

Chapter 2 **A Historical and Pictorial Review of Louisiana's Barrier Islands**

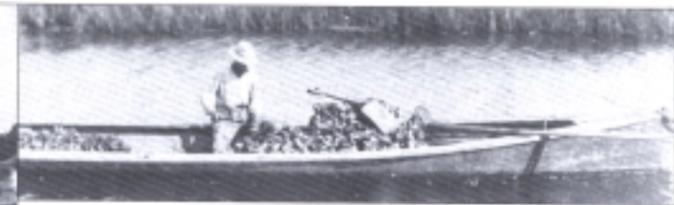
by Donald W. Davis



A two-master sailing lugger going to market. Shallow-draft boats often had to be pulled with tow ropes attached to a horse, mule, or man—a process called cordalling, ca. 1940; (Louisiana State Library, Louisiana Collection, WPA Photographic Archived)



Fisherman's wife baking bread in an outdoor oven (*paix chaud* is a *houillage four de campagne*) at *Cheriere Caminada*, 1891; (National Archives, Negative No. 22-PCD-36) Oyster loggers and skills at *Grand Isle*, 1891; (National Archives, Negative No. 22-PCD-31) Typical palmetto (*Sabal wisoo*) home built by the residents of *Cheriere Caminada*, Louisiana's largest pre-1900 coastal community, 1891; (National Archives, Negative No. 22-PCD-40)



Harvesting oysters from beds in Terrebonne Parish, ca. 1920; (Randolph Beart Collection, Houma, Louisiana)



Typical isolated Basotier Bay oyster camp, ca. 1935; (Louisiana State Library, Louisiana Collection, WPA Photographic Archived)



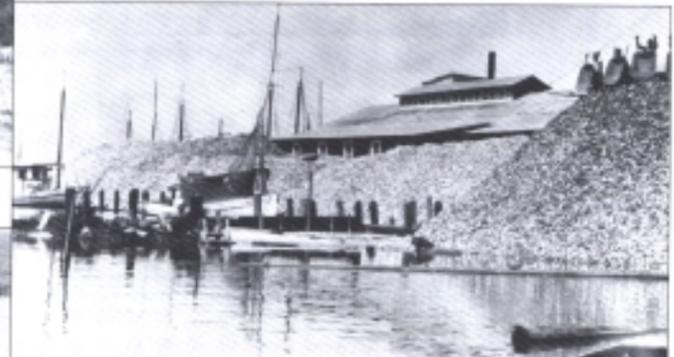
The belief that quality fish come only from cold climates was unfounded. Louisiana's marshes were one of North America's preeminent far-producing regions, ca. 1930; (Louisiana State Library, Louisiana Collection, WPA Photographic Archived)



Grand Isle children, no date; (Louisiana State Library, Louisiana Collection, WPA Photographic Archived)



Many Houma Indians lived in raised structures, close to and facing the bayou. This family's home on Lower Bayou Grand Callee is one example, no date; (Louisiana State Library, Louisiana Collection, WPA Photographic Archived)



Louisiana's oyster beds were so prolific that oystermen from Mississippi harvested the sites for canning plants at Biloxi, no date; (Anthony V. Rogovin, Louisiana State Library, Louisiana Photographic Archived)



Before the arrival of the Yugoslavians, those engaged in the oyster business were Italians and Sicilians, no date; (Ferdie Weiss, Louisiana State Library, Louisiana Photographic Archived) Using hand-woven china baskets to unload shrimp at a Terrebonne Parish drying platform, ca. 1920; (Randolph Beart Collection, Houma, Louisiana)



An isolated marsh settlement provided quick and easy access to harvesting areas, ca. 1920; (Randolph Beart Collection, Houma, Louisiana)



Four large tarpon caught in the inland waters of Terrebonne Parish, ca. 1924; (Randolph Beart Collection, Houma, Louisiana)



Harvests such as this allowed Louisiana to adopt the nickname "Sportsman's Paradise," ca. 1920; (Randolph Beart Collection, Houma, Louisiana)

**SETTLING
LOUISIANA'S COASTAL FRINGE**

The Gulf of Mexico's northern coast is dominated by a series of barrier islands separated by water bodies less than 10 meters deep. This 870-kilometer chain parallels the Gulf Coast and represents nearly 35 percent of the United States' barrier islands (Ringold and Clark, 1980).

Most of these islands and adjacent peninsulas have a cross section composed of several shore-parallel environments. Typically, the nearshore zone is identified by a system of bars and troughs parallel to the strandline. The active beach has a moderate sand slope, but grasses cover the dunes that customarily frame the foreshore berms. An island's midsection is frequently a series of beach ridges and intervening swales, covered by salt-tolerant vegetation, scattered shrubs, and clusters of trees. Marsh tidal-flat ecosystems, as well as mangrove communities, lie on the bay-shore side (Vincent and others, 1976; Davis and others, 1987). These features vary in physiography and cross-sectional profile according to the amount and type of eolian material, winds, tides, and the frequency of hurricanes. The same natural laws of beach-barrier dynamics, however, apply equally, regardless of the barrier's location. Unfortunately, human uses do not follow such an orderly pattern: whether in Louisiana, Maine, North Carolina, Florida, or Texas, people introduce to the existing physical and biological systems an additional complex set of variables.

The Gulf of Mexico barrier islands have served humanity since the seventeenth century when farmers discovered that cattle released on barrier islands would forage and reproduce. Eventually, settlers moved onto the barrier islands following an annual-use cycle-making a living using the different renewable resources that were available from season to season. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the islands were used for military bases, small settlements, hotels, and other recreation endeavors, such as lavish hunting clubs and camps.

The sea has reclaimed human features repeatedly, but they have been rebuilt. Like lemmings, people continue to move toward the boundary between the land and water to see and hear the ocean, regardless of the consequences. Coastal citizens, especially those on the barrier islands, are at the mercy of hurricanes, northeasters, and other storms.

The conflict that results from the incompatibility of human and natural processes is most evident when the barrier islands are overrun by hurricanes that generate walls of water over six meters high. Often storms hit the shoreline with such intensity that they sweep far inland and destroy homes, businesses, and public buildings; frequently, nothing is spared.

Along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts today, millions of Americans are exposed to hurricanes. Many live on barrier islands: their homes and businesses are particularly vulnerable because they live dangerously close to

Two physiographic provinces dominate the natural setting: the chenier and delta plains. The former extends from a site near High Island, Texas, eastward to Marsh Island, Louisiana, and has a relatively smooth and typical shoreline. Near the shoreface, the chenier plain (from the French, chene, meaning oak) is fronted by mudflats and backed by marsh with an intervening series of beach ridges capped with live oak trees (*Quercus virginiana*) (Howe and others, 1935). The delta plain is east of Marsh Island; within its boundaries lie more than 7,000 years of deltaic morphology. Numerous bays, lakes, and barrier islands characterize its highly irregular shoreline.

