

# A Brief History of the Cajuns From Acadia to Louisiana

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# Filles a la Cassette

## Filles a la Baleine

- Similar to Filles du Roi.
- Filles a la Cassette (Cassette refers to the case or cassette in which they brought their belongings to Louisiana).
- They were sent to Louisiana to marry French soldiers of the King.
- Like the Filles du Roi the King provided a dowry for each girl.
- Filles a la Baleine were 90 women prostitutes and/or criminals sent from the La Salpetriere prison in Paris to New Orleans on the ship La Baleine in 1721 to marry Louisiana colonists without a dowry.

# Filles a la Casette 1728



# Le Grand Derangement and Cajuns

- Approximately 3,000 Acadians from Canada eventually ended up in Houma and Terrebonne Parish.
- The first group of Acadians arrived in Louisiana on the Santo Domingo from Saint-Domingue (Haiti) on February 27, 1765.
- Acadians became Cajuns as they mixed with the French and Spanish and native peoples.
- The term Cajun was given to those who spoke French and were generally of lower socio-economic status.

# Language

- Cajun French is an oral language, not a written one.
- Recently a dictionary has been produced of Cajun French words, but Cajun words change with localities.
- Also, Cajun French is being taught in some schools and universities in Louisiana. But the language remains mainly oral, passed from parent to child.
- Speaking Cajun French in school was against the law in Louisiana as recently as the 1960s.
- Cajun French is full of nautical terms and Celtic influences coming from Brittany and Normandy in France.
- There are also many English words used while speaking Cajun French. This is also true for the present-day French speakers in the Canadian Maritime Provinces.
- Cajun French is still spoken in many of the rural communities of South Louisiana. However, in Louisiana cities it can be hard to hear anyone speaking Cajun.

# Yesterday

- When the Acadians arrived in New Orleans they were not welcomed. The French authorities looked down upon them as illiterate peasants.
- They were sent into the swamps and lowlands of Southern Louisiana where their descendants still live today.
- The French/New Orleans culture maintained a stigma that Cajuns were stupid, poor, ill-educated, and not worth much well into the 1960s.

