Chapter Six:
The Spirit of the People and the Community,
in Cameras and Folklore

Section One: Chapter Introduction

This chapter like the second chapter of this text is a chapter divided into three sections. It is also a long chapter which allows more easily for divisions and less easily for treatment in a single undifferentiated body of text in the entire chapter. The first section is this introduction, the second is a brief historical overview of mentalities, sentiments, resonances and the events and people which shaped them especially from 1843 to 1943. This second section particularly seeks to understand how Cajun culture came to be alienated from the mainstream American culture to the degree that it did. The last section seeks to understand what constituted and defined the folklore and folkloristic environment encountered by the documentarians of the SONJ projects and also a bit about the folklore and folkloristic environment they brought with them.

The nature of this study has already been shown to focus on the kind of human experience which is far from the battlefields and political halls of power which have been the stronghold and defining spaces for traditional history. At this point this study turns to the historical exploration of a good many aspects of experience which are certainly not products in any clear way of that aspect of history which in the first chapter was designated the historical moment. We will attempt however to look even at these deep cultural resonances not only as products of the historical tradition which in the first chapter was described as it has formed Cajun Country and its peoples -- especially the Cajun people themselves. We will look at whatever folk spirit is discussed here very much in those historical terms. However this study will not stop there. It will also be the task of this chapter to show how the postwar moment in which this activity occurs shaped, flavored and defined the longer trends and stream of traditional experience.

A next question to ask is, what is the purpose of discussing spirit at all in this context? That is not the most vital or crucial question in this chapter but it is an important question and it deserves to be answered. For a variety of reasons that will be the question we attempt to answer first in this chapter. The main reason for answering it first is so that we will not be tripping over it as the discussion progresses.

First, it perhaps sets the tone of this discussion to recognize that there is a Robert and Frances Flaherty Study Center at Claremont College Sch. James Coogan wrote an article about this site in the same journal in which my own review of Pare Lorentz’s
memoirs appeared and only a few years after the fact of that immediately posthumous review. But the *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* is not the only entity which has had occasion to interface with this unusual institution. The online platform for the Center discusses and presents its significance and purpose in connection with its longtime director James Coogan as follows:

**Robert and Frances Flaherty Study Center**

*Dr. Coogan’s special interests are in religion and the performing arts and religion and media, and in the unique contribution which these can make to understanding the religious dimensions of experience. He has had extensive experience in music, theater and media production, including more than thirty plays and dozens of instructional films and television programs.*

*Working with Frances Flaherty, he developed a Center to provide resources for the study of non-fiction film, which has since preserved and made accessible to the scholarly community thousands of still photographs, audio recordings, and films related to the production of *Nanook of the North* and the other Flaherty films. These pioneered a new use of the film medium, focused on cross-cultural communication, care of the earth through right relationship to it, and the moving image as a tool for the human spirit, to inspire and shape a better future for the earth and its peoples.*

*Recognized by the International Documentary Association by its award for film preservation and scholarship, the Center’s work continues as its materials are being transferred to digital media, to facilitate wider distribution and use by filmmakers, scholars, and students.*

The fact that the creators of *Louisiana Story* have their work archived and enshrined especially in a school of theology surely indicates a great deal about how Frances Flaherty saw their work in the years after the death of her husband. We will start with that discussion which is readily undertaken before plunging into the more challenging question of what spiritual and folkloristic aims Robert Flaherty, the SONJ photographers and Roy Stryker may have had. The reader can presuppose correctly that the answer is likely to be different very different for each of those three subjects. Robert Flaherty was, among the many other things he may have been, most certainly was the husband of Frances Flaherty her perceptions and sensibilities formed a very important part of the life context in which he did his work. With Stryker and the SONJ
photographers there is very little, if anything, that one can presume about their motivations and sensibilities from the motivations and sensibilities of Frances Flaherty.

Speaking with Robert Gardner of Harvard University’s Peabody Museum in 1960, within a decade of Robert Flaherty’s death Frances Hubbard Flaherty had many spiritually oriented things to say about her husband’s work and her husband himself. Frances Flaherty made the following statement about Flaherty’s films as a whole body and his approach to filmmaking:

*His attitude toward it (the camera) was that of a mystic…. The camera was a machine for seeing more than the eye could see. He didn’t presume to write scripts, he didn’t presume to tell the camera what to see. He didn’t tell the camera, “This is life!” He asked the camera, “What is this mystery that you can see better than I? Far better than I can see movement – and life is movement – better than I can see you can see not only the movements that reveal emotion but the finer inner movements that reveal the spirit. You take us to a new dimension of seeing. You give us a new awareness. Through your eyes we rediscover the world around us, we rediscover ourselves, the world is at once in morning again and we are reborn.”*

This religious sensibility is more than a little and thin layer of religiosity imposed on the memory of a life. Frances Flaherty was extraordinarily serious about this religious and spiritual dimension to her life’s work with her husband. Most famous people’s lives and great works are not described in such spiritual terms by those nearest and dearest to them after their deaths. The value of her assessment of his work itself is also worth considering and we will look at it with both a critical and an appreciative eye. However, it is more to the point here that they were there together in a life much shared and their work is remembered in spiritual terms by the surviving spouse. Spirituality as embodied in daily life is not an alien construct imposed on their work strictly from the outside.

Not only in comparison to what has already been quoted from the views of Frances Flaherty but keeping the following passage in mind one can compare another New Englander’s view of Acadian life and the connection of these people and the wilderness and rural environment in which they lived. Here are the opening stanzas of Longfellow’s *Evangeline*:

*THIS is the forest primeval. The murmuring pines and the hemlocks,*

*Bearded with moss, and in garments green, indistinct in the twilight,*

*Stand like Druids of ebd, with voices sad and prophetic,*

*Stand like harpers hoar, with beards that rest on their bosoms.*

*Loud from its rocky caverns, the deep-voiced neighboring ocean*

*Sspeaks, and in accents disconsolate answers the wail of the forest.*
This is the forest primeval; but where are the hearts that beneath it

Leaped like the roe, when he hears in the woodland the voice of the huntsman?

Where is the thatch-roofed village, the home of Acadian farmers,—

Men whose lives glided on like rivers that water the woodlands,

Darkened by shadows of earth, but reflecting an image of heaven?

Waste are those pleasant farms, and the farmers forever departed!

Scattered like dust and leaves, when the mighty blasts of October

Seize them, and whirl them aloft, and sprinkle them far o’er the ocean.

Naught but tradition remains of the beautiful village of Grand-Pré.

Ye who believe in affection that hopes, and endures, and is patient,

Ye who believe in the beauty and strength of woman’s devotion,

List to the mournful tradition, still sung by the pines of the forest;

List to a Tale of Love in Acadie, home of the happy.

It deserves to be mentioned that it is debatable how much of a New Englander Frances Flaherty ever was. She was born in Germany, had formative years outside of the region, traveled much of her life and so forth but she was also very much attached to the intellectual and spiritual communities of New England which have done so much to define the United States of America and its peoples and communities. Dudley Leblanc had not yet written *The Acadian Miracle*, which appeared with a 1966 Abbeville, Louisiana copyright and was produced mostly from his study in Erath, Louisiana and his publisher in Lafayette, Louisiana. But these works from that book written by one of the most prominent and relevant Cajuns do show something of their own perception of themselves:

*Simple in their mode of living, moral and temperate in their habits, They enjoyed a rural community life that has been the theme of many a poem. They were peaceful and happy, ardently Catholic and French. They worked eamestly and diligently. They built villages, planted orchards and built dykes (levees). They built a few roads and constructed chapels and churches.*
Thus the Acadian nation was being formed.

There is no doubt that the Longfellow poem was the most important poem in Leblanc’s mind as he wrote these lines. There are three different views of the mutual relationship of spirituality, community and the environment between Longfellow, Frances Flaherty and Dudley Leblanc. But all three have carefully developed opinions about all three of these realities and all three are of the opinion that all three are important matters that deserve to be discussed. All are of the opinion that our humanity in some way depends on these elements and the way that they achieve any balance at all. All saw in these elements a set of necessities for the continuity of the humane and decent life in the time in which they each lived.

