



An Introduction to the Territorial and Early Federal and State Records Held by the Louisiana Office of State Lands (OSL)

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Ark-La-Tex Genealogical Association
14 August 2021
Presented at the Bossier History Center
& Via Zoom

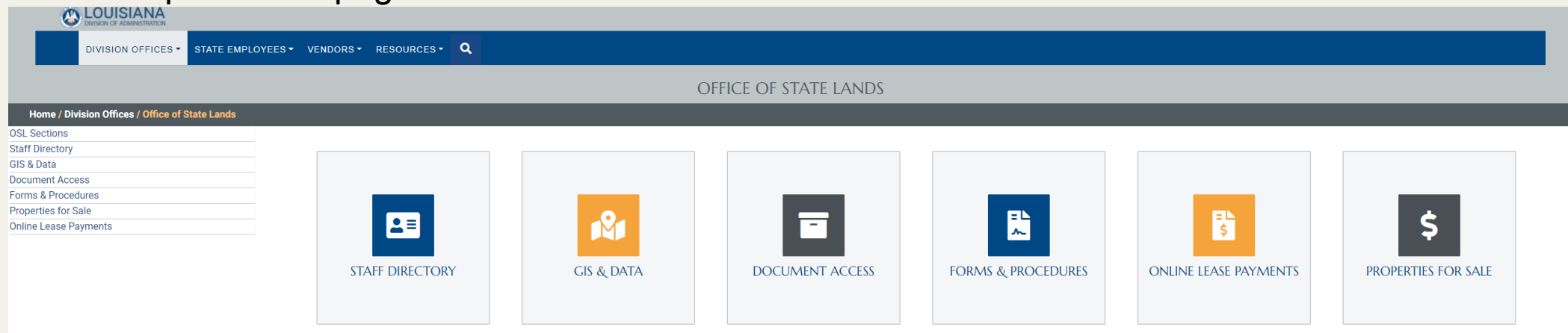
Background

- + Many settlers of different national backgrounds made homes in present-day Louisiana
 - + In colonial Louisiana often decades before the Louisiana Purchase (1803)
 - + In Orleans Territory (1803-1812)
 - + In the state of Louisiana (1812-)
- + In 1803 the U. S. Government put ALL of Louisiana Purchase into its “public domain,” which forced ALL prior settlers wishing to hold onto their improvements to prove their British, French, Spanish, and Indian claims and seek confirmation of title from Congress. Some of these **private claims** took *decades* to settle, a few exceeding 100 years. In addition, lands acquired by the State and selected businesses (e.g, railroads) had to first be selected, then approved by the U. S. government, thus severing these lands from the U. S. public domain.
- + Four major problems added to the discord
 - + Extensive delays in surveying complex terrain & approving the surveys, **then** offering lands for sale to the public.
 - + Boundary disputes with Spanish authorities (yes, Spanish) for years after the Louisiana Purchase.
 - + Settlers’ reluctance to appear before federal officials to press their claims in the legally allowed time period.
 - + Squatters on unsurveyed lands, which they would have to vacate once the lands were surveyed, *unless* Congress gave them preference over other bidders. This process took years, sometimes decades.

Purpose

- + This module discusses the types of records held at OSL and how to navigate them, followed by two case examples.
- + Start at this website: <https://doa.louisiana.gov/doa/osl/>

Partial snip of home page:



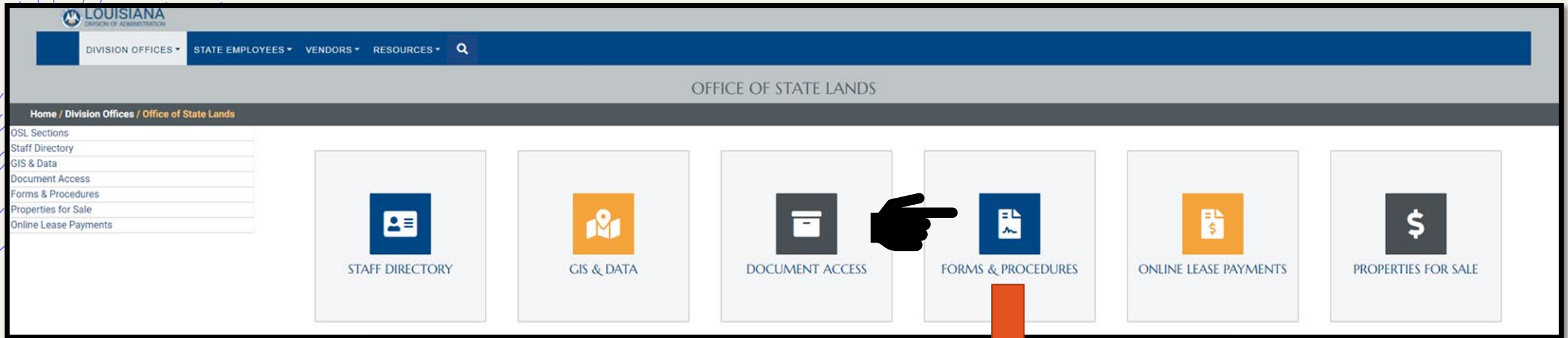
Navigating Louisiana's OSL Website

**Plus ...
Creating a Project File on their
Website and Adding
Documents to It**

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High Level Navigation: Background



Publications & Information

[Document Definitions](#)

[Instructions to Deputy Surveyors](#)

[History of Land Titles in Louisiana](#)

[Utilizing the OSL Website to Find Common Historical Land Title Documents](#)

[Louisiana State Historical Land Records and Their Relevance to Genealogists](#)

High Level Navigation: Historical Records

The screenshot displays the Louisiana Division of Administration website. The top navigation bar includes links for DIVISION OFFICES, STATE EMPLOYEES, VENDORS, and RESOURCES. Below this, the 'OFFICE OF STATE LANDS' section is highlighted. A sidebar on the left lists various sections: OSL Sections, Staff Directory, GIS & Data, Document Access, Forms & Procedures, Properties for Sale, and Online Lease Payments. The main content area features six large icons: STAFF DIRECTORY, GIS & DATA, DOCUMENT ACCESS, FORMS & PROCEDURES, ONLINE LEASE PAYMENTS, and PROPERTIES FOR SALE. A hand icon points to the 'DOCUMENT ACCESS' icon, with a large orange arrow pointing down to a detailed view of the 'DOCUMENT ACCESS' page. This page shows two search options: 'HISTORICAL RECORDS SEARCH' and 'TAX RECORDS SEARCH'. The 'TAX RECORDS SEARCH' option is highlighted with a red box and a text overlay.

LOUISIANA
DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATION

DIVISION OFFICES ▾ STATE EMPLOYEES ▾ VENDORS ▾ RESOURCES ▾

OFFICE OF STATE LANDS

Home / Division Offices / Office of State Lands

OSL Sections
Staff Directory
GIS & Data
Document Access
Forms & Procedures
Properties for Sale
Online Lease Payments

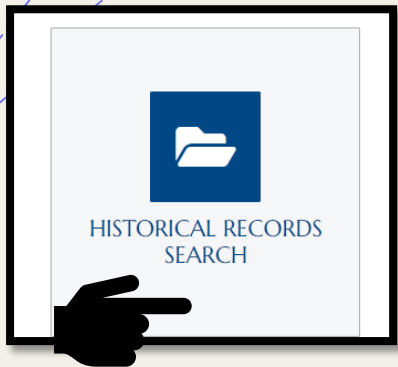
STAFF DIRECTORY GIS & DATA DOCUMENT ACCESS FORMS & PROCEDURES ONLINE LEASE PAYMENTS PROPERTIES FOR SALE

DOCUMENT ACCESS

HISTORICAL RECORDS SEARCH TAX RECORDS SEARCH

Seizure for non-payment of State property taxes, 1880-1973

High Level Navigation (cont'd)

A screenshot of a web application titled "Search Historical Documents". On the left is a vertical blue sidebar with four buttons: "RETURN TO OSL HOMEPAGE", "SEARCH HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS", "SEARCH TAX DOCUMENTS", and "SEARCH SLABS DOCUMENTS". The main content area has a blue header with "Text Size" controls and a "[Login]" link. Below the header, the title "Search Historical Documents" is followed by a "GETTING STARTED" section with instructions and a hint about using wildcards. Below that is a section titled "LOOKING FOR OFFICIAL TOWNSHIP PLATS, TRACT BOOK PAGES AND STATE PATENTS?" with a "Click Here" link. On the right is a "Search" form with a red border around the "Document Type" dropdown menu, which is currently set to "Unspecified". Other fields include "Doc ID Number", "Title of Volume", "Land District", "Township", "Range", "Section", "Original Owner", "Patent Number", "Certificate Number", "Surveyor", and "Parish". At the bottom of the form are "Search Historical Documents" and "New Search" buttons.

Search

Document Type

Unspecified

Mid-Level Navigation: Document Type (41)

Unspecified

ABSTRACT DOCUMENTS

ACTS / LEGAL

AMERICAN STATE PAPERS

BEARING TREES

CERTIFICATES

CHOCTAW DOCUMENTS

FIELD NOTES

HOMESTEAD DOCUMENTS

INTERNAL IMPROVEMENTS

LAND CLAIMS

LAND GRANTS

LETTERS, COMMISSIONER

LETTERS, MISCELLANEOUS

LETTERS, SURVEYOR

LETTERS, SURVEYOR GENERAL

LEVEE BOARD TRANSFERS

MILITARY WARRANTS

MISCELLANEOUS DOCUMENTS

PATENTS

PLATS, MISCELLANEOUS

PLATS, OFFICE OF PUBLIC WORKS

PLATS, OFFICIAL

PLATS, OLD

PLATS, STATE CHECK

PLATS, SURVEYOR GENERAL

PLATS, U.S. CHECK

PRE-EMPTION DOCUMENTS

RECEIPTS

RECEIVER DOCUMENTS

REGISTER & RECEIVER DOCUMENTS

REGISTER OF CERTIFICATES

REGISTER OF RECEIPTS

SALE DOCUMENTS

SCHOOL LAND DOCUMENTS

SECTION 16 SCHOOL LAND DOCUMENTS

SPANISH DOCUMENTS

STATE SURVEYS

SWAMP LAND DOCUMENTS

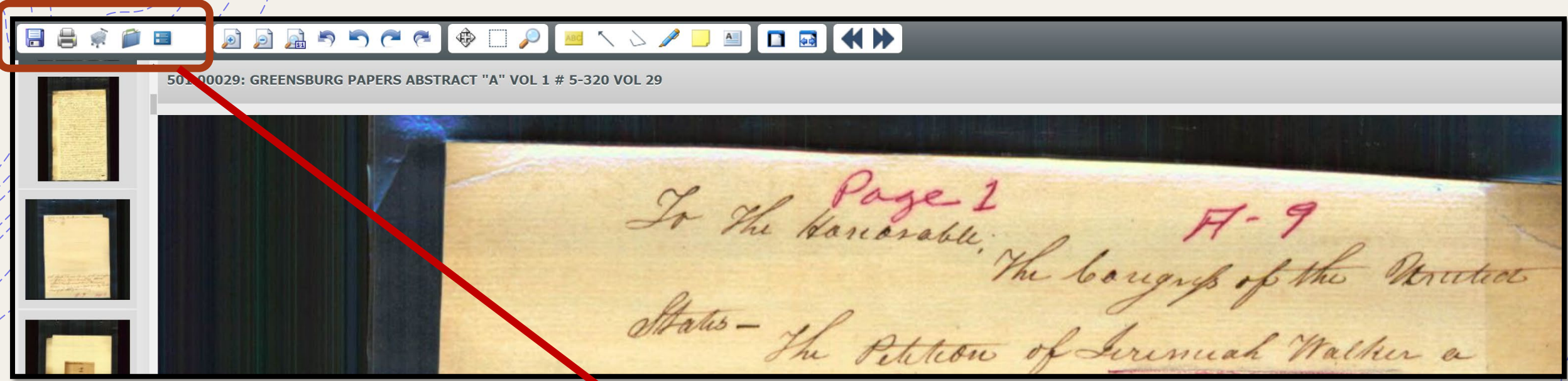
TRACT BOOKS, STATE

TRACT BOOKS, U.S.