# Today

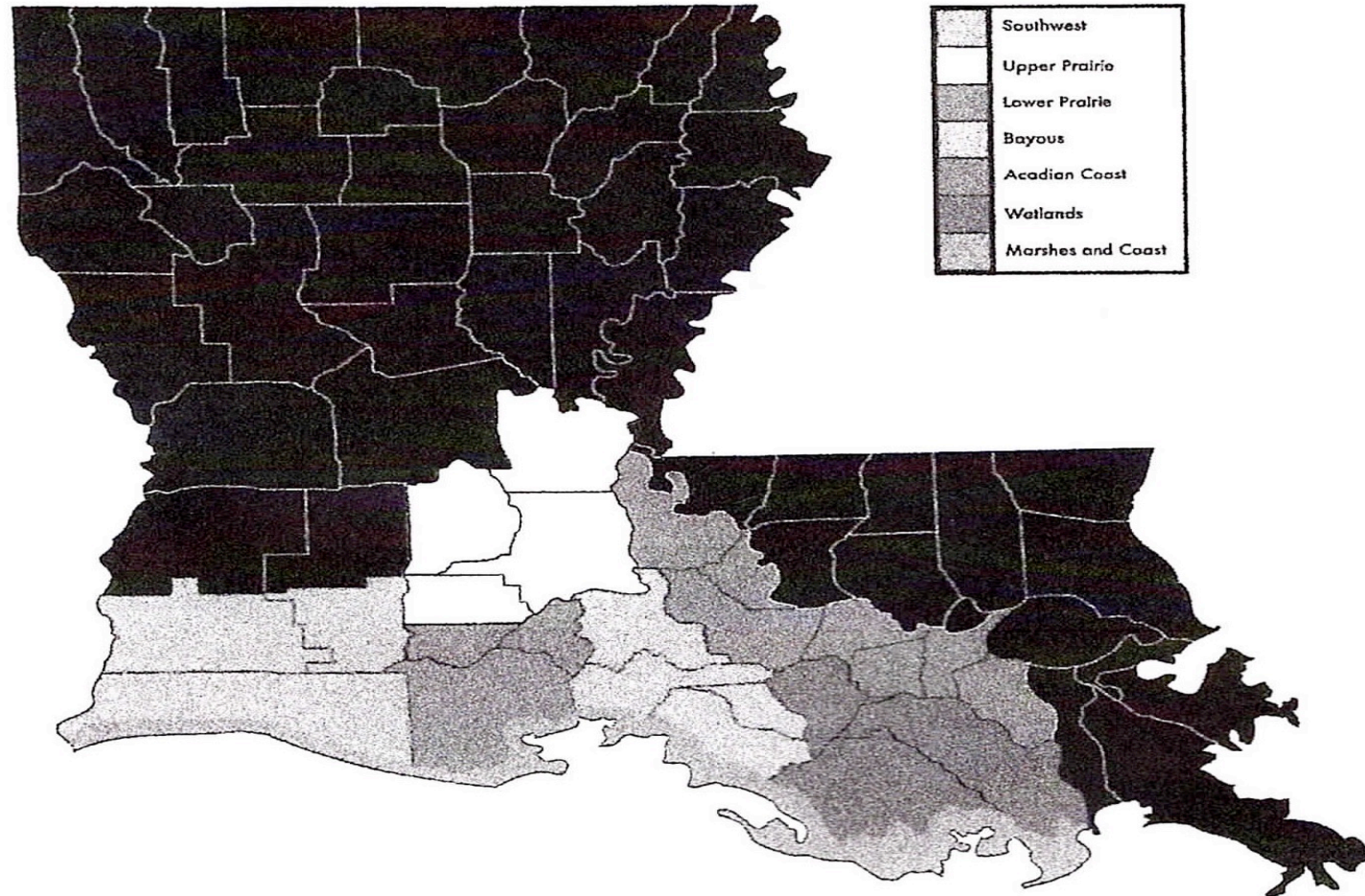
- Attitudes begin to change through food and music. In 1979 Chef Paul Prudhomme introduced the US to Cajun food with his famous restaurant K-Paul's Louisiana Kitchen in New Orleans.
- Cajun music began to leave the bayous and seep into the popular music culture along with food.
- Today, Cajun music, food, and culture can be found in the far reaches of the globe, from here in Portland to France and beyond.
- Cajuns are no longer people who have to be ashamed that they speak French or live in a distinct, unique, bon temps culture.