This whole effort of course is underwritten by Standard Oil of New Jersey. One might presume that the spirituality of the experience of this documentary venture would surely end when it ran up against the checkbook of the Standard Oil Corporation. In the same Peabody Museum interview with Robert Gardner in which the widow and photographer and screenwriter delivered the quoted description of Robert Flaherty’s meaning and method she said many other interesting things. She read from a document that she presented as the authorizing text which Standard Oil presented to Robert Flaherty as his commission to make the film that became *Louisiana Story*. She presented this excerpt from that unnamed document as the description that they provided of what they wanted for their money.

...a classic, a permanent artistic record of the contribution which the oil industry has made to civilization. A film that will present the story of oil with the distinctly epic sweep it deserves and assure the piece a permanent place in the highest ranks of the literature of the screen. The film would also be such an absorbing human story that it would stand on its own feet as entertainment anywhere. Because of its entertainment value it would be distributed through the regular motion picture houses in America and abroad.

While there is no mention of Catholicism, Druids or mystics this is hardly corporate boilerplate. There is some spiritual element in the minds of the least religious people in words like classic epic, civilization, human, highest, literature and story when these words are all shoved together in a few sentences. Whatever else may be the case the people funding this effort were closer to the feeling with which kings commissioned Cathedrals in the middle ages than the were to the feelings with which most television and print commercials are contracted in the workaday business of the advertising industry. The struggle of all these people to express things that go beyond the ordinary description of facts and narration of events is certainly evident. While the same documentary evidence of such a high purpose is not evident in the SONJ photography project does not present itself there is still a reality that both projects were related and that it was through Stryker that Flaherty received his commission.

Where does that leave the scholar or anyone seeking to understand that unseen reality which Flaherty’s Mystic Camera set out to record?
It is important to remember that the crew of the *Louisiana Story* met Lionel Leblanc at Avery Island’s rather opulent and manicured Jungle Gardens, met J.C. Boudreaux first at a cafe in Cameron and then at movie house in Gueydan. The crew techs were largely hired in or around Abbeville and New Iberia. The trapper’s cabin used for interior and exterior shots of the was not in a location as remote as the fictional location fabricated from several sequences of raw footage. But it was the most significant interaction they had with wilderness trapping families that I have been able to detect. But all the Cajuns on the crew and the cast had some wilderness experience and many had significant wilderness experience.

The fact that there were a good number of Cajuns at work on the film certainly helped to add an authenticity to Flaherty’s method of trying to see the spirit of the people. I have mentioned the ways they failed to interface effectively with some of the life of the people around them, given those shortcomings in their method of interacting it is important to note one of the great strengths of the work that they pursued. The connection to the ethnic community was preserved in the people doing the production -- Clarence Faulk the production assistant, his brother Burnell and their cousin the star of the film -- J.C Boudreaux were Cajuns. Evelyn Bienvenu as well as Lionel Leblanc and the carpenter usually respectfully addressed as Mr. Hebert were Cajuns certainly helped to make up for the degree to which they failed to participate fully in the region’s life and to reach out for complete information about way of life and culture which might have been available to them. In addition within the way that Cajun-ness is measured and rated among those near the center of the ethnic community a good number of these people would be considered very Cajun.

In some ways the interaction between these film people and the Cajun community was better than it often is when movies are made in a location. Movies are disruptive in all sorts of ways and there are many stories to be heard of conflicts with the local communities where films are shot to match the many stories of communities competing to receive and attract filmmakers. Richard Leacock in his letters home to his wife Happy in Greenwich Village discussed the complications involved in hiring J.C, Boudreaux. There were few moments which would illustrate the distinctions between the two places as clearly but that was because there were so few really challenging interactions which were undertaken. J.C. was a Catholic, Cajun, white, Louisiana male minor and all of those identifiers would have meaning for these people and these meanings would interact in a particular system of values with which the film people were not very familiar.

J. C. Boudreaux was subject to child labor laws and compulsory education laws in Louisiana that protected white children from exploitive labor practices. In addition he was required to be properly educated and needed parental consent, Flaherty had commissioned Leacock to get the boy on board so at least for one part of the process he remained either in charge closely involved with the issues involved in recruiting the child. In that process he found out that Boudreaux was the illegitimate son of a union in which his mother was no longer involved and also that she was eligible to marry under both the law of the state and the laws of the Catholic Church but was not married to her current domestic companion and all of this affected the forms and means of granting parental consent under the law at that time. Leacock is further
impressed that the lawyers on retainer or in the practice of working with Flaherty or the
documentarians who are prestigious. New York lawyers are not knowledgeable of Louisiana’s
Civil Code nor are they licensed to practice in the State. This survival of the legacy of Napoleon
surprises him. He is surprised at the legal complexities involved in making the film in Louisiana.

There was a community at the Nettles in the three hundred block of North Main Street in
Abbeville. Helen Van Dongen in her diary recounts the fact that at first people from the town
called on them but under Robert Flaherty’s cue these social calls were not returned and so they
ceased. She does not blame Flaherty because of the demanding and unusual schedule the
people associated with the film kept but she does regret it to some degree and the theme of
loneliness and alienation is developed in her diary quite a bit. She also states that she felt like
people in Abbeville regarded all the household at the Nettles as a family with Robert and
Frances Flaherty as mother and father and everyone else as their children. It may be from my
experience of both New York and Abbeville that she was not entirely off the mark. Certainly
there would have been a tendency to regard the household as a social unit that was stronger
than in the Greenwich Village to which Richard Leacock was ever sending his letters to Happy
Leacock as she awaited the birth of their first child. What was lost in their connection with the
town under these circumstances surely did increase at least to some degree their connection
with the Cajuns that usually shared the table at least now and then and often slept over --those
on the production itself. In addition to this connection within the household we know that there
was a great deal more. Arnold Eagle’s film *The Pirogue Maker* is not only significant because it
shows the work of the man who made the pirogue used in the film but it is more significant in
that it shows how people were able to connect to such a craftsman who had to be deeply
connected to the cultural environment. No footage of this making of the pirogue appears in
*Louisiana Story*. However it does establish the authenticity that was present in the process the
Flahertys had come to represent. Nor was the Eagle film the only example. Besides the SONJ
photographs archived by Eagle, Webb and Leacock that were part of the production there were
many photographs by Frances Flaherty that were part of the production of all of her husband’s
films more or less. They were her special and largely unsung life and treasured part of the work
which is revealed just a bit in the film Hidden and Seeking made about their life together during
the last years of her life and including footage shot of her and her environs in Vermont. In
addition to those photographic explorations we know from Van Dongen’s diary that they located
and set out to record the work of a Mrs. Dronet they believed was a very authentic worker in
Cajun homespun.

The web of all these connections provided some real and valuable and honest insight into the
lives and folkways of the Acadian heritage and the Cajun people. There were surely many limits
to the method but anyone with experience in connecting with distinct cultural groups will
recognize all the opportunities for a conversation, a random observation or a personal
connection that would lead from one of these openings into Cajun culture and bring them to
another such connection. A substantial amount of time invested by this household at the Nettles
into the process they had committed themselves to bring about and make complete could not
help but yield some insight and worthy observation.
Section Two: The History of Alienation and Isolation

However, the sense not only of the exotic but of the alienated and entirely separate nature of Cajun life and experience is not dependent entirely upon this connection to impenetrable wilds in order to understand the possible spiritual and aesthetic resonances and sensibilities of these people who would become associated with the film it is important to understand both their durable distinctiveness and the long journey of alienation which had characterized their history since 1865. For one thing about all human endeavor is that the value of communicating with other people in the same field leads those in the endeavor to develop a kind of shorthand to make communication easier. That is efficient in all sorts of ways but also leads to misunderstandings that invite their little or not so little rebellions along the way.

