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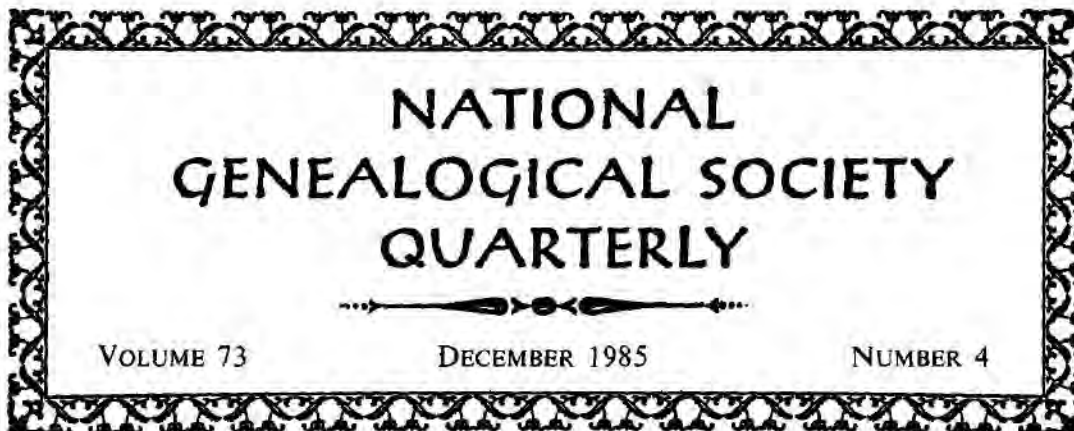
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SPANISH RECORDS: LOCATING ANGLO AND LATIN ANCESTRY IN THE COLONIAL SOUTHEAST

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Archival holdings relating to Spanish North America are among the most fascinating, extensive, and unexploited resources available for genealogical and historical research. An old cliché holds that the Spaniards made three copies of everything; the experienced researcher would avow it is more correct that they made at least six or seven. Spanish officials in the New World were meticulous record keepers. Pedigrees were prized possessions, though not above embroidering. The shepherds of the Church kept watch over their flock, or tried to, wherever they might wander. Literally millions of records were created in the Spanish Gulf South, and they have for the most part lain neglected for the centuries since. In very recent years, a few scholars and research institutions have addressed this problem; their accomplishments have opened up countless new vistas in genealogical research, not only for individuals of Spanish origins, but also for Americans of French, Indian, Black, and—most importantly, and most ignored—Anglo ancestry.

Three major factors have heretofore limited the exploitation of Spanish resources: geographical barriers, language barriers, and a widespread unawareness of what these record collections have to offer. Geographical barriers have been broken to a great extent. The number of records from Spanish archives which are available in one form or another in U.S. research institutions is extensive. The language barrier is also being broken, albeit to a smaller extent. Translating old manuscript documents is much more tedious and time consuming than microfilming. Still, the American researcher with no knowledge of the Spanish language will find that a very large percentage of the

Spanish language records generated and maintained in the United States, the "local" records, have been published in the form of translations or translated abstracts. Public awareness is the area in which the least amount of progress has been made. Most individuals who would like to utilize unpublished resources have no idea of where and how to begin, and others who could benefit from these records have not recognized the potential that exists for them.

"My family settled Maryland," the Anglo researcher protests. "They never went further west than Alabama." Never? This small word can encompass some very big oversights. For example, the Dwight family of eighteenth-century Anglo-America originated in Massachusetts. By the outbreak of the Revolution, a branch of the family had migrated southward and was located on the Big Savannah River of Georgia—still in Anglo-America. Yet, some researchers have found it very difficult to track the family's migration. There are years in the early 1770s for which the family cannot be accounted. Why? Because they were not in Massachusetts or Georgia or any of the colonies in between; they were part of a larger migration movement from New England to Natchez on the banks of the Mississippi River. Massachusetts and Rhode Island "Yankees" located there when the region was part of Britain's fifteenth colony, West Florida. After the British were expelled by Spanish allies of the American revolutionists in 1779, some members of the company of Yankee adventurers moved back east, as far as Georgia, although some other family members remained at Natchez permanently.²

Other researchers, in the course of their study of a Virginia family, for example, may find references to a brother or a brother-in-law of their ancestor who left the Tidewater for the West, never to be heard from again. Because the researcher does not descend from the "lost" branch, he customarily makes little or no effort to trace it. He should. Every researcher has encountered genealogical problems in the Atlantic colonies for which Anglo-American records seem to hold no solution. Too seldom does it occur to the researcher that the branch of the family which went to Louisiana or Florida may have taken family papers with it—and preserved them—or that records which Spanish officials there generated on these detached family members may contain the data needed to solve the Anglo-American lineage problem. One experience of the Manasco family provides an excellent example:

The Manascos have an extensive network of researchers. All appear to descend from a family which had its first known origins in Virginia, from which point it spread into North Carolina, Georgia, and Tennessee by the end of the colonial period, then westward into Alabama, Mississippi, and Arkansas—finally reaching Louisiana by the mid-1800s. Or so researchers thought. The Manascos are a typical family in the American South, and descendants have faced all the customary problems of research in that geographical area. Yet, one of their problems has been solved—the identity of the wife of John Manasco of Virginia—and it was resolved not through a Virginia record but through a will drafted by a Spanish notary of New Orleans.