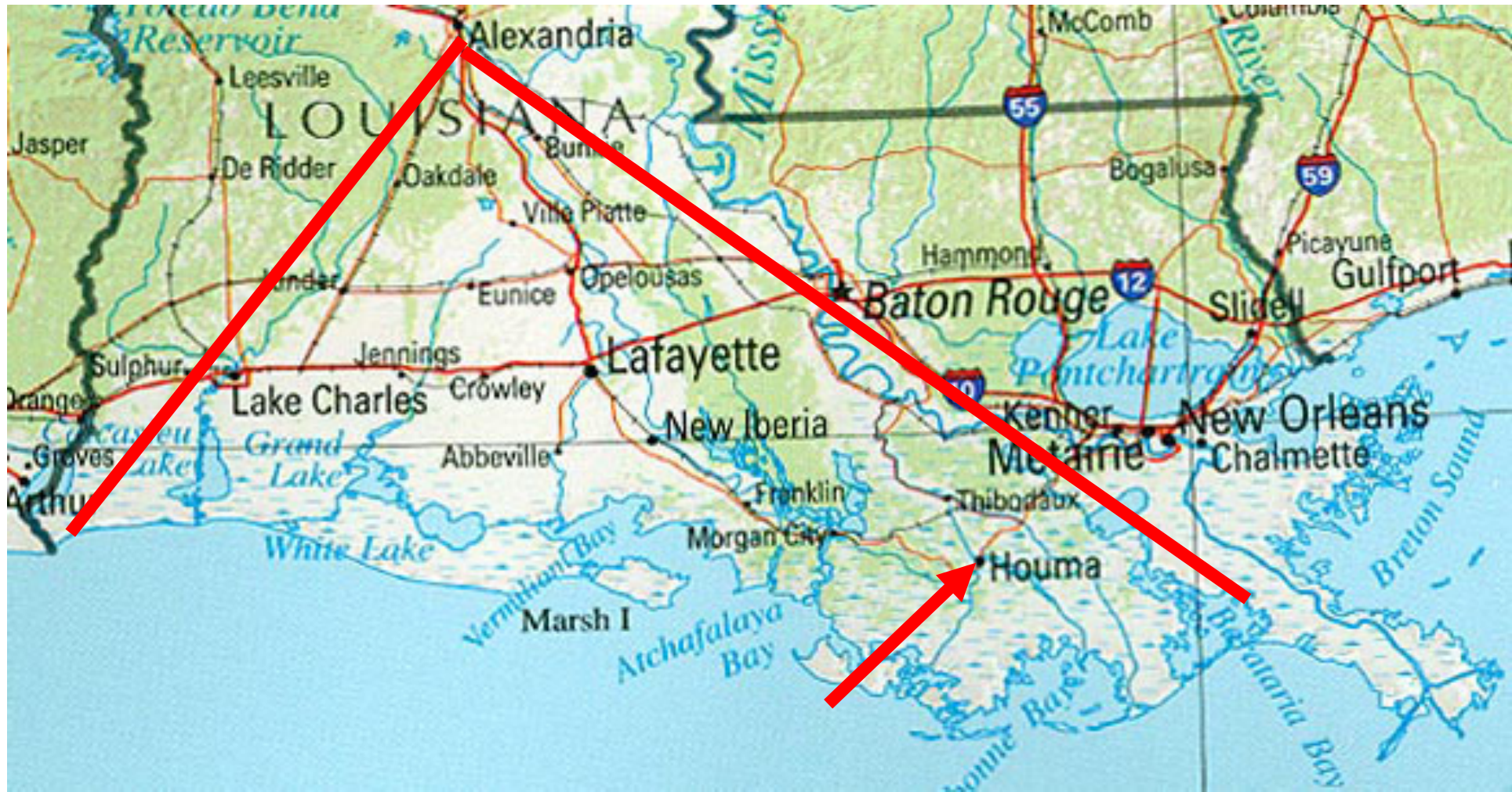
Where do Cajuns Live?



