

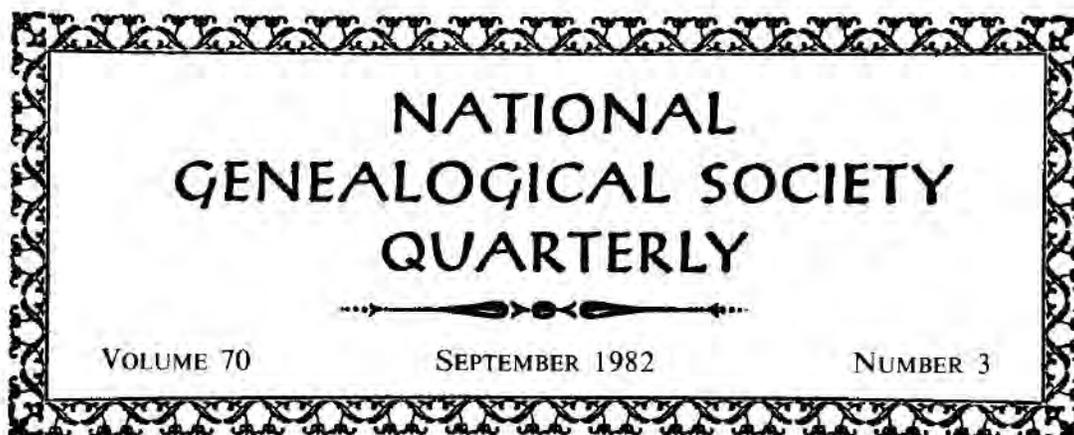
# NATIONAL GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY



March 1982

VOLUME 70

NUMBER 1



# NATIONAL GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY

VOLUME 70

SEPTEMBER 1982

NUMBER 3

## SLAVES AND MASTERS: THE LOUISIANA METOYERS

By ELIZABETH SHOWN MILLS, C.G., F.A.S.G.  
and GARY B. MILLS, Ph.D.\*

The pursuit of genealogical research by Afro-Americans is a fairly-recent innovation in the American social experience. From an academic standpoint, today's generation of black family historians are pioneers on the threshold of a challenge, an adventure through which traditional white genealogists have already passed. They are heirs to a rich legacy of family tradition, almost invariably undocumented. They face a world of resources whose limits appear to be boundless, but are frustratingly underdeveloped. The guides which exist for them are often crude and elementary, even contradictory. There also exists, to some extent, a self-defeating presumption that documentation of miscegenous, illegitimate births is not possible—as reflected in the recent assertion of a well-known black writer:<sup>1</sup>

*In those days, slaves were sold and shifted much like livestock, so records were sporadic. Nor did records reflect things like children born from unions between white masters and black women. So to expect these records to provide an accurate account is pure naivete. When it comes to black genealogy, well-kept oral history is without question the best source.*

Even more unfortunately, contemporary black genealogists, like the older generations of more naive white genealogists, often begin their pursuit with a handicap: a stereotyped, often one-dimensional concept of American historiography that may limit their potential success. Americans, black and white, are prone to draw too-sharp lines between certain races and classes of men. A white with Southern heritage traditionally expects his forebears to be slaveowners, while the American black expects his ancestors to be enslaved. The white American looks for his heritage among the records of free men, while the black is conditioned to believe his search must begin in slave records.

Both are likely to be surprised at the degree of variance which may emerge between reality and their stereotyped expectations.

The Louisiana family of Metoyer provides an intriguing example of the degree to which class, race, and economic lines were blurred in early America. The Metoyers were both slaves and masters, but they were not unique. Pioneer black historian Carter G. Woodson in 1924 identified 3,765 black Southerners who were, in the single year 1830, owners of other blacks.<sup>2</sup> On the eve of the Civil War (1860) the enumerators of the federal census tabulated almost half a million blacks who were already free—roughly one out of every eight blacks in America. Surprisingly, almost half this number were found in the Southern States.<sup>3</sup>

The quarter of a million or so free blacks found in the antebellum South in that one year ranged the economic spectrum from exceedingly rich to pitifully poor. It has been the experience of the present writers, in extensive research on some six thousand of these free blacks, that even the poorest left a surprising number of genealogical records behind them. The Louisiana Metoyers are singular only in the degree of their success. In the pre-Civil War South they were, as a family unit, apparently the wealthiest of all the free families of color in the nation. After the war, they endured generations of poverty, but preserved a rich store of oral history, some of which has been proven valid and some of which is easily disproven. They have been nationally conspicuous since 1975, the year that *Melrose*, the last of at least a dozen pillared, two-storied, "mansion houses" which they built on their plantations, was declared a National Historic Landmark.<sup>4</sup>

The sheer size of this family of *Creoles de couleur* and the thousands of records which they generated prior to the Civil War, preclude any possibility of presenting here a complete biographical and genealogical account of the family. The genealogy that follows is exceedingly limited in its scope, but it is offered with the hope that the resources and methodology evident in this account will assist others who attempt research on non-white families. For a more comprehensive study of the Metoyer family, it is suggested that the reader consult Gary B. Mills, *The Forgotten People: Cane River's Creoles of Color* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977) and the related, published, source material discussed in the footnotes of this present genealogical summary.

Since ethnic designations used in Louisiana are often misunderstood by other Americans, a brief review of basic terminology must preface this genealogy. The term *Creole* has no racial connotation. As traditionally used, it simply denotes any individual or thing native to Louisiana. A *Creole* may be French, German, or English, white, black, or any combination of these two races. Within this study, *Creoles* with African or Indian ancestry are identified by another traditional term: *Creole de couleur*. The ethnic term "Cajun," a corruption of "Acadian," is applicable to whites who descend from the displaced population of Isle d'Acadie; because none intermarried with the Metoyers in this period, the term does not appear in this paper.

In colonial and antebellum Louisiana certain other terms were used to denote varying degrees of ethnic mixture. Most commonly, these were:

Mulatto	1/2 black	1/2 white
Quadroon	1/4 black	3/4 white
Octoroon	1/8 black	7/8 white
Metis/Mestizo	1/2 Indian	1/2 white
Griffe	Indian/black—possibly with a degree of white	

The term mulatto is one that is particularly offensive to members of the subject family. It stems in French and Spanish from the same root word that produced the word mule; in a sense it connotes "hybrid." As late as 1927, learned professors of major American universities were still maintaining in scientific quarterlies that because hybrids could not reproduce, mulattoes were sterile when mated with other mulattoes.<sup>5</sup> As a family long known for its religious leadership, the subjects of this study have understandably resented the inference that the countless marriages formed between themselves would have been sterile had not their females been impregnated by men of a different race (*i.e.*, someone other than their husbands). As this study shows, each line of *Creoles de couleur* did begin with a union of two individuals of different races, but the bulk of the children born in this very prolific family were born of the legitimate marriages of one *Creole de couleur* with another. The authors readily admit the absurdity of some antiquated "scientific" notions and are appreciative of the family's sensibilities. Nevertheless, the English language contains no word other than mulatto which designates a person as one-half black and one-half white. Since genetic mixtures are crucial in a precise genealogical study, there is no alternative but to use this term in this paper.

**François<sup>1</sup> and Marie Françoise.** On 26 December 1735 a *brut négre* of unspecified origins was baptized in the Catholic Church of St. François at the military outpost of St. Jean Baptiste des Natchitoches in the French colony of Louisiana. According to the requirements of the Catholic faith, he was given at baptism the name of a saint, and, according to the custom of this society, he was named by and for his godfather, the post surgeon, François Goudeau.<sup>6</sup>

The new Christian, François, was one of a number of slaves belonging to the post commandant, Chevalier Louis Juchereau de St. Denis. Within two weeks a wife was found for him among the single black females in that household, and on 8 January 1736 the couple were married in accordance with the laws of both church and province.<sup>7</sup> Even less is known about the origins of François' wife, Marie Françoise. The military outpost where they are found was less than eighteen years old, and a mere handful of civil and ecclesiastical records exist locally for those first years. The limited number of blacks existing there, particularly children, suggests that Marie Françoise, like her husband, was brought to the region as an adult, possibly through the French slave traffic with Africa or, equally possibly, through St. Denis' extensive trade with Mexico.

The only clues existing to the origins of one or the other of this African couple are the names which four of their children bore. Although Catholic custom required all baptized Christians to bear a saint's name, popular custom

among the French permitted a variety of nicknames, or *dits* as the French called them. The custom extended to the slave population as well, and a number of them are identified in official records by the African name which French masters permitted them to retain. Four of the children born to François and Marie Françoise appear in colonial records under *dits* that are apparently African in origins: *Dgimby* (var. *Jinby*); *Choera* (var. *Kiokera* and *Quioquirá*); *Yandon* (var. *Yandose*) and *Coincoin* (var. *Coinquan*, *Quoinquin*, and *Kuen Kuoin*).<sup>8</sup> One specialist in African linguistics, Dr. Jan Vansina, has attributed these names (corrupted though they are by French and Spanish spellings) to the Ewe linguistic group of the Gold Coast/Dahomey region of Africa. The most conclusive clue, Dr. Vansina felt, was the name *Coincoin* (phoenetically pronounced *Ko-kwě*), a name given to all second-born daughters by those who spoke the Glidzi dialect of the Ewe language, a dialect which in that era was spoken in the region known now as Togo. It is important to note that when Dr. Vansina reached this conclusion in 1973, he was not aware that the Louisiana *Coincoin* was, indeed, the second daughter born to the marriage of her parents.<sup>9</sup>

The *Code Noir* (Black Laws) in effect in Colonial Louisiana did not permit the separation by sale of a husband and wife or of a child under fourteen from its mother. Consequently, the family of François and Marie Françoise remained a stable unit until 18 April 1758 when the couple died together—victims, apparently, of the same fatal disease that had claimed their mistress three days before.<sup>10</sup> The completed family of these African progenitors consisted of:

1. i. Marie Gertrude<sup>2</sup> dite *Dgimby*, bapt. 18 Nov. 1736. When the St. Denis estate was inventoried in 1758, the 22-year-old Gertrude was identified as the mother of a small son, François. On 25 April 1758 she and her son were drawn by lot by a St. Denis son-in-law, the Commandant César de Blanc. Possibly she is the same De Blanc slave who was married under the name "Marie," on 10 June of that year, to an unidentified black of the de Blanc household. The succession (probate) record of De Blanc, who died 1763, has not been found, and the disposition of his slave property is unknown. In 1833 there was buried at Natchitoches an individual named Marie Gertrude, described as a "free Negress, aged about 115." Parish records reveal the existence, during the previous century, of only two black females with this name, the Marie Gertrude of this study and another born two years later into the slave household of Jean Baptiste Derbanne. Derbanne subsequently migrated into Spanish Texas and all trace of his slave child by this name is lost. It might be speculated, therefore, that the Marie Gertrude who died in 1833, "aged about 115" was Marie Gertrude dite *Dgimby*. Death records of this society normally exaggerated the ages of the elderly.<sup>11</sup>
2. ii. François dit *Choera*, b. ca. 1738, was inherited in 1758 by the Chevalier Louis Antoine Juchereau de St. Denis. Like most Natchitoches slaves who matured after the 1750s, *Choera* did not marry in the church, and no children are known to have been fathered by him. François' master, St. Denis, died in Feb. 1778. Shortly before his death he attempted to draft a will manumitting François and another slave, Athanase, then leaving the bulk of his estate to his wife, by whom he had no children. The post commandant, Athanase Christophe Fortunat Manguet de Mézières, refused to notarize the will on grounds that the childless St. Denis, under colonial law, was obligated to leave the bulk of his estate to the closest relatives in the family of his birth. The commandant's interests were admittedly prejudiced, since he was the widower of St. Denis' sister, by whom he had a child that stood to

inherit from her uncle's estate. Thwarted in his attempt to draft a will, St. Denis then beseeched the parish curate, Padre Luis de Quintanilla, to see that his wishes were fulfilled. Due to Quintanilla's subsequent efforts, the St. Denis estate remained in litigation for a number of years, and its final outcome is not revealed in extant records. Whether François achieved manumission is not known. His death is not recorded among extant burial records and he is not enumerated as part of the slave household left by the widow St. Denis at the time of her death in 1803. The last records found on François *dit* Choera are dated 1 July 1787 and 17 Feb. 1790, at which times he served as godparents to black infants owned by Jacques La Case and Widow Louis Buard, two families with which François' family had extensive ties.<sup>12</sup>