U.S. STATUTES

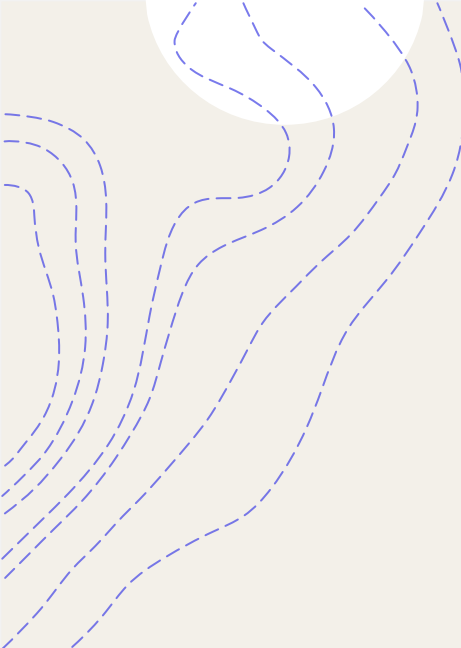
WARRANTS

LA OSL Online Project & Subfolder Tools



- + Conduct search and locate document(s) of interest
- + Create/Access a Project
- + Add Documents to Project

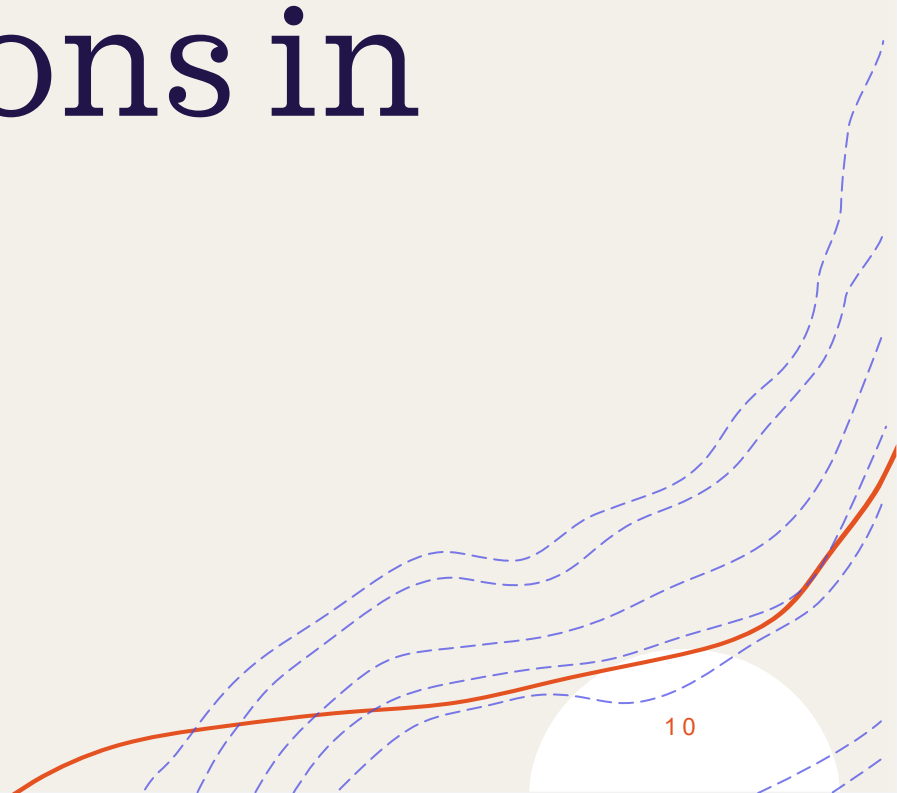




Land Descriptions in Louisiana

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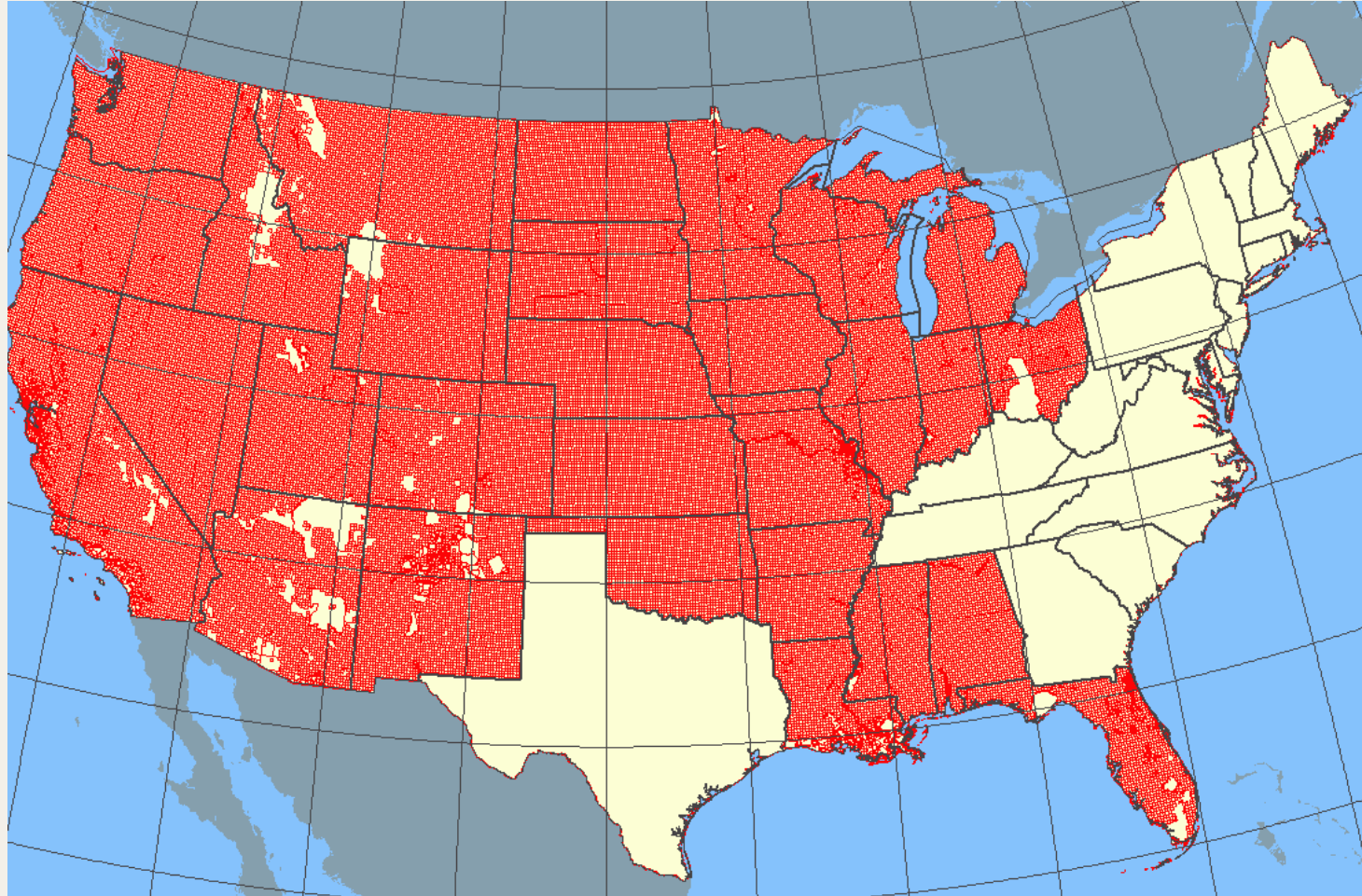
10

Keys to Land Descriptions in Louisiana

- + Public Land Survey System (PLSS) is the foundation
 - + Rectilinear grid system: **36** nominally 1-square-mile **sections** of 640 acres in 1 nominally square PLSS township
 - + Used to describe all land transactions other than those claiming land derived from British, French, Spanish, or Indian authorities
- + Metes and Bounds
 - + Land derived from British, French, Spanish, or Indian authorities
 - + Generally associated with pre-statehood transactions and subsequent decisions involving those lands after statehood
 - + Section numbers ***begin*** at **37**. These numbers signal a private land claim!!

The Public Land Survey System (PLSS)

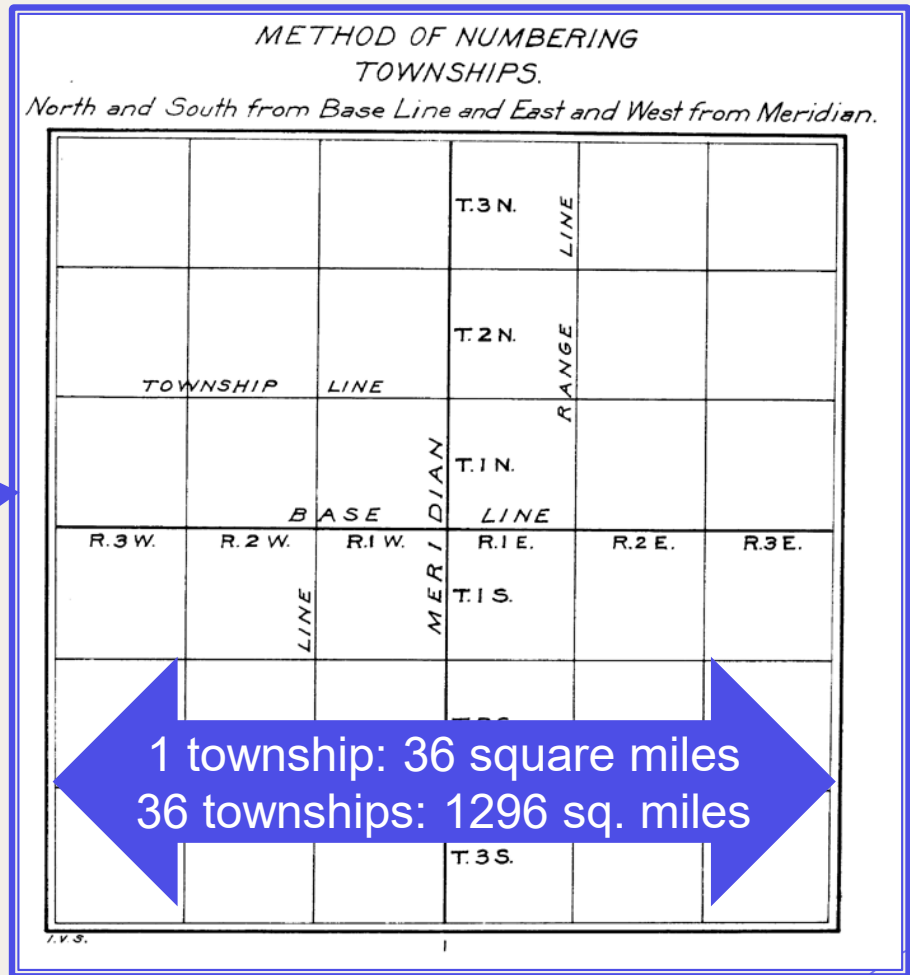
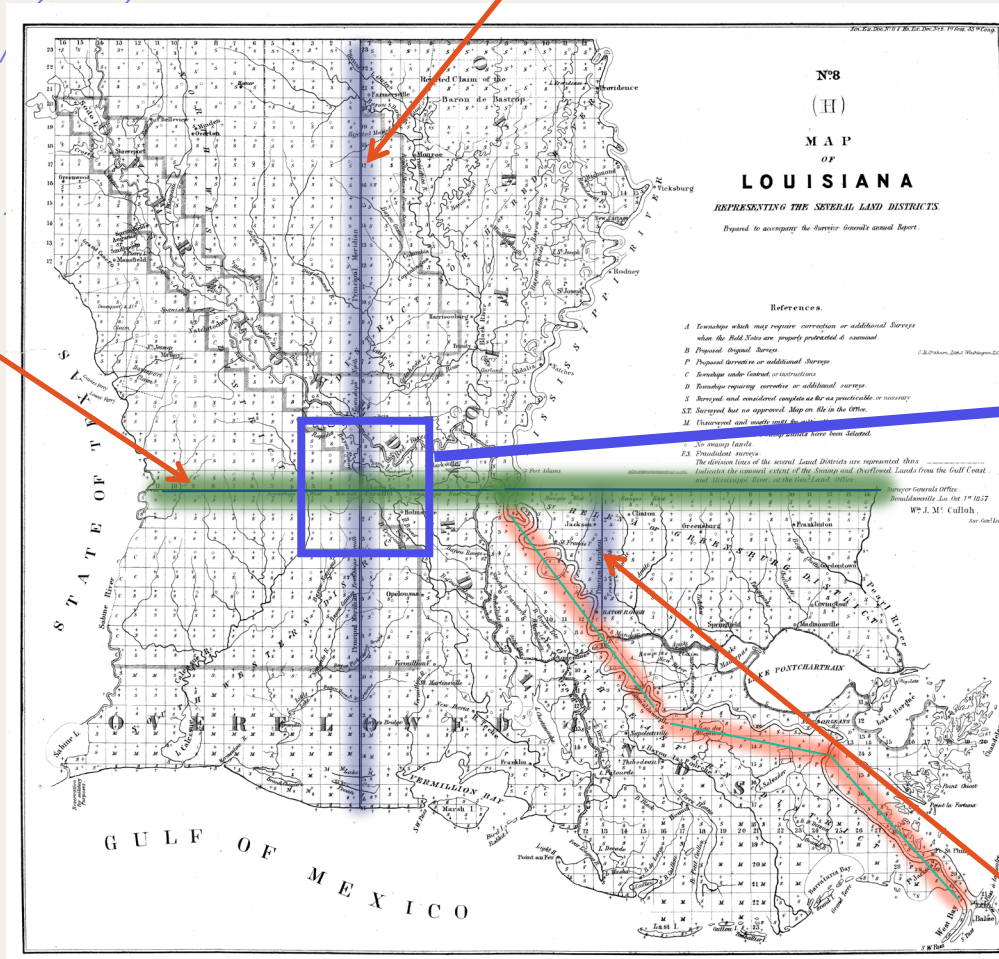
States (includes Alaska, not shown)