# The Cajun Triangle

## CAJUN COUNTRY

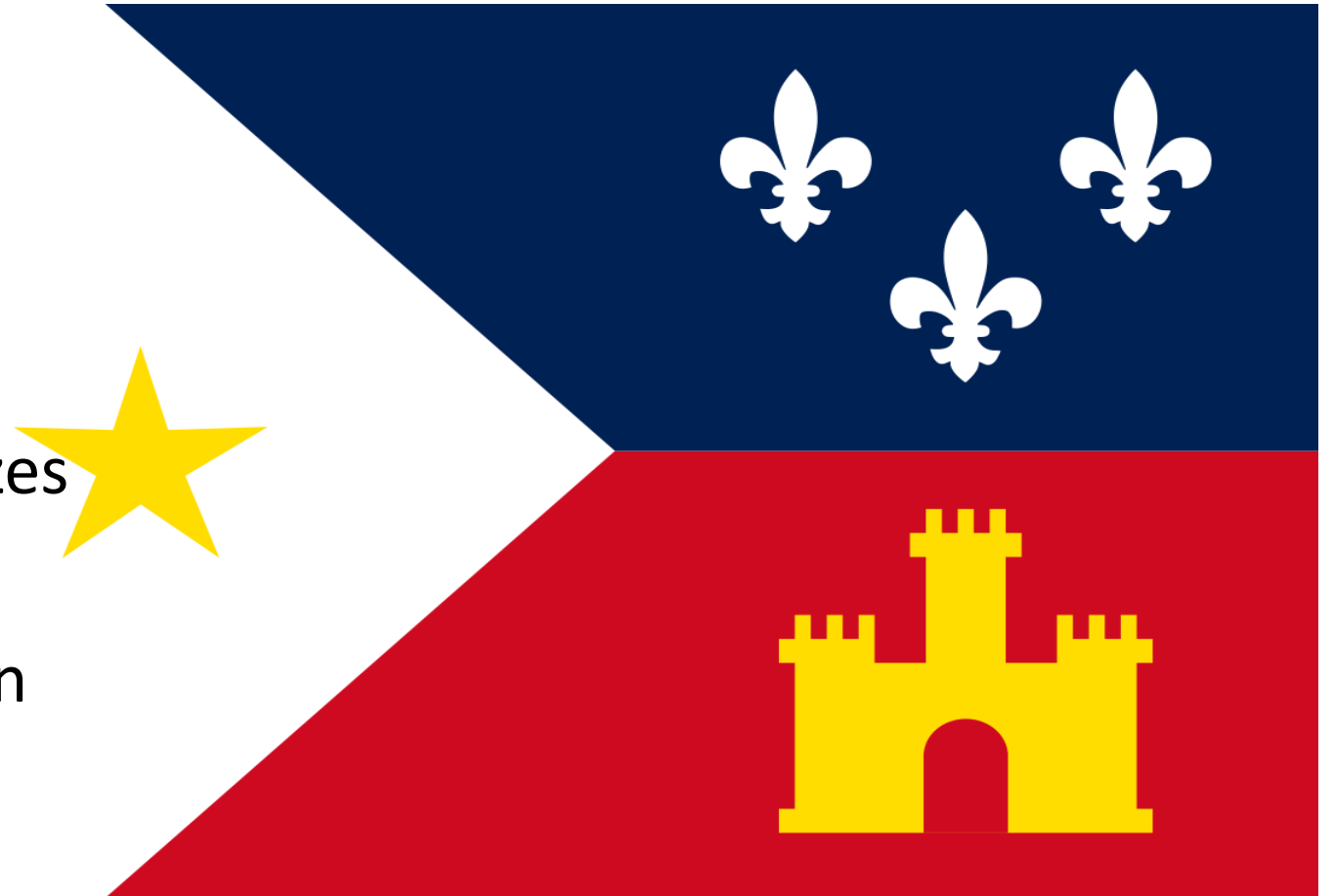




Laissez les bons temps rouler: “let the good times roll”; saying often heard in south LA  
Capital of Cajun Louisiana: Lafayette  
Acadia=Acadie=Acadien=Cadien=Cajun

# Official Flag of Louisiana Acadians

- Yellow Castle=Spain
- Fleur de Lis=France
- Gold Star=Our Lady of the Assumption, patron saint of Acadiana; also symbolizes the active participation of the Cajuns in the American Revolution



# Architecture of Southern Louisiana

# Typical Old Cajun Architecture Vermillionville Historic Village Lafayette, Louisiana



# Typical Old Cajun Architecture Vermillionville Historic Village Lafayette, Louisiana



# My Childhood Home-Houma



# Typical House in Houma Today





# Spanish Influenced Balconies Vieux Carre-New Orleans



# Terrebonne Parish Courthouse Square Downtown Houma



# Typical Cemetery-Lockport, Louisiana



Mardi Gras in Cajun Country

# Mardi Gras Night Parade-Houma



# Courir de Mardi Gras



# Courir de Mardi Gras



# Shrimp boats on Bayou LaFourche near Galliano, Louisiana



State Library of Louisiana (<http://www.state.lib.la.us>)



Laissez les bons temps rouler  
Your Cajun relatives are fun loving, hard working,  
family oriented, party any time people

**FIN**  
**THE END**

# Selected Louisiana Genealogical Resources

- Lafayette Genealogical Society: [lafayettegenealogicalsociety.org](http://lafayettegenealogicalsociety.org)
- Lafourche Heritage Society: [facebook.com/Lafourche-Heritage-Society-175016482542312/](https://facebook.com/Lafourche-Heritage-Society-175016482542312/)
- Louisiana Genealogical and Historical Society: [louisianaghs.org](http://louisianaghs.org)
- Terrebonne Genealogical Society: [terrebonnegenealogicalsociety.org](http://terrebonnegenealogicalsociety.org)
- The Historic New Orleans Collection: [hnoc.org](http://hnoc.org)