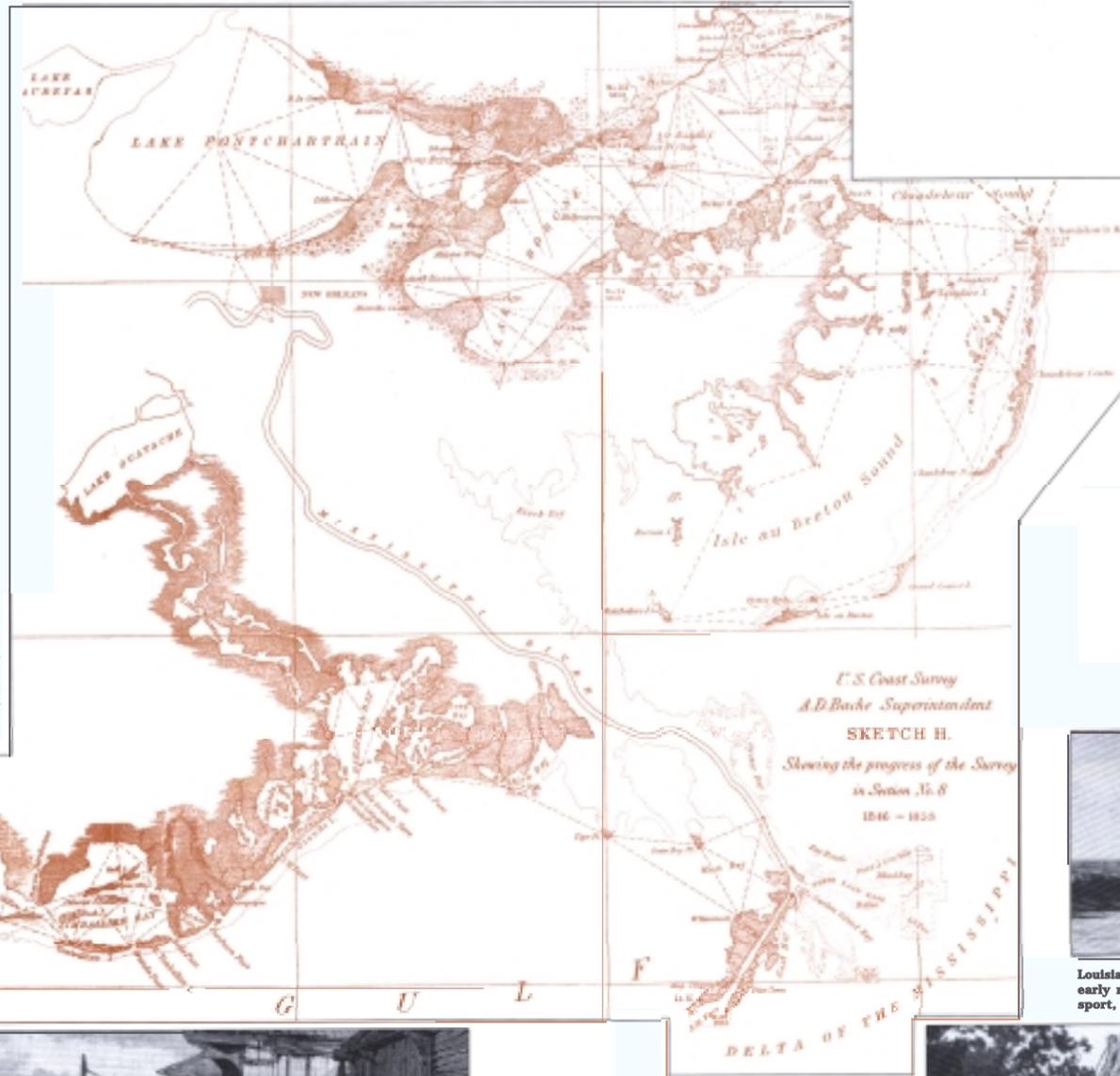
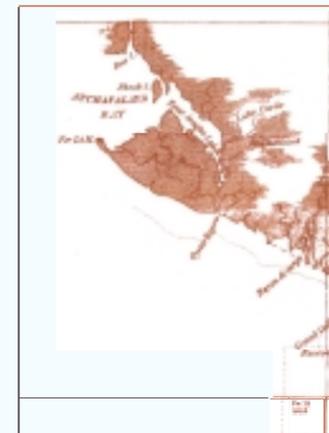
Barrier islands and marshes absorb wave energy and help retard natural or storm-induced erosion. The islands serve as the first line of defense against destructive hurricanes and storms and therefore receive the full force of their impacts. Washover fans, new tidal passes, diminished dunes, rearranged beaches, and general profile changes, via accretion, deposition, and erosion, are by-products of the passage of a hurricane. The islands are in a constant state of change. Moore (1899, p. 73) noted

The topographical changes in the region between Timbalier and Terrebonne bays are quite extensive and rapid, and islands were observed there in all stages of destruction, some of them cut into pieces, others barely showing above the water, and still others whose former positions were marked merely by shoals or by dead brush projecting above the surface.

Barrier islands are bulwarks that protect the valuable wetlands and slow a storm's forward momentum, but the damage can still be catastrophic. In fact, since the 1950's over \$20 billion in property losses due to hurricanes have been assessed in the United States, with the barrier islands absorbing the initial punishment (Ringold and Clark, 1980; Daily Comet, 1985; Wang, 1990). Although Louisiana's coast does not have a barrier island 50 kilometers long, such as Galveston Island, Texas, the Chandeleurs, Grand Isle, Grand Terre, Timbalier, and Isles Dernieres (Last Island) are important settlement sites.

Unlike those on most coasts, Louisiana's barriers are not completely developed. Grand Isle is the exception: even so, it does not possess an extensive array of hotels, motels, high-rise buildings, or single-family residences. The permanent and seasonal recreational population nevertheless is in danger because Louisiana's coast is particularly sensitive to storm damage. Before 1985, Hurricanes Betsy and Camille severely damaged Louisiana's coast. In 1985, Louisiana became the first state to be struck by three hurricanes in one year-Danny, Elena, and Juan.

Barrier island residents have been susceptible to dangerous weather for over two centuries. Villages, recreational hotels, and scattered trapper-fisher-hunter camps are part of the barrier islands' folklore. Pirates, bootleggers, smugglers, and others have used these islands. Scattered recreational dwellings and petroleum-related industries now dominate the barrier islands' human-made landscape.



Oystermen often built homes on bird-like wooden legs, two meters above the water; oyster shells thrown around the camp created an artificial island, 1940; Justin F. Bordenave, ed., Jefferson Parish Yearly Review, Special Collections Division, Hill Memorial Library, Louisiana State University Libraries, p. 72.

**LOUISIANA BARRIER ISLAND EROSION STUDY
ATLAS OF SHORELINE CHANGES I-2150-A**



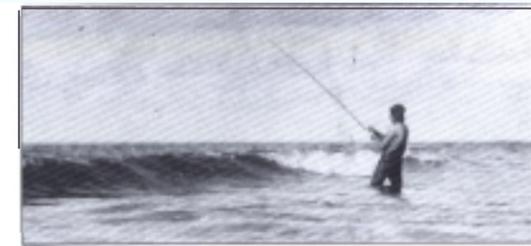
An oysterman tonging oysters into a bote—a flat-bottom boat with a blunt bow and stem, ca. 1920; (Randolph Bazel Collection, Houma, Louisiana).



Under full sail, a Louisiana oyster lugger moved easily across the inland waterways, no date; National Archives, Negative No. 22-FC-D-30).



Muskrat and nutria were trapped in Louisiana's marshes to provide nearly 60 percent of the nation's fur harvest, ca. 1930; (Louisiana Department of Wild Life and Fisheries, Photographic Archives).



Louisiana's barrier islands have served as a recreational resource since the early nineteenth century. Surf fishing at Timbalier Island was a popular sport, ca. 1920; (Randolph Bazel Collection, Houma, Louisiana).



Louisiana's trapper-farmer-fisher folk built their homes from indigenous materials to create functional structures; these were covered with polesetto and equipped with barrel cisterns, ca. 1910; (Seaton Collection, Smithsonian Institution, Photo No. 1536).



The St. Bernard Parish community of St. Malo, elevated above the marsh "muck." Asian immigrants used plaster boxes and "night soils" to raise fresh vegetables. Rain water from roof drainage was collected in barrels, no date; (Harper's Weekly, March 31, 1883, p. 197).

the water's edge. The citizens of northwest Florida, for example, thought they were immune to dangerous storms; they were incorrect. In 1975, Hurricane Eloise struck the Florida Panhandle: numerous beach-front buildings-believed to be hurricane proof-were "toppled like dominoes" (Frank, 1976, p. 221), inadequate building codes and improper construction techniques were responsible for the extensive destruction of beach-front property (Frank, 1976).

LOUISIANA'S COASTAL LOWLANDS

Near-featureless marshes and adjacent water bodies span the Louisiana coast and vary in width from 25 to 80 kilometers. Exposed salt domes are over 40 meters above the sea-level marshes. There is less than a four-meter height difference between the marsh and adjacent natural levees, cheniers, and beaches, and one meter in elevation can provide firm, habitable land.

**LOUISIANA'S SETTLEMENT HISTORY:
FROM NATURAL LEVEES TO MARSHES
TO BARRIER ISLANDS**

Louisiana's coastal lowlands have been occupied for 12,000 to 14,000 years. During that time the adjacent alluvial wetlands have supported a range of cultures and settlements which include prehistoric Indian sites, and Yugoslavian, Chinese, Italian, and Acadian communities (Johnson, 1831). Prehistoric Indians settled the dry land adjacent to many of the region's water bodies. Over 500 of these relic encampments, distinguished by middens (shell mounds), have been located and mapped. The region's settlement and economic history has, in fact, been generally dictated by the availability or unavailability of high ground. From barrier islands to beaches, natural levees, cheniers, coteaux (hills or ridges), bays, and estuaries, people have had to adjust to floods, subsidence, hurricane-induced storm surges, and sea level rise.

Settlement clusters were scattered throughout the wetlands, along the shoreline, and on the barrier islands by the late 1800's. Mauvais Bois, a small community south of Houma, was located on a levee remnant approximately 10 kilometers long and 75 meters wide and supported an economy based on agriculture, fishing, and trapping. At Mauvais Bois and other coastal communities, cattle ranged the open marsh. In contrast, Camardelle inhabitants at Barataria Bay were totally dependent upon seasonal fishing and trapping because there was no space available for agriculture. Camardelle citizens lived on wharves and houseboats and took their homes with them, even if the dwellings had to be dismantled, as seasonal activities changed.

The elevated community of Manila Village was supported entirely by the shrimp industry. Cheniere Caminada was dominated by trapper-hunter-fisher folk, groups who based their subsistence economy on the annual changes in the seasons and who cultivated small gardens to add to the quality of their diet (figure 1). Cheniere Caminada had a school, a church, and several stores, facilities usually unavailable in marsh communities.

By the mid-1800's Louisiana's wetlands supported over 150 communities that were connected to the settlers' resource areas, markets, and supply sources by well-defined routes of circulation—the region's natural and human-made waterways. One of the earliest sites was Cheniere Caminada—a community just across the Caminada Bay from Grand Isle, which served as a harbor for net fishermen.

