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## Louis Monet's Daughters Dorothee and Dorothee: Sorting Tri-Racial Roots of Two Same-Named, Previously Merged, Colonial-Born Freedwomen

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By Elizabeth Shown Mills, CG, CGL, FNGS, FASG

*The actions of the father of two Dorothees held keys to separating their identities. Information about the families in question and the father's ancestral society supplied needed context for the father's actions.*

In 1990 a prominent genealogical journal published a study on the ethnic origin of a Louisiana family headed by a free woman of color, Dorothee Monet (1777–1820).<sup>1</sup> Genealogy standards had not yet been codified. The Genealogical Proof Standard (GPS) had not been defined.<sup>2</sup> The author, who held a PhD in history and the Certified Genealogist credential, followed then-accepted practices for researching Catholic families. He gleaned baptisms, marriages, and burials from published church records, then filled gaps with a probate list of heirs and various other civil documents.

Cited records contained contradictions in identifying Dorothee. Some called her “Canneci Indian,” some a “free woman of color,” and some a “free mulatto.”

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© Elizabeth Shown Mills. The author is a former editor of the *National Genealogical Society Quarterly*, a former president of the American Society of Genealogists and the Board for Certification of Genealogists, the author of *Evidence Explained*, and the architect and editor of the two-volume set *Professional Genealogy*. She has spent her career drawing forgotten women, yeoman farmers, and the enslaved out from the shadows of history. Much of her work on individual lives is posted at her website *Historic Pathways*, including research notes for Louis Monet and each Dorothee Monet. Referenced websites were accessed on 3 June 2021.

1. Gary B. Mills, “Backtracking a Cross-Racial Heritage in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries: Rachal and Monet of Natchitoches Parish, Louisiana,” *The American Genealogist* 65 (July 1990): 129–42. That study covered three genealogical problems: the misidentified parentage of one Joseph Rachal (1848–1927), the change of family surname made during the lifetime of Joseph’s father Narcisse Monet, and the identity of Joseph’s slave-born grandmother Dorothee. The resolutions of the first two problems stand. The third problem is the one readdressed here. Issues with Dorothee’s identification were rooted in Mills’s doctoral dissertation, published as *The Forgotten People: Cane River’s Creoles of Color* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), and repeated by the present writer in her 2013 revised edition of *Forgotten People* (same publisher).

2. Board for Certification of Genealogists, *Genealogical Standards*, 2nd ed. rev. (Nashville: Ancestry Imprint, Turner Publishing, 2021).

The 1990 author did not cite one record that presents her as “White.”<sup>3</sup> Such contradictions in ethnic labels are not unusual in research on minorities. They do not necessarily reflect the whims of record keepers. Identifying a Native American woman as a “woman of color” is consistent with practices of the time. “Persons of color” on the American censuses were meant to include both Native Americans and African Americans.<sup>4</sup> Identifying part-White Native Americans as “White” was not unusual when their lifestyle and associates were White. Modern researchers also commonly, but erroneously, believe “mulatto” was synonymous with “Indian.”

When the GPS—particularly the requirement of reasonably exhaustive research—is applied to the Dorothee Monet of the 1990 article, a different story emerges. Two Dorothee Monets were contemporaries. Evidence reveals they were half-sisters fathered by a French-Créole bachelor, Louis Monet.<sup>5</sup> One Dorothee died in 1820, leaving a small estate. She was born in 1774 to an enslaved woman of the Lipan Apache, a people the French called *Canneci*. The second Dorothee, born in 1777 to an enslaved African woman of Guinea birth, lived past 1821.

3. 1820 U.S. census, Natchitoches Parish., La., population schedule, folio 99 (stamped), line 52, Dorote Monet household; microfilm publication M33, roll 31, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Washington, D.C. Dorothee died a few days before this enumeration began; her household, kept intact by minor children, was enumerated with “Dorote Monet” as the family head.

4. Prior to 1850, the exact wording used on the non-white columns of the federal censuses was “All other {free} persons, except Indians not taxed.” The excluded Indians were those living in a tribal environment, not subject to the laws and taxes of the United States government. For more on the ethnic designations used by pre-2000 censuses, see U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *200 Years of U.S. Census Taking: Population and Housing Questions, 1790–1990* (Washington: Superintendent of Documents, 1989). Instructions to census marshals in each individual year are also available at *United States Census Bureau* (<https://www.census.gov/history>) > Through the Decades > Census Instructions.

5. The term *Créole* in Louisiana refers to culture, not color. The term was adopted by Europeans in the sixteenth century to distinguish those “born in the colonies” from those born in the Old World. In Louisiana it excluded (a) indigenous people living in the tribal environment; (b) “Anglo” American Protestant families who migrated into Louisiana; and (c) the endogamous and culturally different Acadians who had been expelled from Île d’Acadie (modern Nova Scotia). Those born to unions of Créoles with indigenous, Anglo, or Acadian settlers might also be called Créole if they were reared in the Créole culture. The classic discussion defining Créole identity is by Joseph G. Tregle Jr. in “Early New Orleans Society: A Reappraisal,” *Journal of Southern History* 18 (February 1952): 20–36; *JSTOR* (<https://www.jstor.org/stable/2954790>). Also Tregle, “On That Word ‘Creole’ Again: A Note,” *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 23 (Spring 1982): 193–98; *JSTOR* (<https://www.jstor.org/stable/4232170>). Tregle, like most Louisiana historians, drew his examples from New Orleans literature. For more diverse examples from eighteenth- and nineteenth-century documents at Mobile and in the country parish of Natchitoches, see Elizabeth Shown Mills, “Forgotten People: Cane River Creoles,” book page, *Facebook* (<https://www.facebook.com/ForgottenPeopleCaneRiverCreoles/posts/539159849549140> : posted 17 April 2019), “Bits of Evidence, No. 377: Who’s a Creole?”

The two Dorothées' life experiences were significantly different. The first two and the last six children previously attributed to the one Dorothée were half-first cousins, not siblings. Each set of children made life choices—radically different ones—based on the race of their maternal grandmother.

Four techniques helped separate the two Dorothées:

1. Thorough research in *all* discoverable records. Vital information often appears in documents not considered vital records.
2. Research on *all* discoverable family members, associates, and neighbors.
3. Targeted land research, reconstructing the neighborhood for *each* appearance of Dorothée in a surviving record. Many people moved several times, and an unidentified move can skew a genealogical conclusion.
4. Careful observance of *all* ethnic labels and surnames in each document found for, or attributed to, Dorothée and each family member—noting also when each Dorothée first used, was allowed to use, or was assigned a surname.

The actions of the man who fathered the two Dorothées were the keys to separating his daughters' identities. Information about the subject families and the father's ancestral society helped explain the father's actions.

## ROOTS

In 1714–17 Louisiana's French colonial government set up an outpost on its western frontier to stave off Spanish aggression. The site was home to a small, friendly band of the Caddo tribe, the Natchitoches. They lived at the juncture of the Red River and its tributary, the Cane.<sup>6</sup> Two of the earliest families are the foundation for identifying and separating the two Dorothées.

### *Root Family 1: Rachals*

Pierre Rachal and his wife, Marianne Benoist, both French-born, appear on the outpost's first census of May 1722.<sup>7</sup> Pierre had arrived in the colony in 1716, an eighteen-year-old drummer in the Royal Marines. His father, also a soldier-drummer named Pierre, had loved and left Pierre's mother, Elisabeth Jagut, at France's outpost on Île d'Oléron.<sup>8</sup>

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6. Laura D. Kelly, "Natchitoches Settlement," Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities, *64 Parishes* (<https://64parishes.org/entry/natchitoches-settlement>).

7. Colonies G1 464, Archives Nationales d'Outre Mer, Aix-en-Provence, France; translation published in Elizabeth Shown Mills and Ellie Lennon, *Natchitoches Colonials—A Source Book: Censuses, Military Rolls & Tax Lists, 1722–1803* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 2017), 14–15.

8. Images of original documents tracing the ancestry of Pierre Rachal are online, with commentary by E. S. Mills, at "Forgotten People: Cane River Creoles of Color," *Facebook* (<https://www.facebook.com/ForgottenPeopleCaneRiverCreoles> : posted February–March 2019), "Bits of Evidence" nos. 350–57.

Marianne, whose father was a porter for the palace of Versailles, was deported to Louisiana in 1719 under singular circumstances: a five-year exile after she, at twenty, was found guilty in the palace court of being a “famous blasphemer.”<sup>9</sup> Four of this couple’s children—Elizabeth, Jacques, Louis, and Marie Louise—appear in the tangled roots and branches of the two Dorothées. See figure 1.

#### Root Family 2: LeRois

Étienne LeRoy, carpenter and native of Paris, arrived in the colony in 1719 as a thirty-year-old soldier. By 1722 he had retired, appearing in the census as a civilian settler.<sup>10</sup> At the outpost in about 1734, he married the “Widow Davion,” née Louise Françoise Guillot of Charenton-le-Pont, a suburb of Paris. She had been sent to Louisiana in 1720 to marry a settler and help populate the colony. In about eight years, the couple had three daughters.<sup>11</sup> All would shape the world of the two Dorothées. See figure 1.

#### POLITICS, KINSHIP, AND AUTONOMY

At the close of the French and Indian War in 1762, France gave Louisiana to Spain. French military personnel were discharged. Most at the Natchitoches outpost petitioned for land and settled there. Two of those discharged, Pierre Rachal’s son Louis Rachal and immigrant Jean Baptiste LeComte, had married Étienne LeRoy’s daughters.<sup>12</sup> Their former officer, Louis Mathias LeCourt de Presle, was then the eldest LeRoy daughter’s consort.