Louisiana, 1857 Federal Land Survey Map

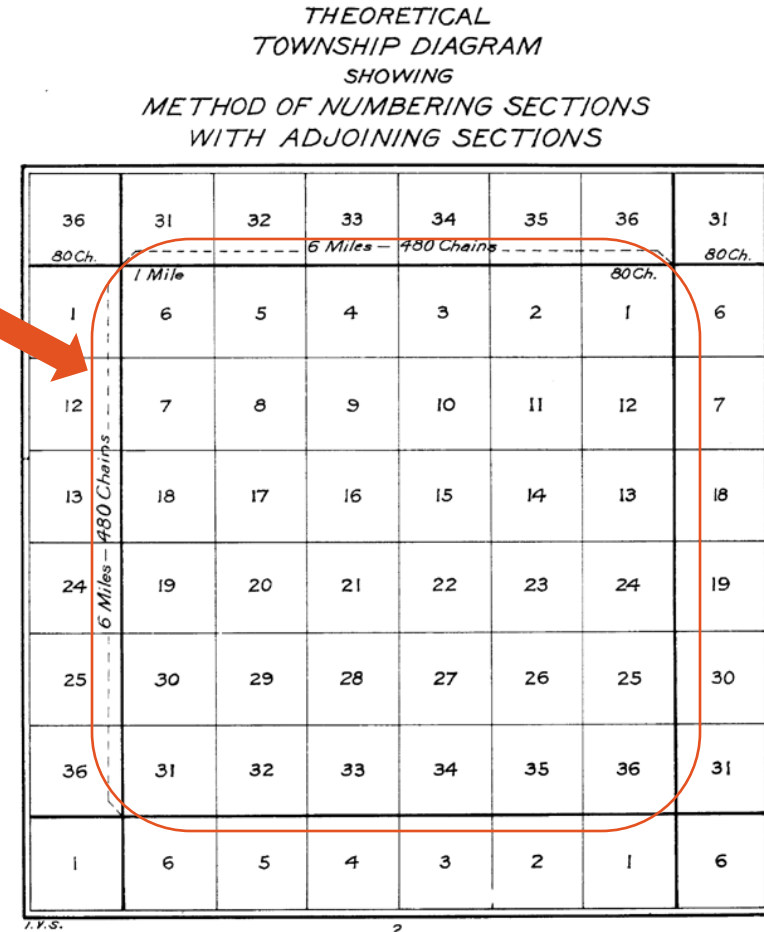
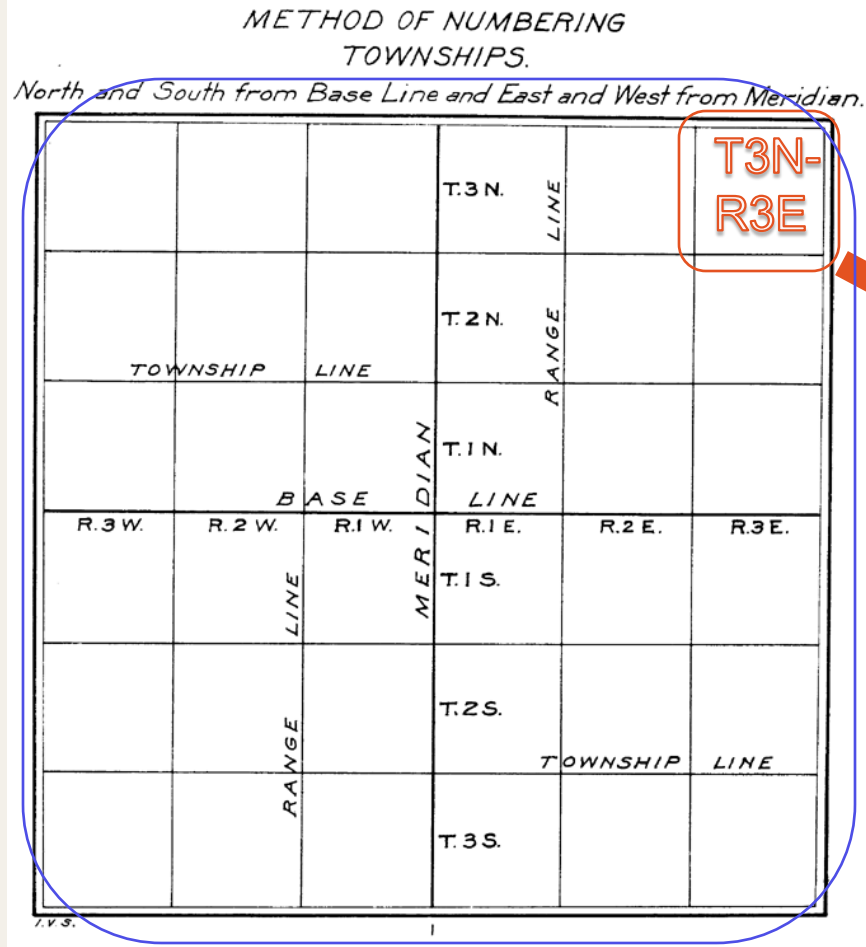
Louisiana Meridian

Baseline



St. Helena Meridian

A Brief Review

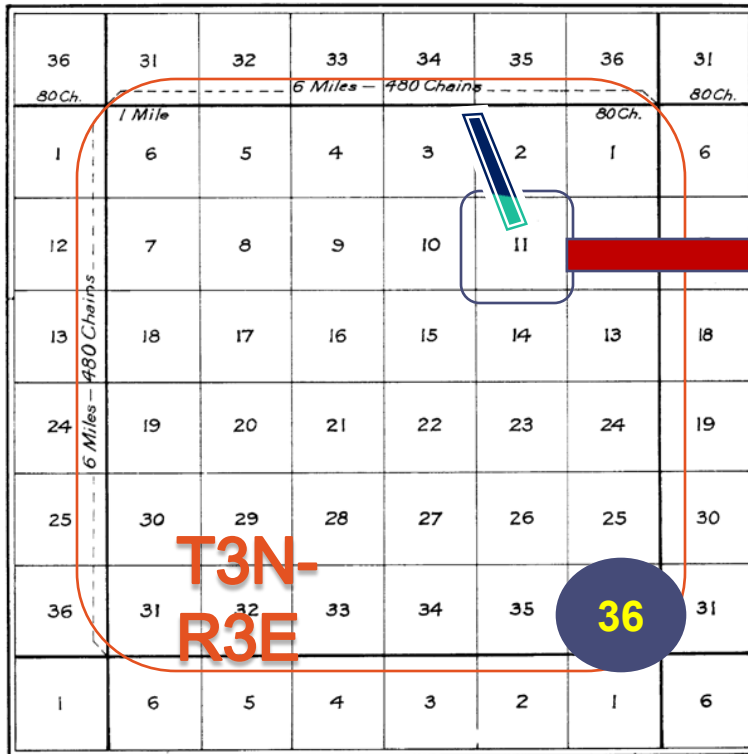


A Brief Review

A Section # greater than 36 signals a private land claim.

SE⁴ NE⁴ Sec. 11 of T3N-R3E

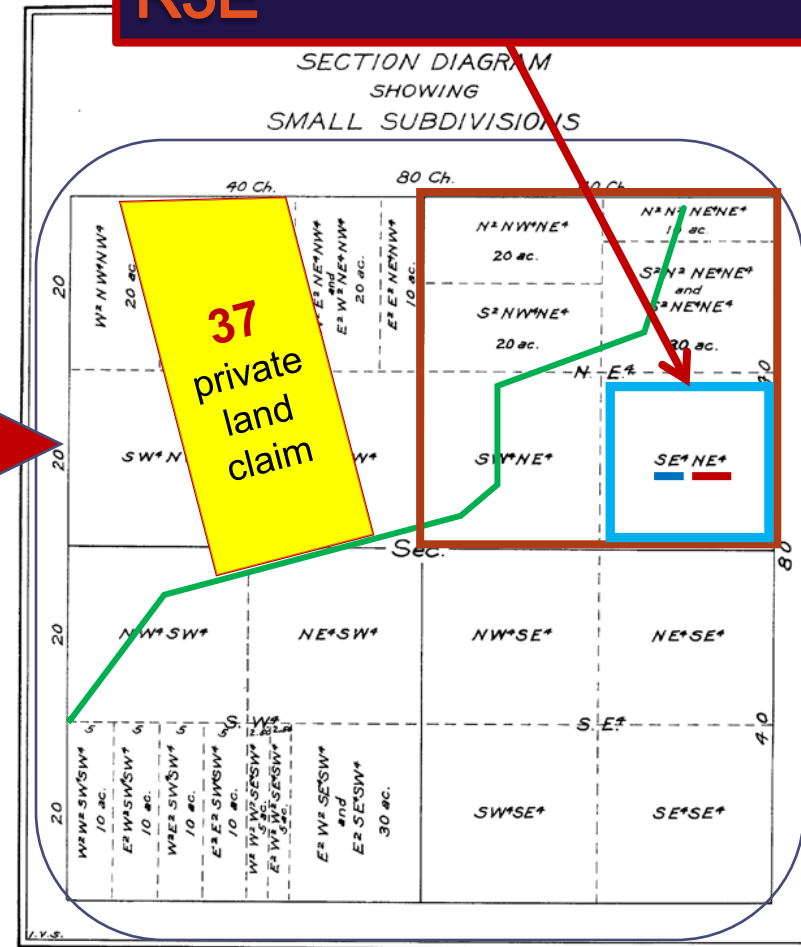
THEORETICAL
TOWNSHIP DIAGRAM
SHOWING
METHOD OF NUMBERING SECTIONS
WITH ADJOINING SECTIONS



**T3N-
R3E**

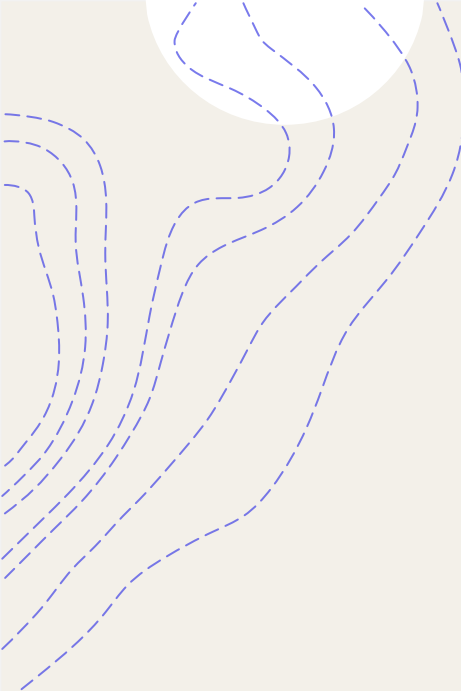
36

SECTION DIAGRAM
SHOWING
SMALL SUBDIVISIONS



**37
private
land
claim**

SE⁴ NE⁴



Land Office Districts

History in Louisiana & Research Tips

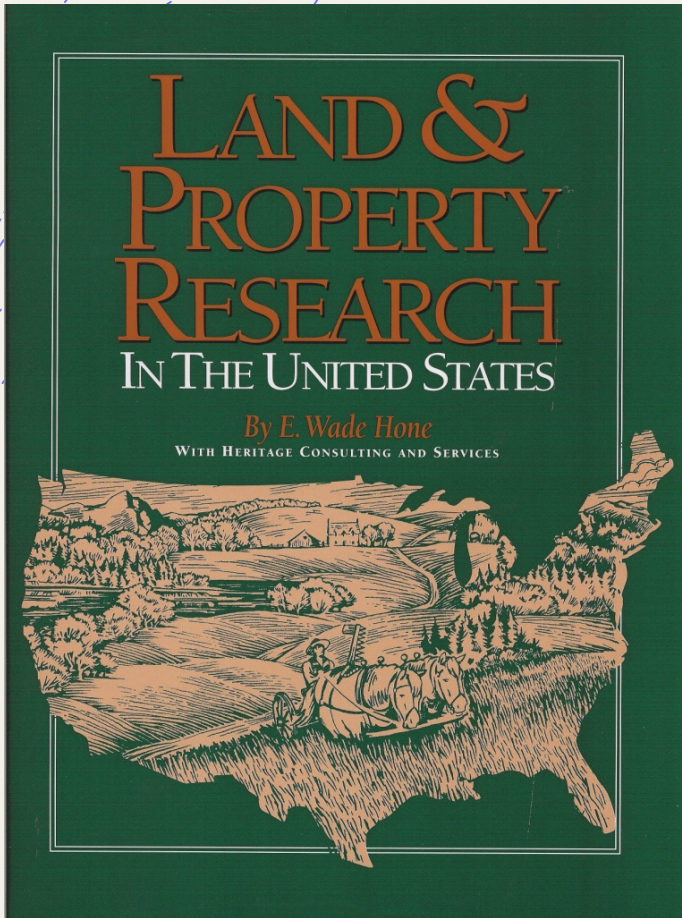
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Local Land Offices in Louisiana



E. Wade Hone, *Land and Property Research in the United States* (Salt Lake City: Ancestry Inc., 1997), 367-371.

- + Treat local land offices as you would counties and parishes over time:
 - + Formation dates
 - + Jurisdiction line changes
 - + Closure dates
- + However, township formations and locations generally remained **fixed** relative to one of two meridians (Louisiana or St. Helena) and baseline (31st Parallel).
- + **Bottom line: more than one land office may have handled an ancestor's land acquisition over time.**

Act of **3 March 1805** as it applied to Orleans Territory

+ Eastern District-Board of Commissioners

- + Based in **New Orleans**
- + 1 Register appointed by President
- + 2 Appointees
- + Adjudicated title claims and made subsequent recommendations of confirmation to Congress
- + Lands east of Mississippi River and parishes that bordered them on its west bank

+ **Western District**-Board of Commissioners

- + Based at **Opelousas**
- + Same structure and mission as above
- + All remaining lands in the territory.

Harry Lewis Coles, Jr., *History of the Administration of Federal Land Policies and Land Tenure in Louisiana, 1803–1860* (New York: Arno Press, 1979), 69–80.