In the last years of Spanish colonial rule in Louisiana and West Florida, *circa* 1800, one "Santiago Manasco" began to appear in the records of Baton Rouge. He seemed to be an ordinary settler, a butcher by trade. He generated a lawsuit or two over business matters. Then he died. On his deathbed, while visiting New Orleans, he drafted a will in which he revealed that (in spite of the Hispanicized version of his name) he was not a Spaniard. He was from Virginia. Yet, his testament was not one of the Anglo genre in which a man sometimes called his wife by

her first name and sometimes named some, but not necessarily all, of his children. Manasco's will was a typical Spanish will in which a great deal of genealogical data is found. Although he was of advancing years and had been twice widowed, he began with an identification of his deceased parents, not merely their first names, but even his mother's maiden name. He proceeded to name each of his deceased wives, maiden names also. Then he named each of the children born of his first marriage and specifically stated that he had no issue of his second union.³

Countless such documents exist in Spanish archives to assist with Anglo-American research, not only such civil documents as testaments but ecclesiastical records as well. Within the Spanish provinces, Catholicism was the state religion, as the Anglican faith was in Virginia. However, in the Gulf South, Spanish officials were quite lenient in the enforcement of the state religion where non-Catholic newcomers were concerned. The public practice of other faiths was proscribed, but Anglo-American settlers were not forced to convert to the Roman Catholic faith. All that was required of them was that their marriages be officially witnessed by a priest (since there was no such thing as a civil marriage ceremony in Catholic countries) and that their children were to be baptized by a Catholic priest (even though the offspring were not subsequently required to worship in that church).⁴

One of the most important record-keeping decrees issued in the Spanish colonies of the American southeast, from a genealogical standpoint, occurred in 1795 when Anglo-American migration into the Spanish Gulf was probably at its peak. Bishop Luis Penalver y Cardenas, appointed to the newly-created diocese of Louisiana and the Floridas, instructed that all baptismal entries recorded in church registers should not only identify the father, the mother's maiden name, as well as the name of the godfather and the maiden name of the godmother (as was already customary), but that they must also identify both sets of grandparents, including the maiden names of both grandmothers. In addition, these Catholic sacramental records also commonly named places of origin, at least states or colonies if not the towns. So it was that in 1801 there was recorded at Avoyelles, Louisiana, the following not-at-all unusual baptismal record:⁵

John Ryan. Born 28 November 1800. Son of John Ryan II and Patience Vick his wife, residents of Avoyelles. Grandchild of John Ryan I and Catharine Power, his wife, of Virginia; and of Aaron Vick and Maria Radford, his wife, originally of North Carolina.

Some Vick researchers report this to be the only document they have yet found which identifies the maiden name of the wife of Aaron Vick. Other baptismal records for children born to the Louisiana couple further assert that John Ryan II was born in Georgia, while his father John I was born in Ireland, and his mother was a native of Pennsylvania. The family is said, therein, to have settled awhile in Virginia, and it is further indicated that the children's paternal grandmother (if not their grandfather as well) had migrated to Avoyelles with the parents and was still alive in the nineteenth century. These same church records also state further that Patience Vick Ryan was born in Natchez and that her North Carolina-born father (Aaron) had spent awhile in South Carolina before moving on to Saint Louis, where his wife Maria Radford was said to have been born.⁶ A priceless migration pattern of these Anglo-

American families, through the Eastern colonies and westward to Missouri and Mississippi, is sketched for researchers in these Catholic baptismal records of Louisiana. The Vicks, moreover, were not even Catholic.

Once a genealogist recognizes the need for conducting research in the Spanish records of the Gulf provinces and attempts to initiate that research, he encounters a perplexing problem. The same geographical names in existence now were used then, but as one frustrated researcher once put it, "The places weren't all in the same places." At various times prior to statehood: Alabama was part of Mississippi; Mississippi and Alabama were part of Louisiana; Mississippi and Alabama were part of Florida; Mississippi and Alabama were part of Georgia; part of Louisiana was part of Florida; and part of Louisiana was part of Texas.

When the Louisiana Purchase took place in 1803, it covered what is now 15 other states, but it did not include the east part of Louisiana which remained in Florida or the west part which remained in Texas. When the Louisiana Territory was created in 1806, it covered the present states of Missouri and Arkansas, but it did not include present Louisiana at all (that was the Territory of Orleans). When the West Florida Rebellion took place in 1810, it did not take place in Florida at all; it occurred in Louisiana and Mississippi.

Confusion is understandable, but the contradictions are not as perplexing as they first seem. The following chronology outlines the few major developments that need to be kept in mind.

Pre-1763. Spain occupied roughly the present boundaries of Florida and Texas (one exception: Texas extended eastward to the Red and Calcasieu Rivers). France and her Indian allies controlled the Gulf area in between, and the whole expanse of French territory was called Louisiana.

1763. At the close of the Seven Years War, Spain gave up Florida to England. France gave up all her territory east of the Mississippi River to England (the Isle of Orleans excluded) and all of her territory west of the Mississippi (including the Isle) to Spain. England created two Gulf colonies: British East Florida and British West Florida, with the Apalachicola River being roughly the boundary between them. Note that the present state of Louisiana, at this point, was split between British West Florida and Spanish Louisiana.

1779-1782. In the course of the American Revolution (and the concurrent Spanish-English War), Spain regained East Florida, which she had formerly owned, as well as West Florida. The colonies retained the same names and boundaries that had existed since 1763.

1795. Pinckney's Treaty settled disagreement between the United States and Spain over the northern boundary of the Floridas, running the line at the 31° parallel. The important posts of Natchez (Mississippi) and St. Stephens (Alabama) became part of the United States.

1800. Spain ceded Louisiana to France, but no actual change of government occurred in the colony.

1803. Spanish authorities in Louisiana officially returned Louisiana to France and the latter deeded it to the U.S. The part of present Louisiana which lies east of the Mississippi was not part of the Louisiana Purchase. It remained in Spanish West Florida. Likewise, the part of present Louisiana which lies west of the Calcasieu and the Red Rivers still was considered part of Texas.

1810/1813. The West Florida Rebellion of 1810 resulted in the annexation of the Louisiana and Mississippi portions of that colony, although Mobile did not capitulate. In 1813, the United States seized Mobile. East Florida and Texas were then the only Spanish territories left along the Gulf.

1819. By terms of the Adams-Onis treaty, the U.S. and Spain agreed that the western boundary of Louisiana would extend to the Sabine River.