American history cannot much be accused of minimizing the significance of the War Between the States however when considering the postwar era as such or documentary history as such it is generally considered to be a fairly safe assumption that the gaps between the Confederates and the Federals is not a principal concern. Leaving aside the question of what concerns are principal let us consider the fact that there is no point in history where the wounds opened in that conflagration fully healed for all those involved. Clearly the documentarians were not carpetbaggers but they were not devoid of all sectional sentiment. That sentiment varied from one to the next. The same generalizations apply to those they came to document in the South. First of all the journey from New York into the heart of Cajun Country and Vermilion and Iberia Parishes by all of the Standard Oil of New Jersey documentarians was largely a journey by people associated strongly with New England into the former Confederate States of America. A child born in 1864 was 79 years old in 1943 and the pace of change in rural Dixie was often slow and memories were often long. When people discussed the past there were still faces around who could say they had been born under Confederate flags. When my parents were teenagers in Abbeville in the 1950s a senior matron of unusually long life in our extended family was still telling the story of how her family hid her as a child in a well near their house when the Yankees passed through the region. She used to say to many, including my great grandmother, who was her daughter and a woman I knew very well that this was one of her earliest vivid and distinct memories. It was true that there was a moment of lessened sectionalism and heightened nationalism in this postwar moment of 1947 that is at the center of our period and in the years leading up to this point. But it does not do any justice to this period to ignore the sectional antipathies in a region where injuries suffered in the eighteenth century were remembered by all and injuries from the fourteenth and fifteenth century were remembered by, some of the elite, conservative or influential.

There is not space in an essay of this type to write any definitive cultural history of Dixie even in summary. There was a complicated relationship with the Southern heritage in Cajun Country, there were fewer Confederate monuments in public spaces than in rural areas that did not have
the competing tragedy of the expulsion of the Acadians from Nova Scotia to memorialize and remember along with the Lost Cause of Dixie. In addition, the history of the region was more integrated into mainstream Southern experience before the Civil War than it was after the Civil War. In many ways the history of the Acadiana region after the civil war is a history of becoming alienated and exotic survivors. Cajuns were as alienated in their own way as many other groups that were more disadvantaged. The struggles of the Gens Libre des Coleurs and the Metis were perhaps more serious in almost every way but the disadvantages of their worsening position tended to draw them into the mainstream of American history as Colored People. They were alienated definitely but alienation was not their principal concern. Cajuns found alienation to be their principal concern. They entered this period of alienation after a catastrophic war. It was a very bloody war. More Yankees or Unionists in uniform were killed in this war than all Americans killed in any other war and more than Southerners were killed in uniform. Of course the percentage of Southerners killed was much higher as they had the smaller armies. More Southerners or Secessionists killed in this war than Yankees if one counts all losses civilian and military in that war and while percentages were high for civilians in the early wars of the eighteenth century no total of all Americans killed comes close to matching this great killing in any other war. It was in many ways just the kind of horror Americans came to this continent to avoid among others -- the remaking of an entire society by bloodletting and violence. That is a well known fact of history but bears repeating. Standard Oil of New Jersey would become part of the industry that would have a great deal to do with remaking some of what were known as the antebellum Cotton States into a new type of oil fired economy which would provide a new precious commodity to the nation which had emerged since the Civil War. But Standard Oil of New Jersey would not be oblivious to the Sectional past as it forged these new economic institutions. The documentary period is one of many pieces of evidence that shows that they were aware of challenges related to cultural and historical differences across the postwar United States.

The town in which the Flaherty led household had situated itself was founded in that part of the antebellum era which could seem a golden age. The age of Evangeline being published, of the bilingual education law, of the Governorship of Alexandre Mouton. That Acadian had strong connections with his own ethnic community, with the Creole aristocracy that sort of did and sort of did not exist much as it had during colonial times and with the new British American elite. He had been speaker of the Louisiana House of Representatives in 1831 and 1832. Later he filled a vacancy in the Senate as a rising star in the Democratic Party and then elected to a full term in the U.S. Senate in 1837 where he served as Chairman of the Agriculture Committee until he resigned in connection with the taking of the office of the Governor of Louisiana from 1843 to 1846. He supported private wealth at the expense of the growth of government but also set up reforms that would increase the influence and voting rights of white men who were not well landed or otherwise privileged. He would later lead the Secession Committee through its crucial phases. He also fathered 19 legitimate children by two wives. He sought in the fabric of Acadian ethnic life to strengthen the regional operations of the community within the Attakapas. The Town of Abbeville, then known as La Chapelle, and the church parish of St. Mary Magdalen
were founded by a French missionary priest called *Pere* Megret on July 25, 1843 when he purchased 160 arpents (about 135 acres) of property on the Vermilion River from Joseph Leblanc and his wife Isabelle Broussard Leblanc. Optimism about the Acadian ethnic future in the slaveholding culture of the South was a part of the fabric of the founding of this town. It struggled successfully with the Anglo and Protestant community of Perry’s bridge to become the seat of Vermilion Parish when that time came. Father Megret also established a chapel under special missionary rites to guide English-speaking Protestant souls into the Catholic Church at Perry’s Bridge. However exotic or distinct the Cajun community in the area may have been in the early 1840s it is clear that it was not alienated. There were problems enough in the antebellum order and Louisiana was far from an exception but the Cajuns were a committed and successful part of the struggle of the region to become whatever it was in the future going to be. Unlike the older communities on the Attakapas Prairie or what Longfellow calls the beautiful Town of Grand Pre the Town of Abbeville has no real pioneering heritage. It is the town of a softer era in the history of a people who value hard men, hard work, hard fighting, caution and close husbandry of resources. Despite the catastrophes of the Civil War some of the feeling of the era of privileged optimism has clung to the town. I and Dudley Leblanc are both descended from Joseph Leblanc and Isabelle Broussard Leblanc. This little world around Abbeville would take far too long to describe to be attempted in this chapter but it was not all that much like Margaret Mitchell’s Georgia. But it was a way of life and a community that eventually felt threatened by the election of Abraham Lincoln and would go to war against its former sister states.

To feel an empathy with the Confederacy one need not see the kind of romance and dreamlike quality that the film more than the novel titled *Gone With the Wind* seems to evoke so powerfully. The Confederacy was fighting for many things which no longer seem credible as reasons to fight. The world indeed has so vastly changed. In 1816 the American Colonization Society was founded by a man named Robert Finley about whom I know almost nothing. However, within a few months the ACS had held a meeting presided over by Henry Clay and attended by other Southern luminaries like Andrew Jackson and James Monroe. These men also faced a distinguished Northern delegation (as it were without formal sectionalism) of whom Daniel Webster may have been the most distinguished. These men actually got $100,000 in funds from the US Congress and after a short time in 1819 had sent a ship with 88 Free Black emigrants three white ACS agents to begin founding the colony which would become the nation of Liberia. This is the same pre-confederacy where at the same time the Congo Square had free and slave musicians from many regions and tribes and nations in Africa performing amid Louisiana French martial music and creating Jazz’s roots. This is the same pre-confederacy where Treme was a neighbor of prosperous people of Free Coloured descent in New Orleans and where the City of Richmond was starting to show a lesser version of the same development. This was the same pre-confederacy where dueling codes and historic re-enactments of and elaborations upon ancient jousts were often celebrated. This was the same pre-confederacy South where serious conversations about race and class still went on in many homes, taverns, vestries and colleges. Was it a perfect society? No, indeed.
There were many clubs and associations in the pre-confederate South that celebrated knights and serfs from Europe’s past. There were those who hoped and were trying to find a way to have real manorialism rather than chattel slavery plantations. Like Aristotle, Confucius and the Bible they were devoted to the idea of building a real society that saw people as valuable and relationships as worthy of being institutionalized. It is true that all of this has little meaning according the modern view of America. However, America has changed. American Southrons fought for civilization and what we have now is market savagery. I could write much more about the socialist and royalist policies that distinguished Louisiana. Far from perfect the South was still too good for a world determined to rid itself of all I call goodness in mankind. It was a real society that could deal with the inevitable evolutions of race, class and religion.

