

LOUISIANA

HISTORY

Native nations, French and Spanish colonists, Africans, Acadians and Americans all helped build Louisiana.

The First Peoples

People have lived in Louisiana for more than 10,000 years. Some built great earth mounds, like the ones at Poverty Point. By the 1600s, the Caddo farmed in the northwest. The Chitimacha, Houma and Atakapa lived farther south. They grew corn, hunted, fished and traded along the rivers. In 1699, French explorers saw a red pole that marked the edge of two nations' hunting grounds. They called the place Baton Rouge, French for red stick.

A French Colony

France claimed Louisiana in 1682 and started a **colony**. In 1718, Jean-Baptiste Le Moyne de Bienville founded New Orleans on a bend of the Mississippi River. The French and the Chitimacha fought a war that ended with a peace agreement in 1718. In 1729, Natchez warriors attacked a French fort upriver and killed more than 200 colonists. French soldiers and Choctaw allies fought back and defeated the Natchez by 1731.

Spanish Louisiana

In 1762, France gave Louisiana to Spain. Spain ruled for nearly 40 years. Acadians from Canada and settlers from Spain's Canary Islands started farms. In 1779, the Spanish governor Bernardo de Galvez captured Baton Rouge from the British. Fires burned much of New Orleans in 1788 and 1794. The city was rebuilt in brick, so much of the old French Quarter was built in a Spanish style.

Purchase and Statehood

Spain returned Louisiana to France in 1800. In 1803, the United States bought it. Louisiana became the 18th state on April 30, 1812. Britain attacked New Orleans in the War of 1812. On January 8, 1815, Andrew Jackson's army beat the British in the Battle of New Orleans. His army included soldiers, free Black men, Choctaw fighters and Jean Lafitte's pirates.



Sugar, Cotton and Steamboats

The first steamboat reached New Orleans in 1812. Soon steamboats carried crops from the whole Mississippi Valley to the city. It became one of the country's busiest **ports**. **Plantations** grew sugarcane and cotton. Most of that work was done by enslaved people. In an 1835 **treaty**, the Caddo sold their Louisiana land to the United States and moved west. Louisiana left the Union in 1861. Union ships captured New Orleans in 1862. Slavery ended here by 1865.

Building Louisiana

After the war, people built railroads, sawmills and towns. Drillers struck oil near Jennings in 1901. In 1927, the Mississippi flooded a large part of the state. Engineers then built higher levees and spillways. A 24-mile bridge across Lake Pontchartrain opened in 1956. In 2005, Hurricane Katrina flooded most of New Orleans, and people rebuilt. Four Native tribes have their governments in Louisiana today.

LOUISIANA THROUGH TIME

1682	1718	1762	1803	1812	1815	1862	1901	2005
La Salle claims Louisiana for France	New Orleans is founded	France gives Louisiana to Spain	The Louisiana Purchase	Louisiana becomes the 18th state	Battle of New Orleans	Union ships capture New Orleans	Oil is struck near Jennings	Hurricane Katrina

PEOPLE TO KNOW

Bienville	French colonist who founded New Orleans in 1718.
Norbert Rillieux	New Orleans inventor. His machine made sugar cheaper.
Louis Armstrong	Jazz trumpet player born in New Orleans.
Clementine Hunter	Painted scenes of farm life near Natchitoches.
Michael DeBakey	Heart surgeon born in Lake Charles.

WORDS TO KNOW

colony	a settlement ruled by a faraway country
port	a place where ships load and unload
plantation	a very large farm that grows crops to sell
treaty	a written agreement between nations