SUPPLEMENT TO CRITERION C OF THE UNITED HOUMA NATION, INC.
PETITION FOR FEDERAL ACKNOWLEDGMENT
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May 14, 1991

During the period from March 23, through March 26, 1991, I conducted eleven interviews in Lafourche and Terrebonne parishes, Louisiana. The purpose of this research was to identify Houma Indian political leaders who white politicians recognized and with whom they had contact and the nature of that contact. All but one of the individuals interviewed are white, and all but one of these held or presently holds political office. The time period covered in the interviews is from the mid-1930's through the 1970's. The results of this research are described below and supplement criterion (c) of the United Houma Nation petition for federal acknowledgment.

The primary contact that the politician-interviewees had with the Houma centered around their soliciting Houma support for their respective campaigns and elections. Candidates seeking Houma support did not go door-to-door or mail out campaign literature. Instead, their main campaigning device was to approach the influential tribal leaders. They would ask the tribal leader to "cabale" for them; that is, to politic, to cajole, to convince, or to speak on their behalf. Each settlement had one or more tribal leaders who could get out the vote and who could influence other tribal members' votes. The politician asking for support was not assured of it. He was, in a sense, screened by the tribal leader. If he gained the support

of the tribal leader, the politician usually gave the Houma leader printed material with the politician's picture and a sample of the ballot to show how it should be marked. Sometimes the tribal leader allowed the politician to address the tribal members by the tribal leader. Individuals who owned stores, bars and/or dance halls were in a position to exert political leadership, and these were most generally the tribal members sought out. Sometimes the politician paid a sum for the support; more commonly he promised jobs or agreed to provide some improvements for the settlement. After the election the politician could expect to be called upon for assistance when there was a problem in the settlement.

In Golden Meadow, Ernest Dardar was one leader who was frequently contacted by tribal members and white politicians. He was born in 1894 and died in 1964. Besides being a fisherman, he was a prominent traiteur. "If two whites was running, it was important who got to talk to him first. But if he didn't like you - what you say - no sense coming back. You not going to get no votes below the corporation line (village line). They (Houmas) listened pretty much to Ernest (Freddie Bruce to Campisi, Golden Meadow, March 23, 1991). (Mr Bruce is 72 years old and a lifelong resident of Golden Meadow.)

Similar sentiments were expressed by Senator Leonard Chabert, President of the Louisiana State Senate. In describing Frank Naquin of Golden Meadow, another Houma leader with whom Senator Chabert and others did cabale after World War II, he said, "If they (Houmas) liked you, alright. If not, you didn't make a second visit. Frank was the one to go to see first (Senator

Leonard Chabert to Campisi, Chauvin, March 26, 1991). According to Senator Chabert, Eddie St. Marie was a major politician after the second world war who cultivated and relied on support from the Houmas. He ran for sheriff defeating a wealthy Cajun. Frank Naquin and Ernest Dardar would carry St. Marie's "cards" and gather people to hear him speak. Dick Guidry, who represented Golden Meadow in the 1950's and the 1960's (although his political activities extended back to the 1940's) confirms the importance of Frank Naquin and also his brother Andre. Referring to Frank, he told this interviewer, "He was the spokesman for the group. He would call when he needed things - help for somebody or maybe jobs, sometimes police matters. He didn't call a lot; they (Houmas) were very self-sufficient" (former state representative Dick Guidry to Campisi, telephone conversation, March 26, 1991).

One of the staunchest allies of the Houmas is Senator Leonard Chabert. He was brought up on Bayou Lafourche and worked with Houmas. As a young man he was active in local and parish politics and associated with Eddie St. Marie and Dick Guidry. In 1967, he was elected to the state's house of representatives and for the last 12 years has served in the state senate. He has a long association with the Houmas in all of their settlements. His senatorial district covers the parts of both parishes where the Houmas are concentrated. From his point of view, the Houmas have always had leaders, and these leaders were known and recognized by non-Indians. He identifies as leaders Frank Naquin, Ernest Dardar, and John Dardar in Golden Meadow; Victor, Antoine and Deme Naquin (Antoine's son) at Isle Jean Charles; and Charlie Fitch at Dulac-Grand Caillou. Of the last mentioned,

Senator Chabert said, "Every politician who could had a rally at Charlie's dance hall. That is, if Charlie let you" (Senator Leonard Chabert to Campisi, March 26, 1991).

In addition to carrying campaign literature for a specific candidate and cajoling individuals to vote, Houma leaders would gather together tribal members to hear a candidate. Most commonly this occurred at a store, bar or dance hall owned by the leader. Antoine Naquin on Isle Jean Charles had a store which served as a school, dance hall and church (Sherwin Guidry to Campisi, Montegut, March 24, 1991). (Mr. Guidrey is a retired postal employee and a local historian who has studied the settlements along Bayou Terrebonne. It is his opinion that the land acquired in Rosalie Courteaux's name along the bayou was acquired for the tribe.)