Because the marshes were devoid of "high" land, the region's narrow riverine strips became the focal point for settlement. A settlement pattern developed from the region's distinctive deltaic morphology. With time, this dense, unorganized network of distributary ridge, wetland, and barrier island communities became a large, isolated, and permanent population. Each settlement was economically homogeneous in that all inhabitants were supported by variations of the same means of making a living. The hamlets' farmer-trapper-fisher folk were aware of their environment and developed skills that allowed them to harvest the local wildlife.

THE ETHNIC MIX

The Spanish, French, Italians, Yugoslavians, Irish, Germans, Cubans, Greeks, Latin Americans, and Chinese settled within Louisiana's coastal lowlands. The foreign fishing population was larger than any other in the Gulf states (Collins and Smith, 1893). Based on its cultural heritage, each group interpreted the environment differently. Louisiana exhibits, therefore, a distinctive ethnic and cultural heterogeneity, but the French are the biggest and oldest ethnic group.

French and German peasant (habitant) farmers first settled along the Mississippi River in the Cote des Allemands (German Coast) (American States Papers, 1803). As early as 1718 the area was settled by people enticed into moving to Louisiana from France by the propaganda of John Law's Mississippi Company. They were generally the more prosperous and better educated class living in Louisiana (Bertrand and Beale, 1965). These urban dwellers enjoyed the fine goods offered to them by the privateer Jean Lafitte, whose barrier island fortress was one of the earliest settlements on Louisiana's coast.

After deportation from British-controlled Nova Scotia in September 1755, nearly 4,000 refugee Acadians also migrated to Louisiana and settled the alluvial wetlands. These people continued to arrive in small groups from 1760 to 1790 (Detro and Davis, 1974). The Acadians were accustomed to working the land and settled on the prairies, cheniers, bayous, marshes, swamps, and barrier islands in south central and southeastern Louisiana. They were French-speaking Roman Catholics who provided south Louisiana with its own unique ethnic community. Eventually the Acadians abandoned French as a written language. Their language is no longer spoken in France, and many of the family surnames survive there only in historical literature.

The Acadians enjoyed the isolation provided by south Louisiana's physical geography. Their communities were accessible by means of winding streams called bayous (from the Choctaw bayuk, or creek) and close to fishing, hunting, trapping, and agricultural areas. The rich alluvial soil of the Mississippi valley, the area's abundant hide- and fur-bearing animals, and the easily harvested aquatic life were infinitely attractive to the Acadians, who were also trappers and net fishermen (Evans, 1963).

Besides the French, a group of Yugoslavian oyster fishermen settled along the bayous, bays, and lakes southeast of New Orleans. Chinese and Filipinos built shrimp-dyeing communities in the estuaries. British, French, and Americans settled the barrier islands. By the early 1830's, a relatively dense network of settlements was functioning at isolated points within the marsh. The barrier islands—Grand Isle, Grand Terre, Cheniere Caminada, Isles Dernieres, and the Chandeleur Islands—had established their own identities.

Throughout the wetlands' waterways, red-sailed luggers, isolated palmetto-covered houses, or the rustic, cypress-gray gables of Chinese camps or lake dwellers were a part of the visual landscape (Sampson, 1893). Although many considered the wetlands valuable only for their intrinsic qualities, Acadians, Yugoslavians, Chinese, Italians, and others recognized the coastal lowlands for their resources and were able to make a living from them through trapping, shrimping, and oystering.

**ISLES DERNIERES:
LOUISIANA'S FIRST COASTAL RESORT**

Isles Dernieres was:

no ordinary island, but the proudest summering place of the Old South a private little world dedicated to fine living. Here, to the massive, two-story hotel in the myrtle-shadowed village at the island's western tip, and to the hundreds of graceful houses decorating 25 miles of beach, wealthy planters and merchants, who bore the most illustrious names in all Louisiana, brought their families to escape the summer heat and to live according to the unchanging code of French and Spanish ancestors. (Deutschman, 1949, p. 143)

In the early 1850's Isles Dernieres, known also and especially historically as Last Island and located at the southern fringe of Terrebonne Parish, was about "thirty miles [48 kilometers] long and half a mile [0.9 kilometers] in width" (Daily Delta [New Orleans], 1850). The wooded island was the site of about half a dozen light-framed summer cottages on Village Bayou. Erected on posts stuck in the sand, they were not built to withstand the force of a hurricane, but the visitors were only concerned about enjoying the relaxed atmosphere of the island (Silas, 1890).

The houses are fine, particularly those of Lawyer Maskell and Captain Muggah. These houses serve for the reception of visitors during the summer season, at which time the enjoyers of elegant leisure flock to the isle in great number, and not as a dernier resort, but for the veritable purpose of enjoying themselves. (Daily Delta [New Orleans], 1850, p. 2)

Isles Dernieres was one of Louisiana's first coastal recreation sites. Families came to swim, fish, hunt, and enjoy the tranquility (Liddell, 1851). Most visitors to the resort were wealthy planters from the Lafourche and Atakapa areas. "It was a delightful place to escape the summer heat, enjoy the sea breeze" (Wales, 1854), and listen to the "skill and taste of the old German, whose violin furnished exquisite music" (Pugh 1881, p. 3). The extensive beach served as a shell road where "one's buggy whirled over it with a softness, and airy, swinging motion, that is perfectly intoxicating" (The Daily Picayune [New Orleans], 1852, p. 1). The Village Bayou on the bay side of the island provided a safe place for packet steamers and sailboats to land. In fact, as early as 1848 Louisiana requested its legislative delegation to lobby for a lighthouse at the west end of the island to improve the navigation of the State's western coast (Johnson, 1848).

Two hotels, the Ocean House and Captain Muggah's Hotel, or The Muggah Billiard House, provided rooms for guests. The Ocean House was equipped with a bar, amiable accommodations, a billiard table, and tennis alley. Captain Muggah built cabins on the beach as alternate facilities to his hotel (Pugh, 1881). A large public livery stable housed the guests' horses and buggies.

THE 1856 LAST ISLAND HURRICANE

Sunday, August 10, 1856, the island resort was destroyed by the Last Island hurricane. During the storm every solid object became a mobile battering ram, destroying nearly all the structures on the island. Many families were lost; about half of the island's population survived. In the legends of coastal Louisiana, over 400 people attended a Sunday ball at the hotel on Village Bayou at which the Creole aristocracy "danced until they died" in the hurricane.

With time, stories of the disaster became part of the region's folklore. For example, through a blend of fact and fiction, the two hotels were visualized as one. Consequently, numerous imaginary embellishments of the Isles Dernieres legend crystallized in Lafcadio Hearn's book, *Chita: A Memory of Last Island*, which purports to document the storm.

Newspaper accounts of the period reported that from 260 to 300 people died (Ellis, no date). Entire families were swept off the island. Some rode out the storm on floating debris and were rescued 24 kilometers from the resort (Schlatre, 1937). Horses, cattle, and fish lay strewn about the island among the human victims. At the center of the island, one small hut and several head of cattle survived the storm (Cole, 1892a). Property loss was estimated at over \$100,000 (Ludlum, 1963). Because earlier reports were revised as more survivors were located, the final death toll was about 140 persons (Ludlum, 1963).

From that time the wind blew a perfect hurricane; every house upon the island giving way, one after another, until nothing remained. At this moment everyone sought the most elevated point on the island, exerting themselves at the same time to avoid the fragments of buildings, which were scattered in every direction by the wind. Many persons were wounded; some mortally. The water at this time (about 2 o'clock P.M.) commenced rising so rapidly from the bay side, that there could no longer be any doubt that the island would be submerged. The scene at this moment forbids description. Men, women, and children were seen running in every direction, in search of some means of salvation. The violence of the wind, together with the rain, which fell like hail, and the sand blinded their eyes, prevented many from reaching the objects they had aimed at. (Ludlum, 1963, p. 166)

It was a gloomy sight, not a house or shelter standing. The hull of the steamer and a number of sailing boats stranded on the island near where the hotel had stood, and some 260 or 300 people had been drowned every one was busy all day looking for and buying the bodies which had been drowned, others collecting provisions and getting something to eat, others fixing up things to make it a little more comfortable. In the meantime we had fitted out a boat and dispatched it to the Atchafalaya to report our condition. (Ellis, no date, p. 8)

The steamer Star made semi-weekly trips from the railroad station in Bayou Boeuf, down the Atchafalaya River through Four League Bay, to the Isles Dernieres resort. On Sunday morning, August 10, 1856, the Star approached Isles Dernieres after a difficult journey from Morgan City, a trip that required two men to steer the vessel. She anchored in Village Bayou behind the Muggah's Hotel. During the hurricane a part of the pier gave way, and the steamer parted her moorings and slowly drifted towards the island. Those on board were ordered below. Soon the steamboat's chimneys, pilot house, and hurricane deck were gone, leaving only the hull (Ellis, no date). The wreck drifted toward the island and lodged itself in a turtle enclosure for the remainder of the storm (The Daily Picayune [New Orleans], 1856b). Approximately 250 to 275 people survived in the hull of the Star, without its body, firmly trapped in the sand, more would have perished (The Daily Picayune [New Orleans], 1856a).