It was possible in the rural South to find many people in Market towns and beside a rural hearth who saw the Lost Cause of Dixie as the grand and singular tragic drama of American history but it was virtually impossible to find a really Cajun homestead or village where that was the case. The story behind the Evangeline epic poem is a very American story as well and is just as tragic as the Lost Cause. The Cajun, like all humans everywhere was and remains a human specimen of definite and definitely limited resources in emotional and sentimental terms. These limited resources had to be spread over a longer history of victories and defeats by the same distinct community compared to their counterparts in the rest of Dixie. In that regard the Cajun cultural conservative just as damaged by the losses of the Confederacy found himself or herself in a position similar to that of a man with a limited income and very many financial obligations. The list of tragedies to be remembered and for which no immediate remedy could be found was not infinitely long but it was longer than the one which most Southerners chose to set up at the structure of their historical journey. Furthermore cotton was not king in Acadiana at any time. Sugar was the closest to a king of that kind and the history of sugar and cotton both before and after the Civil War were very different. Low wages paid to freed slaves who paid rent on their former slave cottages provided an arrangement that could sustain wealth and there was no equivalent of the boll weevil to curse and afflict the crop. Cajuns, white Creoles and Anglos who preserve a plantation through the Civil War could usually keep it going with lots of struggle and a little luck. It was not an impossible task. For Creoles of Color it was different as a Sectional Racist orthodoxy began to dominate rural Acadiana increasingly. The traditional form of the society of old Louisiana was not remade overnight. In addition Louisiana which preserved the French Law had a long legal tradition of regarding sugar as king that persisted in its social practices. In evidence of this consider these cites from the *Code Noir*.

**Article IX.** Free men who shall have one or more children during concubinage with their slaves, together with their masters who accepted it, shall each be fined two thousand pounds of sugar. If they are the masters of the slave who produced said children, we desire, in addition to the fine, that the slave and the children be removed and that she and they be sent to work at the hospital, never to gain their freedom. We do not expect however for the present article to be applied when the man was not married to another person during his concubinage with this slave, who he should then marry according to the accepted rites of the Church. In this way she shall then be freed, the children becoming free and legitimate. .
**Article XXXIX.** The masters of freed slaves who have given refuge to fugitive slaves in their homes shall be punished by a fine of three hundred pounds of sugar for each day of refuge.

**Article XVIII.** We forbid slaves from selling sugar cane, for whatever reason or occasion, even with the permission of their master, at the risk of a whipping for the slaves and a fine of ten pounds for the masters who gave them permission, and an equal fine for the buyer.

**Article XIX.** We also forbid slaves from selling any type of commodities, even fruit, vegetables, firewood, herbs for cooking and animals either at the market, or at individual houses, without a letter or a known mark from their masters granting express permission. Slaves shall risk the confiscation of goods sold in this way, without their masters receiving restitution for the loss, and a fine of six pounds shall be levied against the buyers.

The Code continued to shape the understanding of slavery and social standing always had something to do with the aspirations of slaveholders in the South. The slaveholders were not insensitive to the connections of Versailles to sugar and its lack of connections to cotton even though Versailles had little to do with anything from many other points of view. There was sugar still being grown in Vermilion and Iberia Parishes when the SONJ projects were filmed and shot. Flaherty had filmed sugar cane harvests for the film The Land in the end of the 1930s social documentary era. Rice, cattle, fur, cane and then later oil were the principal products of the region around Abbeville. Seafood, music, soldiery, and a host of products and services related to navigation and cuisine were also important. Louisiana Story chooses to focus on the nexus of fur and oil. Those are important stories but they are also especially free of Confederate baggage. Cajun trappers existed in the Confederacy and were happier, more prosperous and less alienated than many of them were in the United States in the 1940s. But the new then that their lives were never at the center of the life of antebellum or Confederate South.

What is discussed here is a journey of alienation by a people who found life in the mainstream offputting. However, in a sense it also true that Flaherty chose the occupation with the least to do with any particular period Acadiana’s history. For Cajuns it was often the case that there was a sense of facing three unpalatable realities at the same time. It was a cultural shift from a time when French heritage and American citizenship had enjoyed a more promising and positive relationship than they were coming to have in the years between 1865 and 1943. The portraits of Marie Antoinette and Louis XVI had hung in honor in the halls of the Congress in Philadelphia before the Capital was moved to Washington and the District of Columbia. The Louisiana Purchase was both a friendly act and one which established a very definite equality between Citizens of France in Napoleonic Imperial Louisiana and those of the current United States of America. The result was a new country which was in a real sense a merger of two societies. This unity had been imperfectly but impressively sealed in the Battle of New Orleans. While other states, like Missouri would find themselves under the British common law after entering the Union, Louisiana itself at least would remain under the State’s new version of the French Civil Code. In 1847 the first laws describing language in schools were passed and the assurance was made of right to English only, French only and bilingual education. The Acadian Governor Mouton had from the Cajun point of view presided over the zenith of antebellum life in Louisiana before the forces of chaos and destruction which led to the Civil War were pouring across the region and were contested by his son Alfred Mouton. That same Alfred Mouton was
killed in that war and so it was to that same golden age which Margaret Mitchell commemorated in *Gone With the Wind* was in fact a golden age in memory for many Cajuns as well. The horrors that followed were no less horrible for them than for other Southerners in fact they may have been worse years to come on average but the complexities of the period which followed were not going to be simply defined. Postbellum America was an increasingly alienating and hostile place for Acadians to live out their lives and destiny as Acadians or Cajuns. The reasons why this came to be the case are numerous and too complicated to cover in this chapter. However enough of the history of the era’s sensibility and mentality can be addressed to allow the reader an understanding sense of isolation from mainstream culture which pervades Louisiana Story. In this chapter more than most Louisiana Story will be regarded as the most perfected version and form of the overall SONJ documentary effort in the region.

This is a text which has long past the point where caution would stop in pointing out the distinctions between the Cajun experience as remembered in Cajun history and the most well known tales of American history. But here there is more to discuss in the same vein. The importance of law in Louisiana and the whole struggle of the South to find its way forward has enormous importance in the scope and play of Cajun history. There are many things that changed after the defeat, poverty, occupation and propaganda campaigns which shaped the Reconstruction period. It is worth stating clearly that it seems abundantly evident to this writer that a great deal has been invested into a few interpretations of how the events of the war and the years that followed shaped the United States. This interpretation presented in this study is not one of the greatly developed and highly publicized interpretations of those years. Neither is it a nuanced and individualized interpretation developed from some individual inspiration. It is an interpretation of these events very much more influenced by the Cajun experience than by any other experience.

There is no way to avoid writing that despite all that has been written by very many competent people about the issues related to race in these decades I find that there are many large areas of important experience that are not duly explained.

While the Code Noir of 1685 was not the law in effect in Louisiana in 1860 it was still the strongest single source of the legal spirit behind the Louisiana Civil Code and the customs and practices of the State. That law stated in its final article the following: **Article LIX.** *We grant to freed slaves the same rights, privileges and immunities that are enjoyed by freeborn persons. We desire that they are deserving of this acquired freedom, and that this freedom gives them, as much for their person as for their property, the same happiness that natural liberty has on our other subjects.*

An ocean of ink has been expended to show that by no means did any spirit of this law exist in the South. That has been done by those of a more Southron party and disposition and those more inclined to extol the benevolence of the wonderful Union reconstruction. There is evidence that much of that ink does not deal adequately with the facts as they existed in Louisiana. We see that in the period of time immediately following Louisiana’s secession, Governor Thomas Overton Moore issued pleas for troops on April 17 and April 21, 1861. There is a great deal to
be learned from the incidents related to the creation and the rest of the story of the Louisiana Native Guard. So that story is outlined here in brief. It remains in testimony to realities of that era.

In response to the governor's request, a committee of ten prominent New Orleans free people of color who included people across the color spectrum which in their society was not the only factor for determining a family or an individual's rank but was the single most important purely social factor in a complex social system. The certified were a group of people less than one eighth Negroes who were proven to be committed to the social order of antebellum Louisiana and these enjoyed a special relationship with the Creole and Cajun elite. These people were being woven into the fabric of the merged culture of Louisiana after Statehood until the War. Below them were the Octoroons, the Quadroons, the Mulattoes and the true free blacks. Writers today will tend to call all of these people free blacks and they have their reasons for doing so but that is not how they saw themselves. This complex and racially conscious and stratified community was represented in this Committee of Ten who called a meeting at the Catholic Institute on the 22d of April. About two thousand people attended the meeting where muster lists were opened, with about 1,500 free men of color signed up. The Anglo Southron Governor Moore included in all the proper and ordinary channels these applications and included these men as part of the state's militia. The Louisiana Native Guard is so named because they were natives who were not quite citizens but they were accepted as armed patriots in the Confederate cause. It bears adding that while this text asserts that Acadians were largely very free under the laws of 1685 many French people were not. Thus in the way of thinking of many in Louisiana including most Cajuns these freed people had preserved the kind of liberty and status a 1685 Frenchman would have who did not enjoy the freedom of a Coutume, a religious order, a knightly order, a chartered city or a privileged family. That was still a real level of freedom. Ancient Acadian rights, the Louisiana Purchase and the US Constitution allowed the Cajuns more freedoms to which the freedmen were not a party. Thus in the way of thinking of many in Louisiana including most Cajuns these freed people had preserved the kind of liberty and status a 1685 Frenchman would have who did not enjoy the freedom of a Coutume, a religious order, a knightly order, a chartered city or a privileged family. That was still a real level of freedom.