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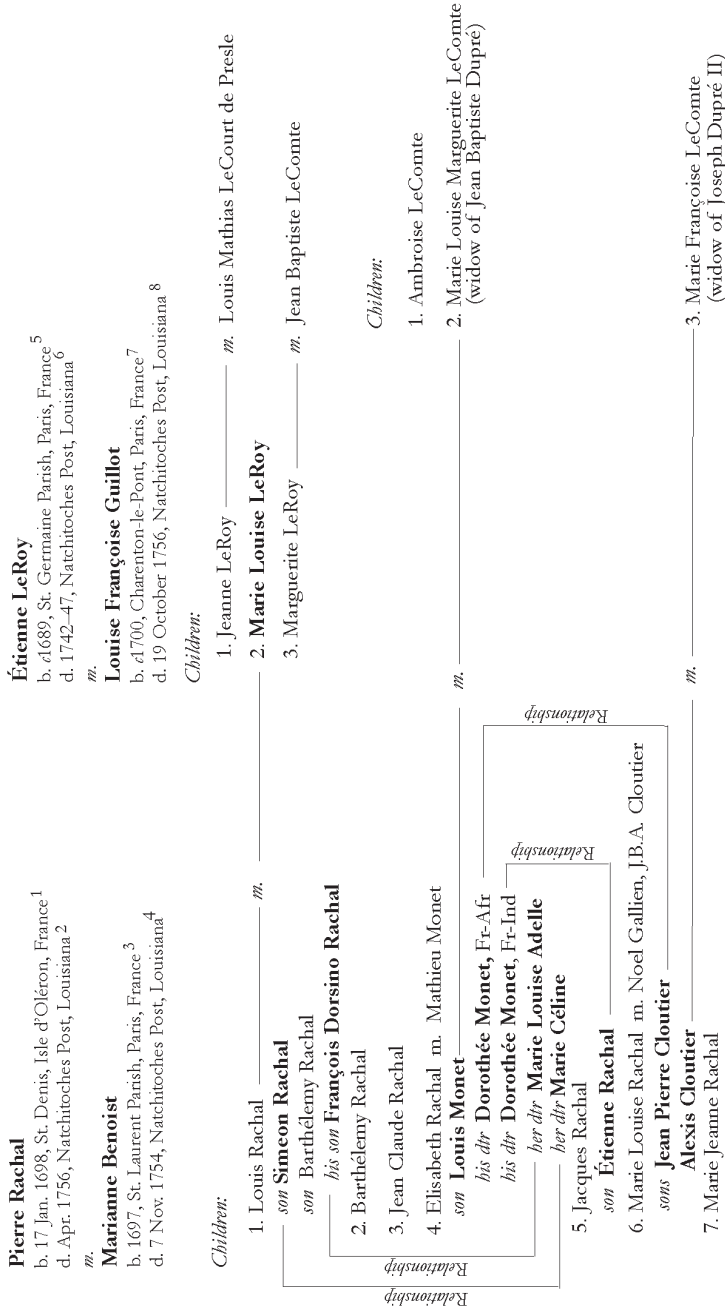
9. The scant documents for Marianne Benoist’s trial and deportation are “Personnes renfermées en la maison de force de la Salpêtrière, bonnes pour les isles” [Persons held in the prison of the Salpêtrière, bound for the islands], 27 June 1719, doc. 12692; and “Extrait des Reg[istres] du greffe de la prévosté de l’hotel du Roy et grande prévosté de France” [Extract from the registers of the provost of the King’s palace and the provost marshal of France], doc. 10659 (1719); fond [collection] Bastille, Bibliothèque de l’Arsenal, Archives Nationales, Paris. Also, passenger list of *La Mutine*, [after 20 December] 1719, section: “Girls Sent from Paris by Order of the King”; Colonies F5b 37, Archives Nationales d’Outre Mer. The ship roll can be roughly dated by the orders given to Capt. Martonne dated 20 December 1719, published by Delvaile H. Theard, “A History of the Foundations of New Orleans, *Louisiana Historical Quarterly* 3 (April 1920): 213, citing Colonies B 42 *bis*, fol. 207.

10. Passenger list, *Duc de Noailles*, 12 September 1719, section: “Soldiers,” for Étienne LeRoy; Colonies G1 464; Archives Nationales d’Outre Mer. Also, 1722 census of Natchitoches; Mills and Lennon, *Natchitoches Colonials*, 14–15.

11. 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: Polyanthos, 1977), entries 30, 105, and 191 for baptisms of the three daughters born to the “legitimate marriage” of the LeRois. The marriage record itself does not survive. Also, St. Louis Cathedral (New Orleans), Book of Marriages A (1720–1730), pp. 5–6, Davion–Guillot marriage, 26 August 1720; Archdiocese of New Orleans Archives, New Orleans.

12. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729–1803*, entry 727 (Rachal–LeRoy marriage), entry 738 (LeComte–LeRoy marriage).

**Figure 1**  
**Tangled Kinships: Cloutier, LeCourt, LeComte, LeRoy, Monet**



*Note:* This chart does not include all children of every named person. Focus is on those relevant to the case at hand. For source notes, see appendix. All other relationships are documented in the text.

LeCourt, born into Brittany's minor nobility, was deeply rooted in the French caste system.<sup>13</sup> Men of his class married for wealth or social status. However, affairs were separate arrangements. LeCourt's choice to remain in the colony after discharge undoubtedly affected his life with Jeanne LeRoy.<sup>14</sup> A marriage between LeCourt de Presle and a carpenter's daughter was out of the question. So he had settled into an affair on Louisiana's frontier.<sup>15</sup>

The French caste system clashed with demands of colonial priests, who viewed cohabitation outside marriage as destabilizing to the social order. To escape complaints of the priest at the Natchitoches post, LeCourt petitioned for land some sixty miles south of the post. The first grant, dated 1762, was titled to Jeanne LeRoy, not LeCourt, to assure support for her and their natural children if he returned to France.<sup>16</sup>

Rachal and LeComte, friends and relatives by marriage, moved south with LeCourt and Jeanne. On a long stretch of river lined by cane groves, the three LeRoy sisters and their menfolk began the settlement called *Rivière aux Cannes*. See figure 2. Jeanne LeRoy's grant lay at *Écore Caché* (Hidden Hill), although no known evidence suggests they lived there.<sup>17</sup> The three men chose sites strategic for protection

13. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729–1803*, entry 984 (for LeCourt's birthplace and parents). Also, baptism of "Louis Mathias, legitimate son of Sieur Joseph le Court, Seigneur de Prelle, enseigne des vasseaux de son Majesté [ensign of His Majesty's vessels], et de dame Jeanne de la Haye," 27 February 1717 (born 24 February); photocopy supplied 14 December 1977, without identification of book or page, to Gary B. Mills by Claude Fagnen, Le Directeur des Services d'Archives du Finistère, Quimper, France. For other documents on Louis Mathias's birth family, see fonds 1587, 1652, and 1858 (Liasse), of Série B, "Cour Royale [Royal Court] de Brest et de Saint-Renan," Archives Départementales de Finistère.

14. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729–1803*, entries 466, 488, 652, and 707 for baptisms of children Marie Antoinée, Barthélemy, Pierre Laurens, and Jean Baptiste under their mother's surname. No baptisms have been found for the youngest three children born at *Rivière aux Cannes*, but they are identified in later marriage records; see *ibid.*, entries 1647 (Françoise), 3391 (Athanase), 3434 (Cécile).

15. The extent to which the French social abhorrence of marrying beneath one's class persisted in Louisiana was expressed at Natchitoches in 1825 by an unmarried daughter of LeCourt's friend, Commandant Athanase Mauguet de Mézières, also minor nobility. On her deathbed Collette explained to a bishop that she and her siblings had not married in Louisiana because they could not make a *mésalliance* (an inappropriate alliance); see Mary Teresa Austin Carroll, *A Catholic History of Alabama and the Floridas* (New York: P. J. Kenedy & Sons, 1908), 251–52, quoting Bishop William DuBourg. For the Mézières ancestry, see Elizabeth Shown Mills, "(De) Mézières-Trichel-Grappe: A Study of a Tri-Caste Lineage in the Old South," *The Genealogist* 6 (Spring 1985): 4–84.

16. Grant papers have not been found. The grant of eight *arpents* frontage to a depth of forty is dated 22 May 1762 in a chain of title recited on 21 June 1804 by the seller Robert McAlpin to Berthélemy Rachal; see Natchitoches Colonial Archives (NCA) Doc. 3153; Office of the Clerk of Court, Natchitoches. The term *arpent* was used in colonial Louisiana for both lineal and superficial measurement. The American survey defined the tract as 541.60 superficial acres; see *American State Papers: Documents Legislative and Executive of the Congress of the United States*, Public Land Series (Washington: Gales and Seaton, 1834), 2:867; this source is hereinafter cited as ASP-PL vol:page.

17. This site is known locally as Little Eva plantation.

against hostile tribes. LeCourt and Rachal settled at *Les Écores*, on bluffs guarding the southern entrance to Rivière aux Cannes.<sup>18</sup> LeComte chose a horseshoe bend at Shallow Lake, near the northern end of Rivière aux Cannes.<sup>19</sup> There LeComte and his wife were joined by Rachal's twice-widowed sister Marie Louise and her Cloutier and Gallien children.<sup>20</sup> Rachal and LeComte would significantly develop their holdings. By contrast, no evidence suggests that LeCourt farmed his tract or Jeanne's. He maintained a second residence among the Caddo. Trade with the tribe apparently was his primary source of income, and the source of the Native Americans he sold at Natchitoches.<sup>21</sup>

The Rivière aux Cannes settlement grew into a narrow ribbon of plantations along the river stretching twenty-five to seventy-five river miles below the post. With no church, school, or governmental authority closer than two-to-three days by *piroque*, the district was self-reliant and self-governed, but not particularly self-disciplined. Despite the distance between the farms, socialization was frequent among the three families—including with, and among, their enslaved people.<sup>22</sup>