1821. Spain ceded Florida to the U.S. Shortly thereafter, the Mexican Revolution drove Spain out of Texas as well.

Politics, wars, and boundary changes constitute the boring side of genealogy for most researchers. However, a basic familiarity with these events is crucial to any determination of where one's ancestors were and where the records can be found. An excellent example is provided by the Southern researcher who once reported his perplexity over the fact that an Anglo ancestral family was said to have set out, in the colonial period, from South Carolina for Florida. According to the family story they were massacred enroute, with only one son escaping. As an adult, the survivor returned to the site of his family's massacre and settled there, a site now known as Gadsden, Alabama. As his descendant, the genealogist, rightly pointed out, northeast Alabama was hardly "enroute" from South Carolina to Florida. Both the shortest and the safest route would have been through eastern Georgia, which the Indian nations had already ceded.

Such confusion regarding the actions of ancestors in the lower South usually result from an unfamiliarity with geographical boundaries of the past. The Florida to which the family was migrating was certainly either British or Spanish West Florida, which extended across the Gulf to the Mississippi River. Similar problems are encountered by individuals, for example, who find on the 1850 census that an ancestor in Franklin County, Mississippi, was born in Florida about 1790. Yet they find no records on the ancestor in archival holdings within the State of Florida. At the time of the ancestor's birth, the Florida in which he resided was, quite commonly, the same Mississippi neighborhood in which he was enumerated in 1850. Clearly, to find early records of such families, the researcher must be familiar with Spanish administrative jurisdictions and Spanish archives.

ADMINISTRATIVE JURISDICTIONS— CIVIL AND ECCLESIASTICAL

To summarize the various Spanish territories already discussed, there were four distinct provinces along the Gulf: Texas, Louisiana, West Florida, and East Florida. The former was part of the Kingdom of New Spain, with all its political actions and records channeled through Mexico City. This southwestern colony is not being included in the present paper, which focuses upon the southeast. However, because of kinship ties and economic activities which occurred along the Louisiana-Texas border, it is important that Louisiana researchers be aware of the fact that much helpful material exists in Texan and Mexican resources. The remaining three Spanish colonies were assigned to the Vice Royalty of Cuba, with its actions and paperwork being channeled through Havana. These administrative channels were consistent for both civil and ecclesiastical records, with one exception as subsequently noted.

ECCLESIASTICAL ARCHIVES

Within the three Spanish provinces along the Southeastern Gulf, church records were maintained at two levels: the parish level and the diocesan level.

Parish Level. Each parish, whose jurisdiction usually covered the same territory as a civil post, maintained its set of registers covering the administration of the sacraments of baptism, marriage, and burial. Variants were many, but relatively minor. Larger parishes maintained separate sets of registers for each sacrament. Many did not. Until late in the eighteenth century, entries for whites, blacks, and Indians, slave and free, were more likely to be recorded as they occurred, in a single register. After 1795, clerics were instructed to maintain separate registers for whites, free people of color, and slaves, but the cautious researcher remains cognizant of the fact that many entries were recorded in the wrong set of registers, hence all should be searched.⁷

Sacramental registers for the colonial period, throughout most of the Southeastern Gulf region, have been published in translated, indexed and abstracted form that are more or less complete. A number of such works are included in the appended bibliography. These fairly recent contributions to American genealogy have served as the most significant boon to research in the Spanish colonies that has occurred, making research on Gulf Coast families as relatively easy as New England research long has been believed to be. However, far more judicious use of these published records should be encouraged, a point that will be subsequently discussed with relationship to available civil archives.

Vestry minutes, which can occasionally be found for Catholic churches of the nineteenth century, are not known to the present researcher to exist in any parish along the Southeastern Gulf.

Confirmation records are similarly rare, with an exception discussed below.

Diocesan Level. Prior to 1795, no diocese existed in the southeastern provinces, and the normal types of genealogical records which characterize diocesan papers did not exist there, principally dispensations and confirmations. Once created, the Diocese of Louisiana and the Floridas was shortlived, strangled by the Louisiana Purchase of 1803. The transfer of ecclesiastical responsibilities for Louisiana from Spain to the distant American Diocese of Baltimore also resulted in the transfer of the Floridas back to the pastoral care of the Bishop of Havana.

The brief existence of the Diocese of Louisiana and the Floridas did create three types of records of superior value for genealogists with both Anglo and Latin ancestors along the Gulf: confirmations, dispensations, and censuses.

Confirmation, a sacrament normally administered today at the onset of adolescence, has traditionally been administered by bishops only. Throughout the Gulf provinces, when they fell under the jurisdiction of the Diocese of Havana, the sacrament was not administered. The earliest known administration of such sacraments occurred after 1785, with the arrival at New Orleans of Cirillo de Barcelona, auxiliary Bishop of the Diocese of Havana. The confirmation register which he began, and which continued in use throughout the short life of the subsequent Diocese of Louisiana and the Floridas (actually covering only the years 1789–1801), contains entries from the various corners of the province into which the bishops journeyed on their pastoral rounds, and on all classes of settlers, as follows:

Anglo-Irish orphans, taken in by the Ursuline Convent at New Orleans, their foreign names often garbled and almost always translated by Spanish scribes. For example: (23 March 1800) Catalina Merced Coperzuet [Catherine Copperthwait], daughter of Santiago [James] and Carlota [Charlotte] Obrien; or her probable relative Maria Justina Jons [Jones], the daughter of Roberto and Ana Obrien.⁸

The offspring of marriages of mixed ethnicity, sometimes illustrious, for example: (10 December 1797) Fernando Gayoso de Lemos, son of Don Fernando Gayoso de Lemos, Brigadier of the Army Regiments of His Catholic Majesty and Governor of this Province, and of the Senora Dona Margarita Waths [Watts, a Catholic convert from a Pennsylvania Protestant family]; the godfather being the Senor Don Nicolas Maria Vidal, Lieutenant Governor and Judge-Advocate in this Providence [*sic*].⁹