3. iii. Jean Baptiste, b. *ca.* 1740; inherited 1758 by Pierre Antoine Juchereau de St. Denis. Parish records suggest that this younger St. Denis son, who never married, may have been physically or mentally afflicted, and his property was managed (or taken over) by his siblings. Jean Baptiste appears last on record 18 Jan. 1777, when he witnessed a marriage of two slaves of Sieur Jean Baptiste La Berry. Like his brother François, Jean Baptiste did not marry legally and left no known issue.<sup>13</sup>
- + 4. iv. Marie Thérèse *dite* Coincoin, bapt. 24 Aug. 1742.<sup>14</sup>
5. v. Barnabé, b. 9 Sept. 1744 and baptized two days later by the parish priest for whom he was named; buried in the cemetery of the parish on 20 Sept. 1748.<sup>15</sup>
6. vi. Marie Jeanne "Jeanneton," bapt. 25 June 1746, godchild of Nicolas Paul Bourdelle and Mlle. Jeanne Le Roy (who would subsequently marry the noble Lieutenant Louis Mathias Le Court de Prelle and produce offspring that would figure prominently in the genealogy of this family). At the April 1758 partition of the St. Denis slaves, Marie Jeanne was drawn by a St. Denis son-in-law, the previously mentioned de Mézières, in whose household she thereafter bore several children of pure-black parentage, prior to her marriage on 26 April 1777 to the 43-year old Negro Laurent. At the death of Commandant de Mézières in 1779, she and her husband and children were sold together to a nearby planter, Joseph Dupré. When Dupré also died, three years later, the family was again inventoried together with the notation that Marie Jeanne and Laurent were legitimately married before the church and should not be separated. The couple next appears on record in January 1796 when a fellow slave belonging to their latest owner, Louis Fontenot, was charged with assaulting their overseer. Together with the accused "English Negro" Charles, Marie Jeanne and Laurent were engaged in clearing timber on new ground when the overseer judged Charles' work to be too lackadaisical and approached him with a raised whip. After two or three quick lashes the overseer himself was felled when Charles' ax split open his side. According to testimony, "the negro Laurent and his wife the negress Marie Jeanne were the first to give the overseer aid and all the others who were clearing the field did likewise." When the accused expressed repentance, saying that his ax slipped, and when the overseer agreed that "he did not believe the man held a particular animosity against him," Charles was released; Laurent and Marie Jeanne were not called to testify also, as was more commonly the case. No further record has been found of the couple.<sup>16</sup>
7. vii. Marie Louise, b. *ca.* 1747. She is shown as a child of François and Marie Françoise on the 1756 inventory of the St. Denis slave property, where she is listed under the Christian name "Marie Louise." She does not appear by this name on a 1756 memo itemizing St. Denis slaves, but may be the individual appearing under the *dite* "Suisse." She is not found on the 1758 partition of slave property. It is possible, indeed probable, that she died in this period. The burial records of the parish are seriously incomplete for both blacks and whites.<sup>17</sup>
8. viii. Marguerite *dite* Yandose, b. *ca.* 1749. She is inventoried on the Sept. 1756 list of St. Denis slaves as a child of François and Marie Françoise; however, her baptismal registration has not been found and she is not included in the 1758 partition of slaves. It appears from a study of all documents in this succession that some slaves were assigned to heirs in 1756, with the bulk of the division occurring when the

Widow St. Denis died two years later. On 3 Jan. 1768 Marguerite reappears in the parish registers as mother of a newborn infant, at which time she is identified as a slave of Marie des Neiges Juchereau de St. Denis, wife of Antonio Manuel de Soto y Bermudez; it is further stated that Mme. de Soto's ownership of the slave "stems from her patrimony." On 31 January, Mme. de Soto sold the mulatto infant, Théodore Antoine, to his father, a young white bachelor, reserve-officer and Indian-trader of prominent family named Antoine Fazende, who was to manumit him. The child was left in the care of his mother. On 11 December of that year, Fazende died suddenly, without executing the manumission, and the young mulatto child was inherited by Fazende's sister, who had become the second wife of de Mézières. She, too, left the child with his mother and the mother's owners, the De Sotos. In 1780, after the death of De Mézières and his wife, and after the De Sotos had moved southward to the post of Opelousas, Fazende heirs initiated a lawsuit against Mme. de Soto to recover the child as their property. For at least two years, the affair remained in litigation, with Mme. de Soto appealing the case to Governor Esteban Miró in an effort to preserve the boy's freedom. In the last document of record, dated 4 April 1783, Mme. de Soto was refusing yet again to obey the order of the Opelousas commandant which demanded that she relinquish the slave to his "rightful owners." The 1785 and 1788 censuses of Opelousas, however, show no free man of color in the De Soto home. No other children are known to have been born of Marguerite. She apparently had no infants under age 14 when, on 14 January 1782, she was conveyed to the De Soto's daughter, Marie Damasainte, upon her marriage to the *Commissioner des Magazine d'artillerie* of Pensacola, in Spanish West Florida, Joachim de Ortega. Marguerite appears, still without child, on the 20 June 1784 census of Pensacola, which is the last record of her found to date.<sup>18</sup>

9. ix. Bonaventure, bapt. 8 April 1751, at which time De Mézières and his daughter Marie Felicité served as godparents. In the 1758 partition of St. Denis slaves, Bonaventure fell to the De Mézières. No other record of him has been found. He was never sold at the post and does not appear in the 1779 succession inventory of the commandant. Apparently, he died in the interval.<sup>19</sup>
10. x. Anne Hyacinthe, bapt. 13 Sept. 1753, at which time she became the godchild of Captain Louis César de Bormé and Mlle. Marie Josephe Henriette Corantine (the latter would subsequently marry the post surgeon, Jean Baptiste Prudhomme, and her family would be staunch friends of the Metoyers for the next century). In 1758, Hyacinthe fell by lot to Louis Antoine de la Chaise, as guardian of the three children born of his marriage to the late Marie Rose Juchereau de St. Denis. De la Chaise, by this time, had taken a second wife, Mlle. Marguerite d'Arensbourg, daughter of the commandant of the post of St. Charles des Allemands, and the De la Chaises soon moved southward to be near her family. Hyacinthe was apparently taken from Natchitoches at that time.<sup>20</sup>
11. xi. Françoise. At the division of the St. Denis slaves on 25 April 1758, the "eight day old orphan" was drawn by the youngest St. Denis daughter, Mme. de Soto. There has been found no further trace of the child. Possibly she died. In 1772, Mme. de Soto executed a sale of three slaves, including one woman named Françoise who was described as a 20-year-old mulatto; neither the age nor the racial composition fits the "orphan" of 1758, and there has been found no other trace of a slave by this name, born in this period, in the De Soto household.<sup>21</sup>

4. **Marie Thérèse dite Coincoin**,<sup>2</sup> daughter of François and Marie Françoise, was baptized at the Natchitoches Post on 24 August 1742. At this time she became the godchild of two members of the St. Denis family—the *subdélégué* de la Chaise and the eight-year-old Marie des Neiges, the youngest daughter of St. Denis, who would become Mme. de Soto. On this day, the first link was forged in a chain of events that would irrevocably alter Coincoin's future and that of her progeny.<sup>22</sup>

At the division of the St. Denis slaves in 1758, the adolescent Coincoin was inherited by the young Chevalier de St. Denis, and for the next several years little is known of her life. Her master was still a bachelor, a military officer, and an Indian trader. When his varied activities brought him back to the post, he shared a home with his younger and apparently afflicted brother, Pierre Antoine. Censuses and notarial records of that era indicate that their adult slaves operated for them a sizable ranch and tobacco farm.<sup>23</sup> Given the fact that the bulk of their slaves were male and the tradition that Coincoin was a skilled nurse, it is more probable that she performed domestic rather than agricultural services. Five children were born to her in this period, of an unknown father. The records indicate only that the children were not of mixed Negro-white parentage.<sup>24</sup>

Between 1761 and 1766, there occurred the second in the chain of events that would crucially change Coincoin's life. For unknown reasons, the Chevalier de St. Denis gave, sold, or traded Coincoin and her children to his youngest sister, Madame de Soto. The conveyance was apparently made by private act. The document is neither on file nor listed in the index to the colonial archives.

Also in this interval a third event occurred that was of import to Coincoin's destiny. There arrived at the post a young French merchant, a native of La Rochelle, **Claude Thomas Pierre Metoyer**. In 1766, apparently, he rented Coincoin from Mme. de Soto, and the slave moved into the home he shared with his bachelor friend, Étienne Pavie. Ostensibly, she was to be their housekeeper; in actuality, she became Metoyer's concubine. A deep and enduring relationship developed. In the twenty years that followed, Coincoin bore ten children to this man whom she could not marry under the anti-miscegenation marital codes of colonial Louisiana. Their open relationship was challenged by a scandalized church, and both parties were charged with criminal behavior by the provincial government—as was Coincoin's mistress-godmother who condoned and aided the relationship. Evidence suggests that Coincoin was sentenced to "ride the wooden horse" in public shame, and that she suffered a lashing for the "crime" of licentiousness. Her white paramour, who denied all allegations, was ordered only "to abandon her." The ultimate penalty of the law—the confiscation of her and her children and their sale at New Orleans for the benefit of the provincial hospital—was thwarted when Metoyer bought Coincoin and their offspring and gave Coincoin her freedom. Their half-French, slave-born children were not manumitted by their father, however, until they reached adulthood.<sup>25</sup>

Ultimately, the unsanctioned alliance ended of its own accord, and Metoyer took a legal wife by whom he raised a second family. Even after this marriage, he remained close to Coincoin and their children, and he provided for them in the will that he drew up after his marriage, as well as in the one that was secretly drafted during the course of their relationship. In a poignant reflection upon the social duplicity of their era, it is noted that Metoyer at no time acknowledged his relationship with Coincoin or his paternity of the half-French, half-African children who took his name. Indeed, in his first will he stated tersely that he was a bachelor and therefore had no children—but then he proceeded to devote the remainder of his testament to provisions for the

“Negress Coincoin” and “her mulatto children.” Documentary confirmation of his obvious paternity did not occur until almost a century later, at which time a white granddaughter—one of the most prominent matrons of the region—testified under oath that her grandfather did sire the “colored” children who used his name.<sup>26</sup>

As a freedwoman, Coincoin proved to be a worthy member of society. She was an industrious and astute businesswoman and a public-minded citizen; but, more importantly, she was a mother who devoted the remainder of her life to the betterment of her progeny. With her first savings she purchased the freedom of her now-grown black children whose owners were cooperative. With her profits, thereafter, she bought and manumitted more distant kin. But her remaining profits were invested in a manner that she knew would earn her offspring the best returns, the surest stability, and the most respect from the world at large—that is, land and slaves.<sup>27</sup>

When Coincoin purchased her first slave woman in the 1790s, she thereby became the first black slaveowner at the post of Natchitoches, but she certainly was not the first in Louisiana or the first in any of the New World colonies. At the time of her death some twenty years later, she was one of the wealthiest residents—of any race—in the new and rich American “county” of Natchitoches. Yet, when her fortune was divided among her numerous heirs, individual shares were small.<sup>28</sup> Legend holds that she left a stupendous fortune which enabled her children to live in grand style for the rest of the antebellum era. In truth, her greatest legacy to them was her example of determination, industriousness, concern for the community, and devotion to one’s family. The children who followed her examples made equally noteworthy contributions to the parish and state.