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South that these men never fired a shot in anger as Confederates against the Yankee invader. While there may be many other stories for which their fate is a better one for a Cajun view of what the South it was supposed to be it was a sign of bad times to come. It indicates something about the customs, commerce and status of person in Louisiana that these Native Guards were traditional American militia volunteers, and as such supplied their own arms and uniforms. One here is reminded of another article of the Code Noir, as follows: Article XV. We forbid slaves from carrying any offensive weapons or large sticks, at the risk of being whipped and having the weapons confiscated. The weapons shall then belong to he who confiscated them. The sole exception shall be made for those who have been sent by their masters to hunt and who are carrying either a letter from their masters or his known mark.

There is every reason to believe that the even as the Code lived on in more current laws regarding arms restrictions strictly enforced against slaves were not applied to these men in their daily lives before the war. These were displayed in a grand review of troops in New Orleans on November 23, 1861, and again on January 8, 1862. The terribly wasted troops offered their services to escort Union prisoners taken prisoner by the Confederate forces at the First Battle of Bull Run. One could imagine that this could have been done with white troops as well and with international observers it might have been a means of showing the possibility of Confederate policy working out a secure future the abolitionist powers they sought to ally with as they marched through New Orleans. But this would have required the kind of social daring the Confederacy would usually lack.

Confederate General David Twiggs failed to accept the unit’s offer, but thanked them for the “promptness with which they answered the call. That was a response that reflected the way such transactions occurred in the military. The Louisiana State Legislature had begun to change the society into something new when they passed a law in January 1862 reorganizing the militia into only “…free white males capable of bearing arms…” The Native Guards regiment was effectively disbanded by this law on February 15, 1862. Despite the change in racial ideology already starting Governor Moore used his executive powers to reinstate the Native Guards to oppose the U.S. Naval invasion. But when the regular Confederate forces under Major General Mansfield Lovell abandoned New Orleans the whole system was plunged, into disarray. Cajuns served in the regular Confederate Forces and had militia units advancing to defend the city as well as the unauthorized units that have always been part of the culture who hoped to join in the fight in their traditional guerilla manner. But none of these units did well when the Confederate forces withdrew and the militia units were left to fend for themselves. The Native Guards were subject to the same relative disgrace and so it was no great surprise that they were again, and in finality, ordered to disband by General John L. Lewis, 1862, as Federal ships arrived opposite the city. General Lewis of the Louisiana Militia as he sent word to their units deployed in useless positions disbanded these colored Confederates and cautioned them to hide their arms and uniforms before returning home. He also began the process requiring them to hide their Confederate service, later ten percent of this unit would serve in the Union and be among the most distinguished colored troops. Some came to the irregular Cajun militia according to spoken tradition and assisted in the armed and highly secretive smuggling supplies to Confederate forces during the war. None of those ever received much recognition even
though some did fire shots in anger at Union forces in these irregular units. The white creole Colonel Felix Labatut maintained the belief that colored troops could make a difference and was proven right by the Union service with distinction of his former officers Cailloux and Morrison in the cause of the Yankee invaders.

The moratorium of colored troops by the South certainly did not limit the deployment of colored troops by the union. From the Cajun point of view it was a bitter irony to lose possible GLC units and see that throughout the war and in the time of the period after end of hostilities in the Civil War was a time in which Cajun folklore reports that people believed that Yankee bureaucrats had motivated and armed a quarter of a million freed slaves and loosed them in strongly encouraged rage upon the Southland. This period followed the kinds of endless horrors described in books like Yankee Autumn in Acadiana and local institutions of my ancestors rolled over to face the new challenge. the Knights of the Invisible Empire of the Ku Klux Klan Also known with the same name given here but with the word White preceding all the others i.e. “White Knights…” also known as the Ku Klux Klan, the KKK and the Klan. The Klan share many motifs, traditions and operating procedures with the much older Ridelles and somewhat older Comites de Vigilance that existed among the Acadians. However, the Klan always had it own symbols too and those grew in importance and common symbols declined. The Cross-Lighting was never an Acadian symbol but perhaps went with the ideas of ethnic differentiation that are very Acadian. Knights of the White Camellia have been basically a special Louisiana version of the Ku Klux Klan. The name is a triple entendre it references the beautiful flowers of this area, the legendary kingdom of Arthur of the Round Table, and the Chivalric legacy left by Prince Camille de Polignac who was a Confederate General during the Civil War. This Prince took command from the Acadian General Mouton after he died achieving the last major victory under the Confederate flag. He embodies a sense of the lost potential of Acadiana to bring the South into a prominent place in the world.

Prince de Polignac was long loved and honored in the region but his legacy had little to do with the future of the Union, Louisiana or the Cajuns. Other forces would shape how the region was perceived across the country. Francis Parkman’s France and England in North America published in 1890 was one of the milestones on that journey of alienation. The book tended to set the historic trajectory of the American culture as one that was hostile and alien to the Cajuns and in which they found themselves more often regarded as hostile aliens. The period from 1890 to 1915 was one of remarkable and accelerating alienation from the period in the past when things might have been quite different than they were now trending to become. The Reconstruction period has a complicated and mixed record with Gens Libres de Coleurs in Louisiana. In many ways this crisis and these complexities grew out of the experience of the Louisiana Native Guard.

Whatever the vision of the Union may have been and whatever the motives behind that vision might have been the did not deliver a racial paradise that began in 1860 and continues today. Radical Reconstruction would replace the occupation and early reconstruction and then be replaced by a new white racial orthodoxy in the former Confederacy.
Louisiana passed the Separate Car Act requiring separate accommodations for blacks and whites on railroads, including separate railway cars. The old Louisiana system would have been more complex and not integration across the board. The Comité des Citoyens (Committee of Citizens) was liberal in that it reflected the citizenship granted to people of color under the Union occupation rather than the native status but it is wrong to think they were all dedicated to repeal the law in order to create racially integrated rides. The members for different reasons all feared the effects of not having a more complex system with exemptions, a mixed race category and so forth. Homer Plessy, was a man of mixed race, selected to participate in the test case. Plessy was born a free man in a free native cultural category and was an "octoroon" with the status this connoted as described earlier in this section. Under the new Louisiana law and the new racial orthodoxy he was classified as black, and required to sit in the "colored" car. The total resources given to setting up the test case are impressive. But space will not allow for a full recounting of those events. From an Cajun point of view the way the law was upheld and doctrine of separate but equal tended to deliver four bad results. It encouraged colored people to possibly pass for white where they might marry Cajuns and damage the bloodlines because the alternatives were so bad. Secondly, they did not favor open and in their view unconscionable oppression of what they considered the inferior races. Without the privileges of octaroons to defend the African-Americans they believed they would be oppressed. Thirdly, they feared that the support for white supremacy provided by the colored upper echelons was essential to the survival of white supremacy. Lastly they thought it was a replacement of a better system by an inferior one and showed disrespect for Louisiana custom. The railroads however favored more or less pure integration of the rail cars to save money on duplicate cars and that has rightly enough confused the issue as they joined in the effort by the Citizens Committee.

Once national political influence had been closed off and the world had begun to reinterpret their Southern, French and other identities as Americans the ties they had to the rest of French Louisiana or all of Louisiana whether manifest in the influences between their music and Jazz or Country music or anything else only added to the sense of their identity as aliens. Cajuns had stopped referring to themselves as American except when officially required to even before the outlawing of French education in 1915. Kate Chopin and others who had great talent and turned it to creating a new Louisiana consensus were impressive to those who followed such things but they did not heal the rift. They were not an old alien culture but a very American culture which had been alienated.