The destruction from the Last Island hurricane was complete, but the storm documented the value of the island itself. Isles Dernieres absorbed the storm's winds, waves, and high water; the islands on the backside were protected and did not receive as great an impact. Bayside damage was minimal. At nearby Caillou Island, in Terrebonne Bay, the water only rose about 1.5 meters. The people on these inner islands were saved from the storm's full force. They were inconvenienced but not killed (New Orleans Christian Advocate, 1856).

HURRICANES IN THE COASTAL ZONE

Coastal Louisiana's climate is generally described as humid subtropical: warm summers and mild winters are the rule. Winter extremes, when they occur, are a product of cold fronts that can change the daily weather quickly. In the summer and fall, normal conditions can be dramatically altered by the periodic arrival of hurricanes.

Caribbean history is punctuated by hurricanes; even the name is derived from the Caribbean Indians' storm-god Huracan. By nature, hurricanes are unpredictable and can change direction abruptly. Between May and November, hurricanes move in a north-northwest direction across the Atlantic Ocean. In the Gulf of Mexico, they are most active in August, September, and October.

Hurricanes are always of concern to humans; they carry high winds, extremely low pressures, vast quantities of precipitation, and large storm surges. The Saffir-Simpson scale, originated in 1972 by Herbert Saffir, consulting engineer for Dade County Florida, and Robert Simpson, former director of the National Hurricane Center, indicates on a scale of 1 to 5 the damage potential from different wind speeds and storm-surge heights (table 1). The 12 deadliest hurricanes of this century were all category 4 or 5 (extreme to catastrophic). Most Louisiana hurricanes are category 2 or 3 (moderate to extensive damage) storms.

TABLE 1.—Saffir-Simpson scale of damage potential.

Scale Number	Central Pressure (mbars)	Wind (mi/hr)	Surge (feet)	Damage
1	>980	119-133	1.3-1.5	Minimal
2	965-979	134-157	1.6-2.4	Moderate
3	945-964	174-209	2.5-3.6	Extreme
4	920-944	>210-250	3.7-5.4	Catastrophic
5	<920	>250	>6.4	Catastrophic

In reports of hurricane damages, two Louisiana storms are mentioned repeatedly: Betsy (1965) and Camille (1969). When Betsy struck the Louisiana coast, it had already left in its wake \$119 million in damages to Florida. This fast-moving storm was highly erratic; it could not be predicted accurately because it changed course frequently. Because of this, officials took the precaution of evacuating an estimated 250,000 residents from unprotected areas. Betsy's 200 km/hr winds approached shore, its waves battering Grand Isle; approximately 90 percent of southeastern Louisiana's residents evacuated.

The storm's aftermath resulted in at least \$700 million in insured damages—\$650 million in Louisiana, the remainder in Florida, Mississippi, and Alabama. Uninsured flood damages pushed the final figure over the \$1 billion mark. Seventy-four people died in Louisiana, most from drowning.

Four years later, Hurricane Camille, one of only three category 5 hurricanes to enter the Gulf of Mexico in this century, took aim on the Louisiana-Mississippi coast. Camille was a compact storm, only 80 kilometers wide, with 320 km/hr winds, a six-meter storm surge and 75 centimeters of rain. This system made landfall near Pass Christian and Bay St. Louis, Mississippi. Its destructive intensity established financial and wind-speed records. Camille left 259 people dead and \$1 billion in property damage.

Before Betsy and Camille, two catastrophic storms occurred in the barrier islands. The first, in 1856, destroyed the recreation-oriented community at Isles Dernieres, and the second, in 1893, displaced nearly 1,500 families at Cheniere Caminada.

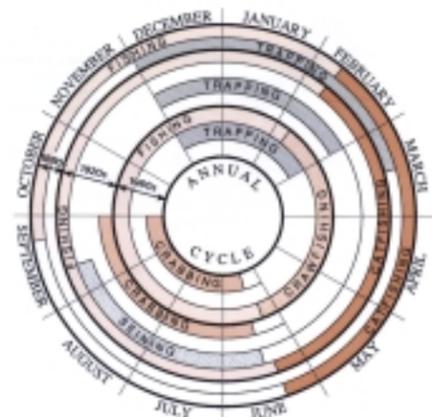
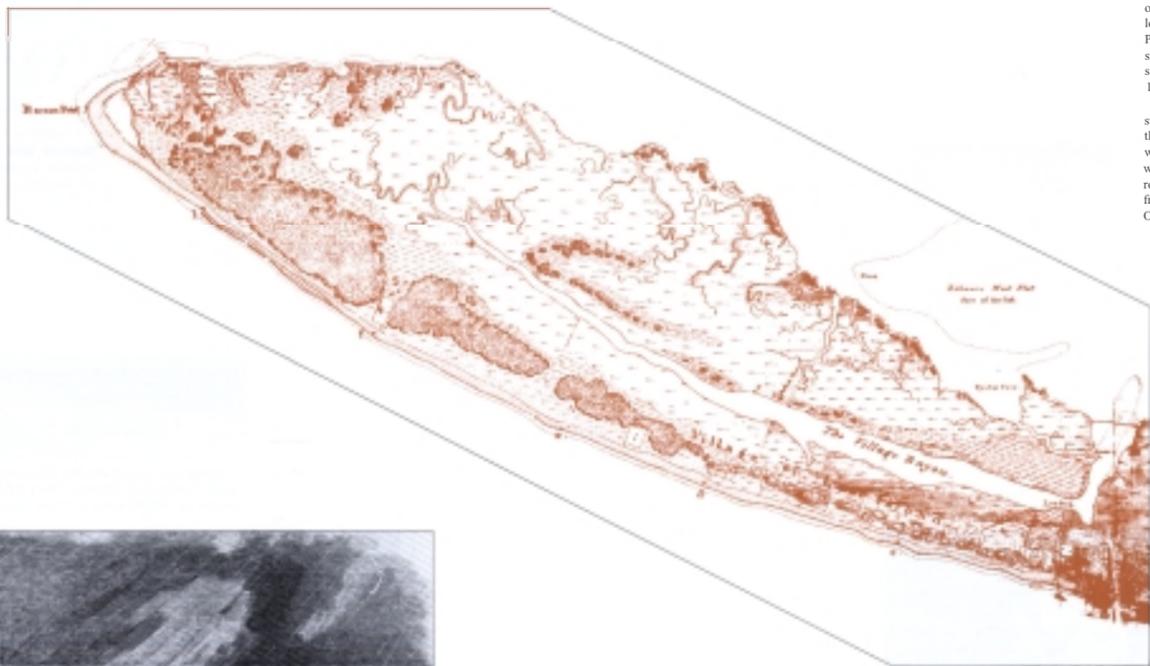


FIGURE 1.—Annual-use cycle of marshlands people in Louisiana. The fishing season included oystering and shrimping as well. Modified from Comeaux, 1972.



United States Coast Survey, A. D. Baché, Superintendent, Western Part of the Isles Dernieres, February 1853 by F. H. Gerdner, scale 1:10,000.



In 1853 Isles Dernieres' (Last Island) Village Bayou was destroyed by a hurricane that inundated Louisiana's first coastal recreation site, ca. 1856: (Frank Leslie's Illustrated Weekly, Historic New Orleans Collection, Museum/Research Center, Accession No. 1974.25.4.66)



Two hotels, the Ocean House and The Muggah Billiard House, were lost because the wind and water rose from the 1856 hurricane. ca. 1856: (Frank Leslie's Illustrated Weekly, Historic New Orleans Collection, Museum/Research Center, Accession No. 1974.25.4.65)

Grand Isle (1904)
GRAND ISLE.
GRAND ISLE AND BARATARIA PACKET
Steamer GRAND ISLE,
M. McInnes, Master.
Leaves head of Canal Street at 7:00 a.m.
EVERY TUESDAY via Company Canal, and
EVERY SATURDAY via Sola's Canal, re-
turning Monday and Thursday via Company
Canal. Special accommodations to excursion pas-
sengers. For freight and passage apply on board.
2-15-04

Haber, Leonard. 1959. Advertisements of Lower Mississippi River Steamboats, 1812-1920. West Barrington, Rhode Island: The Steamship Historical Society of America, p. 29.



Bayou Rigging loading at Grand Isle, ca. 1933; (Pen and ink postcard drawing by George Izvolksy)



Ca. 1933; (Pen and ink postcard drawing by George Izvolksy)



Home of Nez Coups, descendant of one of Jean Lafitte's lieutenants, ca. 1933; (Pen and ink postcard drawing by George Izvolksy)

Joe Weore (1885)
GRAND ISLE.
GRAND ISLE—THE FINE
HOTELS, COTTAGE HOUSES AND
PACKS—
JOE WEORE,
A. E. HOTEL, MASTER. FROM ERMA, GUY.
Leaves EVERY TUESDAY, THURSDAY AND
SATURDAY from the foot of the Canal Street
at 8 A. M. every week, and returning MONDAY, WED-
NESDAY and FRIDAY via Company's
Canal. Fare 25; meals extra. Reservations every
Saturday. Fare paid with minimum meals at
the hotel and on board of the boat, etc.
WYF-12

Haber, Leonard. 1959. Advertisements of Lower Mississippi River Steamboats, 1812-1920. West Barrington, Rhode Island: The Steamship Historical Society of America, p. 36.