Aged French settlers from isolated islands off the Mississippi coast, for example: (21 April 1798) Luis Christian Ladner, alleged (albeit erroneously) to be 100 years old, son of Christian Ladner and his wife Magdalena.¹⁰

Mixed black-white-Indian children, both slave and free, for example: (4 June 1798) Francisca, a free mulatto of Mobile, daughter of the Indian Ysavel Pyen; or (12 May 1796) Manuel of Natchez, slave of Carlos de Grand Pré, whose godfather, the white Anglo Thomas Dalton [variously written Dolton, Docton] also sponsored Marguerita Huilson [Margaret Wilson], daughter of Juan [John], and Guillermo Clarc [William Clark] son of Juan Clarc and wife Margarita Dalton.¹¹

Dispensations, the second of the three genealogically-valuable categories of records created by the Bishop of the Diocese of Louisiana and the Floridas, most commonly resulted from the engagement of two types of couples—those of different faiths and those who were too closely related (usually within second to fourth degrees, according to church law). In all instances, the genealogical data which they provided are of extreme value to researchers, although the detail may be surprisingly candid. Two cases illustrative of the extant dispensations are as follows.

JONES-OBRYEN (19 September 1796)¹²

Robert Jones, a Quaker, appealed for assistance to Chaplain Patrick Walsh who was “charged with the care of the souls of the English, Irish, and Anglo-Americans” of New Orleans. Having been married for a number of years to Anna Obryen, Jones had renounced his faith and wished to marry Anna in the Catholic church, but feared it would cause scandal because they were already the parents of several children. The Reverend Walsh responded by granting them a secret marriage, after recording for them the following genealogical table:

JONES—	Parents:	Robert Jones and Margarita Knowles, natives of Philadelphia, Pa.
	Paternal G-P:	Robert Jones, native of “Alais” [Ireland?] and Margarita, country of birth unknown
	Maternal G-P:	Francisco (Francis) Knowles
OBRYEN—	Birthplace:	Tarboro, N.C.
	Parents:	William Obryen, a native of Ireland, and Maria Knowles, a native of Virginia
	Paternal G-P:	William Obryen and wife unknown
	Maternal G-P:	John Knowles and wife unknown

LADNER-LALANCETTE (29 April 1801)¹³

Juan Bautista (Jean Baptiste) Ladner, aged 35, of Chucupulu, Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, had lived for sixteen years with his cousin of the third grade, Francisca (Françoise) LaLancette, when his remote residence was visited by Père Vaugeois of Immaculate Conception Church of Mobile. Through Vaugeois, Ladner requested a dispensation from the impediment of consanguinity in order to legally wed Françoise and to legitimate their seven children. Mme. Ladner’s mother, still residing in the area, was required to give her consent, even though Françoise had been independent of her for those sixteen years. With the aid of various area residents, the following genealogical table was compiled:

LADNER—	Birthplace:	Pass Christian
	Parents:	Juan Bautista (Jean Baptiste) Ladner and Maria Luisa (Marie Louise) de Lorme
	Maternal G-P:	Pedro (Pierre) de Lorme and the unidentified widow of Mr. Fizon (Fezan)
LALANCETTE—	Birthplace:	Biloxi
	Parents:	Pedro (Pierre) La Lancette and Maria Luisa (Marie Louise) Fayard
	Maternal G-P:	Mr. Fayard and Francisca (Françoise) Fezan, “Daughter of the marriage of Pedro de Lorme.”

Such genealogical tables as these provided in the dispensation records of the Diocese of Louisiana and the Floridas, like all accounts of ancestry related by individuals in any place and time, are frequently flawed. They are nevertheless of considerable value as clues to potential ancestors and to the locales which must be searched in order to verify each generation through contemporary records of a direct and primary nature.

Censuses. The usefulness of the parish censuses which were submitted to the diocesan office typically varies. In some cases, as at Natchitoches, only statistical totals are available, although the collection for this parish includes appendices with data on marriages and burials which amplify the detail recorded in the sacramental registers. Contrasting with the Natchitoches statistics, however, is the Baton Rouge enumeration of 1796 (with data comparable to the federal census of 1800) which reveals that over a quarter of the households of that region were of Anglo origins.¹⁴

CIVIL ARCHIVES

Within all three of the Gulf provinces under the jurisdiction of Cuba, there were four administrative levels at which civil records were created: the local post, the provincial capital, the viceroyalty, and the royal government in Spain. Each of these administrative levels generated distinctive categories or types of records; nonetheless, there was a great deal of duplication. Some categories offer a higher potential to genealogical researchers, but there is no group of records which the family historian should dismiss as inconsequential.

Local

In the various military posts of the Spanish provinces, almost all civil records which were created can be lumped under one category: notarial records. The Spanish (and French) provinces of America operated under a legal system similar to that in use in Europe. Citizens did not draft their own documents, or go to a justice of the peace or a lawyer for this service, and then take the document to the county courthouse or city hall for filing as usually done under the English judicial system in America. Instead, there existed a public notary in every community, charged with the drafting of wills, deeds, marriage contracts, and powers of attorney, as well as the recording of succession (probate) proceedings. Each notary maintained his own office, and his files were passed to his successors. There were no bound volumes in which clerks officially recorded a copy of the original documents. Instead, the original loose papers were kept on file. Each document was numbered consecutively, regardless of type, in most cases. Both wills and deeds, for example, are found randomly in a single series within each notary's collection.