Section Three: Folklore and Mentalities in Acadiana

In the 1940s an SONJ photographer wrote of Natchez as “a Crinoline Crypt”. The Cajuns by 1940 had chosen to deal with their Confederate Heritage differently than the very distinct and strongly preservationist manner in which that period has always been recalled in Natchez. Natchez is no more the typical Southern town than Erath or Abbeville are the most typical towns but it could be said that they are distinctive in different ways. It is possible to write this text and compare the losses of coastal integrity, the expulsion from Nova Scotia and the Dust Bowl year
James Axtell in *The Invasion Within* tells of the way that cultural conflicts can create new opportunities for misery and illustrates that with the experience of the Huron and the Iroquois with the French and English. Of course a great deal of happiness and profit can and does come from interactions between cultural groups. It also happens that his text is mostly about a set of interactions between Cajuns and the people of Standard Oil and the documentary film community. Overall the exchange between these different groups was more good than bad and did not lead to war, pillaging and horror as much as to useful cooperation. Yet in this section of this chapter it is also my objective to show that unhappiness, misunderstanding and a kind of misery led to alienation from the end of the Civil War and have continued all these years. Real definable events contributed to these unseen forces and they existed even in Postwar Acadiana to be captured on film as the isolated and alienated aspects of Cajun culture. This unseen folkloristic, mental and spiritual world is still a mixed world of joy and acceptance in part and of alienation and isolation in part. So the miseries which isolate and alienate continue and even today as this is being written It is to me true that even in relative peace and in the years since the 1943 start where many more Cajuns were able to achieve a life of greater material comfort in part because of their cooperation with Standard Oil, there are those who dream of what they think America should be for their own people and other communities and find that they care very much about such things-- according to what I hear people who are deeply committed to that sense find that the mental aspect of their life at least is hell on earth as often as not.

In the folklore and literature of region and identity which began to define Louisiana after the Civil War there was a great sense of a mysterious past and faded glories but also a real historical sense of a much more complex and sophisticated social order than the currently prevailing social order. This became a kind of new layer of exile from an exotic past that joined with the Cajun sense of having left behind and yet maintained ties to France, some how to Greece, to early ferment and promise of the United States and now to the Confederacy they felt was increasingly forgotten and misunderstood in ways that did not benefit them in the present of their economic situation nor in their sense of themselves.. I cannot exhaustively cover those issues in this text. Their own sense of alienation in the new order underscored for them that the Old South had been was a society in which people were at least somewhat sensitive to the
heritage of others. When they went to New Orleans they often remembered Congo Square or Place Congo. Its name was changed to honor a Confederate Hero after the war who deserved to be honored and while he was Creole not Cajun they liked Beauregard well enough as a symbol. But many felt the loss of Congo Square as one of many institutions of old Louisiana that gave white Southrons a place to go where they could be educated about the diversity and reality of black African heritages more in a few minutes than many Americans in the new order were in a lifetime despite Jazz clubs and other influences that went on in the New order. Their ties to a Hellenic Heritage appear as an appendix to this book but allow it to be said without showing that they had such a heritage that the Hellenic world was a heritage which many individuals and communities in the Confederate States of America knew something about. 

One comes up on the limits of what can be done in an academic text when one writes about the workings and life of an ancient people struggling for survival of their ideals and culture and often using secrecy. One of the realities is that Cajuns maintained a relationship with the German community in Louisiana as a community, with various Indian tribes as they were known, with old French communities on the Mississippi and with old friends and relations in the land from which they had been expelled. They could not look back on their past or live out their present comfortably with the attitudes that now prevailed regarding Indians in the new order. Joseph Broussard dit Beausoleil was among other things my ancestor, a resistance leader in Acadie, Captain of the Attakapas, little understood as he is he stands tall as the founding leader of Acadians in the New Acadia. His story was central to their story as a people and an Indian tribe was near the heart of his story. The MicMac were and are the Aboriginal American tribe which played the most important role in Acadian history. The MicMac were close allies of the Acadians prior to Le Grand Derangement. The end of the Cherokee stay in Georgia must not overshadow all that was better about that connection than ever happened in other regions. The Acadians had no role in causing this but did find kindred spirits in the rest of the South. This tradition continued, I have read in a non footnoted article that the highest ranking officer who was (acknowledged to be) nonwhite in either side of the Civil War was General Stan Waite whose exact title is unclear to me but who was the Supreme Commander of all or some forces from the Native American tribes in the Confederacy. For the Cajuns the new kind of White Supremacy that followed reconstruction was nothing like the Dixie for which their ancestors had fought and died.

So all of this had led up to the postwar moment when Cajuns were trying to enter into a more American identity and the documentarians and Standard Oil were coming to take a look at them and also to use them for their own devices. Cajun identity not the shadows of an ancient primitive past but the shadows of a recently acquired alienation.

Section Three: the Folklore and Spirit of Communities and People
Gone With the Wind has made its way into a few mentions in these pages already and it may seem to be a tenuous connection to make to these events although it is a movie that most people who push the actions at the heart of our narrative forward had seen. The novel is based on a substantial amount of fact and is written by someone who knew the region about which she wrote. In the post Civil Rights era it is easy to criticize the film and the novel for the subservience of the Blacks. In a feminist environment it is easy to criticize its assumptions about women. There are many other reasons to criticize this story about one of the most traumatic events in the history of North America. The events leading up to that terrible war and the war itself remain vividly and vitally connected to current and historical events which vary from place to place. There is a difference in every war between the war the losers wished they were fighting and the war they actually fought. I am not one of those who feels that the Confederacy was the South's finest hour in the senses that many people do believe it was her finest hour. In many ways the greatest promise for some people from whom I claim descent was already in decline. The period from 1610 to 1820 or so would have been a period of real advancement. The heart Jacksonian Era would have been a mixed period and the era from 1845 to 1898 would be largely a continuous decline from a certain set of standards. But there were good trends in large numbers before 1860 and the greatness of the Confederacy lies in her willingness to fight and die for the cause of such a tradition as they hoped to preserve. Had they won it would have been less good than if they had found a path without secession but there would still be hope that they could reverse the worst trends and enhance the best ones in their civilization as it was expressed in those states and that new nation. In terms of what can be done in a study which addresses documentary film it seems impossible not to mention the massive Ken Burns documentary The Civil War. It is hardly debatable that the work gathered together more filmic elements around this theme at a higher level of workmanship and skill than had ever been done before.

While there is some goodness in the New South that Gaines Foster has recorded and analyzed in Moral Reconstruction as well as visiting its weaknesses. Cajuns regarded these changes with great suspicions. The antebellum order while mostly Protestant was the South had some great Catholic institutions. It also had a Jewish Secretary of State named Judah Benjamin. I have said before in these Notes that how Western Civilization views Jesus is a good sign of its health and progress. I see many signs of a better religious consensus developing in the pre-Confederate South. For this and so many other things the South fought and lost. It truly did lose so much in the eyes of many Cajuns. The poverty, Jim Crow, Scientific racism and ideological Anglo-Saxonism of the postwar South were not extensions of the society the Cajuns joined other Southrons to fight for and had sought to preserve. These new orthodoxies were madness.

One symbol of the lost world of the Confederacy was the remembered ride of Prince Camille de Polignac This man was a French Prince and Confederate General who fought in Acadiana during the War Between the States. He reminded them of the days of Paix des Coutumes and the years and centuries as part of a complex France of autonomous peoples. The lynching of the Catholic Italians by the White Leagues in New Orleans was a complicated matter for Cajuns.
They had lynched all kinds of people and did not intermarry or accept many Italians into their number until at least 1920. But they could see that the Mafiosi were not the only objects of hostility in the eyes and minds of the leagues. The Spanish American war also led to complicated relationships with other white foreigners. They had also had a different view of free labor than most white southerners, Yankees, abolitionists or anyone else. In the days of Dixie as they remembered it that did not matter but in the new order it was very alienating.