1812-1838



1812

Annotations in red are used by the Office of State Lands today for Historical Records, but some specific records may carry the federal land office name. **Order NARA land records using the federal land office name.**

1812-1838 [Hone, 367]



District North of the Red River (NRR);
[Ouachita Land Office is also referred to as Monroe Land Office]

Northwestern District (NWD)

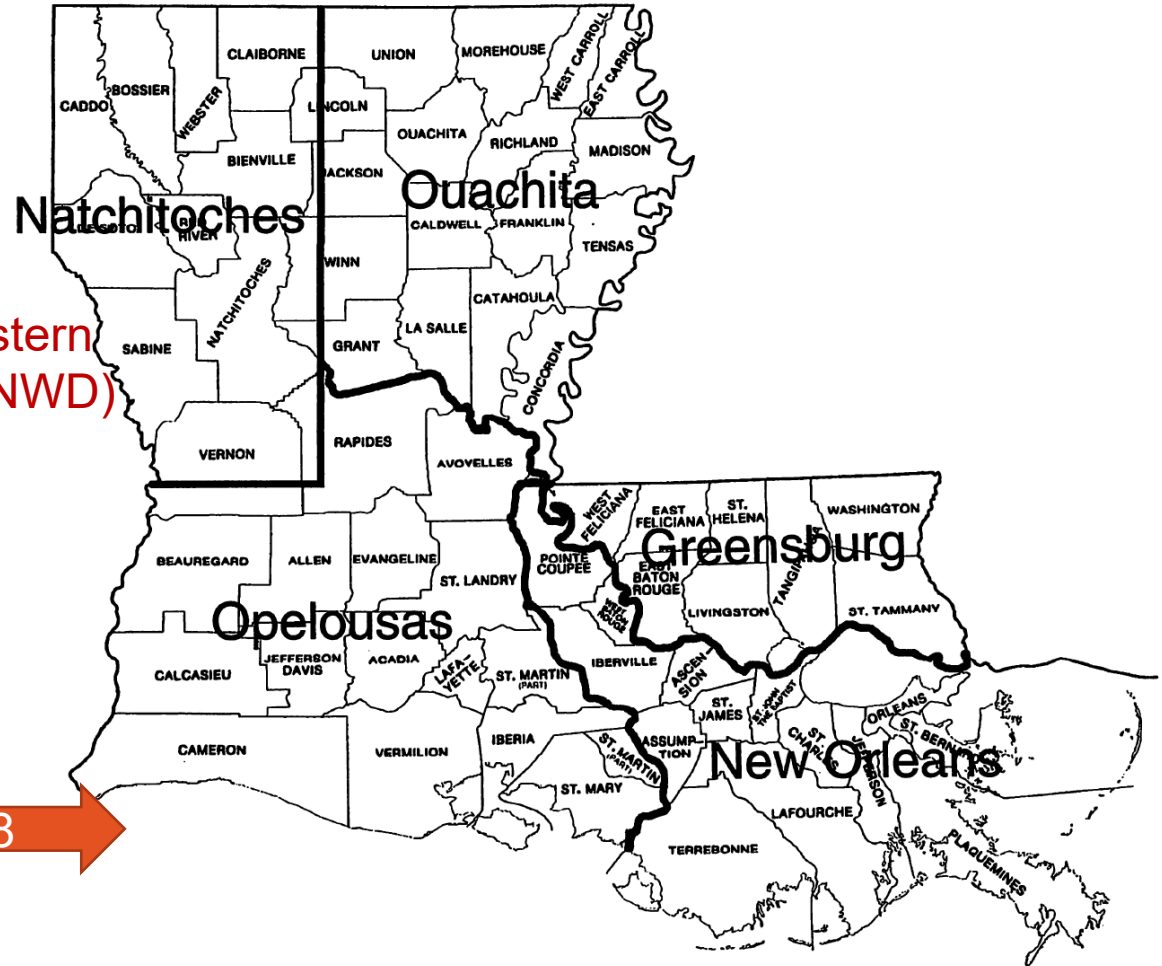
Greensburg District

Southwestern District (SWD)

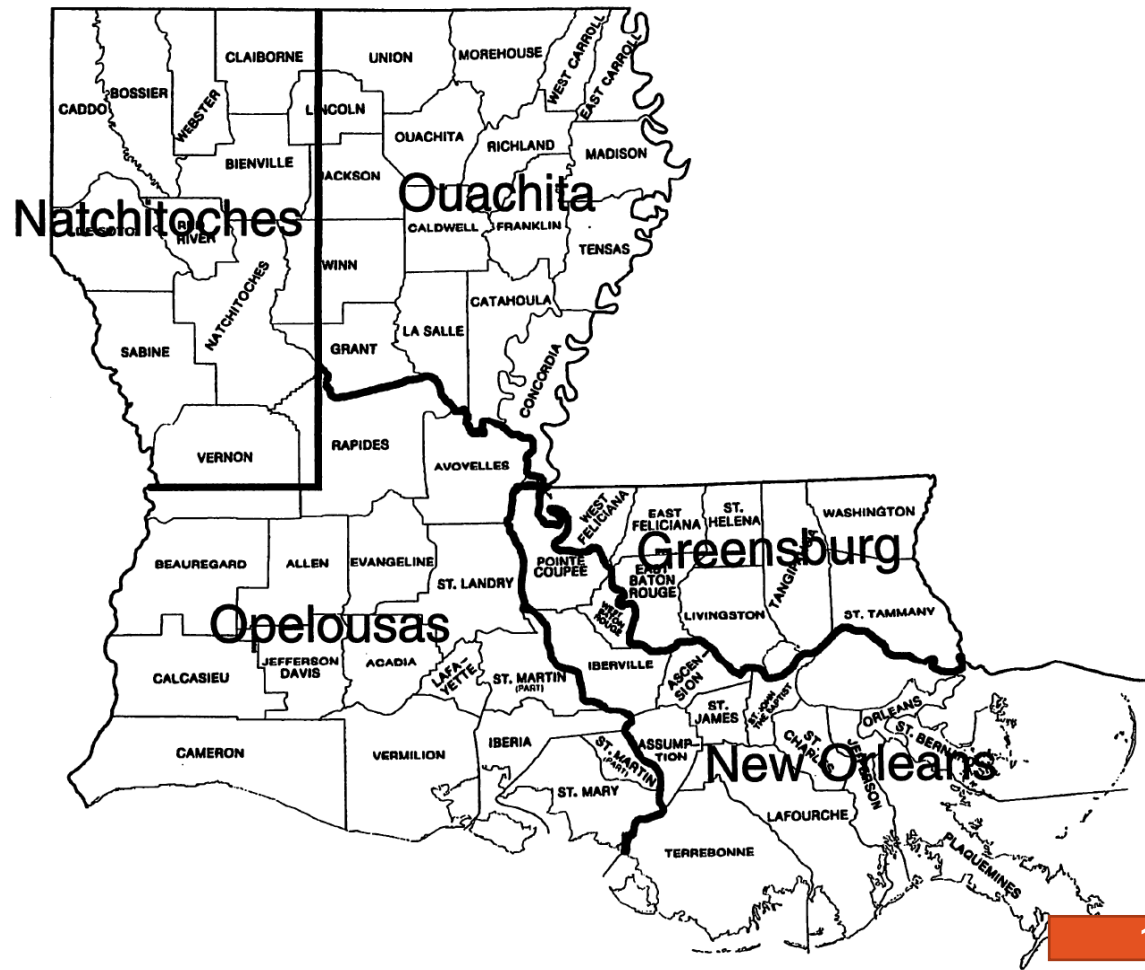
Southeastern District East of Miss. River & Southeastern District West of Miss. River

1838

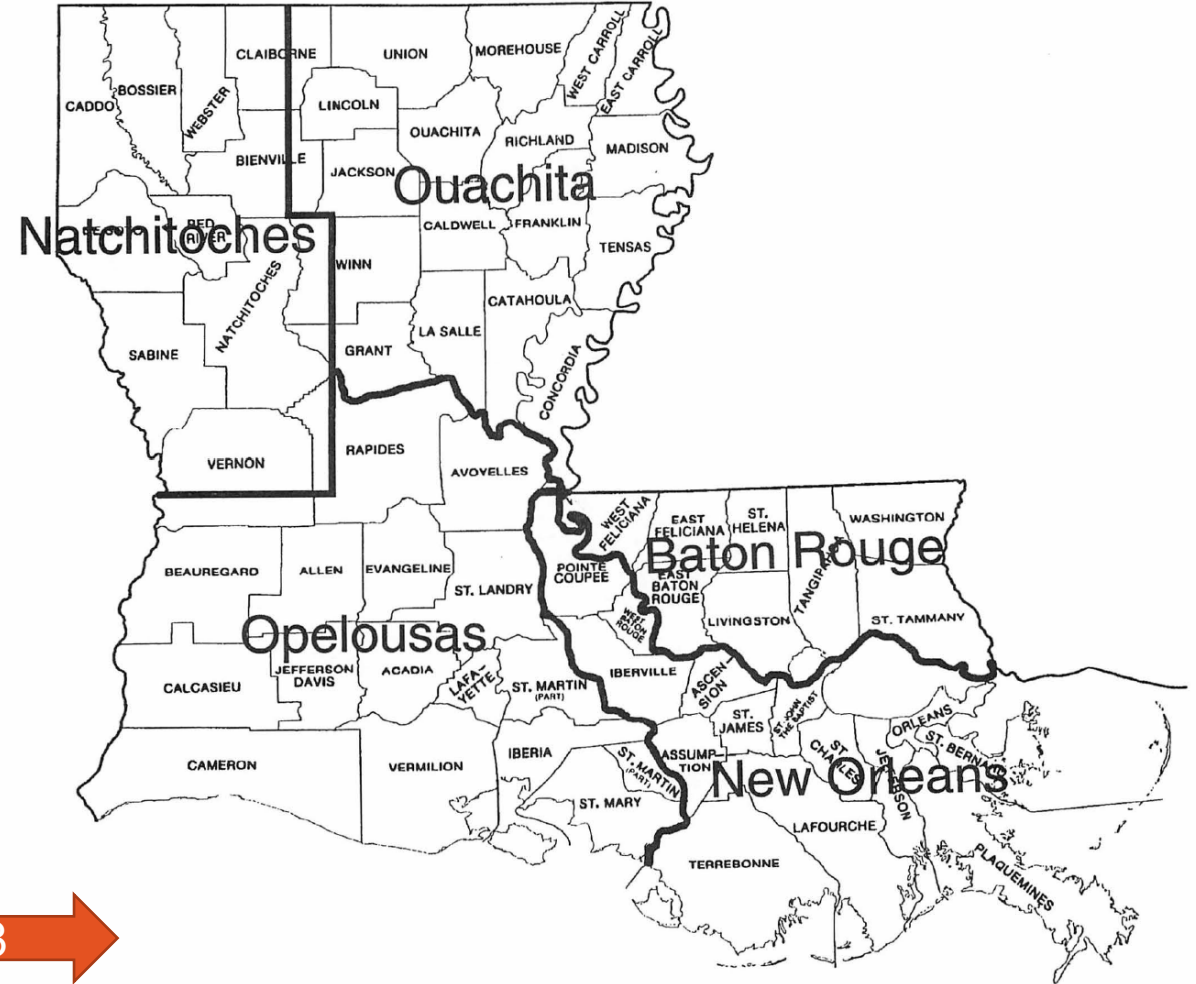
1838-1848 [Hone, 368]



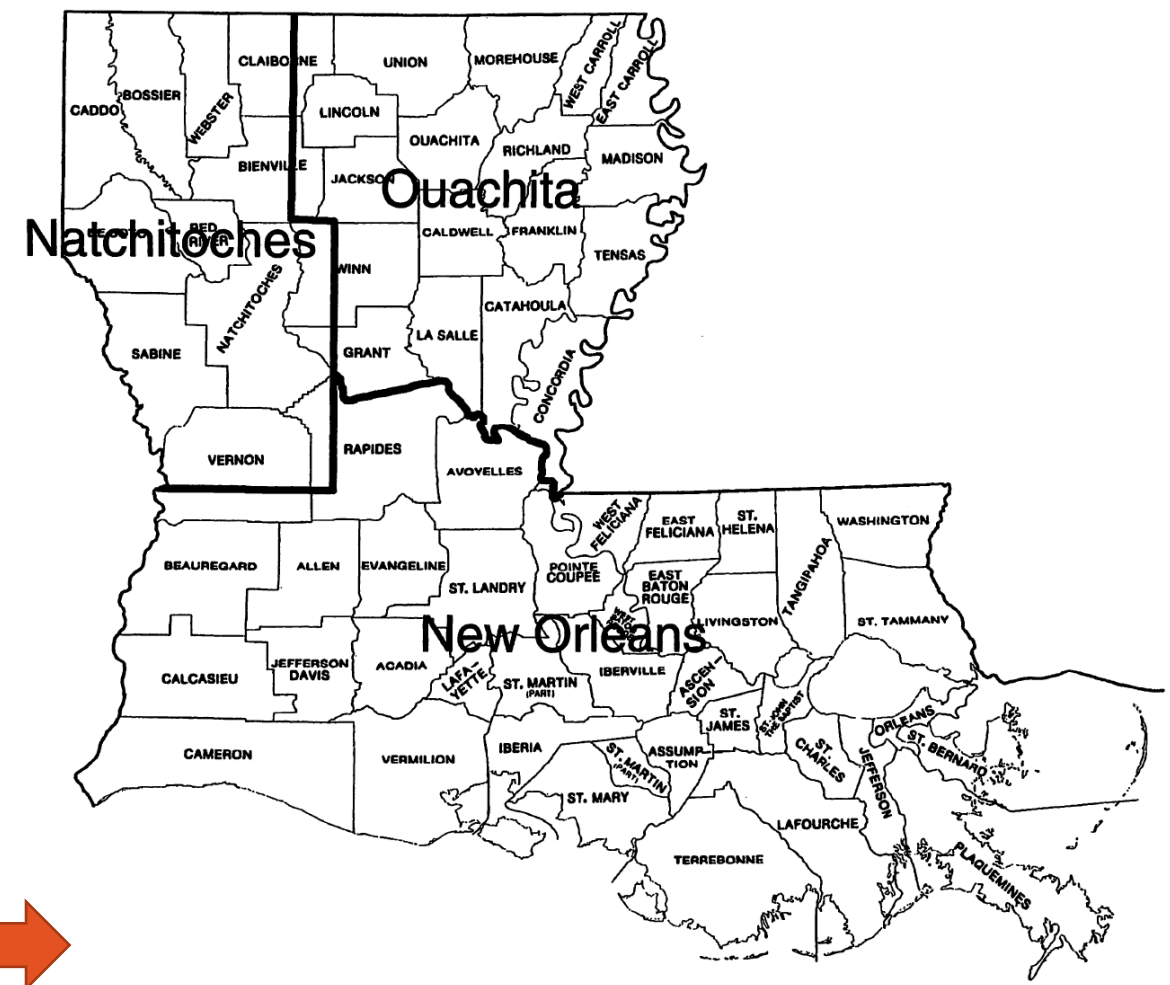
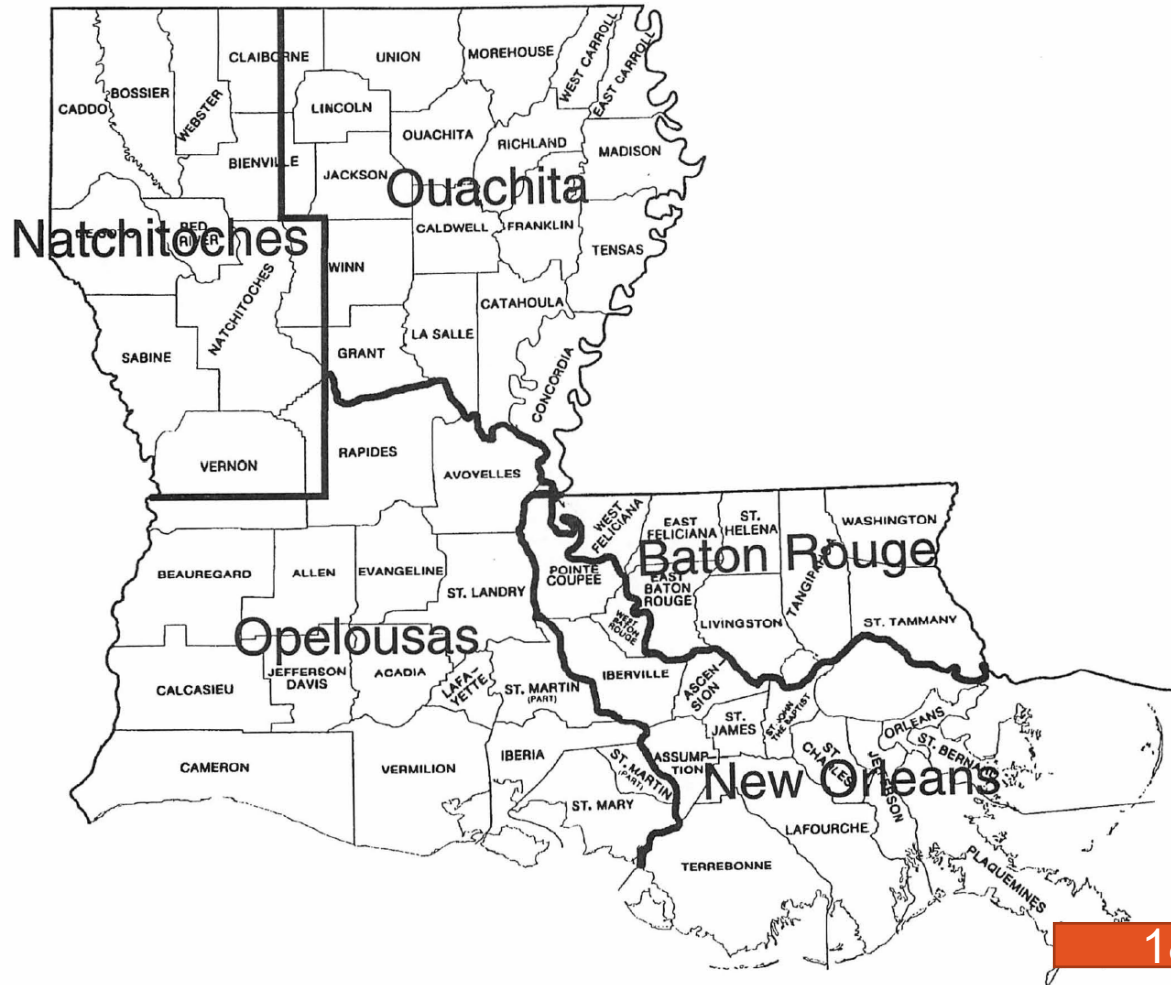
Changes in 1848 [Hone, 368-9]