The five black children born to Coincoin before her Metoyer alliance were:

12. i. Marie Louise, bapt. 8 Sept. 1759 as a slave of Chevalier de St. Denis. With her mother, she was conveyed to Madame de Soto, who took her to live in the South Louisiana post of Opelousas in 1780. On 1 Oct. 1784, Mme. de Soto sold Marie Louise, together with a newly-acquired plantation, to Antoine Boisdoré; but the terms of the sale were not met, and in the following year Mme. de Soto took the purchaser to court to regain possession of the slave. Shortly thereafter, the eldest De Soto son returned to Natchitoches, together with Marie Louise, whom he sold to a De Soto in-law, Pierre Dolet. In the fall of 1786, the newly-freed Coincoin persuaded Dolet to let her buy her daughter on credit. Marie Louise, at this time, was 27 years old and crippled from a gunshot accident.<sup>29</sup>
13. ii. Thérèse, bapt. into the St. Denis household on 24 Sept. 1761. It is curious to note that Coincoin, as a second-born daughter, was given an African name traditionally reserved for second-born daughters; when she became a mother she gave her Christian name to her second-born daughter, but there is no evidence that the accompanying African name was also bestowed upon the child.

Thérèse also became the property of Mme. de Soto and likewise was taken to Opelousas. In 1790, when Coincoin completed the payments to Dolet for her first-born, she journeyed southward to Opelousas to negotiate with her old mistress and godmother for the purchase of Thérèse and Thérèse’s young son. Coincoin had only fifty *piastres* to offer for the pair of slaves whose market value was many times that amount. Meanwhile, Mme. de Soto had become an invalid, entirely dependent “for everything” upon her young nurse, whom Coincoin was determined to buy. The aging freedwoman and her bedridden former mistress compromised. Thérèse

would be manumitted upon Mme. de Soto's death. In the interim, Coincoin advanced her downpayment and left four cows with Thérèse, so that her daughter (with Mme. de Soto's permission) could sell milk and butter in her neighborhood and help raise the balance due. Although Mme. de Soto agreed to part with her pair of slaves at the reduced price of only 700 *piastres*, the debt still had not been totally cleared when the Frenchwoman died in 1797. Young Thérèse and her son were nevertheless released by the de Soto heirs. The pair remained in the Opelousas area, where they have been found as late as 1820.<sup>30</sup>

14. iii. Françoise, the third black daughter of Coincoin, was bapt. on 8 July 1763 by a visiting pastor from the nearby Spanish post of Los Adaes, Fr. Ygnacio Francisco Laba, during a period in which the French outpost was without a religious leader. Françoise also was conveyed to Mme. de Soto by the Chevalier de St. Denis, but her fate was far different from that of her two older sisters.<sup>31</sup>

In 1769, when Spanish officials arrived to assume control of the previously French post of Natchitoches, an order was issued for the arrest of Señor de Soto, who had defected from Spanish Texas some years before. De Soto was to spend the next ten years in prison in Mexico City. Left without support for herself and their numerous children, his free-spending and free-spirited wife spent much of that decade in court, testing the merit of the traditional laws which restricted her activities as well as the mettle of a number of her creditors. To quiet those whom she owed, she was forced in late winter 1772 to sell four slaves. One of these was Coincoin's daughter Françoise, then "seven or eight" years old. Despite the provision of the *Code Noir* which forbade the sale of a child under fourteen from its mother, no challenge was made to the sale—probably because the post commandant was the seller's brother-in-law. The creditor who acquired the child immediately resold her to an area planter, Jean Baptiste Dupré, whose brother Joseph soon after purchased Coincoin's sister Jeanneton.<sup>32</sup>

After Dupré's death in 1781, his widow remarried to a neighboring planter and sold her inherited slaves to that new husband, Louis Monet. Françoise and her numerous children, some black and some of mixed ancestry, were to remain slaves of this family for generations to come. One daughter, the half-French Marie Louise (who used the surname of Mme. Monet's birth-family, Le Comte), bore a son to Sieur Monet shortly before his death. When that child reached adulthood, he was emancipated by Monet's forgiving widow, who was apparently his great-aunt as well. As a free man of color, this young Louis Monet (te) became a respected citizen in the lower portion of Natchitoches Parish, and his offspring intermarried with Metoyer cousins.<sup>33</sup>

15. iv. Nicolas Chiquito, b. ca 1764–65 to Coincoin in a period for which no baptismal records are extant. In Nov. 1772, his heavily-indebted mistress purchased a tract of land, with a cabin, kitchen, and outbuildings, at the nearby Spanish post of Los Adaes, with the apparent intention of leaving Natchitoches. In payment to the seller, Antonio Gil y Barbo, she conveyed to him the title to "one small *negrillon* aged seven" who was erroneously identified in that document as son of "her slave Gertrude," rather than that of Coincoin, Gertrude's sister.<sup>34</sup>

When the post of Los Adaes was abandoned the following year, its settlers, under the leadership of Gil y Barbo, relocated first at San Antonio, then at the new settlement of Bucareli, before eventually establishing themselves in the vicinity of the Nacogdoches Indians of northeast Texas. It was in the new villa of Nacogdoches that Nicolas Chiquito's freedom was purchased from Gil y Barbo in 1793 by his half-French brother, Nicolas Augustin Metoyer, acting on behalf of their mother Coincoin. Subsequent censuses of Nacogdoches reveal that Nicolas Chiquito remained there for several more years, perhaps working to buy the freedom of his wife.<sup>35</sup>

In 1799, Nicolas returned to the post of Natchitoches with his new family and settled on a Spanish land grant of 640 acres at a spot called *Boquet de cannes* on the Attaho River (present Little River). When Louisiana was sold to the United States

in 1803, all preemptive landowners were required to submit proofs of title. In support of his title, in Sept. 1813, Nicolas offered the testimony of a white friend and neighbor who swore that he had inhabited and cultivated the land for fourteen years and that he was the head of a family. His title was confirmed, and in 1818 he sold the tract to the more prosperous half-brother who had bought his freedom. In the 1830s, both he and his land were to figure in an intriguing lawsuit filed against Augustin Metoyer, by a white neighbor who unsuccessfully attempted to claim the property. The last record which exists on Nicolas is dated 1 Nov. 1838, at which time he reaffirmed his sale of the property to his brother Augustin. Other witnesses at that time described Nicolas as a very black man "appearing to be a real African." Although no subsequent records identify him by name, it is probable that he was the individual buried in semi-anonymity at Cloutierville on 12 Apr. 1850, whose burial registration reads only "... the body of [blank], brother of Augustin Metoyer, who died yesterday, aged 85 years, after having received the sacraments."<sup>36</sup>

16. v. Jean Joseph, b. 20 Feb. 1766, and bapt. rather tardily the following 29 March, with his uncle Jean Baptiste and his young sister Marie Louise serving as godparents. The selection of his *parrain* and *marraine* marked a radical change in the godparental concept at Natchitoches. Never before at this post had black slaves been allowed to serve as spiritual surrogate-parents to infants. Given the character of Jean Joseph's mistress, Mme. de Soto, it is fitting that she should have been the individual to initiate the change in attitude toward blacks.

Jean Joseph was still a nursing infant when Coincoin left the De Soto household to live with Metoyer. While his older siblings remained with the De Sotos, Jean Joseph followed his mother; and in 1776, when Metoyer purchased from Mme. De Soto, the six children Coincoin had by that time borne him, he also purchased Jean Joseph. There is no further record of this son past that date. Perhaps it was he, rather than Nicolas Chiquito, who was anonymously buried in 1850; the proximity of their ages suggests the possibility; but the weight of the evidence accumulated to date seems to suggest that Jean Joseph did not survive to adulthood or else did not remain at Natchitoches.<sup>37</sup>

#### The ten Franco-African children born of the union of Coincoin and Pierre Metoyer were:

- + 17. i. Nicolas Augustin Metoyer, b. 22 Jan. 1768.<sup>38</sup>
- + 18. ii. Marie Susanne Metoyer, twin of Augustin.<sup>39</sup>
- + 19. iii. Louis Metoyer, b. ca. 1770 when no priest was at the post to perform and record baptisms. It is probable that his baptismal was performed by a visiting pastor from Los Adaes and that the record was entered into the now-missing church records of that Spanish post.<sup>40</sup>
- + 20. iv. Pierre Metoyer, b. ca. 1772 and bapt. in that same period.
- + 21. v. Dominique Metoyer, b. ca. 1774; it is probable that he, too, was bapt. by a Spanish missionary.
- 22. vi. Marie Eulalie Metoyer, b. 15 Jan. 1776 and bapt. the following 28 Jan. by the newly-arrived post curate, who registered her baptism under the epithet "father unknown," then proceeded to file his charges against the man he "knew" to be responsible. Eulalie is mentioned in her father's will of February 1783, but not in his will of 27 April 1801. Apparently she died in the interim.<sup>41</sup>
- + 23. vii. Antoine Joseph Metoyer, b. 26 Jan. 1778.<sup>42</sup>
- 24. viii. Marie Françoise Rosalie Metoyer, b. 9 Dec. 1780, apparently died before 1783 because she is not mentioned in her father's will.<sup>43</sup>
- 25. ix. Pierre Toussaint Metoyer, the only son of Coincoin and Pierre who did not marry, was apparently the victim of unrequited love. Among the acquaintances of the Metoyers *de couleur* was a young quadroon slave named Marie Henriette Dorothée

Cloutier, who had been born *ca.* Christmas 1796 to the still-enslaved mulattress Dorothée Monet (the daughter of the Dupré's Guinea negress Marguerite, by neighboring planter Louis Monet). Henriette's father, parish records suggest, was another neighboring planter (and a Monet-Dupré in-law), Sieur Alexis Cloutier, who would later become the distinguished founder of the town of Cloutierville and of the church of St. Jean Baptiste. In the late 1790s, Dorothée Monet was manumitted by her father, but her own daughter Henriette remained the property of Monet's widow, Marie Louise Le Comte Dupré. In 1810, Henriette was an attractive, fifteen-year-old, and the bachelor Toussaint Metoyer, twelve years her senior, arranged to purchase her from the Widow Monet (who was, by then, Mrs. James Porter). After making his downpayment—and his proposal of marriage, apparently—Toussaint was rejected and retaliated by returning Henriette to her former mistress!

