

advantage of natural resources, in particular, to establish their claim to certain areas of the New World.

This unit focuses on the French Creoles of Louisiana, their history, holidays and customs, music, dress, food, and language. Creole life today will be mentioned as evidence of the Creoles' tenacity and interest in holding on to their heritage.

This five week unit is designed for French classes levels II, III, IV. In addition, it can be used in an American History class, an American Literature class, and a visual arts, drama, or creative writing class.



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### History of Louisiana Time Line

1519—Alonso de Pineda sailed the Gulf Coast and discovered the mouth of the Mobile River.

1528—Panfilo de Narvaez landed in Florida to establish a colony. Most of his men died fighting Indians. He tried to sail to Mexico along the coast. Near the mouth of the Mississippi River he lost all of his ships. Some men escaped. Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca was one of them. He and some of the other men traveled across Louisiana to Mexico. This trip took eight years.

1539—Hernando de Soto landed on the west coast of Florida. He heard about a rich Indian nation and searched for it unsuccessfully for four years.

1608—The French founded Quebec in Canada.

1658 (approx.)—Pierre Esprit Radisson reached the western area of Lake Superior. He and his men learned of a great river which ran south to the Gulf of Mexico.

1682—Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle and Henri de Tonti who were living in Canada, decided to explore the Mississippi River accompanied by fifty-four French and Indians. When they reached the mouth of the river, La Salle planted a wooden cross in the ground and took possession of the territory in the name of Louis XIV of France. He called it *Louisiane*, land of Louis.

1684—La Salle left France with four hundred colonists to establish a colony in Louisiana. He couldn't find the mouth of the Mississippi River so he founded the colony in Matagorda Bay in Texas. The settlement failed.

1687—La Salle was killed by his own men. France controlled the St. Lawrence River Valley in Canada, the area of the Great Lakes, the Ohio and Upper Mississippi River Valleys. France wanted to keep the lower Mississippi Valley from the Spanish and English.

1694-98—Various books were written about founding a colony at the mouth of the Mississippi River.

Oct. 24, 1698—The Sieur d'Iberville and three hundred men left Brest, France to establish a settlement at the mouth of the Mississippi River.

Feb., 1699—Iberville landed and set off to find the ideal spot for a settlement.

March, 1699—Iberville and his men found the mouth of the Mississippi. They continued up the river past what is now Baton Rouge, turned around and came back to the Gulf Coast.

May 1, 1699—A small fort was established on the eastern side of Biloxi Bay. It was called Fort Maurepas in honor of the French Prime Minister.

1702—Iberville moved the survivors of Fort Maurepas to Massacre Island now called Dauphin Island. A new, larger fort was built on the western side of Mobile Bay about thirty miles from the Gulf. It was called Fort St. Louis de la Mobile.

April 27, 1702—Iberville left Louisiana for the last time.

1712—The Louisiana colony was firmly established.

Sept., 1712—Antoine de Crozat, a French merchant received a royal charter granting him the Louisiana colony for fifteen years. He received all of Louisiana south of Illinois; all the privileges and rights which used to belong to the King; all the land he could cultivate; mines; importing and exporting goods; exclusive right to import slaves from Africa; the King would pay the soldiers for nine years and about \$2,000 a year to Crozat to pay the officers; Crozat had to rule the colony under French law. He also had to send two ships from France every year with colonists and supplies.

1713—Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac arrived in Louisiana as governor. He tried all kinds of economic ventures to help Louisiana become self-sustaining.

1714—Louis Juchereau de St. Denis established a post in northwest Louisiana on the Red River near Natchitoches.

1716—Forts were built at Natchez, on the Alabama River and the Wabash River north of the Ohio for protection from the English and Spanish. Black slaves from the Caribbean were brought to Louisiana. Cadillac was dismissed as governor. Bienville became acting governor.

March, 1717—Chevalier de Lepinay arrived to become governor and was dismissed in August, 1717.

1717—Louisiana was given to the Company of the West organized by John Law, a Scotsman. Shares of stock in the Company were sold to all Frenchmen. This Company had the same rights and privileges as Crozat had.

1718—Bienville established a new town, New Orleans.

1719—All the French trade and colonizing companies merged into the Company of the Indies. The Company of the West was included in this merger.

1717-1722—Many settlers arrived: Germans, Swiss, French, and others.

1721 Louisiana was divided into nine districts, each governed by a Commandant and a Judge.

1722—Three religious parishes were created by the Jesuits, Carmelites and Capuchins. The capital of Louisiana was moved to New Orleans.

1724—The *Code Noir* (Black Code) was written. It dealt with slaves, restricted the activities of Free Negroes, ordered the Jews out of the colony, and insisted on only one religion—Catholic.

1726—Jesuit Father Ignatius de Beaubois secured permission for Jesuits to establish a headquarters near New Orleans as a way station for missionaries working in the Mississippi Valley. Also, Ursuline Nuns were to do educational and medical work.

1727—The first group of *filles à la casket* (casket girls), each with a small trunk of possessions, arrived to find husbands. They were selected by the Company and stayed with the Ursuline Sisters until they married.