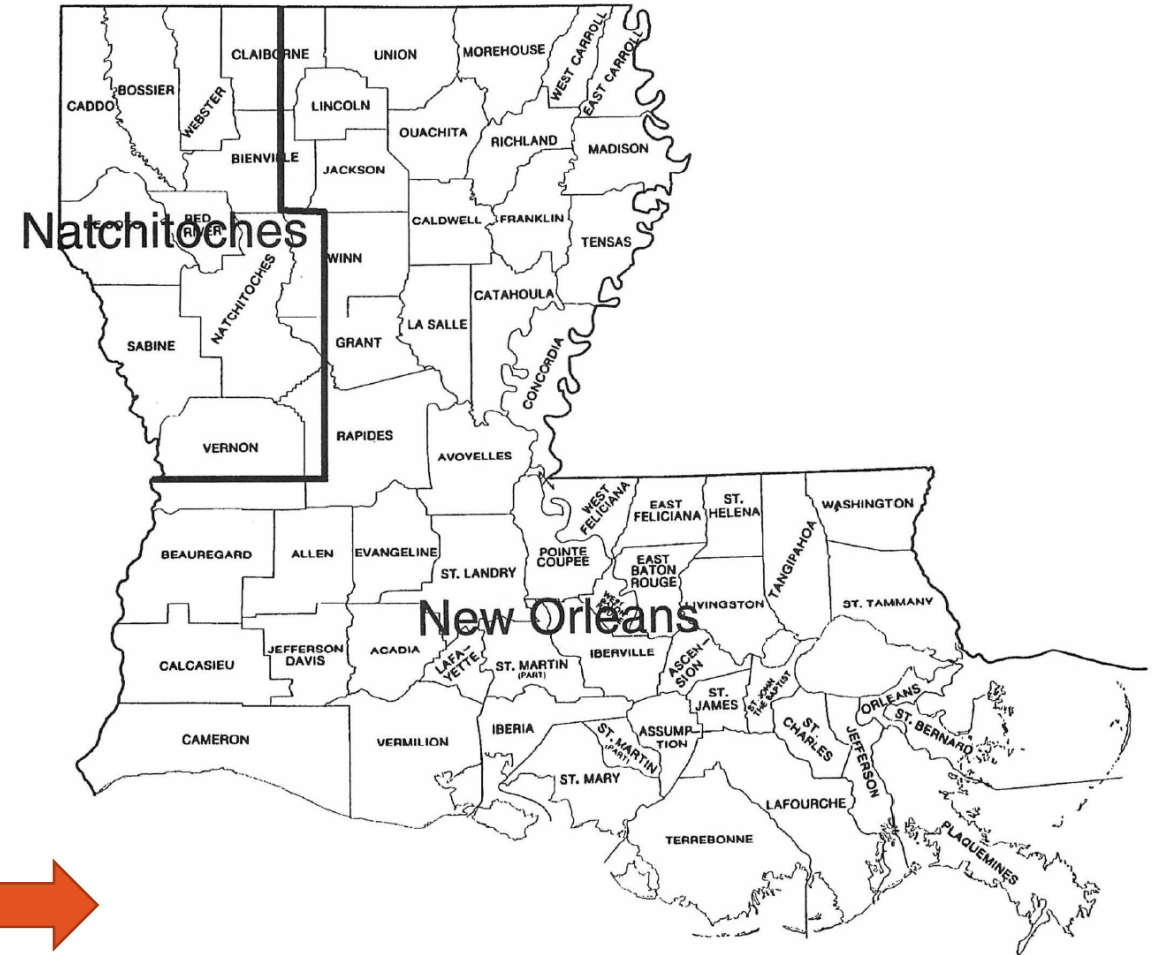
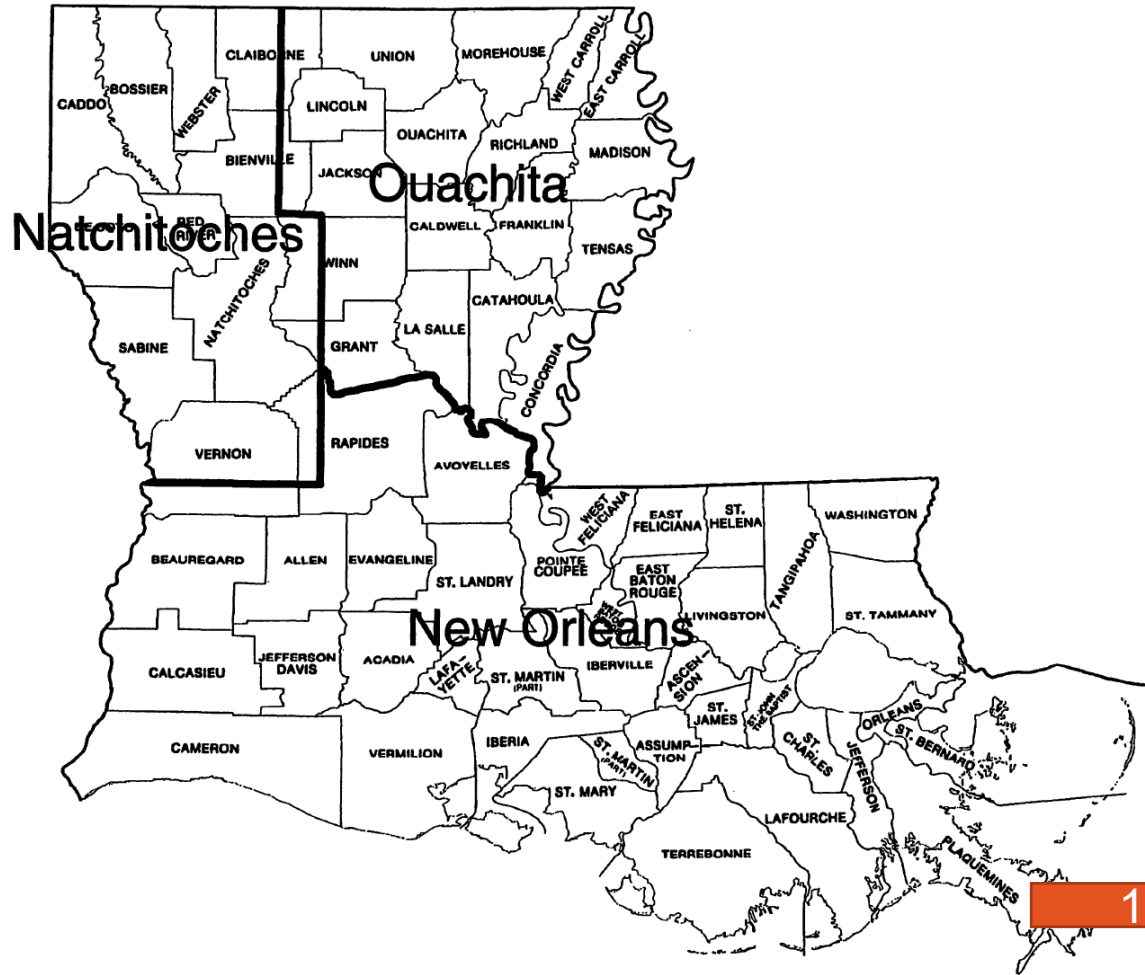
1848



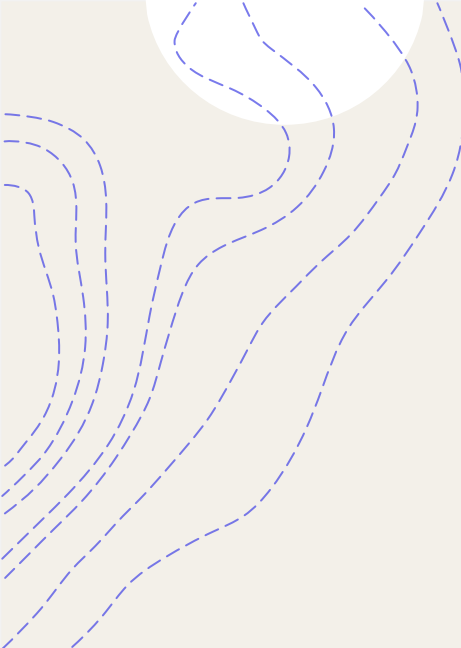
Changes in 1866 [Hone, 369-70]



Changes in 1878—lasted until 1911 [Hone, 370-1]



1878

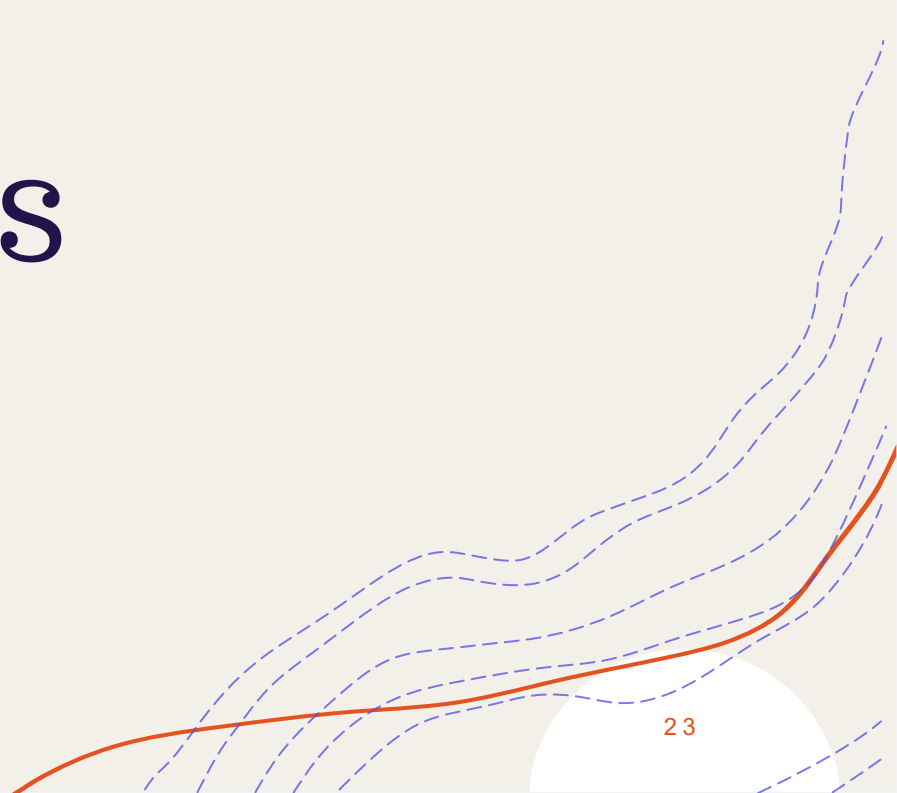


Tract Books

Keys to Getting Started

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Tract Books: Authoritative & Local

Local: Natchitoches Land Office, accessible via LA Office of State Lands website

Authoritative: General Land Office; accessible via GLO website and FHL film

TOWNSHIP NO. 17 N									
DESCRIPTION OF THE TRACT									
PART OF SECTION	Section	Tract	Range	Area	Notes	Patent money	NAME OF THE PURCHASER	DATE OF SALE	When recorded
21	17 N	10 E	10 E	1.25	50.00	50.00	Stephen Applewhite	July 21, 1870	1870
22	17 N	10 E	10 E	1.25	50.00	50.00	Stephen Applewhite	July 21, 1870	1870
23	17 N	10 E	10 E	1.25	50.00	50.00	Stephen Applewhite	July 21, 1870	1870
24	17 N	10 E	10 E	1.25	50.00	50.00	Stephen Applewhite	July 21, 1870	1870

TOWNSHIP NO. 17 N									
DESCRIPTION OF THE TRACT									
PART OF SECTION	Section	Tract	Range	Area	Notes	Patent money	NAME OF THE PURCHASER	DATE OF SALE	When recorded
21	17 N	10 E	10 E	1.25	50.00	50.00	Stephen Applewhite	July 21, 1870	1870
22	17 N	10 E	10 E	1.25	50.00	50.00	Stephen Applewhite	July 21, 1870	1870
23	17 N	10 E	10 E	1.25	50.00	50.00	Stephen Applewhite	July 21, 1870	1870
24	17 N	10 E	10 E	1.25	50.00	50.00	Stephen Applewhite	July 21, 1870	1870

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What is the main take-away from this slide??