The following year, 1811, the re-enslaved Henriette was bought and manumitted by her own mother. In 1815, Henriette fell in love with Toussaint's older brother, Pierre, and eventually married him. In 1833, Pierre died, and some years later the widowed Henriette remarried—but not to Toussaint. Her second husband was an *homme de couleur libre* named Emile Colson. The twice-spurned Toussaint apparently had no bitterness in his heart, for there is on record a donation of a slave made by him to Henriette "in consideration of the love and affection that he entertained for [her]." Toussaint died, still unmarried, on 17 Feb. 1863. Family tradition holds that he did not remain celibate, but the names of his alleged offspring are not recalled.<sup>44</sup>

+ 26. x. François Metoyer, b. 26 Sept. 1784.<sup>45</sup>

17. **Nicolas Augustin<sup>3</sup> Metoyer**, was born into slavery on 22 January 1768 at the colonial Louisiana outpost of St. Jean Baptiste des Natchitoches. Half-African and half-French, Augustin and his twin sister, Marie Susanne, were the first two of the ten children born to the concubinage of Marie Thérèse dite Coincoin (a slave of the politically and socially prominent Marie des Neiges Juchereau de St. Denis, wife of Antonio Manuel de Soto y Bermudez) and the young French merchant-*émigré*, Claude Thomas Pierre Metoyer.

At his baptism on the following 1 February, the young slave child's ties to the colonial elite were further strengthened with the selection of his godparents. The friend whom his father chose to serve as the infant's *parrain* was Nicolas Maraffret Layssard, son of the commandant of the neighboring post of Rapides and the nephew of the commandant of the Natchitoches post, Athanase de Mézières (who was himself a brother-in-law of the infant's mistress, Mme. de Soto). Ironically, the *marraine* chosen for young Augustin was Marie Françoise Buard, whose sister Thérèse would become Metoyer's legitimate wife, after his affair with Coincoin had ended.<sup>46</sup>

Born illegitimate and enslaved, Augustin was destined to become a religious, political, and economic leader of the parish of Natchitoches during the American antebellum regime. He was scarcely nine years old when, still a slave, he stood as the sponsor at baptism for a young slave-born cousin and namesake (a son of his aunt Jeanneton in the de Mézières household); and before his death almost eighty years later, Augustin would become the spiritual father to more infants than any other Christian of any color in the civil parish of Natchitoches.<sup>47</sup>

On 31 March 1776, the elder Metoyer purchased Augustin and the other five children whom he had fathered; but it was not until Augustin's impending

marriage, sixteen years later, that his father manumitted him—without acknowledging his paternity.<sup>48</sup> Three weeks later, Augustin was married in the parish church by Père Jean Delvaux to a young girl of similarly-mixed origins, **Marie Agnes Poissot**. Unlike Augustin, his bride had been a free woman for years. She had been born into the household of the planter Pierre Derbanne. When she was six, a bachelor neighbor, Athanaze Poissot, and his father, Lieutenant Remy Poissot, arranged a trade with Derbanne whereby a slave child belonging to Athanase's father was exchanged for young Agnes, whom they immediately emancipated. The child's black mother, Françoise, remained in bondage as the Derbanne cook. Although the actual records do not identify Agnes' father by name, evidence suggests that he was the younger Poissot—but that presumed fact was to cause Agnes as much grief as advantage. When Athanase subsequently married a daughter of Mme. de Soto, the young free child suffered much abuse from the apparently resentful Mme. Athanase—so much, in fact, that Agnes eventually filed criminal charges against Athanase's wife.<sup>49</sup>



SIEUR NICOLAS AUGUSTIN METOYER, F.M.C.  
(1768-1856)

At the time of Augustin's marriage, his father was already the wealthiest merchant-planter and slaveowner in the parish, yet there is no evidence that Augustin asked for or received any financial aid from his father. A skilled blacksmith and astute businessman with a natural bent for agriculture, he petitioned the Spanish Crown for a grant of land in 1795 and received 395 acres of uncleared cane brakes in a sparsely populated region known as Isle Brevelle.<sup>50</sup>

In the years that followed, Augustin's brothers came to the Isle as well. Clearing their cane brakes, they put the land to crop, first in tobacco, then in cotton. The profits they invested in slave labor to help them clear more land. With each new harvest, then, they extended their plantations by buying out the interests of neighbors who had received grants but had never bothered to develop them. Eventually the length of the Isle—some twenty miles—was dominated by Augustin's "people." At their peak prosperity in the mid-1800s, the combined holdings of the Metoyers *de couleur* exceeded 18,000 acres and 500 slaves.<sup>51</sup>

As each of Augustin's numerous children grew to maturity and married, they received land, slaves, cash, or all three as a wedding present. Upon the death of Agnes in 1839, the aging Augustin divided his remaining estate among all his children, and that "remainder" amounted to \$140,425.35½, a truly stupendous sum in an era of world-wide financial depression that drove thousands to suicide. The relative value of his inventoried property, *i.e.*, \$2,000 for a two-story, white-columned plantation manor; \$80 for fifteen place settings of sterling silver flatware, all emphasize the significance of the wealth this ex-slave amassed.<sup>52</sup>

Augustin's ownership of slaves reflected the ideals and customs of his era, not an innate callousness toward humanity. Throughout his life he bought and freed a number of others, as his mother had done before him. He was the founder of the Church (and later Parish) of St. Augustine, to which history has attributed many "firsts." This was the first known church in the United States built solely by nonwhites for their own use, yet its doors were always open to the white neighbors who had no church at that time, and for the next several decades prominent planters worshipped regularly there, where they literally took a back seat to the old ex-slave and his family. In 1856, when the church parish of St. Augustin was created and a mission was established on Old River to serve an all-white congregation, St. Augustine became the only known nonwhite church in the states to have authority over a mission for whites.<sup>53</sup>

On 19 December 1856, this aged freedman died at his home on Isle Brevelle, after a life of exceptional length and exceptional service to his fellow man. The social, cultural, economic and political contributions of this illiterate, illegitimate ex-slave earned for him the respect of all his fellow men and a lasting place in both the legends and the documented history of northwest Louisiana. His funeral mass was one of the most notable on record, co-celebrated by the bishop and all pastors in the civil parish, and attended by the Sisters of the Holy Cross, who staffed the convent that Augustin had established on the Isle for the education of the young ladies of his extended family. Tradition also holds that there was read at that funeral mass a letter of congratulations upon

the establishment of his new parish, received posthumously by Augustin, and penned by the Sovereign Pontiff Pius IX.<sup>54</sup>

The children born to Nicolas Augustin Metoyer and his wife Marie Agnes Poissot were:

27. i. Marie Modeste<sup>4</sup> Metoyer, bapt. 22 Apr. 1793 at 6 months; died soon after.<sup>55</sup>
28. ii. Jean Baptiste Augustin Metoyer, bapt. 30 Aug. 1795; m. 1816 to his first-cousin, the quadroon Marie Susanne Anty (daughter of Susanne Metoyer).<sup>56</sup>
29. iii. Marie Louise Metoyer, bapt. 2 Apr. 1797; m. 1816 to her first cousin Jean Baptiste Florentin Conant (son of Susanne Metoyer); d. 3 July 1837.<sup>57</sup>
30. iv. Jean Baptiste Maxille Metoyer, b. 7 Sept. 1798; m. Sept. 1817 to his cousin Marie Aspasia Anty (daughter of Susanne Metoyer); drowned 7 Oct. 1830.<sup>58</sup>
31. v. Auguste Augustin Metoyer, b. 6 Apr. 1800; m. 6 Jan. 1824 to his cousin Marie Thérèse Carmelite Anty (daughter of Susanne Metoyer); d. 1862.<sup>59</sup>
32. vi. Marie Pompose Metoyer, b. 19 Sept. 1802; m. 3 Nov. 1818 Charles Nerestan Rocques, a quadroon of New Orleans; d. 7 Aug. 1845.<sup>60</sup>
33. vii. Marie Susanne "Susette" Metoyer, b. 6 Feb. 1806; married 26 July 1820 to Elisée Rocques (brother of Charles Nerestan); married secondly, 2 July 1831, Louis Morin, an *homme de couleur libre* also of New Orleans. She died Feb. 1872.<sup>61</sup>
34. viii. Joseph Augustin Metoyer, b. ca. 1807-8; married 21 Jan. 1830 to a quadroon cousin, Marie Antoinée Coindet (daughter of Marie Rose Metoyer).<sup>62</sup>
35. ix. François Gassion Metoyer, b. ca. 1809. He married: (1) 25 Apr. 1832, to the quadroon Flavie de Mézières; (2) 4 July 1836 to his quadroon cousin, Rosine Carles (daughter of Marie Rose Metoyer); and (3) 30 Nov. 1847, to yet another cousin, Perine Metoyer, who was the granddaughter of both Pierre Metoyer II and of Antoine Joseph Metoyer.<sup>63</sup>

18. **Marie Susanne<sup>3</sup> Metoyer**, the twin sister of Nicolas Augustin, was also born to Coincoin on 22 January 1768, at which time she was given the Christian name of her father's stepmother in France, Susanne Vinault. This daughter of Coincoin and Claude Thomas Pierre Metoyer grew to maturity in a period in which there were no other free men of color along the Natchitoches frontier from whom she could have chosen a spouse. The life pattern that she was to follow well illustrates the point made by James Hugo Johnston in his attempt to define the characteristics of "aristocratic" families of color: "When relations of affection existed between the white father and his mulatto children," Johnston opined, "such fathers were often inclined to consider their offspring not as Negroes but as persons of their blood, and there is evidence that such parents taught their children to consider themselves as better or superior to the members of the servile race."<sup>64</sup>

Evidence suggests this was the situation between Pierre Metoyer and his half-white daughter Susanne. While his sons wed legally to free women of color, Pierre encouraged Susanne to form an alliance with his white friend, even though such an alliance was unsanctioned by law and church. In 1793 Susanne became the *placée* of **Dr. Joseph Conant**, by whom she bore one child before he abandoned her and the frontier. Conant's replacement in Susanne's life, a twice-widowed but still young Creole planter named **Jean Baptiste Anty**, proved to be a far more faithful companion. This alliance lasted for a score of years, and their friendship, apparently, lasted even longer.<sup>65</sup>

In 1802, the 34-year-old Susanne was conditionally manumitted by her father, who requested that she remain with him to care for his white wife until

the woman's death. In 1813, the *statute liber*, or quasi-free slave Susanne became a free woman; and in the last twenty-five years of her life she joined her brothers as a planter on the Isle. By 1830 her estate included no less than 20 slaves. At her death on 28 July 1838, she was one of the wealthiest *sole femmes* in the parish. The sale of her estate, after debts were settled, netted \$61,600 to be shared by her five surviving children.<sup>66</sup>

Children born to Marie Susanne of her two unions were:

36. i. Jean Baptiste François Florentin Conant, b. 6 or 7 of Jan. 1794; m. 1816 to his cousin Marie Louise Metoyer; d. 1858.<sup>67</sup>
37. ii. Marie Susanne "Suzette" Anty, b. 30 Oct. 1797; m. 1816 Jean Baptiste Augustin Metoyer.<sup>68</sup>
38. iii. Marie Aspasic Anty, b. 29 Sept. 1800; m. (1) Sept. 1817, Jean Baptiste Maxille Metoyer; m. (2) 15 Feb. 1832, to the *homme de couleur libre* Henry Octave Deronce.<sup>69</sup>
39. iv. Marie Arsene Anty, b. *ca.* 1803 according to the age provided on the record of her 29 Jan. 1818 marriage to the quadroon Manuel Llorens.<sup>70</sup>
40. v. Unnamed son, bapt. privately before his death on 3 Dec. 1805. It is probable that the infant was a newborn.<sup>71</sup>
41. vi. Valsain Anty, born *ca.* 1806 when there was no priest at Natchitoches; buried 2 Sept. 1814 at the age of eight, after dying of "fever."<sup>72</sup>
42. vii. Marie Thérèse Carmelite "Melite" Anty, b. 1807; married 6 Jan. 1824 in a civil service, to her cousin Auguste Metoyer. After a priest arrived in the parish, the union was rehabilitated in the church, 1 May 1830.<sup>73</sup>