In each of the smaller posts, as almost all of them were, there existed only one notary. He may have been the local commandant as well. Files of this notary were maintained in the government house which the notary and the commandant usually shared. Because the post commandant also served as its judge, all court proceedings (lawsuits and criminal hearings) are usually found in this same series of records. For the colonial period, where the records are still extant, there is usually a master index (or at least a catalogue of documents) which names the principal parties involved in each record. In the case of some posts—such as Natchez and Natchitoches, the notarial records are now filed in the county/parish courthouse. In other cases, such as the previously mentioned Louisiana post of Avoyelles and its neighbor, Opelousas, the records have been transferred to the State Archives. In other cases, such as Mobile, Alabama, the notarial records of the colonial era have been lost.¹⁵

A portion of the local notarial records of the Spanish colonies has been published in the form of translated abstracts, principally those of the Mississippi and Louisiana posts of Natchez, St. Charles, St. John the Baptist, Opelousas, and Avoyelles. (See appended bibliography.) When such published guides exist, the researcher can usually write to the repository where the records are now housed, cite the document number shown in the published guide, and receive a photocopy for a nominal fee. If no guide or published abstracts exist for the notarial records—as in the case of Natchitoches, for example—the genealogist must personally conduct his research or employ someone to do it for him. Courthouse personnel cannot oblige. In the case of Natchitoches, specifically, microfilm copies of the colonial records still housed at the courthouse (but not the portion of the notarial files which have been scattered elsewhere) do exist at some of the larger libraries of Louisiana and are available through the Salt Lake City Library of the Genealogical Society of Utah (or the branch libraries of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints).

Within the city of New Orleans, largest capital of the three Spanish provinces, the compilation and organization of civil records were more complex. It is important to note that because New Orleans was the provincial capital and a major American port of trade, it houses vast numbers of documents of importance to genealogists whose ancestors resided throughout the colonial South and the Mississippi Valley, as well as commercial cities of the Middle Atlantic and New England states. Principal collections of civil materials, at New Orleans, are:

—Notarial Records. Several notaries operated simultaneously and each maintained independent files in his office. In the mid-1800s, a city ordinance required notaries to deposit in one central office¹⁶ both their personal files and those acquired from their predecessors. No published abstracts or guides are available. An index to notaries exists at the Archives and most (but not all) of the sundry thousands of individual volumes are indexed. Mail inquiries cannot be handled unless a specific notary, volume, and page can be cited.

—Court Records. While local lawsuits were maintained separately from the notarial records, the files of the actions in which New Orleanians were involved are interspersed with records of legal cases from all over the province (including points as far north as St. Louis) which were appealed to the court of the provincial capital. This group of records comprises today the Spanish Judicial Archives within the Louisiana State Museum, at the Old U.S. Mint Building, New Orleans. Translated abstracts (and often almost complete translations) of many of these documents were published between 1923 and 1949 in the now-defunct *Louisiana Historical Quarterly*.

—Black Boxes. This series, also maintained in the Louisiana State Museum, is a collection of locally-generated loose papers which were first stored by the Americans in wooden boxes painted black. Because of the fragility of the records, they are not open to the public. However, translated abstracts are available at the Museum, and a very abbreviated guide to them has been serialized in recent years in *New Orleans Genesis*, and microfilm copies have been made by the LDS.

—Minutes of the Cabildo. A governing body comparable to town councils or commissioners' courts in various Anglo-American societies, the Cabildo generated yet another set of records which are of more use to historians but should never be ignored by genealogists working in this area. Minutes of the Cabildo have been translated (but not necessarily well) and are available for research at the major libraries of Louisiana as well as some university libraries elsewhere in the country. The thorough and careful researcher will also note that the collections of Cabildo minutes maintained in certain libraries contain documents not duplicated in similarly labelled collections elsewhere.

Utilizing the unpublished, locally generated civil records (particularly the notarial archives of the various posts) is both tedious and time-consuming. However, there is no way to adequately convey a sense of the rewards that await the thorough researcher who does so—or the dangers inherent in ignoring them in favor of the more accessible church records.

Through the use of the latter, as with the better known vital statistics of New England, many researchers can trace whole lineages in a short time. When they do so, however, they have only the skeleton of the family, dry and meaningless names and dates. It is through the use of the civil records, particularly the notarial archives, that ancestors come alive. Here are found the squabbles in which they became embroiled, the letters from aged parents in Europe or Pennsylvania, letters that were eventually recorded in succession files or attached to powers of attorney. In the case of published abstracts of these notarial records, too many researchers never pursue work past whatever brief remarks have been published, and they, too, miss the essence of their ancestors' characters.

Perhaps even more importantly to consider—although they are frequently not considered—are the inevitable gaps in the church registers. In his seminal work on the subject of genealogical evidence, Noel C. Stevenson, a fellow and current president of the American Society of Genealogists, cautions: "Under no circumstances should a pedigree be based solely on vital records or parish registers." Again in the same work he opines more strongly: "Any pedigree which depends solely on parish registers for its authenticity is not acceptable to a competent genealogist."¹⁷ The majority of researchers using Spanish colonial records would probably disagree with Stevenson, but the more experienced minority recognize the merit in this admonition. The case of François Clement Derbanne of Opelousas serves as one of innumerable examples:

The admirable series of abstracts compiled and published by Rev. Donald J. Hébert, *Southwest Louisiana Records*, indicates that one Clement (variously identified as François, Lemant, Lurent, and Zenon) Derbanne was married by 1822, in the Opelousas district, to one Celeste Roy. Neither his marriage record nor his baptismal record were to be found in the registers of that parish. Family tradition strongly held that he was from Natchitoches—an apparently logical assumption because the progenitor of the Louisiana Derbannes was the first white settler of the post of St. Jean Baptiste des Natchitoches in 1718. Proceeding to search the published, translated abstracts of the Natchitoches post, researchers discovered that no Clement and only one François Derbanne

“was born” (*i.e.*: was baptized) at Natchitoches during the appropriate period: François, *fil*s Jean Baptiste Gaspard Derbanne and wife Marie Heleine Brevelle, born 19 December 1797.¹⁸ Moreover, the subsequent volume of published Natchitoches records, which carried the dates 1800–1826, revealed no marriage at Natchitoches for this François.¹⁹ Therefore, descendants of François Clement of Opelousas deduced that the child born 1797, “the only François Derbanne,” was indeed their ancestor and they proceeded to trace his lineage—including the Brevelles.