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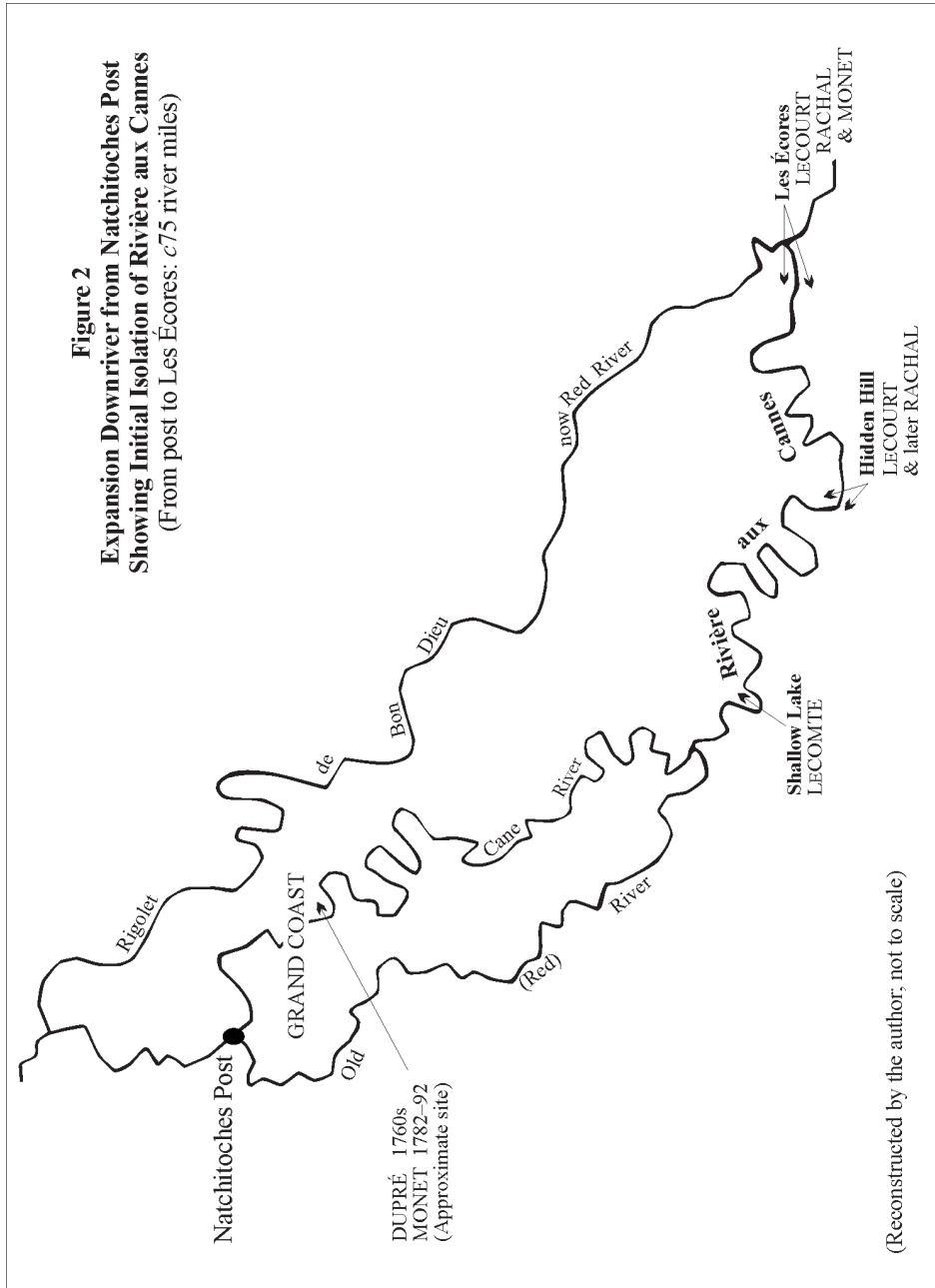
18. LeCourt's site is best known to history as Monette's Bluff and Monette's Ferry, as a consequence of Civil War activities and dispatches from there, including drawings of the locale. Rachal's site is landmarked by St. John's Church and Rachal Cemetery near the Marco community.

19. LeComte's site today is Magnolia Plantation, a key component of the Cane River Creole National Historical Park.

20. For Marie Louise Rachal's husbands, see figure 1. As a starting point for these grants, see the abstracted claim papers published in *ASP-PL*, vols. 2–3. Other original documents are imaged online at Louisiana Office of State Lands, *OSL: Search Historical Documents* (<https://wwwslodms.doa.la.gov/>), search terms: Northwestern District, Township 7 North, Range 6 West (LeComte, Gallien, Cloutier, and Barthélemy LeCourt), T6N R6W (Cloutier and LeCourt), T7N R5W (Jeanne LeRoy, and later Rachal, at Hidden Hill), and T6N R4W (LeCourt and Monet at Les Écores). For the location of Rachal's land, which the other sources do not document, see NCA Doc. 1848, LeCourt heirs to Louis Monet, 16 November 1785, citing the *ancien habitation* (ancient settlement) of Louis Rachal as adjacent upper neighbor.

21. Athanase de Mézières to Capt.-Gen. Unzaga y Amezaga, 3 July 1771, legajo [file] 188-1, fol. 84, Papeles Procedentes de Cuba, Archivo General de Indias, Seville (hereinafter cited as PPC-AGI). The Canneci whom LeCourt brought to Rivière aux Cannes would have been captives purchased from the Caddo, who warred with the Canneci.

22. Teenaged sons of LeComte and Rachal fathered children by LeCourt's enslaved Canneci woman named Thérèse. LeCourt's son Barthélemy fathered a daughter Pelagie by an African woman enslaved on the LeComte plantation. With proceeds from his inheritance, Barthélemy purchased her freedom; and the 1787 census shows the toddler living with young-adult Barthélemy and his three parentless siblings. See NCA Doc. 1850, 6 November 1785; and General Census of Natchitoches, 17 August 1787, leg. 201; translation published in Mills and Lennon, *Natchitoches Colonials*, 99–119, particularly 112. In the 1790s Barthélemy settled into a permanent union with Ursule, a daughter of the Caddo Louison. For their children, see Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729–1803*, entries 2255 (which provides the Caddo tribal identity), 2641, 2837, 2932, 3096. Also, 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: Polyanthos, 1980), entries 14, 440. “Pirogue,” *Britannica* (<https://www.britannica.com/technology/piroque>), “Pirogue . . . in its simplest form, a dugout made from one log, but also a number of more elaborately fashioned boats . . . [such] as a shallow-draft boat that is used to maneuver through the Louisiana swamplands.”





*Introducing Dorothee No. 1: French and Indian*

A rare inventory provides a glimpse into Rivière aux Cannes's enslaved families. Jeanne LeRoy, whom LeCourt eventually married, died in November 1777.<sup>23</sup> The next April, LeCourt requested an official inventory of the personal property his wife brought into the marriage, as well as their community property. It identifies their enslaved as

Thérèse, a *sauvagesse*, about thirty-six

- Susanne, her daughter, born 10 August 1770
- **Dorothee**, her daughter, born 27 September 1774
- Rosalie, her daughter, born 27 March 1776
- Gaspard, her son, born 6 January 1778

Capitaine, *sauvage*, about thirty-five; Magdeleine, his wife, about twenty-five

- Clemans, their daughter, born 5 April 1770
- Romain, their son, born 18 December 1773
- Isabelle, their daughter, born 7 September 1776

Louison, *sauvagesse*, about twenty-four

- Hélène, her daughter, born 6 June 1772
- Jeanne, her daughter, born 21 November 1776

Louis, *nègre*, about fifty

Mercure, *nègre*, about eighty<sup>24</sup>

The settlement of Jeanne LeRoy's succession (probate) freed the Native Americans and their offspring. Spanish officials, after assuming control of Louisiana in 1767, had outlawed enslavement of indigenous people.<sup>25</sup> The outpost usually ignored laws out of New Orleans until pressure was applied. A 1774 census identified eighteen Natchitoches residents holding *Indiens* in slavery. Fourteen held only one, a female; at least half of the enslavers were bachelors. Statistics for 1776 reveal that the enslaved Indian population had increased from forty-one to forty-four.<sup>26</sup>

23. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729–1803*, entry 984.

24. NCA Doc. 1285, succession of Marie Jeanne LeRoy, 2 April 1778. *Sauvage* (fem. *sauvagesse*) was the colonial term most frequently used for Native Americans who had not been baptized. As a generalization, most colonial historians simply translate the term as “wild”; for example, see Sophie White, *Wild Frenchmen and Frenchified Indians: Material Culture and Race in Colonial Louisiana* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 235, n. 2. The present author's study of thousands of colonial usages of this term, correlating those usages with church baptismal records, is the basis for the explanation used here.

25. Proclamation of Gov. Alexandre O'Reilly, 7 December 1769; translated in Lawrence Kinnaird, ed., *Spain in the Mississippi Valley, 1765–1794*, Part I, *The Revolutionary Period, 1765–1781*, being *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1945*, vol. 2 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1949), 125–26.

26. 1774 Census of Natchitoches Slaveowners, 25 February 1774, leg. 189-1, and 1776 Statistical Summary, Natchitoches Post, leg. 112, PPC-AGI; translation, Mills and Lennon, *Natchitoches Colonials*, 70–75, 78.

After his wife's death LeCourt released the Native American adults and their children. Pierre *dit* Capitaine left with his family to farm near LeComte's settlement, where he eventually bought land.<sup>27</sup> The two single females and their offspring stayed on at LeCourt's bluff, where their progeny increased. As adults, many would take the surnames LeComte, LeCourt, Monet, and Rachal.

The 1778 inventory does not name fathers of Thérèse and Louison's children, nor do other contemporaneous records. Several, including the father of the Dorothee inventoried above, can be identified with information from later records.

#### THE FATHER

Louis Monet came to adulthood at Les Écores. His own father, the soldier Mathieu Monet, had died soon after Louis's 1753 birth. His mother, Louis Rachal's sister Elisabeth, died when Louis was eight. Monet's officer, LeCourt, assumed tutorship of the Monet child, acknowledging in November 1761 that he had received 589 livres and 16 sols from the post notary, representing the child's inheritance that he was to manage.<sup>28</sup> When LeCourt and his brother-in-law Rachal moved to Rivière aux Cannes, the Monet orphan—Rachal's godson—went with them.

Louis turned twenty-one in 1774, the year the Canneci Thérèse bore her daughter Dorothee in the LeCourt-Rachal settlement. Like all able-bodied men in the district, Louis had to report periodically for militia drills at the Natchitoches fort.<sup>29</sup> On those 150-mile treks upriver and back, an apparent stop was Baptiste Dupré's home on the Grand Coast, a chain of plantations that stretched for a dozen miles below the fort. See figure 2. As a young widower, Dupré had married Marie Louise Marguerite LeComte, the twelve-year-old daughter of Jean Baptiste LeComte and Marguerite

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27. NCA Doc. 2424, Jean Bte. Anty to "*le sauvage nommé* [named] Capitaine," four *arpents* frontage at Rivière aux Cannes, 5 November 1792; after Capitaine's death about fifteen years later, his son forfeited the land to a local merchant for debts; *ASP-PL*, 3:218. The colonial French *dit* (fem. *dite*) was an alternate name for a person, literally meaning "so called." It differed from a nickname in that it was usually substituted for the person's surname. For more on *dits*, see Robert de Berardinis, "Call Names, Dits, Frenchifications, Noms de Guerre, Particles, Patronymics, Phonetics, Surname Compounds, and Translations! Intercultural Name Changes in America, as Illustrated by the Offspring of Marie Catherine Horn," *National Genealogical Society Quarterly* 90 (March 2002): 37–65, particularly p. 38.

28. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729–1803*, entries 353 (Monet-Rachal marriage), 562 (baptism of Louis). NCA Doc. 301, receipt of LeCourt to Pain, 20 November 1761. No death record *per se* survives to document when or where Mathieu Monet died. Under Louisiana law, a *tuteur* was the financial guardian appointed by the court for orphaned minors with some inheritance. John Bouvier, *A Law Dictionary Adapted to the Constitution and Laws of the United States and of the Several States of the American Union with References to the Civil and other Systems of Foreign Law* (Philadelphia: T. & J. W. Johnson, 1843), 587.