U.S. Tract Books: Authoritative & Local

Local: Natchitoches Land Office

- + Section 22: cancelled entries sometimes supply detail not found in GLO Tract Book
- + Section 23: 1 railroad company entry (1859) and 2 sets of comments
- + Isaac Alden entry, Lot 3, Sec 24, includes patent date
- + Section 24: 9 entries including
 - + Abated entry for Joseph Burks
 - + Cancelled homestead entry for Thomas Ton_.

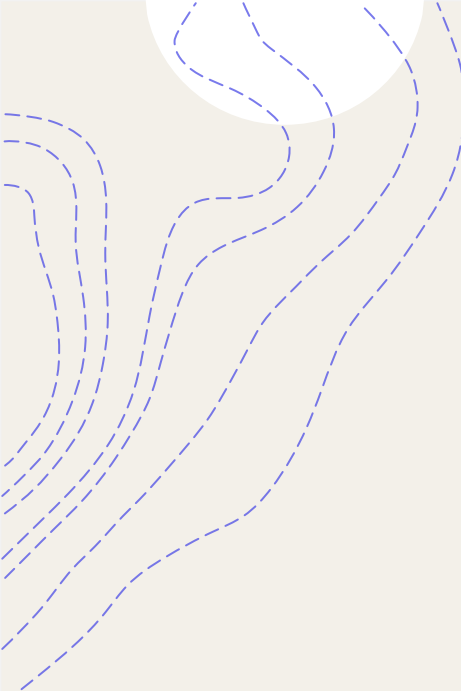
Authoritative: General Land Office

- + Section 22: cancelled entries sometimes supply detail not found in Local Register's Tract Book.
- + Section 23: 6 entries dated in 1960s; no railroad company entry.
- + Isaac Alden entry, Lot 3, Sec 24, does not include patent info
- + Section 24: 7 entries; no entries for Joseph Burks & Thomas Ton_.

Louisiana State Tract Books

Transfers of Land from the
U. S. Govt. to the State of
Louisiana

Transfers of Land from the State of Louisiana to
Private Entities



Land Entry Files

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Principle Types of Land Entry Files at NARA

Reference
Information Paper
(RIP 114)

Robert Kvasnicka
*Trans-Mississippi
West 1804-1912*

+ **Military Bounty Land Warrants**

+ **“General” Land Entry Files”**

+ **Cash**

- + Actual Cash Purchases (once surveyed and opened to the public for sale)
- + Pre-emption Right Claims (aka preference claims) for squatters on unsurveyed lands who improved & cultivated their land and sought to bar other bidders once the land was opened for sale
- + ‘Commuted’ Homestead Claims for those who started the 7-year claim process but subsequently elected, after a minimum time period, to abort the process and pay the cash price for the land

+ **Credit:** installment payments spread over 4 yrs, terminated in 1820)

+ **Homesteads:** 3- to 5-year minimum residence & improvement requirements, & 2 years to successfully prove the claim

+ **Other:** Timber, Mineral, Desert Land Sales; Donations

+ **Private Land Claims**

Research in the Land Entry Files
of the General Land Office



REFERENCE INFORMATION PAPER 114

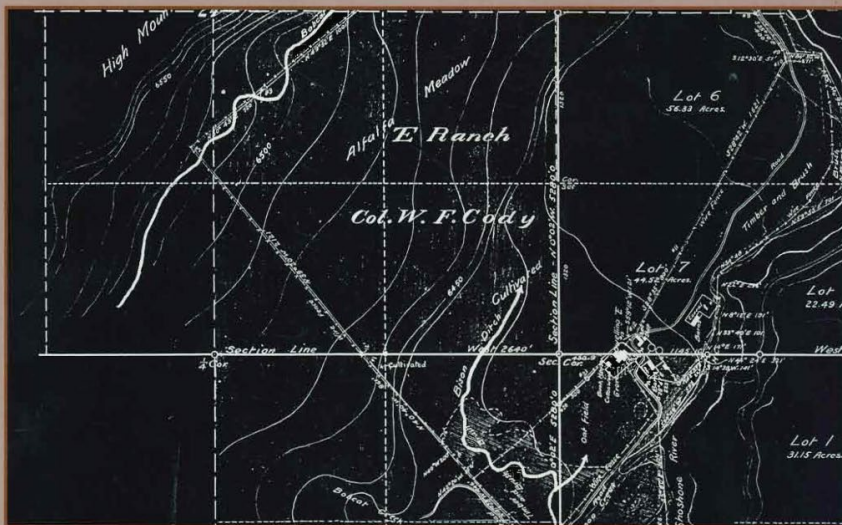
THE

TRANS-MISSISSIPPI WEST
1804-1912

Part IV

A Guide to Records of the Department of the Interior for the Territorial Period
Section 3: Records of the General Land Office

The Guide Supplement Containing State Lists and Other Appendixes
Compiled by Robert M. Kvasnicka



National Archives and Records Administration

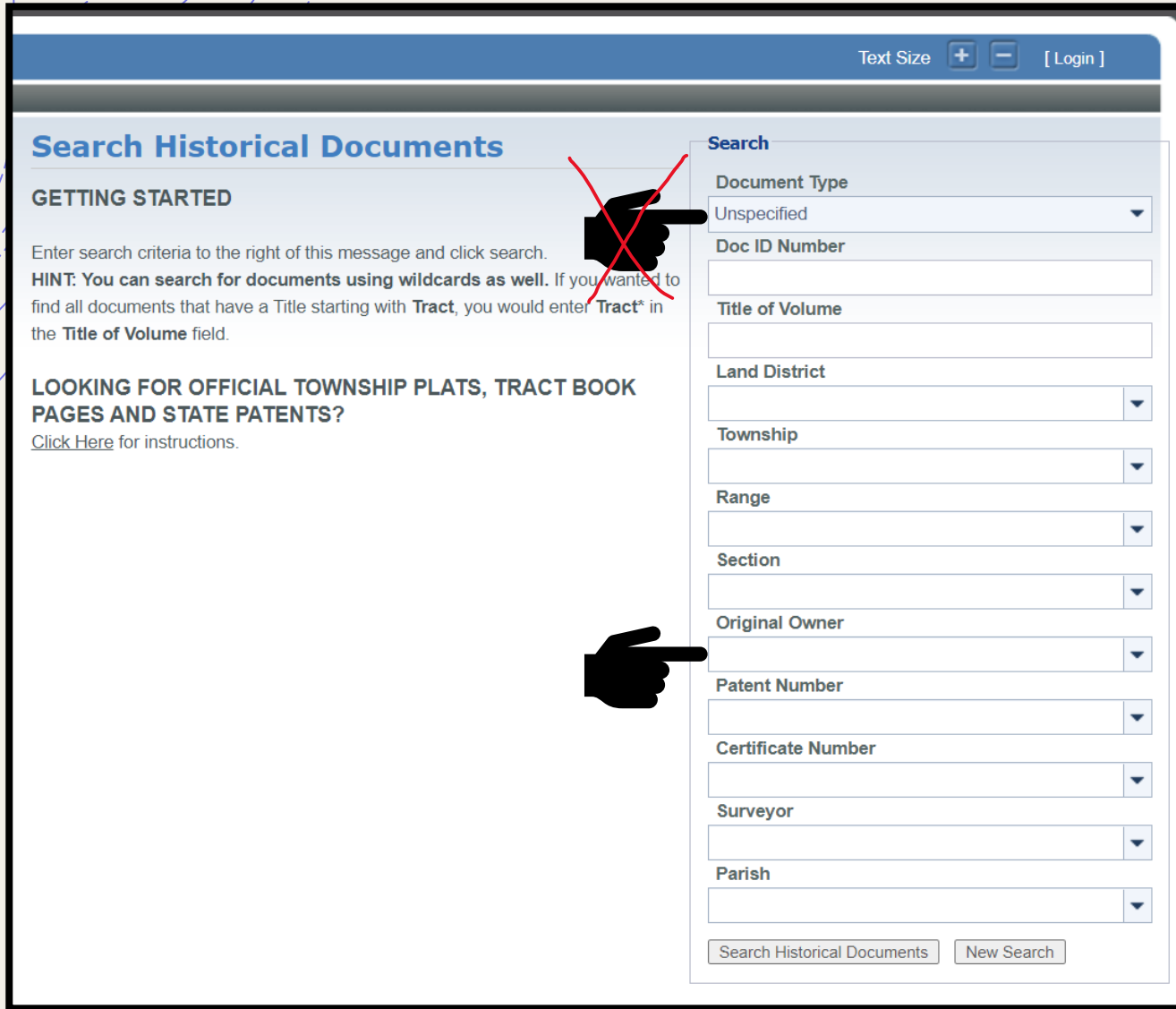
Wildcard Searches on OSL's Website

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Searching OSL Historical Records by Name



Text Size   [Login]

Search Historical Documents

GETTING STARTED

Enter search criteria to the right of this message and click search.
HINT: You can search for documents using wildcards as well. If you wanted to find all documents that have a Title starting with **Tract**, you would enter **Tract*** in the **Title of Volume** field.

LOOKING FOR OFFICIAL TOWNSHIP PLATS, TRACT BOOK PAGES AND STATE PATENTS?
[Click Here](#) for instructions.

Search

Document Type
Unspecified

Doc ID Number

Title of Volume

Land District

Township

Range

Section

Original Owner

Patent Number

Certificate Number

Surveyor

Parish

- + **Document Type:** initially, leave “Unspecified”
- + **Original Owner:**
 - + Asterisk symbol equals a variable number of chars., or no characters
 - + Can use * **before** and/or **after*** a character string
 - + Do **not** hit the “Enter” key—the search will begin as you type!!
 - + Three factors affected indexers
 - + Document legibility
 - + Early American handwriting
 - + Other transcription errors
- + Examples follow

Searching OSL Historical Records by Name

coat

Original Owner
coat
COSTRA A COAT AND COX CO
DAVID B COATES
DESDERNONA A. COATES
EDWARD COATES
HARRY COATES
HENRY COATES
J. R. COATS
JACK COATS
JAMES COATES
JAMES COATS
JESSE COATS

walker

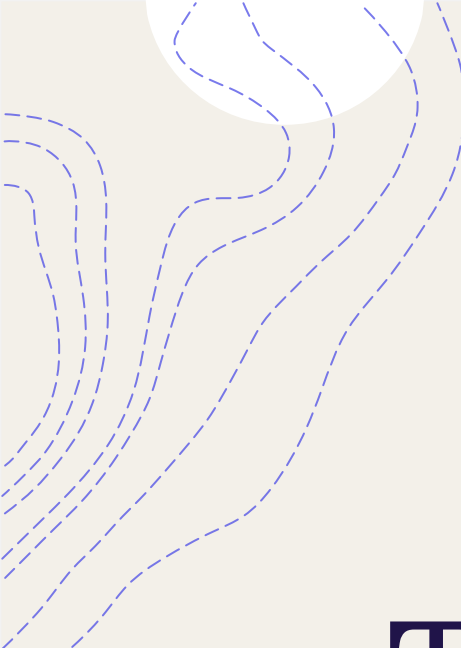
Original Owner
walker
GEORGE H WALKER
GEORGE JONAH WALKER
GEORGE M WALKER
GEORGE W WALKER
GEORGE WALKER
GEORGE WALKER WHITE
GREEN LOBE WALKER
GREEN W WALKER
GREEN WESLEY WALKER
GUSTAVE F WALKER
HAMP WALKER

jepe (Jesse)

Original Owner
jepe
JEPE DEHART
JEPE E EAVES
JEPE GOUGH
JEPE KEITH
JEPE LAIRD
JEPE M C PAXTON
JEPE M TELLY
JEPE M TILLEY
JEPE MILLION
JEPE MOBLEY
JEPE R PITMAN

frier

Original Owner
frier
BONNET FRIERWERLER
CHARLES D FRIERSON
CHARLES FRIERSON
EST. OF MARY E. FRIERSON
EST. OF P. B. FRIERSON
FRIERSON BROS.
G. P. FRIERSON
G.P. FRIERSON
GEDAC FRIERSON
GEORGE FRIERSON
GEORGE P FRIERSON