19. **Louis<sup>3</sup> Metoyer**, was born about 1770 during his mother's residence in the household of Pierre Metoyer. At the age of six he was purchased by Metoyer from his mother's owner, Mme. de Soto, but he was not manumitted until 1802. In this interval, the records suggest, he lived as a free man. He is probably one of the two "free mulattoes" for whom a passport was issued in 1792 to pole their father's *bateau* and their mother's *gabare* to the market at New Orleans.<sup>74</sup>

Various land records also identify the still-enslaved Louis as the recipient of an exceptionally large grant of land made by the Crown in 1795—1372 *arpents* adjoining the tract his free brother Augustin had obtained. Upon the transfer of Louisiana to the United States in 1803, Louis' ownership of the tract was challenged by a white settler, and after an extended adjudication the federal land office ruled that both titles were equally valid. Louis' challenger, Sylvester Bossier, sued in the civil district court to evict the ex-slave and won his suit locally. Louis appealed the decision to the state Superior Court, and in 1818 that body overturned the prior decision and confirmed Louis' right to the land on which he had labored for over two decades. Still, Louis' problems with intruders upon his lands were not over. Within a year and a half he was back in court, this time filing suit against the free mulattoes Geneviève and Clay, whom he claimed were "contriving to prevent [him] from enjoying his property by moving on, committing waste, and claiming title." Again, the courts upheld Louis' title and the squatters were ordered to vacate his land and pay the costs of his suit.<sup>75</sup>

As a planter, Louis enjoyed phenomenal success. Like his brother Augustin, he enlarged his holdings with the purchase of numerous surrounding tracts.

When the 1830 census was taken, he and Augustin vied for honors as the eighth largest slaveholder in this agriculturally rich parish, holding title to 54 slaves each. Their white half-brothers, who had inherited the estate of their father, ranked sixth and seventh at 58 and 59 bondsmen each. Also like Augustin, Louis was a benevolent owner and executed a number of manumissions. As did Augustin, he built a "mansion house" on his principal plantation that was a worthy reflection of his prosperity and culture. But, unlike Augustin, he did not live to enjoy the comforts of his wealth; he died on Isle Brevelle on 11 March 1832 and was buried in the newly-created cemetery of St. Augustine.<sup>76</sup>

Louis Metoyer also left far fewer progeny than did his other married siblings, and even those descendants whom he left have little traditional recollection of him; almost all claim descent from Augustin. Ironically, the "mansion house" that Louis almost had completed when he met sudden death is the only one of the family's dozen or more plantation manors that has survived. In 1795 this home, now called *Melrose*, was declared a National Historic Landmark.

The wife of Louis Metoyer, **Marie Thérèse Le Comte**, was a young Creole *de couleur* of different ancestry. Her mother, also named Thérèse, had been a Canneki (Kiowa Apache) slave in the household of the noble Lieutenant Louis Mathias Le Court de Puelle at the time of young Thérèse's birth and baptism in December 1783,<sup>77</sup> the half-French, half-Indian child used the surname of a neighboring planter whose offspring included only one son. This young man, Ambroise Le Comte, was a bachelor at the time of the child's birth. The subsequent marriage of Thérèse and Louis was celebrated on 9 February 1801, somewhat tardily. Thérèse had given birth to their first and only child the previous 10 October; the infant was baptized and legitimized on the day of his parents' marriage. Both the baptismal record and the marriage record identify the young father and groom as a "free mulatto," despite the fact that his legal manumission would not occur for another year.<sup>78</sup>

The only child born of the union of Louis and Thérèse was:

43. i. Jean Baptiste Louis<sup>4</sup> Metoyer, b. 10 Oct. 1800; m. 29 Oct. 1821 to Marie Susette Metoyer, daughter of Pierre II.<sup>79</sup>

Additionally, Louis is said to have been the father of four other children:<sup>80</sup>

44. ii. Catherine "Catiche" Metoyer, b. ca. 1789, to an unknown slave in the household of Widow Jean Baptiste Le Comte.<sup>81</sup>
45. iii. Marie Rose Metoyer, bapt. 15 June 1793 as an 11 month-old mulatto born to Françoise, a mulatto slave of the Widow Le Comte. She married the young free *griffe*, Jean Baptiste Balthazar *dit* Monet; after his death she became the *placée*, successively, of Antoine Coindet, Dr. Jean André Zepherin Carles, and Dr. James Hurst.<sup>82</sup>
46. iv. Marie Thérèse Magdeleine Metoyer, b. ca. 1800 to the free mulatress Magdeleine Grappe; m. Augustin Cloutier, f.m.c.<sup>83</sup>
47. v. Antoine Metoyer, b. 6 Dec. 1814 to Marie, a slave of Louis Metoyer.<sup>84</sup>

20. **Pierre<sup>3</sup> Metoyer II**, born about 1772, during a period for which no baptismal records are extant. This son of Coincoin, his father's namesake, was

the only one of the slave-born Metoyers who received an education. Like his older brothers, he appeared to have lived as free prior to his actual emancipation. The 1794 parish tax roll, for example, erroneously assessed him a tithe; when the error was discovered, his name was deleted. Pierre's actual manumission occurred on 28 May 1802, when his father appeared before the parish judge to grant freedom to the "young mulatto" who had "always served me faithfully and exactly, always conducted himself to my satisfaction [and] rendered me good service [although] he was in a position to gain escape everywhere that he found himself."<sup>85</sup>

In the year of his manumission, Pierre married the fifteen-year-old quadroon **Perine Le Comte**, who had been born of the Widow Le Comte's mulatto slave Françoise about 1786. After Perine's birth, the widow gave her to young Joseph Dupré, the widow's grandson; and in 1801 Dupré's tutor (guardian), his uncle Ambroise Le Comte, sold Perine to Augustin Metoyer for the sum of \$600, on the condition that she was to be manumitted. Like all of the other Le Comtes *de couleur*, Perine appears to have been Ambroise's daughter.<sup>86</sup>

At Perine's death on 10 July 1815, she held an unconfirmed claim to 596.5 acres on Old River in the parish of Natchitoches. The land was never developed; possibly it was used as open grazing land, as was customary in that period with the less-fertile, rolling, pine-hill terrain. The family's plantation was located some miles northeast in the alluvial valley of present Cane River. In 1840, after both Perine and Pierre were dead and Augustin Metoyer had assumed the administration of their estate, and after Augustin bested his white neighbor, François Roubieu, in a costly legal battle over a tract they both claimed, Roubieu turned his attentions to the still-unconfirmed claim of Marie Perine. He spent the next decade corresponding with the Louisiana land office at Donaldsonville in an effort to prove that a fraud was being perpetrated upon the government in both the Metoyer claim to ownership and location of the tract. He did succeed in proving that Marie Perine was still a thirteen-year-old slave at the time the land, allegedly, was first put to use by her. Parish citizens, both black and white, divided their loyalties between Roubieu and the Metoyers in the course of the litigation, but the ultimate ruling of the land office upheld Perine's title.

Pierre Metoyer II likewise claimed title to a tract of pinchill land that remained similarly underdeveloped. Its value, apparently, remained unappreciated for some three-quarters of a century until the lumber industry first developed to a significant extent in the region. In the 1880s, white heirs of the elder Pierre took note of the land, examined the title, and concluded that since it was issued in the name of "Pierre Metoyer" it was the rightful property of their French-born progenitor, and theirs by inheritance. The non-white descendants of Pierre Metoyer I filed protest, claiming that their ancestor, Pierre Metoyer, *mulâtre libre*, had received the grant when his father applied on his behalf. Again much litigation ensued. The white heirs of the French Pierre disclaimed any relationship to the Creoles *de couleur*; and asserted that the immigrant was the *only* Pierre Metoyer in the parish and that he never

permitted the freed slave "Pierre Coincoin" to use his name. Their case was lost when one white granddaughter of the first Pierre—one of the most highly respected matrons in the parish—declined to be a party to the suit and admitted to the attorney Henry Safford that her grandfather did sire mulatto children a century before and did allow them to use his name.<sup>87</sup>

Pierre Metoyer II fathered three known children by his first wife, Perine Le Comte, although it is probable that two others were born and buried in the 1809–1812 period in which the parish was without a pastor. The known issue were:

48. i. Marie Susanne "Susette"<sup>84</sup> Metoyer, b. 15 June 1804; m. 29 Nov. 1821 to her cousin Jean Baptiste Louis Metoyer.<sup>88</sup>
49. ii. Pierre Metoyer III, bapt. 16 Aug. 1807 at 10 months; his civil marriage to his cousin Marie des Neiges Metoyer (daughter of Joseph Antoine), was ratified by the newly arrived priest on 19 May 1827.<sup>89</sup>
50. iii. Athanase Vienne Metoyer, b. 7 July 1813; m. 27 May 1833 to Marie Emelie Metoyer, daughter of Jean Baptiste Dominique.<sup>90</sup>

After the death of Marie Perine, Pierre Metoyer II took a second wife, much to the disappointment of his younger brother Toussaint, who was hopelessly in love with the bride, **Marie Henriette Dorothee Cloutier**. On 31 December 1817, Pierre and Henriette executed their civil contract of marriage at Natchitoches, which itemized a sizable estate. After dividing this with the children of his first bed, who were heirs to Perine's share, and after making donations to all his children at the time of their marriage, the estate which he left at the time of his death on 25 June 1833 still brought \$19,969 at auction.<sup>91</sup> Proceeds were divided between his widow, his three children of the first bed, and the four surviving children of his second bed, who were:

51. iv. Marie Ozite Metoyer, b. 14 Jan. 1816; m. 15 Feb. 1830 to the French and Indian Neuville Le Court.<sup>92</sup>
52. v. Nerestan Pierre Metoyer, b. 1 Apr. 1817; married 13 Nov. 1837 to Marie Elise Rocques, his first-cousin-once-removed.<sup>93</sup>
53. vi. Auguste Dorestan Metoyer, b. 24 May 1823; m. Nov. 1841 to Mlle. Seraphine Llorens, his first-cousin-once-removed.<sup>94</sup>
54. vii. Marie Elise Metoyer, b. ca. 1822; married ca. 1848 to Belisaire Llorens, brother of Seraphine.<sup>95</sup>

21. **Dominique<sup>3</sup> Metoyer**, born about 1774. He was purchased by his father at the age of two, but it was not until the brink of his marriage that he was manumitted, on 15 January 1795, by the elder Metoyer, after Dominique "gave thanks to his master and promised to conduct himself as an honest man and in obedience to our laws."<sup>96</sup>

Four days later, Dominique was married in the parish church to the young mulatto, **Marie Marguerite Le Comte**, who had been born May 1780 to Marie, a Negro slave of Joseph Trichel. Several months after Marguerite's birth, she was purchased by Ambroise Le Comte and his widowed mother, and on 27 August 1794 the widow manumitted the fourteen-year-old Marguerite. Tradition related today among the descendants of Marguerite holds that "the old Ambroise Le Comte" always acknowledged his kinship to Marguerite and her offspring.<sup>97</sup>

Shortly after his marriage, Dominique applied to the Spanish Crown for a concession of land on Isle Brevelle. On 18 May 1796, he was issued an order of survey and settlement for a tract some two or three miles downriver from his brothers Louis and Augustin. On 15 April 1799, his land was officially surveyed at 904 *arpents*. Over the years, he extended his holdings considerably, and despite the fact that he sired and supported a family of seventeen children, he amassed a considerable fortune before his death. The inventory of property that remained after his older, married children had received their dowries and donations totaled \$42,405. Unfortunately, a great deal of that was wasted in litigation, as his numerous offspring and his widow battled among themselves over its division.<sup>98</sup> The children of Dominique and Marie Marguerite Le Comte Metoyer were:

55. i. Dominique<sup>4</sup> Metoyer, b. 5 Oct. 1796; buried 21 Nov. 1796.<sup>99</sup>
56. ii. Jean Baptiste Dominique Metoyer, the elder, baptized on 29 May 1798; m. 17 June 1816 to the free quadroon, Adelaide Rachal.<sup>100</sup>
57. iii. Joseph Dominique Metoyer, b. 22 July 1799; died "of a pain," 12 May 1816.<sup>101</sup>
58. iv. Marie Susanne Metoyer, b. Sept. 1801; m. 13 March 1817 to Jean baptiste Espallier Rachal, the quadroon brother of Adelaide.<sup>102</sup>
59. v. Marie Perine Metoyer, b. 19 Apr. 1803; m. 8 Feb. 1820 to Pierre Mission Rachal, quadroon brother of Adelaide and Jean Baptiste Espallier.<sup>103</sup>
60. vi. Narcisse Dominique Metoyer, b. 25 Feb. 1805; married 19 Nov. 1829 to the free quadroon Marie Cephalide David.<sup>104</sup>
61. vii. Marie Silvie Metoyer, b. 1807; m. 2 Feb. 1822 to the French and Indian Joseph Valery Le Court.<sup>105</sup>
62. viii. Jean Baptiste Louis Dominique Metoyer, called Jean Baptiste Dominique the younger, b. ca. 1808; m. before 1843 to Marie Louise Doralise Dupre Lasisse in a civil ceremony blessed 25 June 1860.<sup>106</sup>
63. ix. Louis Florentin Dominique Metoyer, b. ca. 1810; m. 19 Jan. 1830 to the quadroon Marie Louise Theodose Chagneau.<sup>107</sup>
64. x. Marie Celine Metoyer, b. 4 June 1813; m. 16 Jan. 1836 to the French-Indian Jacques Eloy Le Court; d. before 1842.<sup>108</sup>
65. xi. Joseph Ozeme Metoyer, b. 6 May 1815; m. 30 July 1833 to the quadroon Catherine David.<sup>109</sup>
66. xii. Ambroise Chastain Metoyer, b. ca. 1818, married 23 Nov. 1840 to the quadroon noblewoman, Marie Osine Labaume.<sup>110</sup>
67. xiii. Marie Marguerite Metoyer, b. 24 Jan. 1817; married 19 Aug. 1830 to the free quadroon Joseph Emanuel Dupré.<sup>111</sup>
68. xiv. Marie Cephalide Metoyer, b. 1 Jan. 1821; married 19 Aug. 1833 (at age 12) to the quadroon Jean Baptiste Saintville.<sup>112</sup>
69. xv. Marie Lise Metoyer, b. ca. 1822; married 17 May 1838 to the quadroon Louis Barthelemy Le Court.<sup>113</sup>
70. xvi. Marie Louise Theotise Metoyer, b. 2 March 1825; m. 5 Sept. 1851 to Marin Rachal, another *Creole de couleur*.<sup>114</sup>
71. xvii. Marguerite Arthemise Metoyer, b. 18 Sept. 1826; on 5 May 1850 she filed contract of marriage with François Vilcourt Metoyer.<sup>115</sup>

23. **Joseph Antoine<sup>3</sup> Metoyer**, was born to Coincoin on 26 January 1778 in the household of Mme. de Soto, after the slave woman's expulsion from the home of Pierre Metoyer had been ordered by Commandant de Mézières at the insistence of the parish priest. When the commandant left upon a military expedition into Texas, a few days following Joseph's birth, Coincoin and her infant returned to Metoyer, much to the ire of Padre Quintanilla. Upon the

commandant's return, the pastor again demanded that Coincoin be separated from her lover, or else the infant and his mother would be sold at New Orleans for the benefit of the hospital as the law required. To thwart further opposition from the priest, Metoyer then manumitted Coincoin and their infant Joseph.<sup>116</sup>

On 1 June 1801, Joseph Antoine Metoyer, now 23 years of age, took a wife at Natchitoches. His bride was also born a slave, but she had been bought and manumitted in infancy by her father. It was on 12 April 1783 that **Marie Pelagie Le Court** had been born at the post to Marie Madeleine, the mulatto slave of the Le Comte family (who was, herself, daughter of the Negro slave Marguerite Victoire who first appears on record at Natchitoches in 1757 as a newly-baptized Christian, apparently an adult, belonging to Mme. Le Comte's sister, Mlle. Marie Jeanne Le Roy. The white father of Madeleine is unknown, and she was only fourteen when she bore her own quadroon daughter, Pelagie). In the year 1784, a young, unmarried Le Comte neighbor, Barthelemy Le Court (son of the noble Lt. Louis Mathias Le Court by his wife Marie Jeanne Le Roy) purchased Madeleine's infant, but not Madeleine herself. Pelagie was manumitted, but Madeleine remained in the Le Comte household and bore at least one child to young Ambroise Le Comte, who also manumitted his infant but not the mother. After Barthelemy Le Court's purchase and manumission of the infant Pelagie, he took her into the family home, which he had headed since the recent deaths of his parents. The census of 1787 enumerates that household with the unmarried Barthelemy still its head, with a young brother and two teenaged sisters, and with the three-year-old Pelagie who is politely (but incorrectly) called an "orphan." Her racial status is not even mentioned.<sup>117</sup>

Joseph and Pelagie settled on Isle Brevelle after their marriage, on a tract of land adjoining his brother Dominique. Like his brothers, Joseph acquired his first land (470 acres) by a grant from the Spanish Crown, then cleared the cane brakes himself, investing each year's profits in more land and, ultimately, in slaves to help him clear and work his added holdings. When the American government subsequently adjudicated Spanish land titles in the parish, Pelagie also claimed, and was confirmed in the possession of, a tract of 640 acres of pinewoods land on Bayou de l'ivrogne (Drunkard's Bayou).<sup>118</sup>

The birth pattern of the children of Joseph and Pelagie, coupled with the land claim files of the state land office, suggest that the couple separated for a few years of their marriage. No child was born to them between 1807 and 1818. In September 1813 the family friend Pierre Quierry (Carey) gave testimony in the separate land claims of Joseph and Pelagie in which he swore that each resided on their separate tracts and was the head of a family of children.<sup>119</sup>

Joseph, like his mother and brothers, also bought the freedom of members of his wife's family as well as his own. His most notable act of charity occurred on 24 March 1818 (perhaps as a concession to Marie Pelagie for their reconciliation), when he paid \$600 to Ambroise Le Comte for "a mulatress named Madeleine, creole of Natchitoches, aged about 50 years, in order to give her liberty." This Madeleine was his mother-in-law. Perhaps understandably, he dallied about the manumission; for seven years he remained the owner of his

mother-in-law, but on 17 May 1825 he filed public notice in the parish newspaper of his intent to free this slave.<sup>120</sup>

Joseph Antoine Metoyer died on the Isle on 9 October 1838.<sup>121</sup> Pelagie survived him by a number of years and, unexpectedly, earned for herself a unique niche in the annals of Louisiana history. She was both frugal and talented, qualities possessed by many past women whom history has forgotten. But Pelagie's progeny passed on one of her favorite activities and, in the mid-1970s, the family's tradition earned widespread recognition. With the scraps of fabric and yarn that Pelagie always saved, she made for the children a type of rag-doll, exquisitely rendered, usually as an old Creole matron with fashionably-groomed, curly gray hair; although the skin varied in shade from white to black, the preferred shade was Pelagie's own—*café au lait*. More than a century after her death, an equally-talented descendant, Mrs. Lair La Cour, began to market the traditional doll, from Pelagie's pattern; and in 1976, Pelagie's "Creole Ma-man" was declared the "Bicentennial Doll" of the state of Louisiana.

Children born to Joseph and Pelagie were:

72. i. Marie Susanne<sup>4</sup> Metoyer, b. 4 July 1802; d. 27 Feb. 1803.<sup>122</sup>
73. ii. Marie Aspasic (Anasthasie) Metoyer, b. 24 May 1804; m. 3 Aug. 1820 to the quadroon Seraphin Llorens.<sup>123</sup>
74. iii. Marie des Neiges Metoyer, b. ca. 1806 according to the 1850 federal census; her civil marriage to Pierre Metoyer, III, was rehabilitated 19 May 1827.<sup>124</sup>
75. iv. Joseph Metoyer, II, b. 22 Nov. 1807; m. (1) 25 June 1831 to the quadroon Marie Doralise Coindet; m. (2) 30 Jan. 1840 to his cousin Lodoiska Llorens.<sup>125</sup>
76. v. Joseph Zenes Metoyer, b. 12 Aug. 1818; d. before his father's 1834 death.<sup>126</sup>
77. vi. Marie Elina Metoyer, b. 15 Nov. 1821; m. 23 Feb. 1843 to her cousin Théophile Louis Metoyer.<sup>127</sup>
78. vii. Marie Celina Metoyer, b. ca. 1825 according to the 1850 federal census; m. 9 Jan. 1841 to her cousin Maximin Metoyer.<sup>128</sup>
79. viii. St. Sabor Hypolite Metoyer, b. 5 Dec. 1827.<sup>129</sup>

26. **François<sup>3</sup> Metoyer**, was born free at the Natchitoches post on 26 September 1784, the last child of Coincoin and Pierre Metoyer. François grew to manhood too late to acquire a Spanish grant, but claimed a tract by right of occupation when the American government began its process of adjudicating pre-emptive land claims in Louisiana. In subsequent years he was to buy and sell various other tracts, as well as slaves to work them. Like his brothers, François clashed occasionally with neighbors who claimed the same lands; and like his brothers he had no hesitancy about defending his rights before a white judge and a white jury. Also like his brothers, he usually won.<sup>130</sup>

François, who was nicknamed "Le Point" because he lived at the point of the Isle where Old River and Cane River joined, was twice married. On 23 July 1804 he was joined in wedlock to a young mulatress called **Marguerite La Fantasy**. The fourteen-year-old Marguerite (a half-sister of Augustin's wife Agnes Poissot) had been purchased and manumitted by Augustin six years before, when he paid \$800 to Marguerite's owner, Pierre Derbanne. Young Marguerite's mother was the Derbanne's cook Françoise; her father remains unknown. There was no family named La Fantasy in the parish and no settler

used that *dit*. Its meaning suggests that this surname might have been chosen by Marguerite for esthetic reasons.<sup>131</sup>

Marguerite died soon after marriage, leaving two children. On 27 June 1815, François remarried at Natchitoches to **Marie Arthemise Dupart**, the mulatto daughter of an educated *femme de couleur libre* of New Orleans, Victoire Mulon. Legend has it that François and Arthemise met in that city when he and the Isle's militia volunteered for Andrew Jackson's gallant defense of Louisiana on the Plains of Chalmette, the last battle of the War of 1812.<sup>132</sup>

Metoyer family traditions are rich with other stories of the incomparable François. When old-timers of past generations gathered on the galleries of their country stores, or around the fires inside for winter games of checkers, François was invariably the subject of some one's reminiscences. He was as strong as an ox, so legend goes, and as ornery as a mule, totally unpretentious and forever practical. It is said that he could lift a keg of rum onto his shoulders and drink from its tap without spilling a drop, or lift the side of the church, without a jack, when repairs had to be made to its foundation. Once, when a prize bull was stuck in a bed of mud left by spring floods, François was called to pull it out. He obliged, but then when the owner made a joke about the similarity between François and the bull, he kicked the animal back into the mud bed and left its dumbfounded owner stranded. When necessity required him to walk to town, after roads had been trodden there on the Isle, he went barefooted with his shoes tied around his neck. Just before crossing the bridge to enter the town, he would wash his feet in the river, shod himself, and stride proudly through the streets with his shoes glistening as bright or brighter than anyone else's around.<sup>133</sup>

Children born to François by his two wives were:

80. i. Marie Adelayde<sup>4</sup> Metoyer, b. 1804; m. her cousin Jerome Sarpy 27 June 1820.<sup>134</sup>
81. ii. François Metoyer, II, m. 26 Apr. 1827 to the mulatto Desirée Cotton-Maïs.<sup>135</sup>
82. iii. Marie Susette Metoyer, b. 10 Dec. 1816.<sup>136</sup>
83. iv. Joseph François Metoyer; m. 14 Oct. 1841 to the freed Marguerite Cecile.<sup>137</sup>

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

\*107 Woodridge, Tuscaloosa, AL 35401. Gary B. Mills is Associate Professor of History at The University of Alabama.