29. For example, see 1780 militia roll, leg. 193-A; 1782 militia roll, leg. 195; 1783 militia roll, leg. 196; PPC-AGI; translation, Mills and Lennon, *Natchitoches Colonials*, 80–83, 86–93.

LeRoy.<sup>30</sup> Dupré died in 1781, leaving much of his estate to his childless widow.<sup>31</sup> Within a year Monet bought an undeveloped tract adjacent to Dupré's land.<sup>32</sup>

*Introducing Dorothee No. 2: French and African*

Louis's decision to purchase land adjacent to Widow Dupré was likely calculated. Three years later she agreed to marry him. Before the marriage, she sold to him her share of the Dupré plantation and its enslaved people:

Françoise, *negresse Créole*, about twenty-three, and her children

- Remy, small *negre*, about six
- Marie Louise, small *mulâtresse*, about three
- Charles, small *negre*, about one and a half

Thérèse, *negresse*, about forty, and her children

- Athanase, small *negre*, about seven
- Nanette, small *negresse*, about three
- Marie Joseph, small *negresse*, about two

**Dorothee**, small *mulâtresse*, about seven

Antoine, young *negrillon*, about fifteen<sup>33</sup>

Seven-year-old Dorothee, French and African, was curiously cited alone rather than in a family group. Unlike the Rivière aux Cannes LeCourts, the Duprés, living relatively close to the post, had most newborns baptized reasonably soon. On 1 March 1778 Baptiste Dupré had presented Dorothee, born 31 October 1777, and the natural daughter of his enslaved Marguerite. The priest, who preferred not to memorialize miscegenous behavior he could not control, did not note color or race in the record.<sup>34</sup>

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30. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729–1803*, entries 651 (Louise Marguerite's baptism), 999 (Dupré-LeComte marriage), and 1269 (Dupré's death). NCA Doc. 593, Dupré-LeComte marriage contract, 7 September 1769. Historically, under canon law prior to its 1917 modernization, the minimum age for marriage was twelve for females and fourteen for males. See Brendan F. Brown, "The Canon Law of Marriage," *Virginia Law Review* 26 (November 1939): 70–85, particularly p. 83; JSTOR (<https://www.jstor.org/stable/1067922>).

31. NCA Doc. 1554, succession of Jean Baptiste Dupré, August–September 1781.

32. NCA Doc. 1624, Poissot to Monet, 6 November 1782.

33. NCA Doc. 1831, Dupré to Monet, 15 August 1785.

34. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729–1803*, entry 2326. For the pastor's struggle against miscegenation, see Elizabeth Shown Mills, "Quintanilla's Crusade, 1775–1783: 'Moral Reform' and Its Consequences on the Natchitoches Frontier," *Louisiana History: Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 42 (Summer 2001): 277–302; JSTOR (<https://www.jstor.org/stable/4233761>).

The presentation of the French-African Dorothee as a lone child in the 1785 deed suggests she was an orphan.<sup>35</sup> However, her mother was alive, apparently purchased earlier by Monet via an unrecorded act. Three months after the deed, Monet and Widow Dupré drafted a marriage contract—a document in which the future spouses identified the property brought into the union and set terms for the inheritance of community property at their deaths. Monet's list of property not only includes as a family unit Marguerite and her daughter Dorothee, but also indicates that Marguerite, about thirty-five, was a native of Guinea.<sup>36</sup>

#### *Locations and Associations Separate the Two Dorothees*

Two Dorothees appear connected to Louis Monet: one French Indian, born in the LeCourt-Rachal settlement where Monet was raised; the other French African in his possession on the Grand Coast. Those locations help identify the Dorothees in records, as do the names of fellow slaves who lived and worked with this Dorothee and her mother Marguerite. Particularly important in that regard was the enslaved Françoise, twenty-three when Monet acquired her. Already known as the daughter of the iconic freedwoman Marie Thérèse Coincoin, Françoise bore children for Monet.<sup>37</sup> Future associations between the offspring of the French-African Dorothee and Coincoin's children helped separate the two Dorothees.

While Monet lived on the Grand Coast, LeCourt died and Monet plotted a new future. In November 1785, two months after his marriage, Louis leveraged their combined property to buy LeCourt's bluff from his succession.<sup>38</sup> Until that debt was paid, he and Marie Louise Marguerite remained on the Grand Coast. The 1787 census enumerates them there with two tracts totaling twenty *arpents* of frontage, twenty-one slaves, fifty cows, and twenty horses.<sup>39</sup> Louis had prospered. Five years

35. Under the Black Code then practiced in Louisiana, a parent could not be sold away from children under the age of fourteen—or spouses from each other if wed in the church. For a translation of this law, see “(1724) Louisiana's Code Noir,” *BlackPast*, an academic “online reference center” (<https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/louisianas-code-noir-1724/>), section XLI–XLII; transcribed from B. F. French, *Historical Collections of Louisiana: Embracing Translations of Many Rare and Valuable Documents* (New York: D. Appleton, 1851).

36. NCA Doc. 1839, Monet-Dupré marriage contract, 10 October 1785.

37. Elizabeth Shown Mills and Gary B. Mills, “Slaves and Masters: The Louisiana Metoyers,” *NGSQ* 70 (September 1982): 163–89, particularly 171. Also, Elizabeth Shown Mills, “Documenting a Slave's Birth, Parentage, and Origins (Marie Thérèse Coincoin, 1742–1816): A Test of ‘Oral History,’” *NGSQ* 96 (December 2008): 245–66. Mills, “Marie Thérèse Coincoin: Cane River Slave, Slaveowner, and Paradox,” chapter 1 in Janet Allured and Judith F. Gentry, *Louisiana Women: Their Lives and Times* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2009), 10–29.

38. NCA Doc. 1848, LeCourt to Monet, 16 November 1785.

39. 1787 Census of Natchitoches; Mills and Lennon, *Natchitoches Colonials*, 107.

later, the Monets sold the Grand Coast land and moved to Les Écores, taking with them the younger Dorothée and her birth family.<sup>40</sup>

The twenty-one-person workforce that Louis held in 1787 grew to forty during his last years at Les Écores, under management by an Anglo-American *économe* (farm manager).<sup>41</sup> Several new births on Monet's plantation were his children. His wife, who had been married off to her first husband at the age of twelve, remained barren.<sup>42</sup>

### *Inequity Separates the Two Dorothées*

As the two Dorothées came to adulthood at Les Écores, their father provided for their future—but not equitably. Louis's paternity of the half-Canneci Dorothée was open knowledge. In 1796, before his once-tidy signature became a ragged *X* mark, he filed with the commandant a petition for more land at the bluffs—for his oldest daughter.<sup>43</sup> The petition was granted, allowing her the right to develop 800 *arpents* (667 acres) adjacent to him.<sup>44</sup> Under his tutelage or arrangement, she sold half that raw land for funds needed to clear the rest of it. Her deed, penned by the Natchitoches post commandant, identified her as “Dorothée, a *métive*, the natural daughter of Louis Monet.”<sup>45</sup>

40. NCA Doc. 2283, Monet to Poissot, 13 February 1791; also Doc. 2574, Monet to LaBerry, 10 December 1794.

41. That farm manager, Tom Monroe, filed bills for his services when Louis's succession was opened; see NCA Doc. 3806, Monet succession, opened 12 November 1804. See also the succession's inventory of enslaved people.

42. The statement that Monet's widow was barren is based upon no children being baptized for her and the fact that no later marriage records reveal the existence of a child whose baptismal record has been destroyed. When she died as the estranged wife (and then widow) of a third husband whom she had already paid off, her legal heirs were siblings who opened no succession; her by-then-meager property was assumed by the heirs on whose land she then lived. For her death on 28 August 1829, see St. François Church (Natchitoches), Register 15, “Whites” 1829:9, “Marie Louise Lecompte Ve [Widow] Monete.” St. François, today, is called Immaculate Conception.

43. The last record Louis Monet is known to have signed was NCA Doc. 2795, Dame Widow LaCour to her son Zenon, 10 July 1797. The earliest document found with his *X* is dated March 1803, NCA Doc. 3782 (Louis Monet succession vouchers), Monette to Anty, promissory note. This LaCour family, which moved up to the Bluffs from Pointe Coupée should not be confused with the LeCourts. For disambiguation of the three separately rooted LaCour/LeCourt families that settled this stretch of river, see E. S. Mills, “The Forgotten People: Cane River Creoles,” *Facebook* (<https://www.facebook.com/ForgottenPeopleCaneRiverCreoles/posts/2110304659101310> : posted 28 September 2020), “Bits of Evidence No. 520: LaCour vs. LaCour vs. LeCourt/LaCour.”

44. Ory G. Poret, *Spanish Land-Grants in Louisiana, 1757–1802* (Ville Platte, La.: Provincial Press, 1999), 121.

45. NCA Doc. 2838, Dorothée to Maës, 7 April 1798. *Métive* (fem. *métisse*) was the French word for the European-Indigenous mixture. For *métissage* and its differences from Créolization, see Shannon Lee Dawdy, *Building the Devil's Empire: French Colonial New Orleans* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 5.

In 1801 Louis manumitted one of his enslaved people, the only one he would ever free: the “*mulâtresse* named Dorothée, aged twenty-two,” whom he “had acquired from Madame Marie Louise before his marriage to said lady.” That manumission took place as an act allowed by *coartación*, a Spanish law allowing slaves to purchase themselves—or third parties to do it for them—after petitioning the court for an estimation of their “value.” At Natchitoches, *coartación* also was a guise fathers used to manumit offspring they preferred not to acknowledge. So, in 1801 Louis and his friend Emanuel Derbanne made the 150-mile round trip to the post where Louis “agreed to the estimate that has been put on . . . Dorothée” and declared that Derbanne had paid him 800 piasters for her freedom.<sup>46</sup>

Louis, however, did not help the French-African Dorothée obtain land, and he created no known record to imply paternity. Nor is evidence known of a prior or subsequent relationship between Dorothée and Derbanne.<sup>47</sup> Neither this Dorothée nor her children would ever use the Derbanne name. While Dorothée herself used no surname, her son self-identified as Monet throughout his life and named his mother as Dorothée “Monete.”<sup>48</sup>

Louis’s death in 1804 left the childless Marie Louise Marguerite LeComte a wealthy woman and target for ambitious men.<sup>49</sup> She soon wed, disastrously, the newly appointed Anglo-American justice of the peace at Les Écores. Her suit for separation in 1809 was costly, but she maintained possession of the enslaved families she had inherited from her Dupré and Monet husbands.<sup>50</sup> Across the next quarter-century she freed several of those enslaved youths, including her late husband’s sons Louis Monet Jr. and François Nicolas Monet.<sup>51</sup> In manumitting

46. “Old Natchitoches Data,” vol. 2:40, typescript, Melrose Collection, Cammie G. Henry Research Center, Northwestern State University, Natchitoches.