The conclusion was not valid. The researchers, in the first place, had failed to note, in either the Preface or the Index to Sacraments which accompanied the 1800–1826 publication, that the original volume being translated and abstracted (while it covered some baptisms and burials through the 1820s) covered marriages only through September 1818. Unions after that date had been recorded elsewhere. When those unpublished records were consulted, it was not only found that the Natchitoches François remained there but that he married twice at Natchitoches—neither time to Celeste Roy.²⁰ The Opelousas ancestor, meanwhile, proved to be one Clement Derbanne (born at that lower post on 15 October 1787 to Jean Baptiste Derbanne and Thérèse Roy) whose baptismal name appeared in Hébert as Zenon.²¹

Clarification of the identity of Clement (*var.* Lemant) has been made only through the use of extant notarial records, principally the files of the father’s succession, opened February 1793, and the 1796 power of attorney given by the widowed mother on behalf of her children who were heirs to their recently deceased grandparents of Natchitoches.²² Clement’s immediate Natchitoches antecedents, incidentally, were not the claimed Jean Baptiste Gaspard Derbanne and wife Marie Heleine Brevelle, but J.B.G.’s uncle, Pierre Derbanne and his wife Marie Le Clerc. All time spent by descendants in tracing the Brevelle lineage was wasted.

Higher Echelon Civil Records

Records generated by the governors of the three southeastern provinces, by the viceroyalty in Cuba, and by the royal authorities in Spain are now generally to be found in one of various archives in Spain. Principal among these are:

General Archives of the Indies (Archivo General de Indias, Seville). Here there exist two major collections:

- A. *Cuban Papers* (Papeles Procedentes de Cuba). This collection consists of 2,375 bundles, called *legajos*, containing the bulk of the government papers, the working papers, generated at the provincial level. With literally millions of documents therein, the Cuban Papers range from petitions by private citizens to correspondence between officials, to passports issued individuals for travel between settlements, to oaths of allegiance, to censuses.

Of special interest to the genealogist, the censuses include a number of every-name enumerations, with specific age, race, and marital-status data of the type that the United States federal censuses did not cover until 1850.

The 1784 enumeration of Pensacola, interestingly, indicates that roughly 10 percent of the households were of Anglo origins.²³

It goes without saying that no master index yet exists to the millions of individual names in the Cuban Papers. The best guide in existence, albeit severely outdated, is Hill's 594-page *Descriptive Catalogue* shown on the appended bibliography. The index to this guide covers nearly a hundred pages of fine print. While it is an extremely superficial index when compared to all that exists, it still contains the names of hundreds of Anglo-Americans and identifies thousands of documents which deal with American newcomers to the Gulf.

Accessibility to the Cuban Papers has vastly improved within the past decade—to the point that no serious genealogist of the region can excuse himself from examining them. Tulane University of New Orleans and the University of Louisiana at Baton Rouge have conducted (and almost completed, at last notice) the microfilming of these documents. Copies are deposited at both institutions and are available on interlibrary loan through the latter university. Similarly, a large percentage of the records relating to West Florida are available on microfilm at the University of West Florida, Pensacola.

- B. *Santo Domingo Papers* (Audencia de Santo Domingo). This second important group of records from the AGI-Seville contains, principally, those documents received in Spain from colonial officials. While a larger percentage of the records deal with administrative affairs, the diligent genealogist will find scattered throughout it such items as birth, death, and marriage records and complete dossiers on various individuals ranging from soldiers to officials.

As with the Cuban Papers, the Santo Domingo Papers have been microfilmed and are available at the American institution responsible for the filming—Loyola University of New Orleans. For a catalog (but not an index) to these documents, the researcher is referred to the De la Pena y Camara, Burrus, O'Neill and Fernández compilation on the appended bibliography.

Representative of the documents to be found among the Santo Domingo Papers is the letter penned 18 November 1767 by Henry Jerningham, of the "Mouth of Wicomico river," St. Mary's County, Maryland, who styled himself "Doctor and Eques Anglicanus." Writing in English to Governor Antonio Ulloa of Louisiana, with regard to the migration of Anglos into Louisiana, Jerningham added the following postscript:

"Your subscriber's father was first cousin of the present Dutchess of Norfolk the 1st dutchess in Britain.

I am related to many of the prime nobility, Roman Catholic in England—my eldest brother died a Jesuit at Rome.

My younger brother Charles is now Lieutenant Colonel in a Regiment de Stampech Cuirassiers pour le servise de Sa m.l m. p. . . .

Hugo still younger a recollete at Douay in French Flanders.

Three sisters one Elizabeth and Edwardina [illegible] all religious at the Augustins' nuns at Bruges, in the Austrians Netherlands.

My uncle Sr. George Jerningham Knight and Baronet now living, was in a public character at the Court of Charles 12, King of Suede; his son lately married my Lord Dillon's daughter and his youngest son is a Lieutenant Colonel in the service of his Christian Majesty.

I have a wife and seven children."²⁴

General Military Archives (Archivo General Militar, Segovia). Here, the researcher will find service records for all soldiers who served in the Spanish military from 1680 to 1920—again, literally millions of documents. In the 1950s and 1960s, a nine-volume index to these dossiers was compiled (see *Indice de Expedientes Personales* on appended bibliography). Copies of the publication are available at Tulane, the University of Texas, and the University of Florida, among other locations, and, with the citations provided therein, photocopies of the originals can be ordered from Segovia.

Typical of the service sheets to be found on colonial soldiers of Creole, French, German, Italian, English, Spanish, and Anglo-American origins is the following, which has been extracted and published by the borderlands historian, Jack D. L. Holmes.²⁵

FINIELS, Juan Bautista Emilio de
Service Sheet: Dec. 31, 1829, AGMS

Country: Pensacola Age: 19

Health: Good Marital Status: single

Ranks: Cadet (Feb. 12, 1823)

Regiments: Malaga Infantry expeditionary (2 yrs. 1 mo. 19 days); Barcelona Infantry (2 yrs. 7 mos. 29 days); Infantry of the Crown (19 days).