A final thing to consider as one considers this alienated culture they came to see was whether or not it survived or was simply shot as it faded away. The truth is that there are lot of signs of continuity that could be mentioned in this context but this text will focus on a very few. All do lot the context of these people and their identity and do not relate to the patterns of material culture that were most easily captured on film. It pays to remember how the images of Cajun life were compiled and constructed as one looks at what has happened since then. It may also help to look at what has happened since then to fully see what the SONJ projects were trying to achieve.

The tales and actions that define the Acadian experience and identity have not disappeared since the postwar period chronicled in this text. In fact in many ways it could be argued that the opposite is the case. *The Founding of New Acadia: The Beginnings of Acadian Life in Louisiana, 1765-1803* by Carl Brasseux is only one of his relatively numerous books that have defined the history of the Cajuns and their experience in terms that meet the standards of professional academic historians. Dudley Leblanc's book *The Acadian Miracle* is actually a good book which represents great achievements in scholarship and writing and translation. But Brasseaux's books is fine and solid scholarship. Of all his books The Founding is is perhaps the most important to the Acadian ethnic community. *Founding* outlines in its opening chapters the Great Upheaval from which this location of peoples into what would become the Confederacy emerged. This same set of facts was later dealt with by others in what is known in Vermilion Parish most often as the *Queen's Apology*. This is in physical terms a very elaborately produced Royal Proclamation. The document laden with parliamentary seals is the result of a lawsuit brought by Warren Perrin of the Acadian Center in Erath, Louisiana near where Dudley Leblanc lived worked and led his part of the Acadian ethnic struggle for identity. Limited as it may be in many ways this document from Her Britannic Majesty demonstrates as nothing else could the relevance and continuity of the Acadiana heritage. One might argue that it imposes on the historian or other reader who wishes to be informed both the burden and the duty of reading and taking time to understand texts like this which relate to the experience of a people still dealing with the British Court and government for centuries and still processing important paperwork out of Vermilion Parish as recently as 2003 at the latest.

Cajuns as I have already written have an affinity for the Confederate experience for the wars of liberation on French soil. There is evidence for both of these struggles having importance expressed in images, monuments and flags over the decades but the woes recorded in Evangeline as remembered there and in many other ways are the suffering most central to Cajun and other Acadian identity. There have been some scholarly books recently that have
begun to explore the possibilities of Acadian interpretations of that period. Cajuns rallied around the innocence proposed in Longfellow’s Evangeline because they did not agree that they were rebels. They did see the trouble with Britain as a kind of conflict having uniquely mixed qualities of British crime, arguable Acadian neutrality violation, French neglect and Aboriginal American struggle. In the midst of all this there was good and bad deportment on all sides. However most of all this was from a certain point of view a civil war fought between two profoundly different societies. During this period called the Great Upheaval the Acadians waged guerilla war with the MicMacs or MiqMaq in small numbers after their treaty rights were violated and their homes destroyed. Among the inner circles of Acadians in Vermilion Parish and elsewhere it was always understood that according to specific anecdotes, partial documents and the sense of the people they had helped to create the new world order from the ashes of Acadie. They had experienced the failure and horror of the Imperial system in a very extreme way. They looked back on their history as an autonomous Coutume in France, at their recent struggle as Americans in a unique way and at the oddly distorted and always refreshed sense of what their ancient Greek past might be about. It was in this boil of resentments, insights and memories that they joined other forces at work in the world and spread revolutionary ideas to France, the Caribbean and the Thirteen British American Colonies. They shed blood in the cause that is roughly the American Revolution cause very late in this American Revolutionary section of the larger Upheaval period at a time which blurs into the next section of period when both the American Confederation Period and the French Revolution were about to really reach their dominance of this action of upheaval. As already mentioned in Chapter One Acadians joined the St. Martinville Militia as the first groups arrived in Acadiana and under Galvez threw Spanish and Creole and Acadian support into the American Revolution by attacking and conquering Baton Rouge and British West Florida. The largest part of Acadians settled in Louisiana either in the country of the Chitimacha under Olivier Theriot or under Joseph Broussard in the land of the Atakapas. These people were an Aboriginal American tribe known for small numbers, ferocity and cannibalism who were very diminished in wars with other Aboriginal American nations, the Spanish and the French before the Acadians under Joseph Broussard came to this region. The Prairie where Abbeville and Lafayette sit is the Attakapas country in Acadian and Louisiana parlance. A good number of Atakapas (or Attakapas of Atakkapas) were killed in skirmishes and their wives and children taken as mistresses and second families by the Acadians. Some of their descendants joined the Houma who also interbred and intermarried heavily with the Acadians. However people who were not white by the Acadian standard became Houma rather than Cajun and these people were part of a larger fabric of Cajun ethnicity only to the degree that such a larger fabric could be said to exist in the United States of the more intensely nationalist and randomly diverse culture which was replacing the old federalist model based on diverse settled communities seeking both to blend and join together on the one hand and to experience different and unique autonomous identities on the other hand. The Attakapas name was so hated by neighbors that only people who are almost pure European White have ever dared to use it since first contact. There are remnants but no tribe. The remnants are spread over a large area. However, they have just recently held their first public reunion in centuries. Again part of the heritage struggle of our times. The Attakapas were one of the many peoples affected by this period and process of turmoil. The Tories exiled by the
Americans who ended up on old Acadian lands are another part of the same story. The Acadian involvement in the Battle of New Orleans is yet another part of the this struggle across generations.

There has already been a mention or two of the Feast of the Assumption in this text. That day in August is not to be confused with a second date recognized for this purpose recently by the British. This national feast in August grew up out of a long struggle and anticipated response involving the Vatican bureaucracy and the Papacy and this is in contrast with and not be confused with July 28 which was not an anticipated result of the lawsuit. The July 28 day set aside to commemorate “the Great Upheaval” and expulsion of the Acadians in Queen Elizabeth of Scotland and of England Second of the Name’s Royal Proclamation and Apology Regarding the Acadian “Le Grand Derangement” is arguably in part a recognition of the people and in other ways a recognition of the threat posed by the first date and a desire to undermine it. Thus in a certain real sense the conflict continues to this very day as each summer develops. Le Grand Derangement is a term well understood to apply to the expulsion and some other events, it is French for “The Great Upheaval”. It is not agreed what all of the other events included in the term ought to be. The longest span of time included could be from the Treaty of Utrecht to the Battle of New Orleans -- thus a long and vast ordeal that includes all of the American and almost all of the French Revolution. There are other interpretations of the period designated that vary to no more than the period from the Battle of Beausejour until the execution of the Dauterive Compact. The proclamation was issued in 2003 and the annual day began by that proclamation in 2005. Acadians have a complex view of the proclamation. Warren Perrin’s own book Acadian Redemption touches upon the tensions. However, the general view among members of the ASG and others had been that there is a kind of deliberate inadequacy and a threatening tone in the proclamation and that this only adds to a world that is always dangerous. However, there is some relief and benefit to the Acadian people in that Her Britannic Majesty acknowledged the people as an ethnicity, recounted the history (however incomplete) and responded with a regular, formal and royal missive. In other words although the threat of bad relations with the UK is certainly a very bad threat in today’s world the threat of meaninglessness and blindness to the past and to human identity is greater for all people but especially the Acadians. The Proclamation has been seen as opening a door to a process that could be good or bad in the eyes of many. However, without the proclamation trouble with the UK was possible but real dialog was impossible and now both are possible.

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Appendix to Chapter Six may be Moved to the Section beyond the Bibliography as an Appendix to the entire book:

Code Noir

Article I. We desire and we expect that the Edict of 23 April 1615 of the late King, our most honored lord and father who remains glorious in our memory, be executed in our islands. This accomplished, we enjoin all of our officers to
chase from our islands all the Jews who have established residence there. As with all declared enemies of Christianity, we command them to be gone within three months of the day of issuance of the present [order], at the risk of confiscation of their persons and their goods.

Article II. All slaves that shall be in our islands shall be baptized and instructed in the Roman, Catholic, and Apostolic Faith. We enjoin the inhabitants who shall purchase newly-arrived Negroes to inform the Governor and Intendant of said islands of this fact within no more that eight days, or risk being fined an arbitrary amount. They shall give the necessary orders to have them instructed and baptized within a suitable amount of time.