Typical early Grand Isle home, built on the highest portion of the island for added hurricane protection, no date; (Louisiana State Library, Louisiana Collection, WPA Photographic Archived)



Horse-drawn carts were the principal means of transportation on Grand Isle, no date; (Louisiana State Library, Louisiana Collection, WPA Photographic Archived)



Bayou Rigging provided a safe and convenient harbor for the working and sporting boats looking for a safe anchorage at Grand Isle, ca. 1939; (in Justin F. Bordarave, ed., Jefferson Parish Yearly Review, Special Collections Division, Hill Memorial Library, Louisiana State University Libraries, p. 54)



When a road and bridge were completed to Grand Isle, it became a favorite summer and weekend resort, July 4, 1938; (Forville Weems, Louisiana State Library, Louisiana Photographic Archived)



A day at the beach on Grand Isle, no date; (Louisiana State Library, Louisiana Collection, WPA Photographic Archived)



Grand Isle bathers leave their cars at the water's edge on hard packed sands, while they enjoy playing in the surf, 1940; (in Justin F. Bordarave, ed., Jefferson Parish Yearly Review, Special Collections Division, Hill Memorial Library, Louisiana State University Libraries, p. 77)



Palm-lined Ludwig's Lane on Grand Isle, ca. 1933; (Pen and ink postcard drawing by George Izvolksy)



Grand Isle oyster boats, ca. 1933; (Pen and ink postcard drawing by George Izvolksy)



A group of Grand Isle bathers modeling the latest in swimwear, ca. 1890; (Historic New Orleans Collection, Museum/Research Center, Accession No. 1961.238.14)



Within the oak thicket at the center of Grand Isle, the local farm community established orange groves, cauliflower fields, and blackberry patches, 1943; (in Justin F. Bordarave, ed., Jefferson Parish Yearly Review, Special Collections Division, Hill Memorial Library, Louisiana State University Libraries)

GRAND ISLE: A POTPOURRI OF USES

The history of Grand Isle is not as spectacular as that of Isles Dernieres, Cheniere Caminada, or Grand Terre. It was like all of south Louisiana's coastal settlements, isolated. To survive economically, the island's inhabitants supported themselves through various industries that included seafood canning, agriculture, and turtle farming (Davis, 1990).

Grand Isle's first major economic activity was the sugar business. By 1830, four sugar plantations were in operation; this established the island as an agricultural base. These plantations were owned by Samuel Britton Bennett, Alexander and Charles Lesseps and John B. Lepretre, Pleasant Branch Cocke, and Francois Rigaud (House Document, 1832).

The center of the island had always been protected to some degree from the full force of a hurricane and was therefore of agricultural interest. The eastern end of the island was under the ownership of Francois Rigaud (House Document, 1832). The island's western end was claimed in 1833 by Samuel Britton Bennett (Swanson, 1975). The middle was divided between the Lesseps/Lepretre and Cocke interests.

A sugarhouse, mills, small homes, carpenter shop, stables, draining machine, cotton gin and press, blacksmith shop, slave quarters, and other buildings were a part of the island's plantation morphology. Sugar and cotton were the principal crops, but sugar was always primary (Swanson, 1975).

Grand Isle citizens lived in wood-framed cottages without electricity, modern plumbing, or evening newspaper, but the fishermen and vegetable farmers considered them comfortable. These were simple folk houses with little wasted space. Below the window sill on many homes there was a sloping shelf called a *tablettes a chaudiere*, or "dish-washing shelf," large enough to hold a stout dish pan. While washing the dishes, *Maman* kept her eye on everything that happened in the yard and on the road.

The oriental pink-to-faded-red-sailed fishing boats called luggers were a common sight in the Barataria estuary and were steered with a rudder by Malay fishermen or French oystermen (Sampsel, 1893). Piled on board the vessels were big bell-shaped bamboo baskets covered with Spanish moss (Tillandsia usneoides), lashed with ribbons of latania (palmetto), and filled with the day's harvest of shrimp, oysters, fish, or crabs (Cole, 1892a). As a rule, fishermen received about half the retail price for their catch. Grand Isle, one of the fishermen's supply points, eventually developed into an important recreational site. Spanish moss, itself an important regional product, was collected, ginned, and sold for furniture or mattress stuffing. There was, in fact, a large trade in the moss along the area's inland waterways (Saxon, 1942).

THE RECREATIONAL RESORT

After the Civil War, Grand Isle became a mecca for fishing, recreation, and farming; visitors endured untold hardships because getting to the island was difficult. It took 12 or more hours to reach it through narrow canals scarcely wider than the passenger

steamboat. This problem was resolved upon completion of the New Orleans, Fort Jackson and Grand Island Railroad, which travelled down the Mississippi's west bank to Socola's Canal at Myrtle Grove plantation. Passengers were loaded onto a steamboat that carried them the rest of the way. The entire trip took about five hours (Ross, 1889a). Although there was some thought of building a railroad to the island to lessen the travel time, this idea never materialized.

Excursion packets from New Orleans were available aboard numerous steamboats of the era. For \$7.50 per person, a room could be reserved for an overnight packet (New Orleans Times, 1866). By 1861, there was daily service to the island via the Emma McSweeney and the Fort Jackson and Grand Isle Railroad (The Times-Democrat [New Orleans], 1891b). A well-established pattern of summer visitation evolved. Plans were made to expand the island's facilities and make it even more attractive for guests (Meyer-Arendt, 1985). In addition, the steamer St. Nicholas provided passenger service three times a week from New Orleans to the island (Tveys, 1867).

In the late nineteenth century, Grand Isle attracted summer vacationers who wanted to enjoy the island's beaches and escape the heat and "yellow jack" (malaria) that plagued New Orleans. The epidemic of 1878 caused numerous families to take refuge on Grand Isle (Ross, 1889a).

THE ISLAND'S ECONOMIC BASE

Within the oak thicket at the center of the island, the local farm community eventually established orange groves, cauliflower fields, and blackberry patches. John Ludwig, one of the island's earliest leaders, recognized that the sandy loam soil could be used to produce mel-

ons, cucumbers, cauliflower, and other commodities (House Document, 1917). The soil, however, could not be cultivated by conventional means, so Ludwig introduced the idea of using high hills with deep furrows to ensure proper drainage. To utilize Ludwig's technique, the islanders built new levees on the island's bay side and repaired those that had been damaged by storms. To keep out salt water, flood gates were installed.

Grand Isle citizens went into the truck-farming business and used shrimp bran to fertilize the new fields (Swanson, 1975). These farms were quite successful and often shipped to northern markets between 35,000 and 50,000 bushels of cucumbers a year (Thompson, 1944). Orange groves were planted so close to the Gulf they rarely froze, and the island's cauliflower reached northern markets before that of any other producing region.

Even though farms were established, farmers still endured the uncertainty of getting their products to market before other producers. Heavy losses were often incurred because perishable items could not be shipped to New Orleans during sustained periods of low water (House Document, 1917).

The Grand Isle and Yugoslavian fishermen gained some notoriety for the oyster beds established in Barataria Bay. On Bayou Brule, a packing plant was constructed from a renovated building used by the New Orleans' World Exposition in 1884. Unfortunately, the enterprise failed, and the harvest was sent to "Lugger Bay," a small area of water on the Mississippi River across from the French market in New Orleans.

By the early 1900's, the island was served by a large number of stern-wheel gasoline boats. The Tulane, Hazel Nevada, and J. S. & B. made the New Orleans-Grand Isle run once or twice a week to carry freight and passengers to the island. These boats and the local luggers carried shrimp, dried shrimp, shrimp bran, crabs, fish, diamond-back terrapin, game, cucumbers, squash, beans, tomatoes, oysters, corn, and furs to the New Orleans market (House Document, 1917).