Campaigns: None given.

Notes: brown hair, black eyes, regular nose, small beard; given leave for 2 yrs. 12 days and rejoined service as cadet.

MISCELLANEOUS RECORDS

Space limitations do not permit a discussion of all archival holdings which deal with Anglo and Latin settlers of the Southeast during the Spanish period. For a broader discussion of the various Spanish archives or for practical advice on how to do research in these repositories, the reader is referred to the numerous English and Spanish language guides on the appended bibliography.

At least passing reference, however, should be made to several significant collections of documents with American provenance and residence:

Cuban Papers Collection—North Carolina Historical Commission. An extensive collection of documents which theoretically should belong to the Cuban Papers now housed in Seville. It is related that this group of papers belonged to a governor who took his papers to Cuba when he was recalled from Louisiana and that those papers remained in the private possession of his family before eventually being acquired by the Commission. The Works Progress Adminis-

tration of North Carolina prepared a guide to this collection during the depression era. See bibliography.

Panton, Leslie, and Company Papers, University of West Florida. A priceless set of records which few genealogists use. This trading firm, founded by Britishers, was the principal firm engaged in trade with the southeastern Indians during the Spanish regime. Its 10,000 or so documents contain an abundance of material on early settlers and traders of the Gulf South, particularly Anglos. Because its proprietors were British, a large number of the firm's documents are in English (although correspondence with officials can be expected to be in Spanish, the official language of the province). A finding guide (but not a complete index) to the collection has been prepared by the staff of the University's John C. Pace Library.

The John Forbes Collection, Mobile Public Library. Closely akin to the Panton, Leslie, and Company Papers. Forbes was the company's agent at Mobile, intermittently, c1785-1810. A microfilm copy of Forbes' papers is to be found in the Panton, Leslie, and Company Papers at Pensacola.

Sons of the American Revolution Transcripts. Similarly neglected is a collection of transcribed military rosters and service sheets compiled in the early 1900s by C. Robert Churchhill, president of the Louisiana Society, Sons of the American Revolution. While descendants of early Gulf settlers search (often in vain) for an ancestor who participated in one of the Revolutionary conflicts along with Atlantic seaboard, countless genealogists remain unaware that their Gulf Coast ancestors participated in an adjunct conflict, the Spanish-English War of 1779-1782, which drove British forces from their strongholds along the Gulf and the Mississippi Valley. The accomplishment of the latter, according to many historians, marked the crucial turning point in the Anglo-American effort and secured their final victory over the British. Descendants of the Gulf patriots are accepted into the S.A.R. and its affiliated organizations, D.A.R. and C.A.R.

The Churchill manuscript, the result of his personal search for relevant military rosters in a number of Spanish archives, identifies most, but not all of the known participants in the Gulf Campaigns.²⁶ Five copies were originally made, with two being deposited at the S.A.R. and D.A.R. libraries, and a third at the Howard-Tilton Library, Tulane University. Location of the two remaining copies is not known. However, various other institutions, ranging from the Library of Congress to the University of Southwestern Louisiana, have obtained photocopies.

CONCLUSION

Clearly, an abundance of resources exists, even within the United States, for those whose direct or collateral ancestors were settlers of the Southeastern Gulf during the Spanish period. The microfilming of Spanish archival material by American universities in recent years, not to mention the acquisition of transcripts and even original collections of materials by other institutions over

the past century (as referenced on the appended bibliography), have made research in Spanish archives almost as convenient for the American genealogist as research in any county courthouse would be. The publication of guides, particularly those in the English language, has made the exploration of these materials easier in many cases than doing comparable work in the National Archives. Still, that which is now available represents only a miniscule portion of the rich legacy left by early southeastern pioneers. Research in these Spanish records—and particularly the translation and publication of these Spanish records—is a promising field (and needed labor) for genealogists and historians who are fluent in Spanish and would like to make a contribution to published genealogical literature.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. 107 Woodridge, Tuscaloosa, AL 35406. A preliminary version of this paper was presented by Ms. Mills at the 1983 National Genealogical Society Conference, Fort Worth.

2. Robin Fabel, Auburn University, "Born in War, Killed by War: The Company of Military Adventurers in West Florida," paper presented at the General Wilbur Brown Military Conference, University of Alabama, February 1983. Professor Fabel has kindly provided a full text of his paper to the present writer.

3. Last Will and Testament of Santiago Menasco, 27 August 1802, Notarial Files of Narcisse Broutin, Office of the Keeper of Notarial Records, Civil Courts Building, New Orleans. See also James Menasco vs. Thomasina Sigvatt, 4:212; Book IV, p. 212; James Menasco to Carlos de Grand-pre, 4:224; Succession of Santiago Menasco, 7:96, 103-04, 105; James Menasco, Misc., 10:257; all in Spanish West Florida Archives Typescripts, Louisiana State Museum, New Orleans.