47. Some confusion is caused for researchers by the existence of a third enslaved Dorothée, born on the plantation of Emanuel Derbanne’s father Pierre. That Dorothée, born 26 December 1792, was the godchild and namesake of the French-Indian Dorothée; Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729–1803*, entry 2699. This third enslaved Dorothée was left to Pierre Derbanne’s son Joseph in the will of Pierre’s widow. Emanuel Derbanne acquired that Dorothée in a slave exchange with his brother Joseph but sold her in 1810 to her wealthy kinsman of color who manumitted her. For the life of this third Dorothée, see Mills and Mills, *The Forgotten People*, rev. ed., 77–79.

48. Elizabeth Shown Mills, *Natchitoches Church Marriages, 1818–1850: Abstracts from the Registers of St. François des Natchitoches* (Tuscaloosa: Mills Historical Press, 1985), entry 375.

49. NCA Doc. 3806, Monet succession, opened 12 November 1804.

50. NCA Doc. 3711, James F. Porter and Marie Louise LeComte, separation agreement, 5 August 1809.

51. For Louis Jr.’s manumission, for which Widow Monet had to seek permission from the state legislature because he was still under thirty, see *Journal of the Senate of the State of Louisiana, 1825* (Baton Rouge: The Senate, 1825), 25, 27, 46; *Journal of the House of the State of Louisiana, 1825* (Baton Rouge: The Legislature, 1825), 39, 71, 73, 85. Also, Marie Louise LeComte to “her slave Louis Monette, aged 22,” folder 75, Cane River Notarial Collection, Historic New Orleans Collection, L. Kemper Williams Research Center, New Orleans. François Nicolas’s manumission record has not yet been found. He was free by 1834; see Natchitoches Miscellaneous Book 18:412, Gaënnié to Monette, 22 August 1834.

young Louis, Widow Monet called him “Louis Monette.” Both freedmen used their father’s surname openly within the community.

The following genealogical summary separates the lives and offspring of each Dorothee, emphasizing evidence that distinguishes one from the other. It identifies their siblings for whom evidence exists that Louis Monet was the father.

#### GENEALOGICAL SUMMARY

**1. Louis<sup>5</sup> Monet** (Elisabeth<sup>4</sup> Rachal, Pierre<sup>3</sup> Rachal, Elisabeth<sup>2</sup> Jagut, François<sup>1</sup> Jacut),<sup>52</sup> baptized June 1753, Poste St. Jean Baptiste des Natchitoches, Louisiana, as son of the Parisian-born soldier Mathieu Monet and wife Elisabeth Rachal. He married 11 October 1785, the widow of Baptiste Dupré: **Marie Louise Marguerite LeComte**, born April 1757, daughter of Jean Baptiste LeComte and Marguerite LeRoy. Marie Louise Marguerite died 28 August 1829; she lies buried at Shallow Lake Cemetery on the plantation of her brother Ambroise LeComte.<sup>53</sup> Louis died 1 November 1804 at his Les Écores plantation just above the parish line dividing Natchitoches from Rapides; his burial site is unknown.<sup>54</sup> The Monet marriage produced no children. Evidence suggests that Louis fathered at least six children by enslaved women.

Child of Louis Monet by **Thérèse**, a Canneci Indian enslaved by Louis Mathias LeCourt de Presle:

- + 2. i. **DOROTHÉE<sup>6</sup> MONET**, French-Indian, consistently called “Canneci” and “free woman of color.” Born 24 September 1774, Les Écores; died there 22 July 1820. She had a relationship, about 1801–10, with her father’s French-Créole first cousin **Étienne Rachal**.<sup>55</sup> Her children used the surnames Monet and Rachal.

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52. For image copies of documents defining Louis Monet’s Rachal ancestry, see Mills, “Bits of Evidence” nos. 350–57.

53. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729–1803*, entry 562 (baptism of Louis), 651 (baptism of Louise Marguerite), 1093 (marriage). Also, St. François Parish, Register 15, “Whites” burials, 1829:17, “Marie Louise Lecompte, Ve [widow] Monete.” Shallow Lake Cemetery, long abandoned, lies in Section 43 T7N R6W.

54. NCA Docs. 3202 and 3806, succession of Louis Monet. The likeliest site—the oldest known cemetery in his region—is the Wise Church Cemetery on the land settled by Louis Rachal in the 1760s. The earliest surviving iron crosses, when the author first visited the cemetery in 1971, dated only to the 1830s. Surviving church registers show that the LeComtes, upon settling at Shallow Lake, set up a burial ground on their land for those who died on the upper reaches of Rivière aux Cannes. It is likely that a similar burial ground was established down at Les Écores on the land of Rachal, rather than that of the often-absent LeCourt.

55. Succession of Marie Jeanne LeRoy, 20 April 1778 inventory citing Dorothee’s mother and birthdate. Also, Natchitoches Ph., Succession Book 3:22–25, Dorothee Monet; Office of the Clerk of Court. For Étienne Rachal, see the subsequent discussion in text.

Child of Louis Monet by **Marguerite**, a native of Guinea enslaved by Jean Baptiste Dupré and Louis Monet:<sup>56</sup>

- + 3.    ii. DOROTHÉE<sup>6</sup> MONET, French African, consistently called “mulatress” and “free woman of color.” Born 31 October 1777, on the Grand Coast, Red River (now Cane River), post of Natchitoches;<sup>57</sup> last on record, September–December 1821 in the company of her daughter’s French-African husband Pierre Metoyer Jr. and his brother, Pierre-Toussaint Metoyer.<sup>58</sup> Her children used the surnames Monet and Cloutier.

Children of Louis Monet by **Marie Françoise**, a black Créole born at Natchitoches, enslaved by Jean Baptiste Dupré and Louis Monet:<sup>59</sup>

- 4.    iii. FLORENTIN<sup>6</sup> MONET, *pardo*, manumitted by Louis Monet at baptism 18 December 1791—apparently died young.<sup>60</sup>
- 5.    iv. FRANÇOIS NICOLAS MONET, baptized 22 February 1797 at seventeen months;<sup>61</sup> manumitted by 1834 when he bought freedom for his daughter Marie Zélia, fifteen.<sup>62</sup>

56. NCA Doc. 1839, marriage contract of Louis “Monnet” and Widow Baptiste Dupré.

57. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729–1803*, entry 2326.

58. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1800–1826*, entry 1438. Both brothers were named Pierre. In their culture, most infants were named by and often for their godparents. Thus, Pierre-Toussaint was named Pierre, even though he had an older brother Pierre, because his godfather was named Pierre. To distinguish between the two brothers, the younger’s call-name was his middle name, Toussaint.

59. Marie Françoise was the daughter of Marie Thérèse Coincoin and a half-sister of Pierre and Toussaint Metoyer, above. Françoise, at seven, was illegally sold to Dupré; see Mills and Mills, *Forgotten People*, rev. ed., 15–16, 47–48, 51, 53, 92–93, 100. Françoise also had another son who used the surname Monet: Charles, who was inventoried as aged one and a half in 1785. He was manumitted by Widow Monet on 3 June 1824; Natchitoches Ph., Conveyance Book 15:74; Office of the Clerk of Court. A carpenter, Charles died unmarried in 1827, with his by-then free mother reporting his death and renouncing his succession; Succession Book 6:118–24. Usage of a surname other than the mother’s almost always represented a claim to paternity in this society. However, most records call Charles *noir* (the French term for a male of full-African ethnicity), rather than *mulâtre* (the term for a male considered half-African and half-European), suggesting he was not Monet’s son or was unusually dark for a half-French man.

60. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729–1803*, no. 2650. Spanish priests sent to Louisiana preferred the terms *pardo* and *moreno*, for *light* and *dark*, as opposed to more specific terms for exact mixtures.

61. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729–1803*, no. 3145.

62. Natchitoches Ph., Miscellaneous Book 18:412, Gaiënnié to Monet; Office of the Clerk of Court. Gaiënnié had purchased his plantation and ninety-three enslaved people from Alexis Cloutier, first cousin of Louis Monet Sr. and brother-in-law of Widow Monet; Natchitoches Ph., Conveyance Book 12:211–15. Cloutier had purchased the land and its workforce from the Widow Monet on 20 August 1818; NCA Doc. 4941.



Child of Louis Monet by **Cécile**, daughter of deceased Native American Catherine, enslaved by Jean Baptiste Dupré; Cécile was manumitted as a child by Dupré's will:<sup>63</sup>

6. v. MARIE<sup>6</sup> LOUISE PERINE CÉCILE aka MONET, born about 1788; no baptismal record found; died before 11 March 1824.<sup>64</sup> By an Anglo newcomer, **Dr. James F. Porter** (justice of the peace for the district of Les Écores) she bore two sons: Jacques, born 25 December 1802,<sup>65</sup> and Louis, born about 1813.<sup>66</sup> In 1809, after Porter wed Widow Monet and purchased part of Dorothée Monet's concession, he donated a parcel to the seven-year-old Jacques, citing the boy as his son "by a free mulatress Marie Louise, daughter of Cécile, a free woman of color."<sup>67</sup> When Jacques married on 24 August 1830, he cited his mother's given name as "Perine," not "Marie Louise."<sup>68</sup> When Louis married on 14 May 1833, he cited his mother as "Perine Cécile."<sup>69</sup> Louis's 1835 burial record identifies his mother as Marie Perine Monet.<sup>70</sup>

Child of Louis Monet by **Marie Louise LeComte**, French-African daughter of Françoise (above) by the French Créole Ambroise LeComte, brother of Widow Dupré; enslaved by the Dupré estate and Louis Monet:<sup>71</sup>

7. vi. LOUIS<sup>6</sup> MONET, born 25 December 1802;<sup>72</sup> freed 2 May 1825 by his father's widow;<sup>73</sup> civilly married **Marie Louise Coton-Maïs** on 17 May 1825, with church ratification on 23 July 1829.<sup>74</sup> He was called "Louis Monette" by

63. NCA Doc. 1554, succession of Jean Baptiste Dupré, August–September 1781.

64. Succession Book 5:253, succession of Dr. James F. Porter. On that date "Louis Metoyer, fmc" (free man of color), petitioned the court saying that "Jacques Porter & Louis Porter two free children of color under the age of Puberty are without father or mother, that he is related to them and wishes to be appointed their tutor." Jean Baptiste [Louis] Metoyer, Jean Baptiste [Augustin] Metoyer, Auguste Metoyer, Jean Baptiste Dominique Metoyer, and Joseph Metoyer were ordered to the family meeting. Louis Metoyer is the only one of his generation for whom some kinship to the boys has been found. Louis's daughter Marie Rose married Jean Baptiste Balthasar, brother of Cécile.

65. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1800–1826*, entry 49.

66. St. François Register 15, burial section "free people of color and slaves," no. 1835:2 (Louis Porter, aged 22).

67. NCA Doc. 3739, "James F. Porter, Esquire," donation to "James Porter, son."

68. Mills, *Natchitoches Church Marriages, 1818–1850*, entry 175, Porter–Coton-Maïs.

69. *Ibid.*, entry 242, Porter–Metoyer.

70. St. François Register 15, section "free people of color and slaves," no. 1835:2.

71. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729–1803*, no. 2404. Marie Louise, born on the Dupré plantation before Widow Dupré married Monet, was allowed to openly use the surname of her white father (her mistress's brother Ambroise LeComte). She was purchased and manumitted in 1835 by her son Louis Monet Jr., who had been freed by his father's widow (and his own great-aunt); see Gaiennié to Monette, 23 March 1835, folder 396, Cane River Notarial Collection. For more on this enslaved family, see Natchitoches Parish Court files, Heirs of Dupré v. Cloutier, microfilm PC 22, Clerk of Court's Office.

72. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1800–1826*, entry 1838.

73. Marie Louise LeComte (Widow Monet) to "her slave Louis Monette, aged 22," folder 75, Cane River Notarial Collection.

74. Mills, *Natchitoches Church Marriages, 1818–1850*, entry 152.

Widow Monet when she freed him. His father-in-law's will of 1834 calls him "Palière Louis Monet."<sup>75</sup>

**2. Dorothee<sup>6</sup> Monet** (Louis<sup>5</sup> Monet, Elisabeth<sup>4</sup> Rachal, Pierre<sup>3</sup> Rachal, Elisabeth<sup>2</sup> Jagut, François<sup>1</sup> Jacut), French and Indian, born 24 September 1774, Les Écores. She died there unmarried, 22 July 1820.<sup>76</sup> Consistently called "Canneci" and "free woman of color," Dorothee had only one known relationship, dating provably from 1807–11 and apparently as early as 1801: **Étienne Rachal**, born about 1775–77, son of the French Créole Jacques Rachal and his French Créole and Gypsy wife.<sup>77</sup>

Dorothee's baptism on 29 December 1775 would allow her privileges denied to most enslaved children. Her owner, retired officer Louis Mathias LeCourt de Presle, took her to the post, where his old friend, Commandant Athanase Manguet de Mézières, served as her godfather.<sup>78</sup> All other enslaved children in LeCourt's settlement, including Dorothee's siblings by different fathers, were baptized by a passing priest using Rivière aux Cannes neighbors as godparents.

Freed under Spanish Louisiana's general emancipation of Native Americans, Dorothee remained with her birth family. At LeCourt's death, they stayed on with his heirs.<sup>79</sup> When Dorothee's father Louis Monet moved to Les Écores with a wife in 1792, Louis acknowledged his paternity of Dorothee and her relationship with his wife seemed cordial. After Louis helped her obtain a sizable land grant, she remained in the Monet enclave. A doctor's bill submitted to her father's succession in 1805 showed treatment of Dorothee's young daughters, "the three sisters," being charged to her father.<sup>80</sup>

After Monet's death, Dorothee did not prosper as an independent woman. The land her father helped her acquire was her main source of income, generated primarily by selling off parcels.<sup>81</sup> By 1807 she had acquired an enslaved woman, Susanne, whom she rented to a neighbor to tend his ill wife for sixteen months. Dorothee also wet-nursed the neighbor's

75. Conveyance Book 21:38, will of Antoine Coton-Mais. *Palière* is a short form of the French surname Despallière.

76. NCA Doc. 1285, succession of Marie Jeanne LeRoy, inventory citing Dorothee's mother and birthdate. Also, Succession Book 3:22–25, Dorothee Monet.

77. No baptismal record has been found for Étienne and no succession file for his parents. His paternity is stated in the post's 1794 Public Works Roster, where he appears as "Rachal, Étienne, Son of Jacq.;" Natchitoches Parish Records Collection, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge. The roster is translated in Mills and Lennon, *Natchitoches Colonials*, especially 171. For Étienne's mother's identity, see Elizabeth Shown Mills, "Assimilation? Or Marginalization and Discrimination? Romani Settlers of the Colonial Gulf (Christophe Clan)," *Historic Pathways* (<https://www.historicpathways.com/download/Romani8Jan2016.pdf> : posted 2011), 66–71.

78. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729–1803*, entry 2278.

79. 1787 Census of Natchitoches; Mills and Lennon, *Natchitoches Colonials*, 112. Native Americans were not enumerated; twelve "slaves" (unnamed) were attributed to the LeCourt household.

80. NCA Doc. 3782 (Louis Monet succession vouchers).

81. NCA Doc. 2838, Dorothee to Maës, 7 April 1798; Doc. 3710, Dorothee to Porter, 1809; Conveyance Book 2:66–67, Dorothee to Rachal, 19 November 1810.

newborn child during that illness.<sup>82</sup> By 1811, when the United States adjudicated Dorothee's claim for land held under Spanish title, she owned just 50.77 acres of the original 677.<sup>83</sup> A year before her death she swapped homesteads with a French-Créole neighbor, who lived a few farms away. Her will bequeathed five arpents of that to "my sister Rosalie, Widow Guillori." Her children shared the remaining land and the \$1,800 proceeds from her succession sale.<sup>84</sup>

Under Louisiana's civil law, Dorothee's status as French and Indian would have allowed her to choose a husband of any color—White, Black, Indian, or multiracial. Her only known choice was a man she could not marry under *church* law—her father's White first cousin, Étienne Rachal. Like Louis Monet, Étienne was orphaned young.<sup>85</sup> Monet volunteered to be his tutor (financial guardian) to manage the child's inheritance until he reached adulthood, while Étienne lived with his godfather Étienne Verger.<sup>86</sup>

At Verger's death in June 1801, young Rachal moved to Monet's home at the bluffs, where Dorothee had just borne twins who would use the surname Rachal as adults. Apparently, Étienne's relationship with Monet was close. Bills submitted in Monet's estate settlement covered charges made by Étienne.<sup>87</sup>

After Monet's death, Dorothee's relationship with Étienne was openly acknowledged, even by the parish priest.<sup>88</sup> In 1810, the year Dorothee bore her last child, she conveyed ten arpents of her land to Étienne, but the relationship did not last. In 1815 he appeared at the baptismal font at Natchitoches with a child said, in the ragged remains of the record, to be the legitimate son of Étienne Rachal and [—?—]lise Ramon or Poirier.<sup>89</sup>

82. NCA Doc. 3720, vouchers for combined successions of Jean Pierre Cloutier and his widow, previously the widow of Jean Louis Hopok; specifically, the bill submitted by Dorothee on 20 April 1809.

83. *ASP-PL*, 2:847.

84. Conveyance Book 8:32, 28 January 1819, Monet and Goye. Succession Book 3:22–25, for 13 July 1820 will and proceedings; Succession Book 4:166–67, final account. Rosalie, a daughter of the Canneci Thérèse, used the surname *Rachal*; no record names the father but he was likely one of the sons of Louis Rachal from the plantation next door. About 1797 Rosalie married the free tri-racial Louis Guillory of Opelousas, who lived as *Indien*; Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729–1803*, entry 2863, baptism of Marie Guillari. For Rosalie's surname usage, see *ASP-PL* 3:213, claim of Rosalie Rachal.

85. NCA Doc. 3806, Étienne Rachal to Widow Monet, 8 May 1805, receipt for "my rights in the succession of my father and mother, Louis Monet being my tutor."

86. 1787 Census of Natchitoches and 1793 Tax Roll (for Étienne Rachal living with Verger), and 1801 Church Census (June burial of Étienne Verger); translations in Mills and Lennon, *Natchitoches Colonials*, 105, 161, 193. For the role of godparents at Natchitoches specifically, based on a reconstitution of all colonial families from surviving church and civil records, see Elizabeth Shown Mills, "Family and Social Patterns of the Colonial Louisiana Frontier: A Quantitative Analysis, 1714–1803" (B.A. Honors Thesis, University of Alabama, 1981), 200–3; archived online at Mills, *Historic Pathways* (<https://www.historicpathways.com/download/famsocpat.pdf>).

87. NCA Doc. 3782 (Louis Monet succession vouchers).

88. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1800–1826*, entry 311.

89. Natchitoches Conveyance Book 2:66–67, Monette to Rachal. Also, Mills, *Natchitoches, 1800–1826*, entries 483 and 2794.

Children of Dorothée Monet, apparently all by the French Creole **Étienne Rachal**:

8. i. MARIE<sup>7</sup> LOUISE ADELAÏDE “ADELE” DOROTHÉ, aka RACHAL, a twin, born 5 February 1801 at Les Écores; died after 1838.<sup>90</sup> On 25 June 1820, she and her French Créole double-cousin **François Dorsino Rachal** (born June 1790 to Barthélemy Rachal  *fils*  Louis Jr. and Marie Françoise Laberry) presented for baptism an infant François Ursin Rachal, born 6 October 1819.<sup>91</sup> The child was identified there as their “natural” son and the one-quarter Native Adele, was deemed “a free woman of color.”<sup>92</sup> Her second child, a daughter Florentine, was baptized as the “natural daughter of Adel Dorothé, father unknown.”<sup>93</sup> In 1838 Adele presented a final child, baptized as Marie Florentine Cide, “daughter of **Jean B<sup>c</sup> Cide** and Adele Rachal, his wife”; that last record applied no color to Adele.<sup>94</sup>
9. ii. MARIE LOUISE ADALINE RACHAL, a twin, born 5 February 1801 at Les Écores. As “Marie Louise Adeline,” with no surname, she served on 25 June 1820 as godmother to her twin’s newborn son. On 5 October 1837, as “Adeline Rachal,” she sponsored a child of her sister Marie Céline.<sup>95</sup>
10. iii. LOUIS MONET [RACHAL?], born 15 February 1803 at Les Écores; he died after September 1829 leaving several offspring by **Oresille Jacques**, whose parentage and ethnicity have not been determined. By 1836, Oresille had married the Spanish-Créole José Marie Robles.<sup>96</sup> (For Oresille: given that no Jacques family resided before then on Rivière aux Cannes and given that all the children baptized on the same day were from Les Écores families, her origin might be sought on the plantation of the French Canadian Jacques St. André, the neighbor and in-law of Louis’s mother.<sup>97</sup>)
11. iv. MARIE THÉRÈSE ROSALIE RACHAL, born 6 July 1805 at Les Écores and baptized as “Indian.”<sup>98</sup> She was not found after her mother’s succession was settled in 1820.

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90. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1800–1826*, entry 69.

91. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729–1803*, entry 1626. François Rachal in 1815 had presented a child for baptism saying it was born legitimately to him in 1813 by a civil contract with Marie Porier. The contract has not been found. For Marie’s last known appearance in 1815, see Mills, *Natchitoches, 1800–1826*, entries 605, 678.

92. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1800–1826*, entry 1272.

93. St. François Register 6, entry 1830:61.

94. *Ibid.*, entry 1838:82, dated 16 May 1838, child born 20 February 1838.

95. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1800–1826*, entries 69 (baptism), 1272 (godmother); St. François Register 6, entry 1837:95 (godmother).

96. St. François Register 6, entries 1829:109–112, and 1836:29.

97. For the placement of Jacques St. André amid the Rachal-Monet cluster, see Surveyor General’s Office, “T.6.N — R.4.W, North Western District, Louisiana” [plat map], 2 October 1848; available from the Louisiana State Office of Lands, Baton Rouge. Jacques’s brother André St. André married Marie Rachal, Louis Monet’s niece and sister of Étienne Rachal; see Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729–1803*, entry 1589.

98. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1800–1826*, entry 171.

12. v. MARIE CÉLINE RACHAL, born about 1807 at Les Écores and baptized 29 December 1809 as “daughter of Étienne Rachal and Dorothee Monet.” Her godfather was the Jacques St. André mentioned under Louis Monet, individual 10.<sup>99</sup> By 1838, Céline had married civilly her French Créole cousin **Siméon Rachal**, a widowed son of Louis Rachal Sr. and Marie Louise LeRoy.<sup>100</sup>
13. vi. NARCISSE MONET aka RACHAL, born about 1810 at Les Écores, his baptismal and marriage records have not been found. Dorothee’s succession names him as her youngest child. By 1837, he had settled into a civil marriage with a French-German Créole **Marie Marcelite “Nolite” Christy**. Baptismal records of their children between 1840 and 1846, as well as the 1850 and 1860 censuses use the surname Monet. In these instances, they were considered White. As adults, their children used the surname Rachal, likely to avoid the “free person of color” label carried by all other Monets in the region.<sup>101</sup>

**3. Dorothee<sup>6</sup> Monet** (Louis<sup>5</sup> Monet, Elisabeth<sup>4</sup> Rachal, Pierre<sup>3</sup> Rachal, Elisabeth<sup>2</sup> Jagut, François<sup>1</sup> Jacut), French and African, consistently called “mulattress” and “free woman of color.” Born 31 October 1777 on the Grand Coast, Red River (now Cane River);<sup>102</sup> last on record there 17 December 1821.<sup>103</sup> Two relationships are known for Dorothee; a third is likely. **(1) Jean Baptiste Balthasar**, a manumitted *griffe*, was claimed as father by the son she bore in 1795.<sup>104</sup> **(2) Jean Pierre Cloutier** or his brother **Alexis Cloutier**, French Créole first cousins of Louis Monet, apparently fathered her daughter about December 1796. **(3) Pierre-Toussaint Metoyer**, a free-born man of color seemingly was her companion from at least 1810 until her last known record in 1821.<sup>105</sup>

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99. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1800–1826*, entry 311.

100. St. François Register 6, entry 1837:95. For Simeon’s first marriage and parentage, see Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729–1803*, entry 3452.

101. St. François Register 6, entry 1840:125; and Register 9, entries 1841:142, 1846:219. Also, 1850 U.S. census, Sabine Ph., La., pop. sch., fol. 119r (stamped), dwelling 219, family 221, Narcisse “Monetta” household; NARA microfilm M432, roll 239. 1860 U.S. census, Sabine Ph., La., pop. sch., Many post office, p. 5, dwell./fam. 33, N. Monette household; NARA microfilm M653, roll 423. For the records and name usages of Narcisse’s children, see the previously cited proof argument in Mills, “Backtracking a Cross-Racial Heritage ... Rachal and Monet.”

102. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729–1803*, entry 2326.

103. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1800–1826*, entry 1687.

104. Mills, *Natchitoches Church Marriages, 1818–1850*, entry 375 (Cyriaque Monet marriage). Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729–1803*, entry 3143 (baptism as Jean Baptiste). His full name, Jean Baptiste Cyriaque is provided in his manumission record; see Widow Monette to Jean Baptiste Cyriaque, 7 August 1829, folder 281, Cane River Notarial Collection. The term *griffe* usually referenced Native American and African parentage; Stephen Webre, “The Problem of Indian Slavery in Spanish Louisiana 1769–1803,” *Louisiana History* 25 (Spring 1984): 117–35, particularly p. 120; *JSTOR* (<https://www.jstor.org/stable/4232338>).

105. For the Cloutiers and Toussaint Metoyer, see the proof assembled in Dorothee’s profile.

Dorothee, born on the Baptiste Dupré's Grand Coast plantation, was baptized as the daughter of Marguerite. The Widow Dupré's subsequent marriage contract with Monet identifies Marguerite, mother of Dorothee, as a native of Guinea, about thirty-five in 1785. Marguerite has not been found thereafter, and her fate is unproved. Dupré's widow, Marie Louise Marguerite LeComte, had grown up with Louis Monet at Cane River in the LeComte-LeCourt-Rachal family cluster. Upon Dupré's death in 1781, Monet bought land next door to the widow, then wooed and wed her. Shortly before the marriage Monet bought the widow's land and enslaved people—including Dorothee and her mother. When the Monets moved to Les Écores in 1792, Dorothee went with them.<sup>106</sup>

At Les Écores, between 1795 and 1797, Dorothee brought two children into slavery: Jean Baptiste Cyriaque and Marie Henriette. Cyriaque's father, **Jean Baptiste Balthasar**, as named by Cyriaque at his marriage, had been born about 1774 to an illegally enslaved Native American mother, Catherine, on the Dupré plantation.<sup>107</sup> In his 1781 will, Dupré manumitted Catherine's two children, calling her son "Baptiste" a "*griffe*, aged seven."<sup>108</sup> As an adult, Baptiste settled at Hidden Hill, claiming land on 19 May 1806 adjacent to Jeanne LeRoy's 1762 grant.<sup>109</sup> About 1807 he married Marie Rose Metoyer, natural daughter of the now-famed Louis Metoyer of the National Historic Landmark known as Melrose Plantation.<sup>110</sup> Jean Baptiste Balthasar's will, probated in 1812, did not mention Dorothee's child as his son; he named only his legitimate children by Rose.<sup>111</sup>

Similarly, the baptismal record for Dorothee's second child, Marie Henriette, names no father. However, the record identifies the child as the *quadroon* daughter of the *mulâtresse* Dorothee, slave of Mr. Monet.<sup>112</sup> That daughter's self-identification later as Marie Henriette Cloutier points to two possible candidates for her father.<sup>113</sup> Louis Monet's aunt Marie Louise

106. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729–1803*, entry 2326; NCA Doc. 1554, succession of Jean Baptiste Dupré; NCA Doc. 1831, Dupré to Monet, sale; NCA Doc. 1839, Monet–Dupré marriage contract.

107. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729–1803*, entry 3143, "baptism of Jean Baptiste, aged two years, *mulâtre* son of Dorothee, *mulâtresse* slave of Mr. Monet." Mills, *Natchitoches Church Marriages, 1818–1850*, entry 375, Cyriaque Monet to Marie Marguerite Lecomte.

108. Will of Jean Baptiste Dupré, filed in the previously cited case, Heirs of Dupré v. Alexis Cloutier.

109. Claim B1831, S44&45 T6N R5W, Northwestern District; imaged at Louisiana Office of State Lands, *OSL: Search Historical Documents* (<https://wwwslodms.doa.la.gov/WebForms/DocumentViewer.aspx?docId=510.00059&category=H#248> also #142). Also, NCA Doc. 3153, McAlpin to Rachal, sale of land from the Jeanne LeRoy grant, bounded above by "Balthazard, a free mulatto" and below by Rachal.

110. The Balthasar-Metoyer marriage record, like many for this period, is missing or destroyed. For Marie Rose, see Mills and Mills, *Forgotten People*, 32, 43, 103–4, 113, 117, 122, 183, and 190.

111. Succession Book 1:49–54, Jean Baptiste, "free mulatto" and "man of color," with Louis Metoyer, executor.

112. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729–1803*, entry 3144. The French term *quadroon*, denoting a person of one-quarter African ancestry and three-quarters European ancestry, was in general usage not only in Louisiana but the American South. See Emily Clark, *The Strange History of the American Quadroon: Free Women of Color in the Revolutionary Atlantic World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 5, for definition as mathematically formulated by Thomas Jefferson.

113. Mills, *Natchitoches Church Marriages, 1818–1850*, entry 541 ("Anriette Cloutier ... daughter of Derotée" to Dupart). Also, St. François Register 6, entry 1840:55 (baptism of Marie Helvina Metoyer).

Rachal had married the French Canadian J. B. Alexis Cloutier. His succession, opened at Natchitoches after his April 1778 death, shows that he left two sons by Marie Louise: Alexis, born 1769, and Jean Pierre, born about 1777.<sup>114</sup> Alexis was married at the time Dorothée bore Marie Henriette.<sup>115</sup> Although marriage was no barrier to his fathering children by other enslaved women, Alexis resided near LeComte's settlement when the child was conceived.<sup>116</sup> His younger brother Jean Pierre married about a month after Marie Henriette's birth, roughly the same time that he acquired land adjacent to the Monet plantation at Les Écores and conveniently close to Dorothée.<sup>117</sup>

The French African Dorothée would not remain on the Monet plantation. In 1801 Louis Monet arranged for her freedom. Thereafter, all records place her on the Grand Coast, her birthplace, and always with same family (the Metoyers) and their enslaved people. In 1804 Dorothée stood as godmother to an enslaved child born on the plantation of a Grand Coast widow; the godfather was Jean Baptiste, slave of the French-born planter Pierre Metoyer. Again in 1806 she was godmother to a child born to Margueritte, a slave of Pierre Metoyer's former consort, Marie Thérèse Coincoin.<sup>118</sup>

In June 1810 Coincoin's and Pierre's bachelor son Toussaint Metoyer went down to Les Écores and arranged to buy Dorothée's daughter Henriette from the Widow Monet, a credit purchase for \$640. That debt was paid in November 1811, when Widow Monet made out the title to "Dorothée, a free mulâtresse," stating that both parties intended for Henriette to be free.<sup>119</sup> Meanwhile, the late-1810 census tallied three free people in Toussaint's household, plus a fourth person enslaved.<sup>120</sup> Seven years later Henriette married Toussaint's widowed brother, Pierre. The couple's daughter Marie Ozitte was baptized and legitimized that day; the baptismal record identifies the child's godparents as "Ciriac and Dorothée, both colored," namely, the child's uncle and grandmother.<sup>121</sup>

114. NCA Doc. 1284, succession of J. B. Alexis Cloutier. *Diocese of Baton Rouge: Catholic Church Records*, vol. 1, 1707–1769 (Baton Rouge: The Diocese, 1978), 152–53 (1767 baptism of Louis, b. 1765, but died young) and Alexis (b. 10 July 1769). Birth period of Jean Pierre calculated from age on 1787 Census of Natchitoches; Mills and Lennon, *Natchitoches Colonials*, 112.

115. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729–1803*, entry 1546.

116. For example, after Cloutier's marriage to Marie Françoise LeComte (a sister of Monet's widow), he fathered a son Augustin by the enslaved Françoise whom his wife had inherited from her first husband Joseph Dupré II; for Augustin, see Mills and Mills, *Forgotten People*, rev. ed., 32, 114, 195; and Mills, *Natchitoches Church Marriages: 1818–1850*, entry 10 (marriage of Augustin to the *griffe* Marie Thérèse Metoyer).

117. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729–1803*, entry 3419. *ASP-PL* 2:854, 3:229.

118. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1800–1826*, entries 1873, 2001.

119. Miscellaneous Book 1 (Dec. 1806–May 1811), 226, "Mary Louise LeCompte" to Toussaint Metoyer; NCA Doc. 4019, Marie Louise LeComte to Dorothée.

120. 1810 U.S. census, Natchitoches Ph., La., fol. 132 (penned), line 27, Toussaint Metoyer household; NARA microfilm M252, roll 10.

121. Natchitoches Ph., "Books 2 & 3: Marr. & Misc. (1816–1839)," 122 (marriage contract); Office of the Clerk of Court. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1800–1826*, entry 784 (marriage of Pierre Metoyer to "Henriette, natural daughter of Dorothée") and 2614–15 (baptisms of Marie Ozitte and Pierre Nerest Metoyer).

The Grand Coast 1820 census enumerates Toussaint and an unnamed female, both twenty-six to forty-five, with a male and female under the age of ten and four enslaved people.<sup>122</sup> The children in Toussaint's household are unidentified. In September to December 1821, Toussaint and Dorothée were joint godparents on three occasions: for a child of a free woman named Catherine; for an enslaved child born on the plantation of Toussaint's French Créole neighbor, Louis Barthélemy Rachal; and for an "English Negro" aged about twenty-two belonging to Toussaint's brother Pierre Metoyer. The following month Dorothée (but not Toussaint) stood as godparent of a "Guinea Negro," eighteen, belonging to Toussaint and Pierre's brother Louis Metoyer.<sup>123</sup> At that point, Dorothée drops from public records. Eleven years later, a few months before Pierre's death, Toussaint donated to Pierre's wife (Dorothée's daughter) an enslaved woman named Zabette, seventeen, "in consideration of the love and affection he entertained for Marie Henriette."<sup>124</sup>

Child of the French-African Dorothée Monet by **Jean Baptiste Balthasar**, *griffe*:

14. i. J.<sup>7</sup> B. CYRIAQUE MONET, born about 1795, Les Écores; married 28 November 1837, Isle Brevelle, **Marie Marguerite LeComte**, "major daughter of Magdeleine LeComte." At marriage, they legitimized three children: Baptiste, born about 1828; Marie Elina, born in September 1830 (1835?); and Marie Lise, born in October 1836. In that marriage record Cyriaque (aka Ciriac) identified himself as the son of Balthasar and "Dorothée Monete."<sup>125</sup>

Child of the French African Dorothée Monet by **Jean Pierre Cloutier** or, less likely, **Alexis Cloutier**, both French-Créole:

15. ii. MARIE<sup>7</sup> HENRIETTE CLOUTIER, quadroon, born about December 1796, Les Écores; died about 1878.<sup>126</sup> Henriette married: (1) **Pierre Metoyer Jr.**, free man of color, 31 December 1817;<sup>127</sup> and (2) **Émile Dupart**, free man of color, 14 November 1842.<sup>128</sup> At marriage, Henriette and Pierre legitimized

122. 1820 U.S. census, Natchitoches Ph., La., pop. sch., fol. 97 (stamped), line 39, Toussaint Metoyer household.

123. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1800–1826*, entries 1304, 1431, 1438, and 1687. Louis Barthélemy Rachal of the Grand Coast was not from the Louis Rachal branch that settled Les Écores. Barthélemy Sr., brother of Louis Sr. of Les Écores, settled the Grand Coast. Both named sons Louis Barthélemy.

124. Conveyance Book 30 (Donations): 10–11, Toussaint Metoyer to Marie Henriette, 23 April 1832.

125. Mills, *Natchitoches Church Marriages, 1818–1850*, entry 375.

126. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729–1803*, entry 3144. Also, Henry Safford, "Mem[oran]da got Feb. 23, 1882 fr[om] Nerestan Pre. Metoyer," attorney's file for Gaiennié v. Metoyer; Henry B. Safford Collection, Cammie G. Henry Research Center. In this case White descendants of the immigrant Pierre Metoyer sued the heirs of his natural son Pierre Metoyer, free man of color, over a piece of land ambiguously patented in the name "Pierre Metoyer."

127. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1800–1826*, entry 784.

128. Mills, *Natchitoches Church Marriages, 1818–1850*, entry 541.



two children: Marie Ozitte (born 14 January 1816; widow of Neuville LaCour [LeCourt] in 1882) and Pierre Nerest (born 1 April 1817; died after 1882). They subsequently had Marie Elisa (born 1819; unmarried in 1882), J. B. Delores (born 1821; died young), and Auguste Dorestan (born 1823). This last son was one of several men of the Metoyer family who moved to Tampico, Mexico, after the Civil War.<sup>129</sup> Four church records attribute to Henriette the surname Cloutier: the 1837 marriage of her son Nerest, the 1840 baptism of Nerest's first child, the 1841 marriage of her son Auguste Dorestan, and her own 1845 remarriage to Émile Dupart.<sup>130</sup>

#### SUMMATION

The opening line of L. P. Hartley's famed novel, *The Go-Between*, provides wise instruction: "The past is a foreign country: they do things differently there."<sup>131</sup> Understanding the past—learning the social conventions of each place and time, as alien or discomfiting as they may be today—is a crucial tool for correctly identifying people of the past and accurately placing them in families.

#### Appendix: Source Notes for Figure 1

1. Baptême de Pierre Archal [Rachal], 27 January 1698, Paroisse de St. Denis, unidentified register and page; photocopy and transcription provided 21 June 1971 by Archives Départementales de la Charente-Maritime, La Rochelle, France, to Elizabeth Shown Mills.

2. 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: Polyanthos, 1977), entry 793, burial of "Rachal dit St. Denis, soldier."

3. Baptisms for St. Laurent and other Parisian parishes of this era have been destroyed. The reconstitutions do not include a record for a Marianne Benoist with the parentage identified in her palace court record. Marianne's age is given as twenty in the charging documents; see Mss. 10652 and 12692, fond [collection] Bastille, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal; Archives Nationales, France. Barbara Allemand is thanked for finding one of Marianne's documents misfiled in MS 10652.

4. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729–1803*, entry 277, burial of Marianne Benoist.

5. Passenger List, *Duc de Noailles*, 12 September 1719, section: "Soldiers," for Étienne LeRoy, aged 30; Colonies G<sup>1</sup>464; Archives Nationales d'Outre Mer, Aix-en-Provence, France. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729–1803*, entry 191, cites his birthplace as Paris, Parish of St. Gervais

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129. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1800–1826*, entries 2614–2615 (Ozitte and Pierre Nerest). For those born after marriage and for the emigration of Auguste Dorestan to Tampico, see Safford, "Mem[oran]da got Feb. 23, 1882 fr[om] Nerestan Pre. Metoyer."

130. Mills, *Natchitoches Church Marriages, 1818–1850*, entries 374 (Nerest), 515 (Auguste Dorestan), and 541 (Marie "Anriette Cloutier" to Dupart). Also, St. François Register 6, entry 1840:55 (baptism of Marie Helvina Metoyer).

131. L. P. Hartley, *The Go-Between* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1953), 9.

[Germain?]. The reconstituted church records of the parish of St Germain Lauxerrois offer a 17 May 1681 baptism of one “Etienne, son of Louis LeRoy, bourgeois merchant of Paris and Claude Liegeois his wife,” godfather: Étienne LeRoy, “royal architect”; uncited image copy provided 23 February 1973 to Gary B. Mills by “Le Conservateur,” office of Le Directeur des Services d’Archives de Paris. Whether this baptism represents the Étienne LeRoy of Natchitoches has not been proved or disproved.

6. Death is bracketed between the baptism of his last child on 1 February 1741, when he was said to be living, and the remarriage of his widow on 31 July 1747; see Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729–1803*, entries 191 and 352.

7. St. Louis Cathedral (New Orleans), Book of Marriages A (1720–1730), pp. 5–6, Davion–Guillot marriage, cites her birthplace as Paris. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729–1803*, entry 352, Tricheley–Gilot marriage, gives her birthplace as “Chalanton, bishopric of Paris”—i.e., Charenton-le-pont, a commune in the suburbs of Paris. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729–1803*, entry 191, baptism of Marguerite LeRoy, states Louise Françoise was from “Conflame, Charenton.” Rue de Conflans is a major street in Charenton-le-pont.

8. Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729–1803*, entry 795, burial of Françoise Guillot.

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## A Conscientious County Clerk

In the 1820s James Perry, the Clerk of Superior Court in Tattnall County, Georgia, was meticulous in recording the reasons jurors were excused from duty, providing details about the lives of these citizens that may not otherwise be known.

### **Monday, 23 October 1820**

“William Blackman one of the grand jury at this term – Excused from serving on account of his being liable to Sustain injury from high waters.”

“John Mattox also excused from serving on the grand jury, on account of the ill health of his brother.”

“William McElvey a grand juror excused from Serving on account of his being a minister of the Gospel” (p. 254)

### **Monday, 9 April 1821**

“John McArthur a grand juror, excused being over Sixty years of age and infirm – John Rogers a petit juror excused.” (p. 268)

### **Monday, 14 April 1823**

“Ordered that Ivey Smith a grand Juror be excused from serving on account of old age” (p. 289)

“Henry Strickland excused on account of sickness of his family.

James Conner excused on account of ill health

John Rogers excused on account of destruction of his farm by fire” (p. 294)

*Source:* Tattnall Co., Ga., Superior Court, Minutes (1805–23), pp. 254, 268, 289, 294; microfilm reel 206,463, item 2; Family History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah.

*Contributed by Brian H. Nilsson*