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2. Woodson, "Documents: Free Negro Owners of Slaves in the United States in 1830," *The Journal of Negro History*, IX (January 1924), pp. 41-85.
3. *Population of the United States in 1860* (Washington, D.C., 1864), pp. 598-604.
4. The research which served as grounds for this historical designation was performed by the present writers, 1972-73, and reported in a monograph *Melrose* (Natchitoches, 1973).
5. For example, see Edward C. Jeffrey, "New Lights on Evolution," *Science*, 65 (13 May 1927): 458-462.
6. 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* (New Orleans, 1977), No. 33.
7. *Ibid.*, No. 11.
8. See various entries in Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729-1803*, as well as Documents 176-178 and 203-206, Colonial Archives, Office of the Clerk of Court, Natchitoches (this source is hereinafter cited as NCA) and

the 1780–1782 letters of Marie de Soto to Governor Esteban Miró, Legajo 195. Papeles Procedentes de Cuba, Archivo General de Indias, Seville, Spain (this source is hereinafter cited as PPC-AGI).

9. Dr. Jan Vansina to Gary B. Mills, dated 12 May 1973, University of Wisconsin.

10. *Code Noir ou Loi Municipale Servant de Reglement* (New Orleans, 1778); Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729–1803*, Nos. 817, 820–821.

11. Doc. 176, NCA; Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729–1803*, Nos. 48, 100, 493, 748; Burial #7-1833, Slaves and Free People of Color, Register 15, Parish of St. François, Archives of Immaculate Conception Church, Natchitoches (this source is hereinafter cited as PSF).

12. Doc. 176, NCA; Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729–1803*, No. 1200, 2546, 2613; Laura L. Porteous, trans., "Index to the Spanish Judicial Records of Louisiana," *Louisiana Historical Quarterly*, 13 (January 1930): 183, incorrectly transcribes Choera's name as Choeras. See also Docs. 2881 and 2895, NCA.

13. Doc. 176, NCA; Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729–1803*, No. 1029.

14. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729–1803*, No. 225.

15. *Ibid.*, Nos. 253 and 392.

16. *Ibid.*, Nos. 269, 1034; Docs. 176, 1451, 1499, 2663, 2780, NCA.

17. Docs. 176, 178, 206, NCA.

18. Docs. 176 and 178, NCA; Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729–1803*, No. 919. St. Denis to Miró, 23 August 1780; de Clouet to St. Denis, 20 October 1781; St. Denis to Miró, 6–7 May 1782 and 10 September 1782, Leg. 195, PPC-AGI; Statement of Marie de St. Denis, Opel: 1783–255, Opelousas Notarial Records Collection, Louisiana State Archives and Records Service, Baton Rouge (this source hereinafter cited as LSARS). Recensements des Postes Opelousas et Atacapas, 1785, and Recensement du Poste de Opepousas, 1788, Leg. 2360, 2361, PPC-AGI. See also Baptism of Théodore Antoine, unnumbered entry, Reg. 2, PSF. In the published version of the Ortega-de Soto marriage contract, the *dite* of slave Marguerite appears as "Landu," rather than "Yandose," an apparent misreading of the poorly legible manuscript. See Winston De Ville and Jacqueline O. Vidrine, *Marriage Contracts of the Opelousas Post* (n.p., n. pub., 1961), 10; and William S. Coker and G. Douglas Inglis, *The Spanish Censuses of Pensacola, 1784–1820* (Pensacola: Perdido Bay Press, 1980), 43.

19. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729–1803*, No. 523; Docs. 176 and 1451, NCA.

20. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729–1803*, No. 565; Doc. 176, NCA.

21. Docs. 176, 765–766, NCA.

22. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729–1803*, No. 225.

23. Doc. 176, NCA. For published translations of all known censuses of colonial Natchitoches see Elizabeth Shown Mills, *Natchitoches Colonials: Censuses, Military Rolls and Tax Lists, 1722–1803* (Chicago, 1981).

24. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729–1803*, Nos. 462, 484, 713, 862; the baptismal record of one child born to Coincoin in this period is not extant.

25. For a more detailed analysis of Coincoin's life, her relationship to Metoyer and genealogical data on Metoyer from various archives of France, see Gary B. Mills, "Coincoin: An Eighteenth-Century 'Liberated' Woman," *Journal of Southern History*, 42 (May 1976): 205–222. Although the incomplete records remaining in *Rex v. de Soto et al* (Doc. 1227, NCA) do not indicate the punishment meted to Coincoin, an ordinance issued 1770 (Doc. 652, NCA) decreed that black women living in concubinage with whites would be sentenced to "exposure on the wooden horse and then be punished with the lash." See Article 6, *Code Noir*, for colony-wide regulations.

26. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729–1803*, No. 1552. Testament of Metoyer, 26 February 1783, Acts of Leonardo Mazange, No. 7, pp. 188–191, New Orleans Notarial Archives, Civil Courts Building, New Orleans. Will of Metoyer, 5 May 1801, Folder 1801, Melrose Collection, and Testimony of Mme. Valery Gaiennie, "Notes," Safford Collection, Box 2, Folder 12, Northwestern State University Archives (hereinafter cited as NSU-A).

27. Répartition à l'occasion . . . l' Mars 1790; and Role de Corvées et Contributions Public, 1793–1794; both in Natchitoches Parish Records Collection, Louisiana State University Archives, Baton Rouge (hereinafter cited as LSU-A). État de la Cargaison d'un Bateau Apartenant à Pierre Metoyer et d'un Gabarre à Marie Thérèse, Reel 1, Holmes Collection. Files A1679 and B1246, Louisiana State Land Office, Baton Rouge. Docs. 2550, 2552, 2596, 2804, NCA. Doc. 501 [Original] Conveyance Book 42, Natchitoches Parish Records, Office of the Clerk of Court, Natchitoches (this source is hereinafter cited as NPR).

28. At her death ca. 1816–17, Coincoin owned some 1,000 *arpents* of land and at least 13 slaves. See Conveyance Book 3, pp. 308–9, 524–38, NPR.

29. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729–1803*, No. 713; St. Denis to Boisdoré, #364:1784 and St. Denis v. Boisdoré, #390:1785, Opelousas Notarial Records Collection, LSARS; Dolet to Coincoin, Old Natchitoches Data, II, 289, Cammie G. Henry Collection, NSU-A; and Doc. 2596, NCA.

30. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729-1803*, No. 462; Doc. 2804, NCA; 1820 Federal Census, Opelousas Parish, Louisiana.
31. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729-1803*, No. 484; Docs. 765-766, NCA.
32. Mills, *The Forgotten People*, pp. 17-18, 38-39. Docs. 757, 765-6, 771, 1499, NCA.
33. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729-1803*, No. 484; Elizabeth Shown Mills, *Natchitoches 1800-1826: Translated Abstracts of Register Number Five of the Catholic Church Parish of St. François des Natchitoches in Louisiana* (New Orleans, 1980), No. 1838. Docs. 757, 765-66, 771, 1499, 1831, 1839, NCA. *Journal of the Senate of the State of Louisiana, 1825*, pp. 25, 27, 46; *Journal of the House of the State of Louisiana, 1825*, pp. 39, 71, 75, 83, Mills, *The Forgotten People*, pp. 89-90. For a genealogical tree of descendants of Françoise through 1825 see Elizabeth Shown Mills, "Slave Roots in Natchitoches," *Louisiana Genealogical Register*, 25 (December 1978): 303-4.
34. Doc. 752; NCA; Gil y Barbo to Metoyer, *Translations of Statistical and Census Reports of Texas, 1782-1836, and Sources Documenting the Black in Texas, 1603-1803* (San Antonio: microfilm publication of the Institute of Texan Culture), Roll 3. It should be noted that in yet another document, the 1778 criminal complaint of Quintanilla in *Rex v. de Soto et al.*, Coincoin is erroneously called Gertrude, just once.
35. Y Barbo to Metoyer, *op. cit.*; 1792-1799 Censuses of Nacogdoches, *Translations*, Reel 1.
36. *American State Papers: Documents Legislative and Executive of the Congress of the United States* (38 vols., Washington, D.C., 1832-1861), *Public Lands Series*, 3: 199. *Roubieu v. Metoyer*, Bundle 59, Case 1935 (1835) and *Metoyer v. Roubieu*, Bundle 74, Case 1473 (1836), District Court Files, NPR. Register 1, unnumbered page, Burial of [Blank], 12 April 1850, Parish of St. John the Baptist, Cloutierville, Louisiana (this source is hereinafter cited as PSJB). The *Roubieu-Metoyer* lawsuit appears to be the one to which Frederic Law Olmsted referred in one of his noted travelogues when he wrote of the Metoyers: "One of them had lately spent \$40,000 in a law suit." See *Journey in the Seaboard Slave States in the Years 1853-1854* (New York, 1856; reprinted New York, 1968), p. 634.
37. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729-1803*, No. 862; Doc. 1161, NCA.
38. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729-1803*. No. 921.
39. *Ibid.*
40. Burial No. 12-1832, Reg. 15, PSF, gives his age as "about 62."
41. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729-1803*, No. 2283; 1783 and 1801 wills of Metoyer, *op. cit.*
42. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729-1803*. No. 2324.
43. *Ibid.*, No. 2383.
44. *Ibid.*, Nos. 2426, 3144; Succession Inventory and Genealogical Chart of Slaves in Heirs of Dupré v. Alexis Cloutier, Microcopy PC.22, NPR. Liberty . . . to Dorothe, Folder 738, Melrose Collection, NSU-A; Docs. 2838 and 4019, NCA also identify the father of Dorothee. See, as well, Porter to Metoyer, Misc. 1:226; Marriage Contract of Pierre Metoyer, Marr. & Mis. Bks 2 & 3, unnumbered page; Toussaint Metoyer to Marie Henriette, Donations 30:10, all in NPR. Death date of Toussaint Metoyer is from Father A. Dupré, *Metoyer Family History*, Ms., Archives of the Church of St. Augustine, unnumbered page.
45. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729-1803*, No. 2489.
46. *Ibid.*, No. 921.
47. *Ibid.*, No. 1489. See also Gary B. Mills, "Piety and Prejudice: A Colored Catholic Community in the Antebellum South," in forthcoming *Catholics in the Old South*, Randall M. Miller and John Wakelyn, eds., (Athens, Ga., 1982).
48. Docs. 1161 and 2409, NCA.
49. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729-1803*, No. 3389; Docs. 1052, 1093, 1700, 2857, NCA. The records of the suit filed by Agnes are no longer extant; their existence is documented only by the index entry found in "French Archives Index," NCA.
50. Mills, *Natchitoches Colonials*, pp. 111-114; File B1960, State Land Office. The Succession of Louis Monet contains a typical bill rendered by Augustin Metoyer for his blacksmith services; see Docs. 3202, 3782, NCA.
51. Mills, *The Forgotten People*, pp. 50-71.
52. *Ibid.*, 71; Succ. No. 395 and Donations Bk. 30, pp. 70-78, NPR.
53. Mills, *The Forgotten People*, pp. 144-155; Rev. J. J. Callahan, *The History of St. Augustine's Parish* (Natchitoches, 1954), pp. 38-40.
54. Date of death from tombstone inscription, St. Augustine's Church Cemetery, Natchez, La. Family papers of Mrs. Lee Etta Vacarini Coutii, and interview with same, 22 May 1973, Natchez, La. For more detail on the life of Augustin see Gary B. Mills, "A Portrait of Achievement: Augustin Metoyer," *Red River Valley Historical Review*, 2 (Fall, 1975): 332-348.

