) per centum of the registered voters.

Section 3 - Petitions. An election on an initiative or referendum petition shall be called by the chairperson after ascertaining that a sufficient number of registered voters have signed.

Any measure referred to the Tribe by the initiative or by the referendum shall take effect and be in force when approved by a majority of the votes cast in such election in which at least thirty (30%) per cent of the registered voters voted. All measures referred to the Tribe shall

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begin with the words: "Be it enacted by the Members of THE UNITED HOUMA NATION, INC. "

ARTICLE XIV. - AMENDMENTS

This constitution and by-laws may be amended by a majority vote of the qualified voters of the tribe voting at an election called for that purpose, providing that at least thirty (30%) per cent of those entitled to vote shall vote in such election; but no amendment shall become effective until it shall have been approved as provided in Article XIII.

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MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING OF
THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF
THE HOUMA ALLIANCE, INC.

A special meeting of the Board of Directors of The Houma Alliance, Inc. was held at the Houma Tribal Center, on the 10 day of February, 1979, at 7:30 o'clock p m. and all the Directors were present.

After a general discussion and motions duly made and seconded, the following resolutions were unanimously adopted, to-wit:

"BE IT RESOLVED that this corporation enter into an Agreement and Plan of Consolidation, providing for the consolidation of this corporation, a Louisiana non-profit corporation, into a new corporation to be known as:

THE UNITED HOUMA NATION, INC.,

the latter to be a non-profit corporation, domiciled in the Parish of Lafourche, State of Louisiana, such agreement and Plan of Consolidation to be executed by a majority of the Directors of this corporation and a majority of the Directors of The Houma Tribe, Inc., pursuant to the authority given by the shareholders/members of each of the respective corporations. Said Agreement and Plan of Consolidation to be in the same form and substance to be voted on by the respective shareholders/members of this corporation, the Secretary being hereby directed to attach a copy of such Agreement and Plan of Consolidation to the minutes hereof;

"BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the said Agreement and Plan of Consolidation Agreement, when executed by the corporate parties in the manner required by law, be submitted to the shareholders/members of this corporation for their approval;

"BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the officers of this corporation are, and each of them is, hereby authorized and directed to do such acts and things as are, in their discretion, necessary and proper to submit said Agreement and Plan of Consolidation to the Shareholders/members and when and if such Agreement and Plan of Consolidation is approved by the shareholders of all corporate parties thereto, to effectuate the said merger pursuant to and to carry out the terms and provisions of said Agreement and Plan of Consolidation and further resolved that all acts heretofore taken by said officers, or any of them in furtherance of the purposes hereof are hereby ratified and confirmed.

There being no further business to come before the meeting, the meeting was then and there adjourned.

Secretary

ATTEST:

President

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MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING OF
THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF
THE HOUMA TRIBE, INC.

A special meeting of the Board of Directors of The Houma Tribe, Inc. was held at the Houma Tribal Center on the 10 day of February, 1979, at 7:30 o'clock p.m. and all the Directors were present.

After a general discussion and motions duly made and seconded, the following resolutions were unanimously adopted, to-wit:

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THE UNITED HOUMA NATION, INC.,

the latter to be a non-profit corporation, domiciled in the Parish of Lafourche, State of Louisiana, such agreement and Plan of Consolidation to be executed by a majority of the Directors of this corporation and a majority of the Directors of The Houma Alliance, Inc., pursuant to the authority given by the shareholders/members of each of the respective corporations. Said Agreement and Plan of Consolidation to be in the same form and substance to be voted on by the respective shareholders/members of this corporation, the Secretary being hereby directed to attach a copy of such Agreement and Plan of Consolidation to the minutes hereof;

"BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the said Agreement and Plan of Consolidation Agreement, when executed by the corporate parties in the manner required by law, be submitted to the shareholders/members of this corporation for their approval;

"BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the officers of this corporation are, and each of them is, hereby authorized and directed to do such acts and things as are, in their discretion, necessary and proper to submit said Agreement and Plan of Consolidation to the Shareholders/members and when and if such Agreement and Plan of Consolidation is approved by the shareholders of all corporate parties thereto, to effectuate the said merger pursuant to and to carry out the terms and provisions of said Agreement and Plan of Consolidation and further resolved that all acts heretofore taken by said officers, or any of them in furtherance of the purposes hereof are hereby ratified and confirmed.

There being no further business to come before the meeting, the meeting was then and there adjourned.

Charles A. Dardar
Joseph A. Billiot
David Fanguy

John A. Billiot
Joseph A. Ledoux, Sr.
John Anthony Billiot
Helen D. Hendrat
Secretary

ATTEST:

Helen D. Hendrat
President

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83.7(e) A list of all known current members of the group and a copy of each available former list of members based on the tribe's own defined criteria.

The United Houma Nation, Inc.
St. Rt. Box 95-A
Golden Meadow, La. 70357

April 10, 1985

Name & Addresses of People that
live in other Parish & States

55C

United Houma Nation
St. Rt. Box 95-A
Golden Meadow, La. 70357

March 21, 1985

Name & Addresses of People that
live in Jefferson Parish

515

United Houma Nation
St. Rt. Box 95 A.
Golden Meadow,La. 70357

February 22,1985

Name & Addresses
of People That Lives In Lafourche Parish

92

St. Bernard Parish

2/27/1985

Name and addresses of
tribal members

1061

The United Houma Nation, Inc.
Star Route Box 95-A
Golden Meadow, Louisiana 70357

May 10, 1985

Names and Addresses of People living
in Terrebonne Parish

83.7(f) The membership of the petitioning group is composed principally of persons who are not members of any other North American Indian tribe.

83.7(g) The petitioner is not, nor are its members, the subject of congressional legislation which has expressly terminated or forbidden the Federal relationship.