

INTRODUCTION

The section of Louisiana known today as the "Florida Parishes" -- consisting of the eight parishes of East and West Feliciana, East Baton Rouge, St. Helena, Livingston, Tangipahoa, Washington, and St. Tammany -- was included in the area known as the province of "Louisiana" claimed by France until 1763. Under the terms of the Treaty of Paris which in that year ended the Seven Years War, or the French and Indian War, this territory became English along with all the territory east of the Mississippi River except the Isle of Orleans*. Even the Spanish province of "Florida" (approximately the present state of Florida) became English at that time.

The British, in the Proclamation of 1763, gave "West Florida" a name and a northern boundary, the thirty-first parallel between the Mississippi and Appalachian Rivers. Four years later the British wished to include all white settlers below the junction of the Yazoo with the Mississippi River in the new province, thereby more than doubling the area and raising the northern boundary to just above the site of the present city of Vicksburg, Mississippi. This action embraced the southern half of the present states of Mississippi and Alabama in West Florida.

During the American Revolution Spain (which had acquired Louisiana west of the Mississippi River and the Isle of Orleans at the time the British had acquired Louisiana east of the Mississippi River in 1763) conquered the English settlements in West Florida. These Spain retained under the Treaty of Paris which ended that war in 1783. However, the

*The Isle of Orleans included that land area surrounding the City of New Orleans, bounded by Bayou Manchac, Lake Pontchartrain, the Gulf of Mexico, and the Mississippi River.

area between the two northern boundaries which the English had established was in dispute between the new United States and Spain, who again owned the rest of Florida - both East and West - as a result of the latest Treaty of Paris. This dispute continued until 1798, when the United States was finally put in possession of the area to the thirty-first parallel (the lower boundary line), which was re-established as the northern boundary of West Florida.

When the United States purchased from France in 1803 the real estate west of the Mississippi River known as the "Louisiana Purchase," the United States made feeble claims on the area of West Florida remaining to Spain.

Meantime, several abortive attempts at rebellion against Spain were made within the area. On 23 September 1810 a successful armed revolt occurred, and for a short time the "Republic of West Florida" was an established fact. Independent West Florida included the territory from the Mississippi River to the Perdido River. Actual possession, however, was taken to a point just west of Mobile.

By presidential proclamation James Madison on 7 December 1810 declared West Florida to be a part of the United States based on the Louisiana Purchase. Only that part of West Florida presently incorporated in the state of Louisiana was seized in 1810. The next year that portion now included in the state of Mississippi was taken; the area around Mobile was gradually taken, and Mobile itself in April of 1813. The remainder of West Florida, now a part of the state of Florida, was purchased by the United States along with the rest of Florida in 1819 and actually transferred to the United States in 1821.

Almost as soon as the territory was taken, in 1811, the County of Feliciana was organized as the thirteenth county* of the Territory of Orleans. This

*The Territory of Orleans (organized shortly after the Louisiana Purchase) was in 1805 divided into twelve counties. Two years later these were subdivided into parishes. This dual county-parish system continued for about four decades.

included all the area to the Perdido River, the present boundary between Florida and Alabama. The County of Feliciana as originally organized contained six parishes: Feliciana, East Baton Rouge, St. Helena, and St. Tammany (in present-day Louisiana), Viloxi (from the Pearl River to the Bay of Biloxi), and Pascagoula. The latter two were detached from Feliciana County when Orleans Territory became the state of Louisiana in 1812 and annexed to the Mississippi Territory, ultimately to become the Gulf Coast sections of the states of Mississippi and Alabama.

Washington Parish was created from St. Tammany in 1819. Feliciana Parish was divided into East and West Feliciana Parishes in 1824. Livingston Parish was created from St. Helena in 1832 and Tangipahoa in 1869 from the four parishes of St. Helena, Livingston, Washington, and St. Tammany, each contributing a corner-section to the new parish.