1729—Natchez Indians massacred almost three hundred people at Fort Rosalie because the Commandant of the fort wanted their land for his plantation. He told the Indians they had to leave. The French fought the Indians.

1731—The French attacked the Natchez again. They killed most of the Indians; the rest were sent to Santo Domingo as slaves. The Natchez were no longer an Indian nation. Directors of the Company asked the King to take back their charter.

1736—Governor Bienville and Pierre d'Artaguette gathered an army to fight the Chickasaws. The French were defeated. D'Artaguette and his men were burned to death by the Indians.

1740—The Chickasaws and the French signed a treaty. Bienville was discouraged about his failure and asked to be relieved as governor.

1743—Pierre Rigaud, Marquis de Vaudreuil became the new governor of Louisiana.

1747—The Chickasaws raided along the Mississippi south of Baton Rouge.

1748—The Chickasaws raided again.

1752—The Chickasaws were finally defeated.

1753—Louis Billouart, Chevalier de Kerlerec was appointed governor. He was a soldier and a disciplinarian. There were lots of problems: the Indians, trade, etc.

Nov. 3, 1762—France ceded Louisiana to Spain in a secret treaty. England took Spanish Florida and the French territory north of the Isle of Orleans and east of the Mississippi River.

1763—The Jesuits were banished from Louisiana.

March, 1766—Don Antonio de Ulloa, the Spanish Governor arrived in Louisiana. He made many mistakes but he tried to govern well.

Spring, 1768—Spain ordered the colonists to use only Spanish ships for trade in only Spanish ports.

Oct., 1768—Some rebels plotting a revolution against the Spanish called a convention to condemn Ulloa and commanded him to leave Louisiana, which he did fearing for his life.

Oct., 1769—The rebels were executed by Spanish troops led by Lieutenant General Alejandro O'Reilly who had arrived to become the new governor of Louisiana.

Spring, 1770—O'Reilly had reorganized the Louisiana colony politically and economically.

Dec. 1, 1769—Colonel Unzaga became governor of Louisiana. He appointed Creoles to important government positions as had O'Reilly before him. Unzaga initiated the planting of tobacco in Louisiana, granted land to immigrants, made treaties with Indians, and encouraged trade.

Jan., 1777—Don Bernardo de Galvez became governor because Unzaga retired.

1778—Americans and British came to Louisiana to find refuge from the Revolutionary War. They were welcome as long as they were willing to obey the laws of the territory.

May, 1779—Spain declared war against England. By the end of August, Galvez and the Spanish troops had captured Baton Rouge from the British. This battle was important because the British were unable to gain control of the territory.

Jan., 1780—Galvez and his troops laid siege to British-held Mobile and forced the British to surrender in March, 1780.

May 10, 1781—Penascola and West Florida surrendered to the Spanish troops.

1785—Galvez was appointed Captain General of Cuba and Governor of West Florida and Louisiana. In addition, he was made Viceroy of New Spain which included all of Spain's territories north of Central America.

1785-1803—Louisiana had five different governors during this time who tried to rule it as a colony of Spain: Colonel Don Estevan Miro who was a progressive governor in the style of Unzaga; Don Francisco Luis Hector, Baron de Carondelet who was a good administrator and would not allow the Creoles to imitate the French Revolution and overthrow the government; Don Manuel Gayoso de Lemos was well respected; Marquis de Casa Calvo was the governor when the French reclaimed the territory of Louisiana with the Treaty of San Ildefonso in 1800; Brigadier General Juan Manuel de Salcedo governed until November 30, 1803 when he turned Louisiana over to the French.

March 26, 1803—Pierre Clement de Lausaat arrived in New Orleans for the transfer of Louisiana back to France.

April 30, 1803—The United States and France concluded the Louisiana Purchase Treaty in which France sold the Louisiana Territory to the United States for about \$11,250,000. There were additional costs and interest payments so that the total amount owed was almost \$27,000,000.

Dec., 1803—Louisiana officially joined the United States.

March 2, 1805—Louisiana became an “organized” territory. This meant that the President of the United States named a Secretary of the Territory, a thirteen member Legislative Council, a federal District Judge, and three judges of the Superior Court. In addition, a Legislature was appointed by the President. The people were allowed to elect a twenty-five member lower house, as well.

1804-1805—Louisiana was divided into twelve counties and the Territory of Orleans into nineteen parishes (following an old Spanish custom).

1808—A civil law code was adopted.

April 18, 1812—Congress approved a state constitution.

April 30, 1812—Louisiana became the eighteenth state of the United States.

1812—The United States declared war on Britain.

1814—Battle of Lake Borgne won by the British.

Jan. 8, 1815 Battle of New Orleans won by the Americans and led to the Treaty of Ghent ending the War of 1812.

Louisiana's beginnings are crucial to the study of the Creoles. Creoles began to have an influence on the territory in the 1760's with the help of O'Reilly and Unzaga who included them in the government and encouraged marriages between the French Creoles and Spanish soldiers. The Creoles kept their languages and customs throughout their early history and well into the present century.