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56. *Ibid.*, No. 3089; Mills, *Natchitoches, 1800–1826*, No. 720.
57. Baptism of Marie Louise, 2 Apr. 1797, *Registre: Baptêmes de Blancs et des Indiens*, PSF; Mills, *Natchitoches, 1800–1826*, No. 721; Succ. No. 323, NPR.
58. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729–1803*, No. 2897; No. 18-1830, Section: White and FPC, Reg. 15; PSF; Mills, *Natchitoches, 1800–1826*, No. 773.
59. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729–1803*, No. 2984; No. 9-1830, Reg. 11, PSF; Succ. No. 1015, NPR.
60. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1800–1826*, No. 103; No. 6-1818, Reg. 11, PSF.
61. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1800–1826*, No. 2032; Nos. 11-1820 and 19-1831, Reg. 11, PSF. *Morin v. U.S.*, No. 13578, Southern Claims Commission Files, Record Group 56, National Archives and Records Service, Washington, DC.
62. No. 2-1830, Reg. 11, NPR.
63. 1850 Federal Census, Population Schedule, Natchitoches Parish, La. Donations 30:70–78, NPR. No. 9-1832 and 20-1836, Register 11; and Metoyer–Metoyer Marriage, 30 November 1847, Reg. 12, PSF.
64. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729–1803*, No. 921; Johnston, *Race Relations in Virginia and Miscegenation in the South, 1776–1860* (Amherst, Mass., 1970), p. 293.
65. Mills, *The Forgotten People*, p. 80; Alice D. Forsyth, *Louisiana Marriages: I, A Collection of Marriage Records from the St. Louis Cathedral in New Orleans, 1784–1806* (New Orleans, 1977), p. 72.
66. Misc. Bk. 2, pp. 210–11 and Succ. No. 355, NPR; 1801 Will of Metoyer, *op. cit.* Mills, *Natchitoches, 1800–1826*, No. 860; 1830 Federal Census, Natch. Ph., La.
67. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729–1803*, No. 2764; Mills, *Natchitoches, 1800–1826*, No. 721; Succ. 1049, NPR.
68. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729–1803*, No. 3179; Mills, *Natchitoches, 1800–1826*, No. 720.
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70. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1800–1826*, No. 785.
71. *Ibid.*, No. 1724.
72. *Ibid.*, No. 1745.
73. No. 9-1830, Reg. 11, PSF; 1850 Federal Census, Pop. Sch., Natchitoches Ph.
74. Doc. 1161; NCA; Misc. Bk. 2, pp. 207–9, NPR; *État de la Cargaison, op. cit.*
75. *American State Papers, Public Lands*, 3:80; File B1953, State Land Office; Memorial of Louis Metoyer, Folder: May 1796, Opelousas Notarial Records Collection, LSARS; *Boissier et al v. Metayer*, 5 *Mart.* (O.S.) 678 (1818). Dist. Suit 264, Bundle 12; NPR.
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78. *Ibid.*, Nos. 2992, 3448.
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82. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729–1803*; No. 2749; No. 20-1836, Reg. 11, PSF; *Coindet v. Metoyer*, Dist. Suit No. 942, NPR; *Adams v. Hurst*, 9 *La. Ann.* 243 (1836).
83. No. 10-1818, Reg. 11, PSF.
84. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1800–1826*, No. 2318.
85. Mills, *Natchitoches Colonials*, p. 93; Misc. Bk. 2, pp. 209–10, NPR.
86. The actual date of the marriage is torn away on the original; see Mills, *Natchitoches, 1800–1826*, No. 946; and Ambroise Le Comte to Nicolas Augustin, Sale, copy filed in Claim R. & R. 309, State Land Office.
87. Files R. & R. 309 and B1952, State Land Office; oath of Mme. Valery Gaiennie, *op. cit.* Mills, *Natchitoches, 1800–1826*, No. 940.
88. No. 20-1821, Reg. 11, PSF; Mills, *Natchitoches, 1800–1826*, No. 112.
89. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1800–1826*, No. 2029; Metoyer–Metoyer marriage, unnumbered entry, 1827, Reg. 11, PSF.
90. No. 18-1833, Reg. 11, PSF.
91. Marr. Cont. of Pierre Metoyer to Henriette, *op. cit.*; Succ. No. 193, NPR.

92. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1800-1826*, No. 1304; No. 4-1830, Register 11, PSF.
93. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1800-1826*, No. 2615; No. 29-1837, Reg. 11, PSF.
94. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1800-1826*, No. 1627; unnumbered marriage entry, 1841, Reg. 12, PSF.
95. 1850 and 1860 Federal Censuses, Pop. Sch., Natchitoches Ph.; Succ. No. 2317, NPR.
96. Docs. 1161 and 2584, NCA.
97. Doc. 2251, *Ibid.*, Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729-1803*, Nos. 2389 and 3401. A portrait of Marie Marguerite Le Comte Metoyer was, in 1975, in the possession of her great-great-granddaughter, Mrs. Coutii.
98. File B1833, State Land Office; Succ. No. 375, NPR; Estate of Dominique Metoyer, Box 14, Folder 63, Natchitoches Parish Records Collection, LSU-A.
99. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729-1803*, No. 3025.
100. *Ibid.*, Nos. 2868 and 3228; Mills, *Natchitoches, 1800-1826*, No. 731; Metoyer-Rachal marriage contract, Doc. 23, Marr. & Misc. Bks. 2 & 3, NPR.
101. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729-1803*, No. 2993; Mills, *Natchitoches, 1800-1826*, No. 1758.
102. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1800-1826*, No. 23; Mills, *Natchitoches, 1800-1826*, No. 762; Rachal-Metoyer Marriage Contract, No. 43, Marr. & Misc. Bks. 2 & 3, NPR.
103. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1800-1826*, No. 113; No. 5-1820, Reg. 11, PSF.
104. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1800-1826*, No. 175; No. 15-1829, Reg. 11, PSF; Succ. of L. D. Metoyer, Succ. Bk. 12, pp. 175-179, NPR.
105. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1800-1826*, No. 2086; 1850 Fed. Cens., Pop. Sch., Natch. Ph., La.; Marriage Contract of Joseph Valarie to Marie Silvie Metoyer, Book C, Notarial, Folios 1-268, Doc. 42, NPR; No. 5-1822, Reg. 11, PSF.
106. Marie Louise Doralise Dupré to C. F. Benoist, Box 14, Folder 62, Natchitoches Parish Records Collection, LSU-A; Mills, *Natchitoches, 1800-1826*, No. 2083; Metoyer-Dupré marriage, unnumbered entry, 25 June 1860, in Marr. Reg. 1855-1905, PSJB.
107. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1800-1826*, No. 190; No. 1-1830, Reg. 11, PSF.
108. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1800-1826*, Nos. 2316 and 2080; see also LeCourt- St. André marriage, 20 May 1843, Reg. 12, and No. 2-1836, Reg. 11, PSF.
109. No. 23-1833, Reg. 11, PSF; Metoyer-David Marriage Contract, Old Natchitoches Data, II, No. 113, Henry Collection, NSU-A; Mills, *Natchitoches, 1800-1826*, No. 2317.
110. Metoyer-Labaume Marriage, November 1840, Reg. 12; Lavombe-David Marriage, No. 19-1821, Reg. 11, PSF; Frederick C. Chabot, *With the Makers of San Antonio* (San Antonio, 1937), pp. 260-261.
111. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1800-1826*, Nos. 2095 and 2557; Mills, *The Forgotten People*, pp. 91-94.
112. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1800-1826*, Nos. 114 and 1654; No. 25-1833, Reg. 11, PSF.
113. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1800-1826*, No. 2560; Le Cour-Metoyer Marriage, 11 May 1838, Reg. 12, PSF.
114. Baptism of Marie Louise Theotise, unnumbered 1827 entry, Reg. 7, and Marr. Entry No. 2-1851, Reg. 20, PSF.
115. Baptism of Marguerite Artemise, unnumbered 1827 entry, Reg. 7, and Marr. Entry 7 May 1850, Metoyer to Metoyer, in Marr. Reg. 1847-, PSJB.
116. Rex. v. De Soto, *op. cit.*; Docs. 1227 and 1312, NCA; Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729-1803*, No. 2324.
117. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729-1803*, Nos. 665, 947, 2482, 2745, 3451; Doc. 1850 NCA; 1787 Census of Natchitoches, Leg. 201, PPC-AGI.
118. Files R & R 306 and R & R 308, State Land Office.
119. *Ibid.*
120. Conv. Bk. 39, No. 4861/223, NPR; *Natchitoches Courier*, 24 May 1825.
121. No. 12-1838, Section: Slaves and FPC, Reg. 15, PSF.
122. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1800-1826*, Nos. 29, 816.
123. *Ibid.*, No. 104; No. 15-1820, Reg. 11, PSF.
124. Metoyer-Metoyer marriage, unnumbered entry, 19 May 1827, Reg. 11, PSF.
125. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1800-1826*, No. 2079; No. 17-1831, Reg. 11, and Metoyer-Llorens marriage, 30 January 1840, Reg. 12, PSF.
126. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1800-1826*, No. 1117.
127. *Ibid.*, No. 1653; Metoyer-Metoyer marriage, 23 Feb. 1843, Reg. 12, PSF.

128. Metoyer-Metoyer marriage, 9 January 1841, Reg. 12, PSF.
  129. No. 56-1828, Reg. 7, PSF.
  130. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729-1803*, No. 2489; *American State Papers, Public Lands*, 3-172, 237.
  - Derbanne v. Metoyer, District Court Suit 1097, bundle 48, (1829), NPR.
  131. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1800-1826*, No. 956; Doc. 2857, NPR.
  132. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1800-1826*, No. 1054.
  133. Reminiscences of Duncan Kirkland, 26 January 1922, "Natchitoches," Vol. 2, Scrapbook Files, Henry Collection; François Mignon to authors, various dates, 1973-1976, Natchitoches; interview with Mrs. Coutii, various dates, 1973-1976.
  134. No. 12-1820, Reg. 11, PSF.
  135. Metoyer-Cotton Maïs Marriage, 26 April 1827, Reg. 11, PSF.
  136. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1800-1826*, No. 2512.
  137. *Ibid.*, No. 50. Marriage of Metoyer-Cecile, 14 October 1841, Reg. 12, PSF.
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