It is interesting to note that according to the federal census of 1820, by far the most heavily populated sections of Louisiana's Florida Parishes were the two western-most parishes - those bordering the Mississippi River. Of approximately 2400 householders (figures given are approximate) listed in the 1820 census for the area, some 1500 were concentrated in Feliciana (975) and East Baton Rouge (600). The three eastern parishes boasted only approximately 865 householders: St. Helena - 375, Washington - 300, and St. Tammany - 190.

The 1812 Tax List for St. Tammany Parish is published here for the first time. This list is housed in the office of the Clerk of Court of St. Tammany Parish, Covington, Louisiana. There are thirteen columns for information shown on the list. Due to lack of space, only the first four columns are reproduced herein: number of men included in the household, number of women, number of children, and number of slaves. Other columns show improvements, cotton gins, schooners, retailers of spiritous liquor above one quart, stud horses, wagons, using (work) horses, stock cattle, and tax paid. Totals show 322 men, 239 women, 835 children, 301 slaves, no cotton gins, 18 schooners,

8 retailers of spiritous liquor, 11 stud horses, 13 wagons, 511 work horses and nearly 10,000 head of cattle.

Also in the Clerk's office in Covington is a short list of persons who had left the Parish of St. Tammany or where no property had been found to satisfy taxes for 1820. This list includes: Pleasant Burton - residence not known to Collector of Taxes; Thomas Gibson - removed to New Orleans; George Robertson - removed to New Orleans; Thomas Shields - "Nulla Bona" - resident of New Orleans; William Davidson - removed to the state of Mississippi; Henry Henry - deceased; Mrs. Penny - "Nulla Bona" resident of St. Tammany Parish; Duke Manette - resident of New Orleans with his 5 slaves assessed for 1820; and Ann Ervin - residence, Madisonville. These names have a double asterick (**) in the Index following.

Both of these lists are reproduced through the courtesy of Mr. Robert Fitzmorris, Clerk of Court for St. Tammany Parish, and my thanks are extended to him for his interest and cooperation.

Where more than one individual with the same name appears in more than one parish in the Index, the different parishes are shown by the name; hence, a Robert Anderson was listed in St. Helena and also in Washington Parishes. A number in parenthesis () following a parish indicates that number of individuals with that particular name in that parish; hence, there are two John Baileys listed in St. Helena Parish in this census.

A single asterick (*) following a name or parish in the Index indicates that particular name is also found on the 1812 St. Tammany Tax List. Where the name is followed only by an asterick with no parish indicated, the name is listed only on the Tax List and not in the census. Hence, Aaron Adams is listed on the St. Tammany 1812 Tax List as well as the 1820 Washington Parish census; whereas, Joseph Ard is found only on the 1812 Tax List for St. Tammany Parish, indicating he had either died or moved from the West Florida area by 1820. Other names showing more than one asterick appear on the Tax List the number of times the asterick appears; hence, the name of John

Richardson appears twice, while John Smith appears three times.

A [?] indicates the spelling is not clear. Other spellings of names are shown in brackets []; other spellings followed by ? in [] indicates possible intended spellings. Straight lines indicate given names could not be read. In a few instances no given names were shown. A surname in brackets [] by a given name indicates a different spelling of the surname from the one shown.

Sources for the historical background given herein are Isaac Joslin Cox's The West Florida Controversy, 1798-1813 (Baltimore, 1918); Stanley Clisby Arthur's The Story of the West Florida Rebellion (St. Francisville, La., 1935); and Mary Elizabeth Sanders' "Louisiana County-Parish System" in the Louisiana Genealogical Register (October, 1955).

I am very grateful to Mrs. Bertha P. Neff, Archivist and Deputy Clerk in the Clerk of Court's Office, St. Tammany Parish, Covington, Louisiana, for her help in assembling and interpreting this information.

Mary Elizabeth Sanders

Lafayette, La.
September, 1972