4. For individuals interested in the laws which would have regulated the behavior and activities of both Anglo and Latin colonists in Spanish Louisiana a number of publications exist. "A Description of Louisiana," communicated to Congress on 14 November 1803, provides a concise summary; see *The Debates and Proceedings of the Congress of the United States*, 8th Cong., 2nd Sess. (Washington: Gales and Seaton, 1852), pp. 1498-1574, particularly 1550-1570. A comprehensive guide to civil regulations appears in Moreau L. Lislet and Henry Carleton, *The Laws of Las Siete Partidas Which are Still in Force in the State of Louisiana, 1820* (2 vols.; New Orleans: James M'Karaheer, printer, 1820). A reiteration of church policy appears in the pastoral letter of Bishop Luis Peñalver y Cárdenas of New Orleans, 21 December 1795, a translation of which can be found on Reel 2, *Records of The Diocese of Louisiana and the Floridas, 1576-1803*, University of Notre Dame Archives Microfilm Publication, 12 reels, 1967. An entertaining overview of moral laws and actions appears in Jack D. L. Holmes, "Do It! Don't Do It!: Spanish Laws on Sex and Marriage," *Louisiana's Legal Heritage*, Edward F. Haas, ed. (Pensacola: The Perdido Bay Press for the Louisiana State Museum, 1983), pp. 19-42. One reference cited by Holmes appears to be crucial to a study of the extent to which Anglo behavior was regulated in Spanish Louisiana and the Floridas: "Expediente sobre el modo de contraer válidamente sus matrimonios los anglo-americanos y demas Protestants domiciliados en la Luisiana y Floridas y instrucción sobre el particular," dated 1792. However, this decree has not been found in the cited repository and has not been otherwise located by the present writer.

5. Extracted from Alberta Rousseau Ducote, *Early Baptism Records, St. Paul the Apostle Catholic Church, 1796-1824, Avoyelles Parish* (Mansura, La.: St. Paul Church, 1980), p. 75. Godparents appear to have been accidentally omitted in the quoted entry, although they routinely appear in the other Ryan records.

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 75, 93.

7. For a closer analysis of research problems created by the racial "segregation" of records, see Elizabeth Shown Mills, "Race and the Southern Genealogist: Myths and Misconceptions, Resource and Opportunities," *Generations and Change: Genealogical Perspectives in Social History*, Robert M. Taylor, Jr. and Ralph J. Crandall, eds. (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1985), pp. 89-108.

8. Entries 2458-2459, *Libro Primero de Confirmaciones de Esta Parroquia de Sn. Luis de la Nueva Orleans*, Archives, Diocese of New Orleans, 1100 Chartres Street. An unindexed, partially-translated typescript by Alice Daly Forsythe, issued under the same title, was published in 1967 by the Genealogical Research Society of New Orleans.

9. *Ibid.*, no. 1701.

10. *Ibid.*, no. 1731.
11. *Ibid.*, nos. 2270, 501 and 527 respectively.
12. Dispensations from the Diocese of Louisiana and the Floridas are deposited at Notre Dame University, and have been microfilmed in unnumbered sequence but in chronological order in the previously cited Notre Dame series. For location of the cited dispensation, see documents of the appropriate date. For published and indexed transcripts of these dispensations, see Bouquard on the attached bibliography.
13. See Note 12 above.
14. Diocese of Louisiana and the Floridas, *op. cit.*, rolls 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, *passim*. The extant parish censuses for Natchitoches have been published in Elizabeth Shown Mills, *Natchitoches Colonials: Censuses, Military Rolls and Tax Lists, 1722-1803*, vol. 5, Cane River Creole Series (Chicago: Adams Press, 1980), pp. 115-24.
15. For the researcher interested in colonial Mobile, there exist nineteenth-century translations of a highly limited nature. In 1840, Joseph E. Caro was commissioned by the State of Alabama to index and translate those documents relating to French, English, and Spanish land claims. The originals of his English translations are housed in the Mobile County Courthouse. Only the K-Z portion of his index is extant, with microfilmed and transcribed copies of this fragment available at the Mobile Municipal Archives.
16. The Notarial Archives of New Orleans are currently located in the basement of the Civil Courts Building.
17. Noel C. Stevenson, *Genealogical Evidence: A Guide to the Standard of Proof Relating to Pedigrees, Ancestry, Heirship and Family History* (Laguna Hills, Cal.: Aegean Press, 1979), pp. 74, 160.
18. Elizabeth Shown Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729-1803: Abstracts of the Catholic Church Registers of the French and Spanish Post of St. Jean Baptiste des Natchitoches in Louisiana*, vol. 2, Cane River Creole Series (New Orleans: Polyanthos, 1977), no. 2873.
19. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1800-1826: Translated Abstracts of Register Number Five of the Catholic Church Parish of St. François des Natchitoches in Louisiana*, vol. 4, Cane River Creole Series (New Orleans: Polyanthos, 1980).
20. These marriage records have subsequently been published in Mills, *Natchitoches Church Marriages, 1818-1850: Translated Abstracts from the Registers of St. François des Natchitoches, Louisiana*, vol. 6, Cane River Creole Series, (Tuscaloosa, Ala.: Mills Historical Press, 1985). See particularly nos. 22 and 151.
21. Rev. Donald J. Hébert, *Southwest Louisiana Records, Vol. I, 1756-1810: Church and Civil Records of Settlers* (Rev. ed., Eunice, La.: Hebert Publishing Co., 1974), p. 152.
22. Folders 1793: Opelousas and 1796: Opelousas, Louisiana State Archives and Records Service, Baton Rouge.
23. Leg. 2360, AGI-PC. For a published translation see William S. Coker and G. Douglas Inglis, *The Spanish Censuses of Pensacola, 1784-1820: A Genealogical Guide to Spanish Pensacola*, vol. 3, Spanish Borderland Series (Pensacola: Perdido Bay Press, 1980), pp. 31-44.
24. Extracted from the translation made by Lawrence Kinnaird, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley, 1765-1794*, Pt. 1, *The Revolutionary Period, 1765-1781*, vol. 2 of *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1945* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1949), pp. 36-37.
25. *Honor and Fidelity: The Louisiana Infantry Regiment and the Louisiana Militia Companies, 1766-1821* (Birmingham, Ala.: Louisiana Collection Series, 1965), pp. 118-19.
26. For example, Churchill missed the 1780 and 1782 rosters for the post of San Juan Bautista de Natchitoches, which were located and published by Mills in *Natchitoches Colonials*, pp. 37-39, 42-44. Both of these rolls, as with those of Churchill, are accepted as proof of service by the Revolutionary-related lineage societies.

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