Article III. We forbid any religion other than the Roman, Catholic, and Apostolic Faith from being practiced in public. We desire that offenders be punished as rebels disobedient of our orders. We forbid any gathering to that end, which we declare to be conventicle, illegal, and seditious, and subject to the same punishment as would be applicable to the masters who permit it or accept it from their slaves.

Article IV. No persons assigned to positions of authority over Negroes shall be other than a member of the Roman, Catholic, and Apostolic Faith, and the master who assigned these persons shall risk having said Negroes confiscated, and arbitrary punishment levied against the persons who accepted said position of authority.

Article V. We forbid our subjects who belong to the so-called "reformed" religion from causing any trouble or unforeseen difficulties for our other subjects or even for their own slaves in the free exercise of the Roman, Catholic, and Apostolic Faith, at the risk of exemplary punishment.

Article VI. We enjoin all our subjects, of whatever religion and social status they may be, to observe Sundays and the holidays that are observed by our subjects of the Roman, Catholic, and Apostolic Faith. We forbid them to work, nor make their slaves work, on said days, from midnight until the following midnight. They shall neither cultivate the earth, manufacture sugar, nor perform any other work, at the risk of a fine and an arbitrary punishment against the masters, and of confiscation by our officers of as much sugar worked by said slaves before being caught.

Article VII. We forbid them also to hold slave markets or any other market on said days at the risk of similar punishments and of confiscation of the merchandise that shall be discovered at the market, and an arbitrary fine against the sellers.

Article VIII. We declare that our subjects who are not of the Roman, Catholic, and Apostolic Faith, are incapable of contracting a valid marriage in the future. We declare any child born from such unions to be bastards, and we desire that said marriages be held and reputed, and to hold and repute, as actual concubinage.

Article IX. Free men who shall have one or more children during concubinage with their slaves, together with their masters who accepted it, shall each be fined two thousand pounds of sugar. If they are the masters of the slave who produced said children, we desire, in addition to the fine, that the slave and the children be removed and that she and they be sent to work at the hospital, never to gain their freedom. We do not expect however for the present article to be applied when the man was not married to another person during his concubinage with this slave, who he should then marry according to the accepted rites of the Church. In this way she shall then be freed, the children becoming free and legitimate. . . .

Article XI. We forbid priests from conducting weddings between slaves if it appears that they do not have their masters' permission. We also forbid masters from using any constraints on their slaves to marry them without their wishes.

Article XII. Children born from marriages between slaves shall be slaves, and if the husband and wife have different masters, they shall belong to the masters of the female slave, not to the master of her husband.

Article XIII. We desire that if a male slave has married a free woman, their children, either male or female, shall be free as is their mother, regardless of their father's condition of slavery. And if the father is free and the mother a slave, the children shall also be slaves. . . .

Article XV. We forbid slaves from carrying any offensive weapons or large sticks, at the risk of being whipped and having the weapons confiscated. The weapons shall then belong to he who confiscated them. The sole exception shall be made for those who have been sent by their masters to hunt and who are carrying either a letter from their masters or his known mark.

Article XVI. We also forbid slaves who belong to different masters from gathering, either during the day or at night, under the pretext of a wedding or other excuse, either at one of the master's houses or elsewhere, and especially not
in major roads or isolated locations. They shall risk corporal punishment that shall not be less than the whip and the fleur de lys, and for frequent recidivists and in other aggravating circumstances, they may be punished with death, a decision we leave to their judge. We enjoin all our subjects, even if they are not officers, to rush to the offenders, arrest them, and take them to prison, and that there be no decree against them. . . .

**Article XVIII.** We forbid slaves from selling sugar cane, for whatever reason or occasion, even with the permission of their master, at the risk of a whipping for the slaves and a fine of ten pounds for the masters who gave them permission, and an equal fine for the buyer.

**Article XIX.** We also forbid slaves from selling any type of commodities, even fruit, vegetables, firewood, herbs for cooking and animals either at the market, or at individual houses, without a letter or a known mark from their masters granting express permission. Slaves shall risk the confiscation of goods sold in this way, without their masters receiving restitution for the loss, and a fine of six pounds shall be levied against the buyers. . . .

**Article XXVII.** Slaves who are infirm due to age, sickness or other reason, whether the sickness is curable or not, shall be nourished and cared for by their masters. In the case that they be abandoned, said slaves shall be awarded to the hospital, to which their master shall be required to pay six sols per day for the care and feeding of each slave. . . .

**Article XXXI.** Slaves shall not be a party, either in court or in a civil matter, either as a litigant or as a defendant, or as a civil party in a criminal matter. And compensation shall be pursued in criminal matters for insults and excesses that have been committed against slaves. . . .

**Article XXXIII.** The slave who has struck his master in the face or has drawn blood, or has similarly struck the wife of his master, his mistress, or their children, shall be punished by death. . . .

**Article XXXVIII.** The fugitive slave who has been on the run for one month from the day his master reported him to the police, shall have his ears cut off and shall be branded with a fleur de lys on one shoulder. If he commits the same infraction for another month, again counting from the day he is reported, he shall have his hamstring cut and be branded with a fleur de lys on the other shoulder. The third time, he shall be put to death.

**Article XXXIX.** The masters of freed slaves who have given refuge to fugitive slaves in their homes shall be punished by a fine of three hundred pounds of sugar for each day of refuge.

**Article XL.** The slave who has been punished with death based on denunciation by his master, and who is not a party to the crime for which he was condemned, shall be assessed prior to his execution by two of the principal citizens of the island named by a judge. The assessment price shall be paid by the master, and in order to satisfy this requirement, the Intendant shall impose said sum on the head of each Negro. The amount levied in the estimation shall be paid for each of the said Negroes and levied by the [Tax] Farmer of the Royal Western lands to avoid costs. . . .

**Article XLII.** The masters may also, when they believe that their slaves so deserve, chain them and have them beaten with rods or straps. They shall be forbidden however from torturing them or mutilating any limb, at the risk of having the slaves confiscated and having extraordinary charges brought against them.

**Article XLIII.** We enjoin our officers to criminally prosecute the masters, or their foremen, who have killed a slave under their auspices or control, and to punish the master according to the circumstances of the atrocity. In the case where there is absolution, we allow our officers to return the absolved master or foreman, without them needing our pardon.

**Article XLIV.** We declare slaves to be charges, and as such enter into community property. They are not to be mortgaged, and shall be shared equally between the co-inheritors without benefit to the wife or one particular inheritor, nor subject to the right of primogeniture, the usual customs duties, feudal or lineage charges, or feudal or seigneurial taxes. They shall not be affected by the details of decrees, nor from the imposition of the four-fifths, in case of disposal by death or bequeathing. . . .

**Article XLVII.** Husband, wife and prepubescent children, if they are all under the same master, may not be taken and sold separately. We declare the seizing and sales that shall be done as such to be void. For slaves who have been separated, we desire that the seller shall risk their loss, and that the slaves he kept shall be awarded to the buyer, without him having to pay any supplement. . . .
Article LV. Masters twenty years of age may free their slaves by any act toward the living or due to death, without their having to give just cause for their actions, nor do they require parental advice as long as they are minors of 25 years of age.

Article LVI. The children who are declared to be sole legatees by their masters, or named as executors of their wills, or tutors of their children, shall be held and considered as freed slaves. . . .

Article LVIII. We declare their freedom is granted in our islands if their place of birth was in our islands. We declare also that freed slaves shall not require our letters of naturalization to enjoy the advantages of our natural subjects in our kingdom, lands or country of obedience, even when they are born in foreign countries.

Article LIX. We grant to freed slaves the same rights, privileges and immunities that are enjoyed by freeborn persons. We desire that they are deserving of this acquired freedom, and that this freedom gives them, as much for their person as for their property, the same happiness that natural liberty has on our other subjects.

Versailles, March 1685, the forty second year of our reign.
Signed LOUIS,
and below the King.
Colbert, visa, Le Tellier.
Read, posted and recorded at the sovereign council of the coast of Saint Domingue, kept at Petit Goave, 6 May 1687, Signed Moriceau.