THE ISLAND'S RESIDENT TURTLE HERD

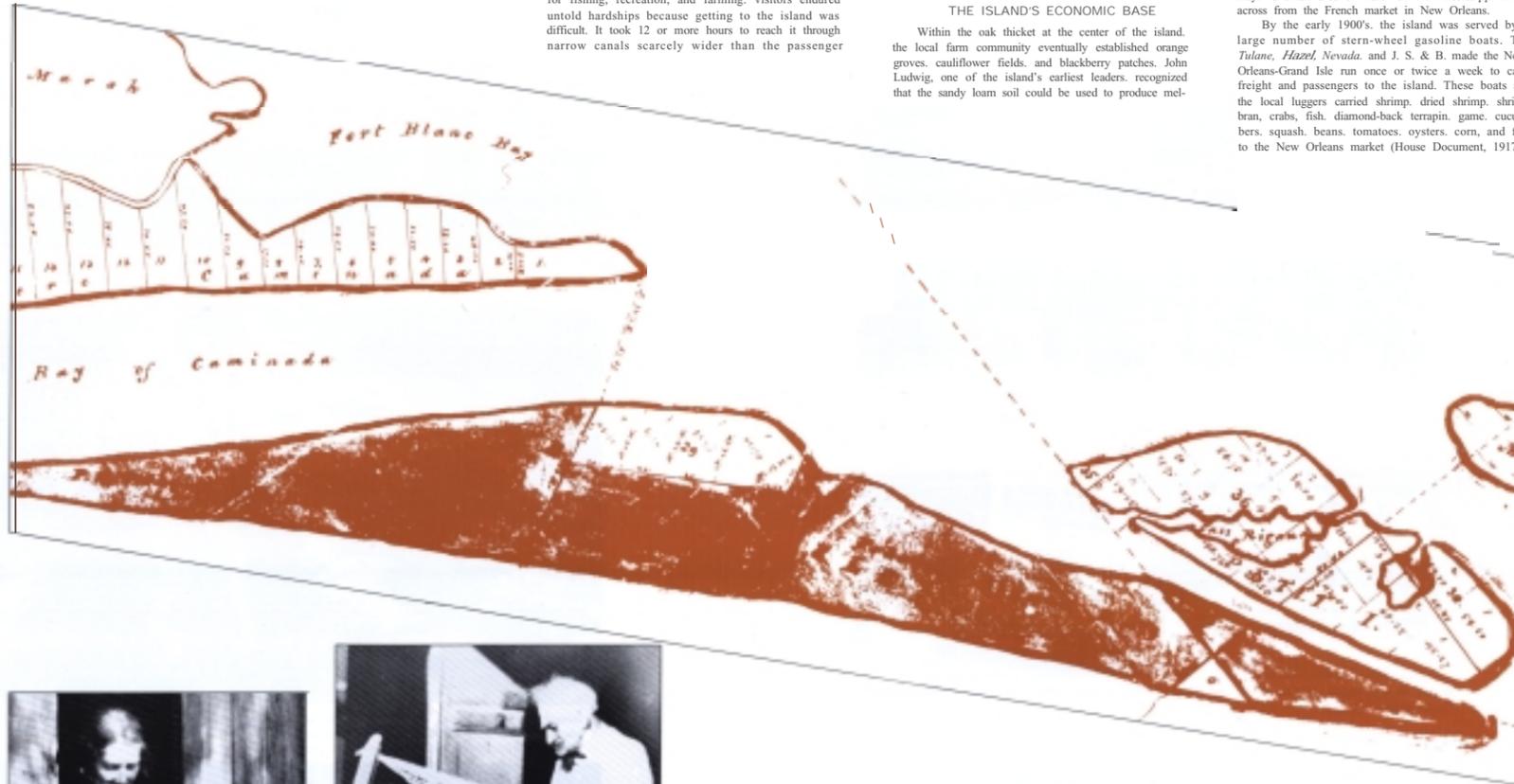
In the 1890's, John Ludwig, Jr. established on Grand Isle what was reputed to have been the world's largest terrapin farm, valued at over \$50,000 (House Document, 1917). The turtle business was established to meet the needs of the restaurant trade (True, 1884b). The diamond-back terrapin (*Malacoclemmys palustris*) was a highly prized food and was cooked according to a Maryland or Philadelphia recipe for a stew garnished with vegetables and spices. Nationwide, the best market was Philadelphia, but turtles were sold in large numbers in many other cities (True, 1884b). Grand Isle turtles were sold to customers in New York, Baltimore, Washington D.C., and Boston (Housley, 1913).

Fishermen caught the animals in their nets, but to meet the industry's needs, a consistent source of diamond-back terrapin was needed. The turtle farm, "three low barns, separated by a road [that] look almost identical with the barns of a well-appointed race track" (Housley, 1913, p. 1), solved this problem. The barns had a low silhouette with protective latticework on the ends, a hinged roof, and floors covered with less than one-half meter of water. Encircling the ponds were small earthen levees designed to let the turtles sun themselves (Housley, 1913).

These pens, or stables, housed about 20,000 female and 5,000 male turtles. The females were used for breeding and market, while the males' only worth was breeding. When the female's bottom shell was 15 centimeters long, her market value would be from \$1.00 to \$1.50, while the male's was rarely over 25 cents (Housley, 1913). Turtles were of some commercial value for their meat and eggs. One turtle, for example, could weigh over 200 kilograms and yield 1,000 eggs (Fountain, 1966).

Although others went into the industry, Ludwig bought them out and controlled the business in Louisiana. Grand Isle was the major source for terrapin, but the industry was widespread. In 1900, one dealer on Deer Island, Mississippi, had a herd of over 5,000.

At Grand Isle, many families collected turtles for Ludwig's farm. Often dogs were used to point to where the terrapin were hiding. Besides raising his own locally caught turtles, Ludwig kept turtles shipped from other wholesalers. Dealers in New York and Philadelphia shipped their terrapins south in the fall because the cold northern winters were often fatal. A barrel of turtles could be stabled at the Ludwig farm for \$10 a season (Housley, 1913).



This open-air *tablettes a chaudiere*, or dish-washing shelf, was strong enough to hold a stout dish pan, ca. 1947; (in Justin F. Bordenave, ed., *Jefferson Parish Yearly Review*, Special Collections Division, Hill Memorial Library, Louisiana State University Libraries, p. 68).



A net being repaired on Grand Isle, ca. 1947; (in Justin F. Bordenave, ed., *Jefferson Parish Yearly Review*, Special Collections Division, Hill Memorial Library, Louisiana State University Libraries, p. 69).



Grand Isle harbor scene, ca. 1940; (Historic New Orleans Collection, Museum/Research Center, Accession No. 1976.22.3).

Col. D.S. Cage (1870)

GRAND ISLE.

For Grand Isle,
The swift passenger steamer

COL. D.S. CAGE,
Capt. Frank Meyer, Hill House, Clerk
will make regular trips to the above popular water-
ing place, leaving the head of Harpoot's Canal on TUESDAY
MAY, and SATURDAY at 8 o'clock A. M. Pass-
engers and freight rate by on this steamer leaving
normally at 12 o'clock P. M. For freight or pas-
sage apply to the Capt. Frank Meyer, Hill House, Grand Isle.

Huber, Leonard, 1959, Advertisements of *Lower Mississippi River Steamboats, 1812-1920*, West Barrington, Rhode Island, The Steamship Historical Society of America, p. 13.

C. D. Jr. (1854)

**FOR THE COAST AND LA-
FOURIER.**—Twice a week from New Orleans
to Grand Isle, and vice versa, on the
steamer, under the management of W. H. B. Bordenave,
will leave Grand Isle every Tuesday at 12 o'clock
P. M., and Monday at 8 P. M.; Grand Isle every Friday
at 7 o'clock A. M., and Monday at 8 A. M. For freight or pas-
sage, apply on board or to
W. H. B. BORDENAVE, New Orleans.

THE INTERIOR AND PLANTING.—The steamer C. D. Jr.
has been built expressly for the coast trade. It has mounted
the very latest improvements that are possible and is the
most comfortable and successful of steamers, and the only
one of her class, has been repaired and brought to new equip-
ment, and has the capacity to carry a large burden.
She will continue to make regular trips throughout the
year, and all freight and freight will be returned.

Huber, Leonard, 1959, Advertisements of *Lower Mississippi River Steamboats, 1812-1920*, West Barrington, Rhode Island, The Steamship Historical Society of America, p. 16.



The Kranz Hotel was partially destroyed in the 1893 hurricane, ca. 1893; (Historic New Orleans Collection, Museum/Research Center, Accession No. 1981.238.17)



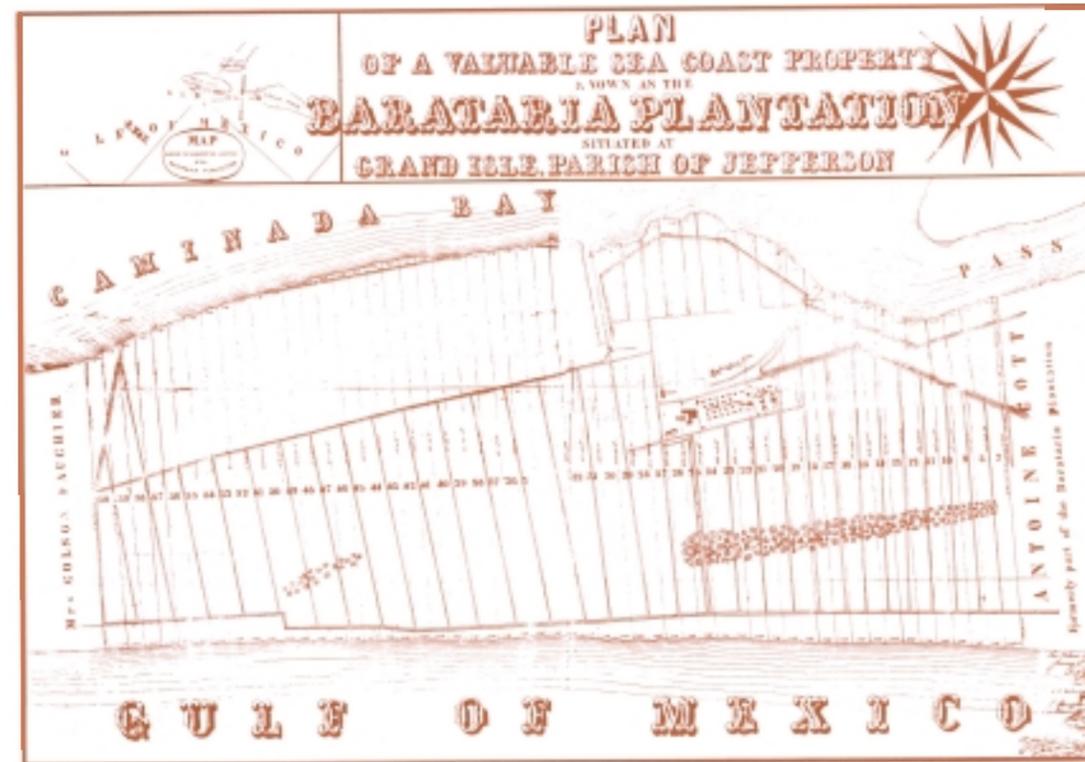
The row cottages that made up the Kranz Hotel, no date; (Historic New Orleans Collection, Museum/Research Center, Accession No. 1981.251.13).