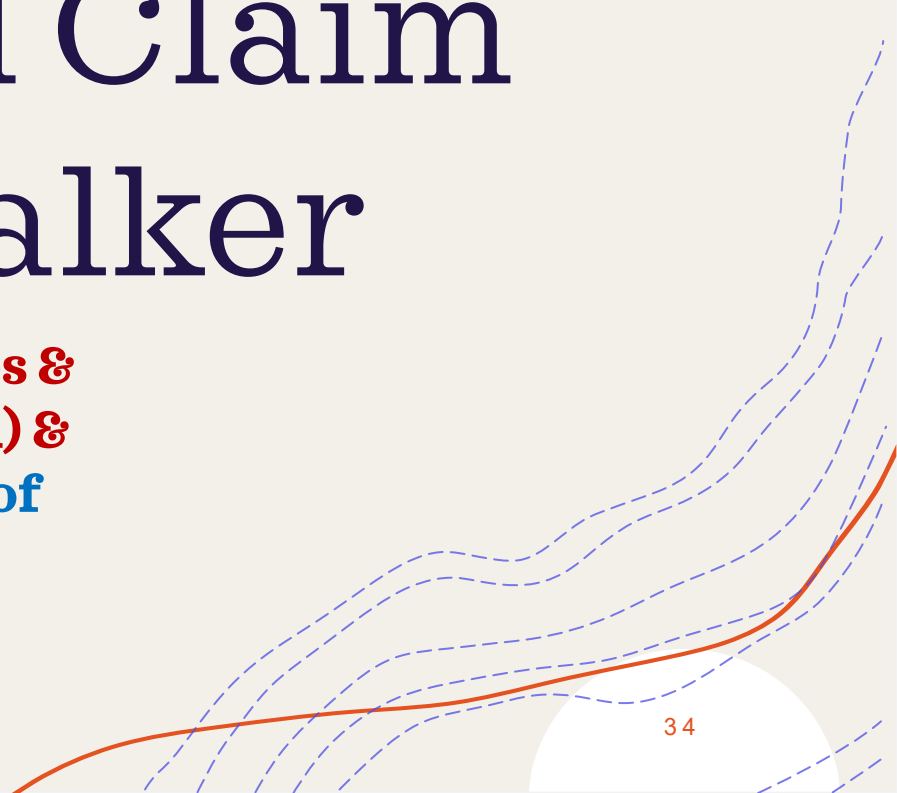


The Private Land Claim of Jeremiah Walker

**Records of the National Archives &
Records Administration (NARA) &
the State of Louisiana's Office of
State Lands, Baton Rouge**

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Private Land Claim: Jeremiah Walker

- + Barred from completing his 1817 private purchase due to
 - + U. S.-Spanish (yes, Spanish) boundary disputes
 - + *Competing* Spanish headright claim
 - + *Delays* obtaining final survey
- + Claim spans **51** years, 1802-1853.
 - + Begins with another settler Thomas Smith's Spanish headright claim in **1802**, **"erased"** and then **reapplied** by Spanish authorities to another 1805 tract settled by Smith.
 - + The Spanish headright claim was unknown to Walker when he first purchased the land privately for \$1000 in **1817**, then settled there and improved it.
 - + Congress issued private act for relief to Walker in 1830, granting him **up to 640** acres for lands in his possessed location that were vacant before **1830**.
 - + Final survey of Walker's tract completed in **1853** (**293** acres).

Four **Initial** Search Results

SEARCH RESULTS (4 Results)

CLAIM PAPERS GREENSBURG T.1S. R.1E. 1
(294 Pages)

CLAIM PAPERS GREENSBURG T1S R1E 1
(249 Pages)

CLAIM PAPERS GREENSBURG T1S R1E, T1S R2E 2
(254 Pages)

US TRACT BOOK VOLUME 01 PAGE NUMBER 002 (GREENSBURG
DISTRICT)
(1 Page)

Recommendations: Always start with U.S. and State tract books and extract every detail. Use the details to help search document types **not included in the search results.**

Document Type

Unspecified

Doc ID Number

Title of Volume

Land District

Township

Range

Section

Original Owner

JEREMIAH WALKER

LA OSL Doc. 538.09290: US TRACT BOOK VOLUME 01 PAGE NUMBER 002 (GREENSBURG DISTRICT); lands to offered for public sale 20 May 1859.

JANUARY OF 1859										JANUARY OF 1859									
Part of Section	Section	Township	Range	Acres	Value	Owner	Value	Owner	Value	Part of Section	Section	Township	Range	Acres	Value	Owner	Value	Owner	Value
All of	24	18	16	37 72		Louis A. Young				3 ^d May 1859	3977	Louis A. Young				General, 1860			
All of	27	18	16	12 76	125 75 45	Louis A. Young				3 ^d May 1859	3978	Louis A. Young				General, 1860			
Sec	70	15	1E	362 94		Thomas Young				2008, in Page 1 Vol 3 of the 1859 confirmed by Act of Congress May 3, 1859, Vol 3, p. 528 Cash 1859 No 26 No 162 No 299 No 266 C.S. 1851 No 12 Cash 1859 No 19 No 75 No 229 No 260 C.S. 1850 No 19 C.S. 1850 No 16 Cash 1859 No 89 No 161 Cash 1859 No 117 Cash 1859 No 287 Cash 1859 No 19 R.R. 1850 No 1, 6 C.S. 1859 No 92 Cash 1859 No 273 No 215 (Appld Act)									
71	15	1E	512 83		Andrew Carl														
72	15	1E	380 36		William McCreary														
73	15	1E	76 01		Esperanza Lopez														
74	15	1E	517 32		Robert Chase														
75	15	1E	330 93		John Brownford														
76	15	1E	390 14		H. Richardson														
77	15	1E	403 76		John Deane														
78	15	1E	544 22		Memoranda Witham														
79	15	1E	610 89		Kenneth Holland, Jr.														
80	15	1E	657 00		William Anderson														
81	15	1E	674 95		Edward Lee														
82	15	1E	222 23		David Campbell														
83	15	1E	413 66		William Duran														
84	15	1E	162 83		William Marsh														
85	15	1E	146 81		Hyman Bradford														
86	15	1E	642 62		William Holland														
87	15	1E	656 88		Robert Scott														
88	15	1E	620 52		Samuel Scott														
89	15	1E	26 21		Alexander Scott, Jr.														
90	15	1E	78 17		Joseph Brownson														
91	15	1E	44 06		Charles Harris														
92	15	1E	330 00		John McCreary														
93	15	1E	293 86		Jeremiah Walker														

Local Register's U. S. Tract Book, likely a rewritten, cleaned-up (derivative) source

T1S-R1E St. Helena Meridian, **Sec. 100**, confirmed to Jeremiah Walker by “**(Special Act)**” [of Congress], “**May 29, 1830**,” US Statutes Vol 6: 439; for 293.86 acres.

U. S. Statutes, Vol. 6: 439 [or “6 Stat. 439”]

CHAP. CLXXII.—*An Act for the relief of Jeremiah Walker, of the state of Louisiana.*

*Be it enacted, &c., That Jeremiah Walker be, and he is hereby, confirmed in his title to a certain tract of land, situate in the parish of East Feliciana, and state of Louisiana, lying on the Lost Fork of Thompson's Creek; it being the place first settled by Thomas Smith, and transferred by him to Sullivan, by Sullivan to White, and by White to the said Walker; containing not more than six hundred and forty acres: *Provided*, That this confirmation shall only operate as a relinquishment on the part of the United States only.*

APPROVED, May 29, 1830.

STATUTE I.
May 29, 1830.

Land title
confirmed.

Proviso. 

STATUTE I.

“An Act for the relief of Jeremiah Walker, of the state of Louisiana,” chap. 172; digital image, Library of Congress, *A Century of Lawmaking for a New Nation: U.S. Congressional Documents and Debates, 1774–1875* (<http://http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=llsl&fileName=006/llsl006.db&recNum=540> : accessed 12 August 2021).

Petitions and Affidavits for Private Claim



LA OSL Doc. 501.00029: GREENSBURG PAPERS ABSTRACT "A" VOL 1 # 5-320 VOL 29; grouping A-9, images 10-39, for petition of Jeremiah Walker of Feliciana Parish, Louisiana, to the United States Congress for equitable relief, [c. 1826]; and evidence for and against Walker.

R	p/o image 5	T
Ross, John	A-145	Taylor, Jonathan
Robin, William	A-218	Tillery, Joshua
Reams, James	A-218	Tillery, Joshua
Reames, Elizabeth	A-218	Trentham, Robert
Rose, William P.	A-247	Trenony, Claudia
Rearny, William	A-302	Taylor, Richard
		Taylor, Samuel
		Taylor, Jeremiah
		Terry, Sarah
		Trahem, James
		Thompson, William
		Thomes, Cornelius
		Thomes, Leonard
		Thigpen, John
		Thomas, Philip
		Thompson, William
		Thomas, Benjamin P.
		Thomas, Philamon
		Tickell, Richard, Sr.
		Tickell, Nathamil
		Tickell, Richard, Jr.
		Taylor, William
		Tarrant, John
		Tally, John
		<i>TUCKER, William</i>
		W
		Walker, Jeremiah
		White, Mr. Asa
		West, Edmond
		White, Thomas

Alphabetical list arranged by surname 1st letter ...

Note groupings of related documents by A-9 designation.

Find document groups by searching for the “A-#” annotated by OSL staff in top margin of documents.

These documents are displayed in 32 images, numbered 10-41.

LA OSL Doc. 501.00029: GREENSBURG PAPERS ABSTRACT "A" VOL 1 # 5-320 VOL 29; grouping **A-9**, images 10-39, for Petition of Jeremiah Walker of Feliciana Parish, Louisiana, to the United States Congress, for equitable relief; and evidence papers for and against Walker.



+ 25 persons in claim group **A-9**:



+ **Jeremiah Walker {Petitioner}**

+ Daniel Boatner

+ Adam & Nathaniel Barnes

+ Richard Barnett

+ William Cabeen

+ **Mr. John Dickason, Jr.**



1830
Neighbors

+ Hugh Denhem [*sic, Dunham*]

+ Hisekeen [*sic, Hezekiah*] Keller

+ James & Henry McNeely

+ Samuel Simpson

+ Phillip & **Pierce Noland**



+ Continued ...

+ William Newman

+ William Noland



+ **Thomas Smith {Spanish Head-right recipient}** and John Smith

+ **William Silliman**



+ Jonathan Taylor

+ Joshua Tillery

+ **Mr. Asa White**



Other owners of
tract before Walker

+ Edmond West



+ **Membrane Williams**

+ **Thomas White**



LA OSL Doc. 501.00029: GREENSBURG PAPERS ABSTRACT "A" VOL 1 # 5-320 VOL 29; grouping **A-9**, images 10-12, for Petition of Jeremiah Walker of Feliciana Parish, Louisiana, to the United States Congress, for equitable relief [c. 1826].



+ The **Register** of the Land Office at St. Helena Courthouse **certified** that the “transfers” [of ownership] alluded to in the petition “are duly made & passed agreeably to the Laws of the State of Louisiana.”

Page 2 A-9
To the honorable The Congress of the United States
State - The Petition of Jeremiah Walker a citizen of the Parish of Feliciana in the State of Louisiana humbly represents as follows
1st That he is in possession of a tract or parcel of Land situate in the aforesaid State Parish and has not until the difficulties that will be set forth in this petition in obtaining Letters to the same which he prays may be removed by a special act in this favor - The Land was settled in the year Eighteen hundred & five by a special permit from the Spanish authority by one Thomas Smith, under whom your Petitioner claims by a regular generation of transfers from Smith to William Williams from Williams to White and from White to your Petitioner - your Petitioner bought of White in good faith in the year Eighteen hundred & seventeen under the advice of the adjacent settlers for the sum of one thousand Dollars advanced at the time of executing the Deed of conveyance - your Petitioner was unaware of any difficulty existing for many years having been informed that the entry of this claim had been made by Smith before Lewis O. Barry the first Commissioner for Land claims in this District but discovered too late that this entry had in the year 1802 made a single improvement in the same Parish on the line of Dematitieu & set his claim the next year for a trifle upon the advice of the surveyor General for the District and this entry made on the Spanish records of the place have claimed by your Petitioner instead of the other which he found would be interpreted with by the line of Dematitieu and that he would be unable to hold there the Land alluded to by the Spanish permit; but the present owner of Smith's first settlement has since paid your Petitioner & taken out a Certificate

for Smith's head right which paid your Petitioner out from not only from obtaining a Certificate but under the Law of 8th March 1809 from relinquishing the claim as Smith remained in possession of it until 1815 - The original permit granted to Smith in 1802 is in possession of your Petitioner & was transferred to Williams by him & from Williams to White & from White to your Petitioner all which will serve & satisfy your Petitioner to hold the claim of your Petitioner as his head right and all of which will be more fully shown by the evidence of your Petitioner & his son which will be attached to this petition & prayed to be examined as a part of it - The place claimed by your Petitioner has been kept in constant occupation and cultivation from 1805 to the present date and your Petitioner since in possession has made improvements on the same to the amount of four thousand Dollars & upwards The settlement made on this place was one of the very earliest in its neighborhood and your Petitioner believes there never would have been any difficulty made about the validity of the claim had it not been that some of the subsequent settlers became deeply interested to destroy it in order to extend their lines across the same, by reference to the Commissioner of the General Land office it will be found that one of the adjacent claimants (after) Daniel Boston was much dissatisfied with the Commissioner because they would not allow him to crop a conditional line & take in the improvement of your Petitioner and it will also there be seen the opinion of the Register on the subject bearing date first June 1806 - your Petitioner grounds his claim on the principles of equity refers you to the evidence attached to this Petition to show that he has no wish to trouble and trusts the whole to the wisdom generosity and justice of your honorable body

and as in duty bound your Petitioner will pray
I Shm^l Parnass Register of the Land office at St Helena cannot but certify that the different transfers alluded to in the foregoing Petition are duly made & right agreeably to the Laws of the State of Louisiana
A-9 Page 3

LA OSL Doc. 510.00024: CLAIM PAPERS GREENSBURG T.1S. R.1E. 1; "Small Book #1," Certificate #332 and Order for Survey for up to 640 acres of land vacant in **old Section 12** prior to the Act of Congress May 29th, 1830, entitled "An Act for the Relief of Jeremiah Walker of the State of Louisiana."