According to J. B. Breaux, an elected representative to the Terrebonne Parish Consolidated Government, his grandfather took political leaders like state senator Rappelea and United States Senator Alan Ellender to cabale with the Houmas on Isle Jean Charles. They visited Antoine Naquin for this purpose (J. B. Breaux to Campisi, Houma, March 25, 1991). Reggie Dupruy, also a representative to the Terrebonne Parish Consolidated Government, recalls his father taking politicians to visit Antoine Naquin. Before him the political leader was his brother Victor Naquin. They also visited with the Houmas at Pointe aux Chenes; the leader there was Sidney Verdin (Reggie Dupruy to Campisi, Houma, March 25, 1991). Reggie Dupruy's father was active in politics all of his adult life and was an elected representative for Pointe aux Chenes and Isle Jean Charles to the Terrebonne Parish

Police Jury.

There were a number of Houma men who exerted influence in the Grand Caillou-Dulac area. According to Thomas Dardar (age 57), a tribal member and lifelong resident of Terrebonne Parish, these included Charlie Fitch, Jimmie Billiot, Joe Solet, Tom Dion, Ti homme Verdin, and James Morris Foret. At Pointe aux Chenes, Sidney Verdin controlled tribal affairs, while on Isle Jean Charles it was Antoine Naquin and before him, Victor Naquin. Wilbert Verdin performed the same functions in Dularge (Thomas Dardar to Campisi, Houma, March 26, 1991). J. B. Breaux told me that Charlie Fitch was particularly influential, his influence going back before World War II. "Charlie Fitch had a bar that had a reputation. He had great influence in the area. If you were a friend of Charlie Fitch, you could go all over. He was like the mayor of Dulac. The sheriff would call Charlie before he came down (to make an arrest) and he'd (Charlie) quiet the place down" (J.B. Breaux to Campisi, March 25, 1991).

Gilmore Pellegrin gave the following example of how these Houma leaders operated. His father and later his brother Royal were involved in Terrebonne Parish politics beginning in the 1930's. Royal took over after his father's death in 1939. Both men cabale with Victor and Antoine Naquin. Father and son would go to Isle Jean Charles with "cards" showing how to mark the ballots, and the Naquins would distribute them and get out the vote. They would give speeches at Naquin's store, which the residents were expected to attend. Victor was a powerful man who could lift a hundred pound sack of sugar with his teeth. He and his brother maintained law and order on the island. As a reward

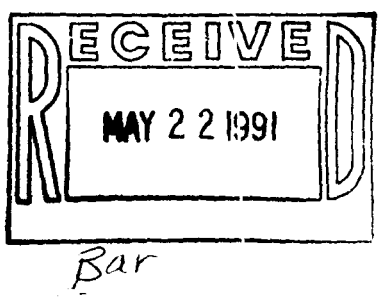
for the continuing loyalty and support of the Houmas, Royal was instrumental in getting a road built between Isle Jean Charles and Pointe aux Chenes.

In 1968, Gilmore Pellegrin (age 72) ran for the school board. He went to see Antoine who told him "I got 68 votes. If I know one of them votes against you, his ass is gone" (Gilmore Pellegin to Campisi, telephone conversation, March 25, 1991). Pellegrin won the election.

The data presented in this supplement to criterion (c) supports and augments data previously submitted to the Branch. These data support the data presented in the petition that there were recognized leaders in the Houma settlements in the 1930's. It is important to recall that the Houmas were subjected to intense discrimination well into the 1970's. As demonstrated in the petition, there were Houma leaders in the settlements continuously back to Rosalie Courteaux. Despite the discrimination, their numbers alone required white politicians to deal with them. The result was the political system described in this report. This system reflected the political and racial conditions and depended upon the development of dyadic relationships between politicians and Houma leaders. Without the latter, it would not have worked.

The data described in these interviews and in material previously submitted to the Branch show that the white politicians used an existing Houma Indian political system; they did not create it. The Houma leaders were already leaders when the white politicians sought Houma support. They were leaders by virtue of the extent of their kinship ties, their economic

resources, their activities as traiteurs, and/or their physical prowess. White politicians would not have wasted time and resources on the politically ineffective. While relationships with white politicians enhanced the power and influence of the Houma leaders, to maintain that power and influence the Houma leaders had to produce benefits for their constituents - jobs, roads, etc. -; to keep the support of the tribal leaders white politicians had to deliver some benefits to the Houma leaders. The evidence supports the conclusion that there existed within the Houma community leaders recognized by the white politicians and followed by the tribal members.



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