The 1893 hurricane severely damaged The Ocean Club. Built for an estimated \$100,000, the facility was never rebuilt in its original grand manner, ca. 1893; (in Mark Forrest, *Wasted by Wind and Water: a Historical and Pictorial Sketch of the Gulf Disaster*, Milwaukee, Art Gravure and Etching Company, Louisiana Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, Hill Memorial Library, Louisiana State University Libraries).



The main avenue of the Kranz Hotel complex showing the rail line used by mule carts to move people to the beach and the steamboat landing, ca. 1890; (Historic New Orleans Collection, Museum/Research Center, Accession No. 1982.862).



GRAND ISLE HOTELS AND HURRICANES

There were three hotels on Grand Isle during the late 1800's: the Kranz Hotel, Hotel Herwig, and the Ocean Club. As is the case today, the beach was the focus of the island's tourist trade, but the island's shoreline was in motion then also. A 1878 survey indicated the island's shoreface was subject to intermittent erosion and accretion. Besides that, there was also a constant threat from hurricanes (see appendix A). All the hotels were wrecked by the storm of 1893. In addition, the steamer Joe Webre, which made regular runs to the island, washed onto the island and "crashed to her death squarely across the tracks of the streetcar line that ran from the Kranz's Grand Isle Hotel to the beach" (Van Pelt, 1943, p. 8)—"a mass of broken timbers, fit only for firewood" (Forrest, no date, p. 6). Of the estimated 650 people on the island, 25 were killed (Sampsell, 1893).

THE KRANZ HOTEL

At Grand Isle's west end lay the Kranz hotel and its associated cottages. The villa was about one kilometer from the Gulf. Cole (1892a, p. 12) described the island's first hotel as an

old, popular, well known resort, built like a plantation quarters, in a series of [38] cottages along a grassy street. At one end a ballroom, at the other a dining hall. One is out of sight of the surf and the sea; but three times a day a tram car runs down to the beach where the bathhouses are.

Mule carts were used to unload the steamers that made regular trips to Grand Isle, and to convey guests to the beach during prescribed bathing hours—5:00 a.m., noon, and 6:00 p.m. (Ross, 1889a). A partial inventory of the hotel's property reveals there were three carts used in this shuttle service (Grand Isle Hotel, no date).

In a report in the *Daily Picayune*, Mr. Kranz (The *Daily Picayune* [New Orleans], 1893) stated:

I am 70 years old, and for many years have owned the Grand Isle Hotel. I am a widower with four children. On the night of the storm I was at home. I did not expect that anything serious would happen. The wind rose and blew hard. At 11 o'clock it changed and blew from northwest to southwest at intervals of fifteen minutes thereafter. In about half a hour the water on the grounds around the hotel was fully five feet deep. A terrible gust of wind struck the house and knocked it over. A portion of the guiding fell on me, and for a time I thought our last hour had come. Fortunately, the water continued to rise, and in about ten minutes I felt the weight pressing heavily upon my body gradually removed. I was lying on a beam. It was [w]ashed away from under the house, the water carrying me with it for a distance of twenty-five feet. I was sick and became unconscious, for several hours I did not know what had occurred to me. When I regained consciousness I was still clinging to the beam ... I received very serious injuries. In my feeble condition I returned to what had been the hotel, but out of the thirty-eight cottages which formerly stood there only twenty were left. There was not a particle of food to be found, everything had been washed away, including all the wearing apparel. I estimate my loss at from \$75,000 to \$100,000.

THE OCEAN CLUB

The Ocean Club hotel, built for an estimated \$100,000, lay broadside to the Gulf. Investors had grand plans for the property. The hotel was designed to be one of the "most commodious and imposing buildings along the Gulf" (Grand Isle, 1891, p. 3) and to rival or surpass the resort hotels at Newport, Saratoga, and Niagara Falls (The *Daily Picayune*-New Orleans, 1866). Photographs from the period indicate the investors met their goal; it was a most impressive structure. The hotel, in fact, marked the beginning of the island's resort cycle (Meyer-Arendt, 1985). Three times a week the steamer St. *Nicholas* carried to the island people interested in leisure-time pursuits (Tieys, 1867).

The two-story building took the shape of a large letter "E" (New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, 1891). With the hotel's long axis parallel to the Gulf, all rooms faced the surf zone. Supported by nearly 300 pilings, the hotel contained 160 bedrooms, two parlors, two dining halls, a billiard hall, a card room, a reading room, pantries, kitchen, and a laundry, and was illuminated by 320 gas lights. The dining hall alone could accommodate 250 guests. The middle section of the "E" was the "en" suite for the hotel's stockholders and was described as "most luxurious" (New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, 1891; The *Times-Democrat* [New Orleans], 1891a). The building was constructed with double framing that required over 180,000 meters of lumber. Like Fort Livingston, the Ocean Club served as a landmark for fishermen returning to the island (New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, 1891).

A two-story addition to the front of the building was planned. This structure would have been at right angles to the main building and extended to the beach. A 40-meter hall would have connected the main building to an immense over-water pavilion, which would have provided a covered walk to the Gulf. Bathrooms were designed into the first floor. The new structure was expected to increase the hotel's capacity to 1,000 guests (New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, 1891). However, the 1893 hurricane mined these plans permanently. Like the hotels on Isles Dernieres, it was damaged severely—never to be rebuilt in its original grand manner.

A storm in 1888 partially inundated the island. Stories circulated around New Orleans that Grand Isle's residents took refuge in Fort Livingston. The storm was described as being the most violent since the Last Island hurricane of 1856. When news of the storm's damage reached New Orleans, reporters wrote: "The rain fell in torrents and the hurricane was as severe as can be imagined" (The *Daily Picayune* [New Orleans], 1888, p. 1). The hotel and its associated cottages survived. Beach bathhouses were demolished and washed away, but quickly rebuilt (The *Picayune* [New Orleans], 1888; Cole, 1892a). Within days after the storm, the resort was back in operation with the *Joe Webre* bringing guests to the island on a regular basis. Five years after the 1888 storm, the enterprise had to be abandoned. Transportation to the island was not quick and easy. Those who could afford the \$50 a month room rate were unaccustomed to enduring the hardships of the long rail and boat trip to the resort (Cole, 1892a).



The Kranz Hotel was Grand Isle's first major hotel and was described as an "old, popular, well known resort, built like a plantation quarters, in a series of [38] cottages along a grassy street" (Cole, 1892a, p. 12), no date; (Historic New Orleans Collection, Museum/Research Center, Accession No. 1981.251.11).



Grand Isle tram clearly visible in a small, covered bridge, ca. 1890; (Historic New Orleans Collection, Museum/Research Center, Accession No. 1981.251.14).



The Grand Isle steamer *Joe Webre* lay across the tracks of the Kranz Hotel's streetcar line after the 1893 hurricane, ca. 1893; (in Mark Forrest, *Wasted by Wind and Water: a Historical and Pictorial Sketch of the Gulf Disaster*, Milwaukee, Art Gravure and Etching Company, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, Hill Memorial Library, Louisiana State University Libraries).



Fort Livingston saw no military action, but from its inception in the 1840's, it was at war with the elements, ca. 1935; Forville Winans, Louisiana State Library, Louisiana Photographic Archives).

GRAND TERRE: HOME OF PIRATES AND PLANTATIONS

THE HOME OF JEAN LAFITTE THE PIRATE

In the 1800's, Louisiana's coastal lowlands were ideally suited for smugglers. The land was inadequately mapped; consequently, government agents who were unfamiliar with the Barataria Bay water system easily became lost, and a skilled smuggler could outmaneuver his pursuers. Isolated ridges, or Indian middens, were utilized to unload contraband. Louisiana's geographical position was nearly perfect for the storage and movement of illicit foreign merchandise (Davis, 1990).

The privateer Jean Lafitte established a base on Grand Terre. By 1810, New Orleans newspapers reported that the privateers had captured a "richly laden" Spanish ship, removed her guns, and built a shore battery to protect their base of operations (The Louisiana Gazette-New Orleans, 1810). These beach cannon emplacements fortified the site. The "first smugglers' convention [was] held there [Grand Terre] in 1805" (DeGrummond, 1961, p. 4).

Over 30 privateer captains called Grand Terre, Grand Isle, and Cheniere Caminada their home. With 120- to 130-ton brigs and schooners, manned by crews of 90 to 200 men, the island's population often swelled to 3,000 (DeGrummond, 1961). Lafitte also had a base at Cat Island, the home of from 500 to 600 men who were protected by a 14-gun brig sunk in the pass (Gilbert, 1814). In 1814, there was a force of five or six armed vessels at Cat Island, each carrying from 12 to 14 guns and 60 to 90 men.

The region profited from the "legalized" pillage practiced by the Barataria pirates. The harbor at Grand Terre served as a rallying point for the Gulf privateers' fast-sailing schooners, which were armed for victory over their adversaries. Newspapers reported that numerous New Orleans businessmen sailed to the island to acquire good bargains (The Louisiana Gazette-New Orleans, 1814a). Several huts and a storehouse were constructed to display the captured booty.

As the English closed the French-controlled Caribbean ports, more contraband was shipped to Grand Terre. Great quantities of foreign merchandise accumulated on the island and were distributed to the New Orleans market. To meet the demand for storage space, Lafitte acquired a warehouse in New Orleans and built one in Donaldsonville. At Grand Terre, 40 warehouses were built along with slave pens, dwellings, a hospital, and an improved fort (DeGrummond, 1961).

At times, the only prudent means of disposing of merchandise was to hold a public auction (Gilbert, 1814). The warehouses attracted merchants and traders who used large pirogues to make the three-day journey to Lafitte's market at Grand Terre. The entrepreneurs purchased their goods cheaply, then retailed them at a large profit: the privateers were better with sword, cutlass, and cannon than with matters of business.

A fleet of small vessels was constantly moving these resold goods into the "Crescent City." The practice was "illegal" but ignored by most of the authorities (Daily Delta [New Orleans], 1854). Hard currency was scarce in New Orleans, so these goods became part of the city's battered economy.

In 1814, the United States Navy sent an expedition to stop the privateers. They captured all of their buildings and effectively terminated privateering on the Louisiana coast (The Louisiana Gazette-New Orleans, 1814b).

GRAND TERRE SUGAR PLANTATION

In 1795, Francois Mayronne purchased the Grand Terre sugar plantation from Joseph Andoeza, who claimed ownership of the island from a Spanish land grant. By 1823 Jean-Baptiste Moussier owned Grand Terre. Sixty-nine slaves worked this sugar plantation, which was valued at \$38,000 and included a sugarhouse, draining house, steam engine, dwelling house, slave cabins, and other outbuildings (Chamberlain, 1942). In 1831 a hurricane completely inundated the island with water six meters deep. Two sugarhouses and the sugar cane in the field were blown down. The corn crop was destroyed, and the island's residents were forced to seek shelter in "their boats and canoes" (The Daily Picayune [New Orleans] 1863, p. 3).

The Moussier family sold the island but retained most of the western tip—the future site of Fort Livingston. By the mid-nineteenth century, the eastern two-thirds of the island were under the control of F. G. and L. E. Forstall. In 1845 this property produced 300,000 lbs of sugar, but after the Civil War the plantation was abandoned because cheap field hands were no longer available.

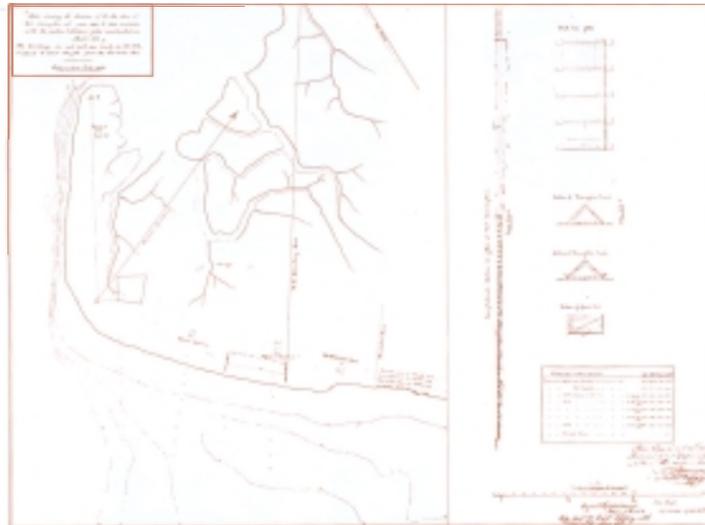
Jose Llulla bought most of the island, and until his death in 1888, he lived a quiet life raising cattle on Grand Terre. With the success of Grand Isle's hotels, several businessmen were convinced they could convert the former home of Jean Lafitte into a tourist attraction. They bought the Llulla estate for \$2,500 intending "to divide it up into building sites for themselves and hold the remainder" (New Orleans Times-Democrat, 1893, p. 9). These investors believed that "if the railroad extends seven miles [11 kilometers] toward the bay they will have a small bonanza" (New Orleans Times-Democrat, 1893, p. 9). However, the railroad was never built, no hotel was constructed, and the island reverted to its original form.



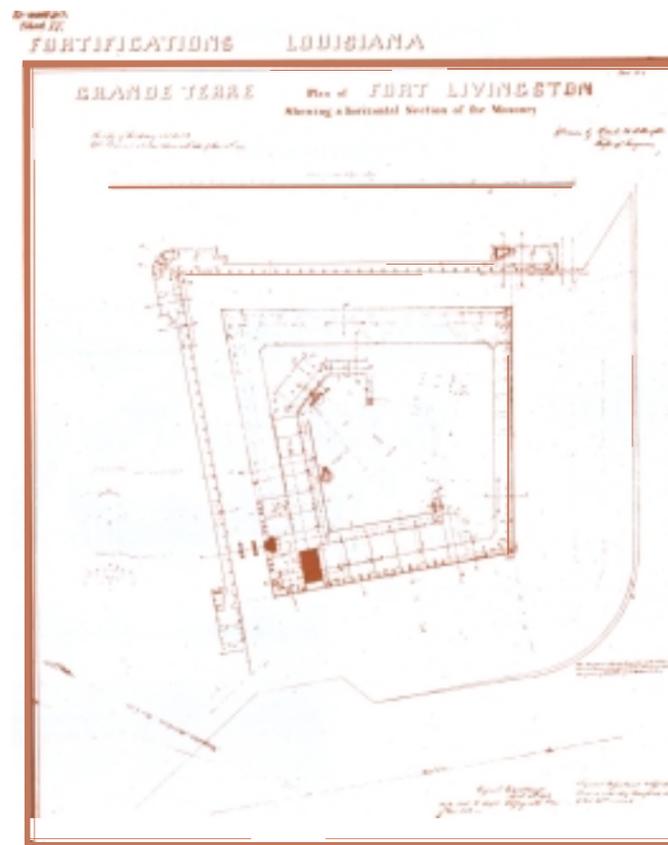
By the mid-1930's the western end of Grand Terre was eroded to the point where the surf was pounding on Fort Livingston's outside walls, date: (Fonville Winans, Louisiana State Library, Louisiana Photographic Archives).



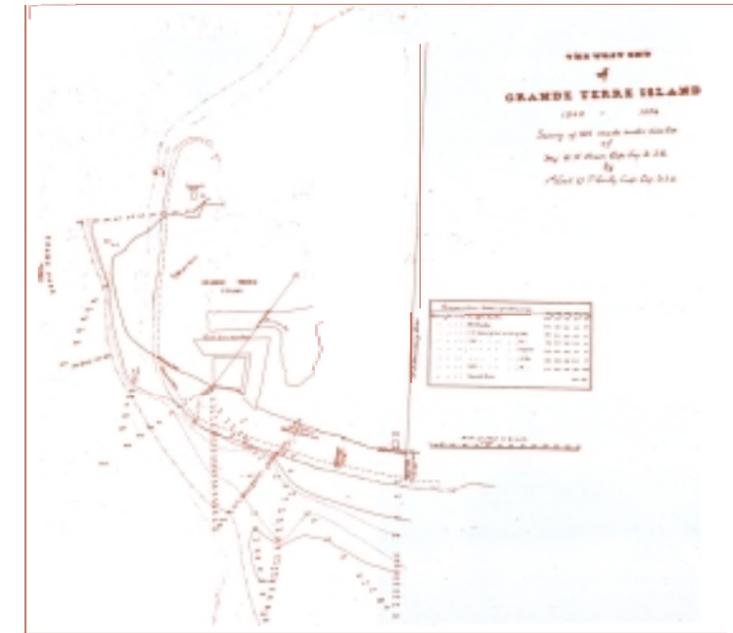
To build Fort Livingston, brick was shipped to the site from the Mississippi Gulf coast. Shells removed from Indian middens were also utilized. With time and the elements the structure became a derelict relic of the past, ca. 1933: (Pen and ink postcard drawing by George Izvolsky).



Erosion at the eastern end of Grande Terre Island, 1840-1854: (National Archives, Record Group 77, Drawer 90, Sheet 34).



**Floor Plan of
 Fort Livingston**



Erosion at the western end of Grande Terre Island, 1840-1886: (National Archives, Record Group 77, Drawer 90, Sheet 44).