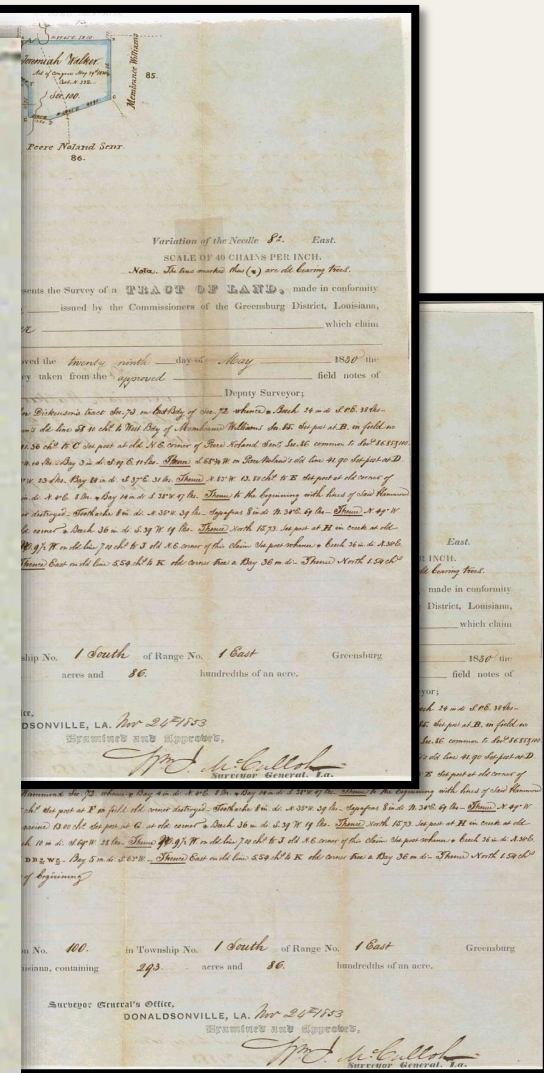
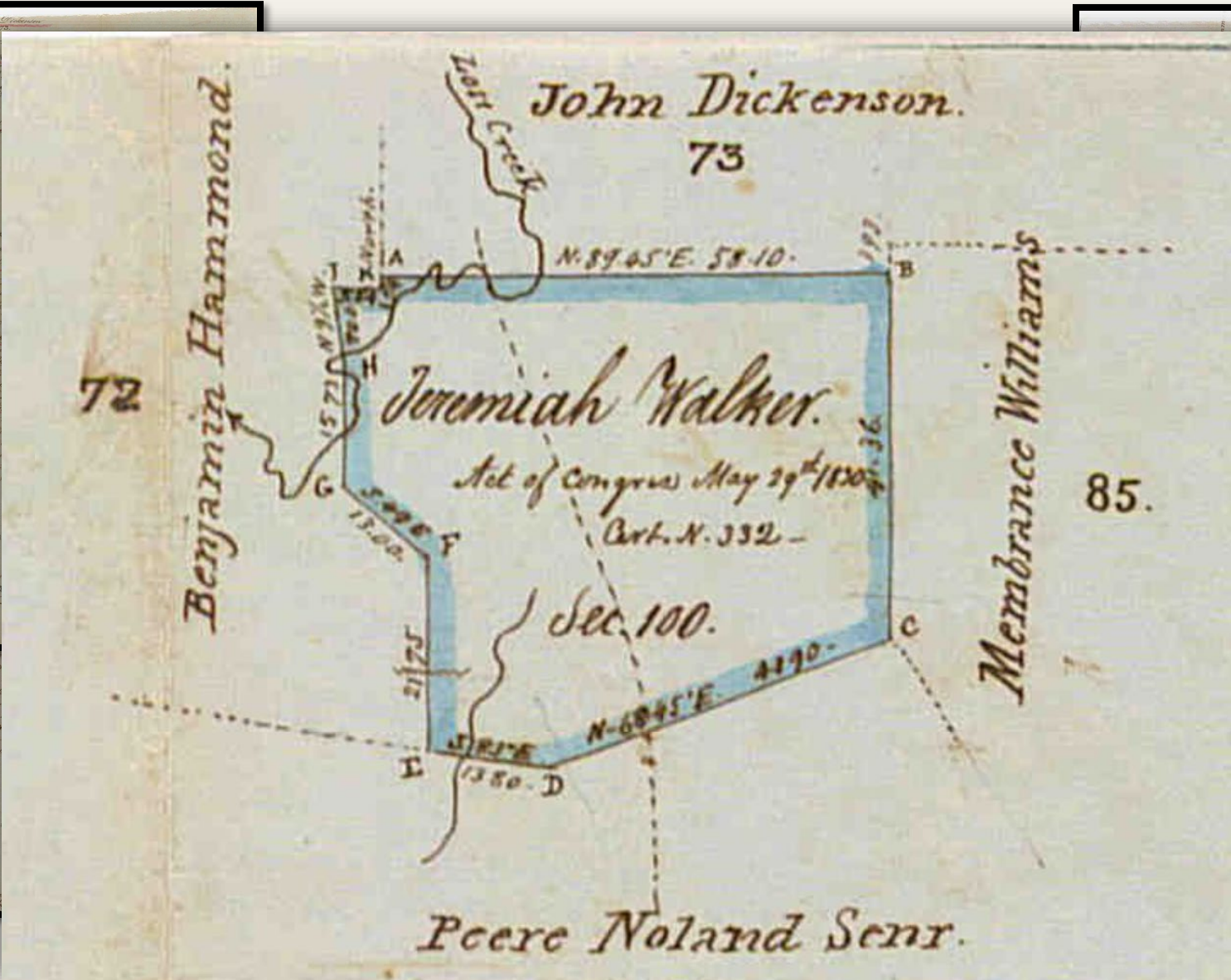
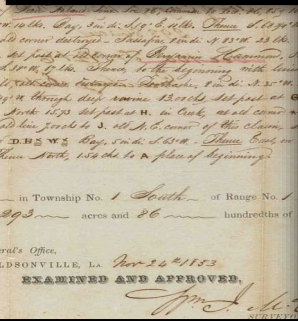
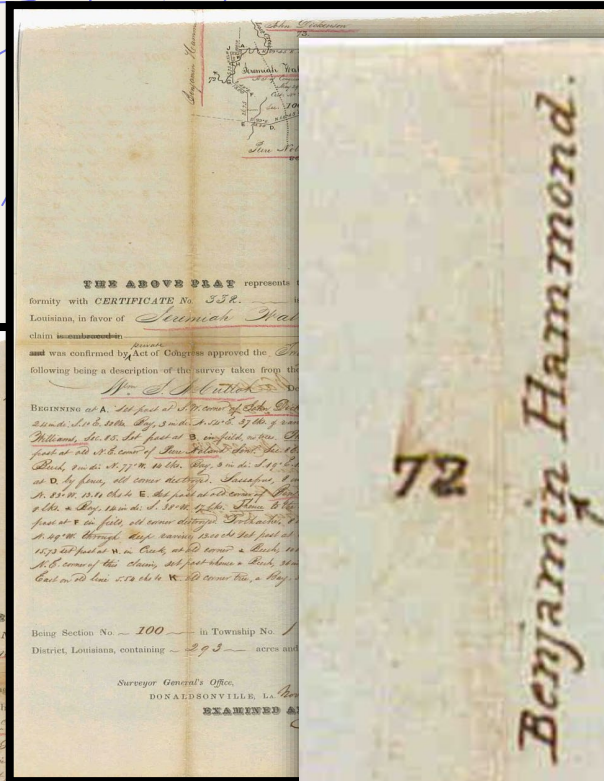
Certificate #332 entitling selection of land on the "lost fork of Thompson's Creek" and supplying the Chain of Title, **7 June 1853**

Certificate No 332
Private Act dated May 29th 1830
U.S. Land Office
Greensburg, Va.
In pursuance of the Act of Congress approved May 29th 1830 entitled "An Act for the Relief of Jeremiah Walker, of the State of Louisiana."
We certify that Jeremiah Walker is entitled to a section of land in the Parish of East Feliciana, on the lost fork of Thompson's Creek, being the place first settled by Thomas Smith, transferred by him to Sullivan, by Sullivan to White, and by White to the said Walker. Provided, that this Confirmation shall only operate as a relinquishment on the part of the United States only. —
Given under our hand this 7th day of June 1853
(Signed) Alfred Mont Register
for M. Vernon Post
U.S. Land Office Greensburg, Va.
I certify the above is a true copy of a Certificate of Confirmation recorded in papers of records of Certificates of this Office — Signed Officially this 7th day of June 1853.
Alfred Mont Register

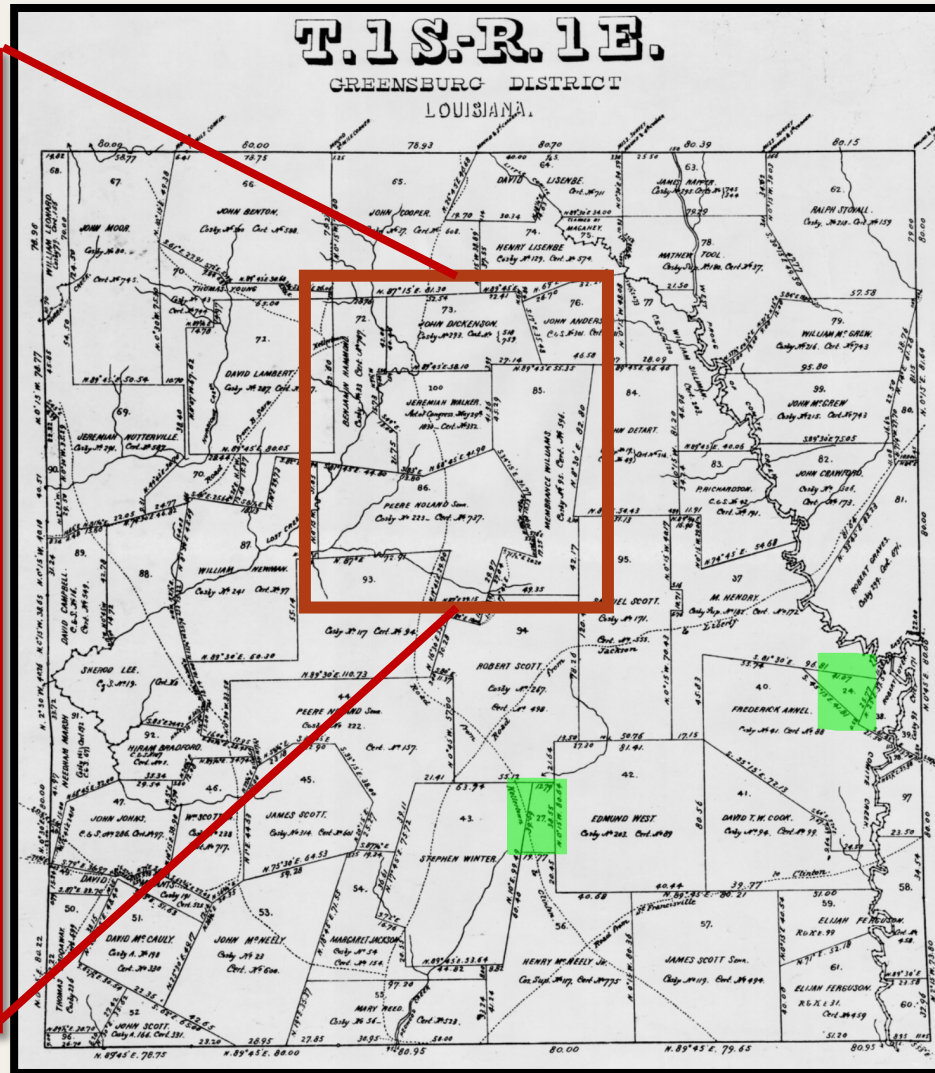
Jeremiah Walker 153
Certificate No 332
Private Act dated May 29th 1830
U.S. Land Office
Greensburg, Va.
Jeremiah Walker his heirs or legal representatives claim a section of land in the Parish of East Feliciana by virtue of Certificate No 332, dated June 7th 1853, and signed Alfred Mont Register and for M. Vernon Post.
It appearing that the tract of land claimed by virtue of the above named Certificate is included in the ~~old~~ survey of the claim of John Dickerson, Caddy 1813, No 293 and designated as Section 12, T. 1 S. R. 1 E. It is ordered that the claim of Jeremiah Walker be allowed to include any lands in said old Sec 12, not sold or otherwise granted by the United States prior to the 29th day of May 1830, not to contain more than 640 Acres in & by law, and not to interfere with any other valid claim.
Given under our hand this 7th day of June 1853.
(Signed) Alfred Mont Register
for M. Vernon Post
U.S. Land Office Greensburg, Va.
I certify the above is a true copy of order of survey recorded in papers of records of orders of survey of this Office. Signed Officially this 7th day of June 1853. Alfred Mont Register

Order for
Survey,
**7 June
1853**

LA OSL Doc. 510.00181: CLAIM PAPERS GREENSBURG T1S R1E, T1S R2E 2; “Large Book #2,” *four* survey plats for Jeremiah Walker dated 24 November 1853; images 114-119.



Sections 37-100

[illegible]

Surgeon General's Office
Washington Feb 26 1833.

The above Swathick Mfg has been examined and compared with the approved Bill and being new on
file in this Office found correct and is hereby approved.

S. S. Survey, Confirmed" I do not object sending 6/54
" abstract D.

R. W. Boyd,
Surgeon General &c

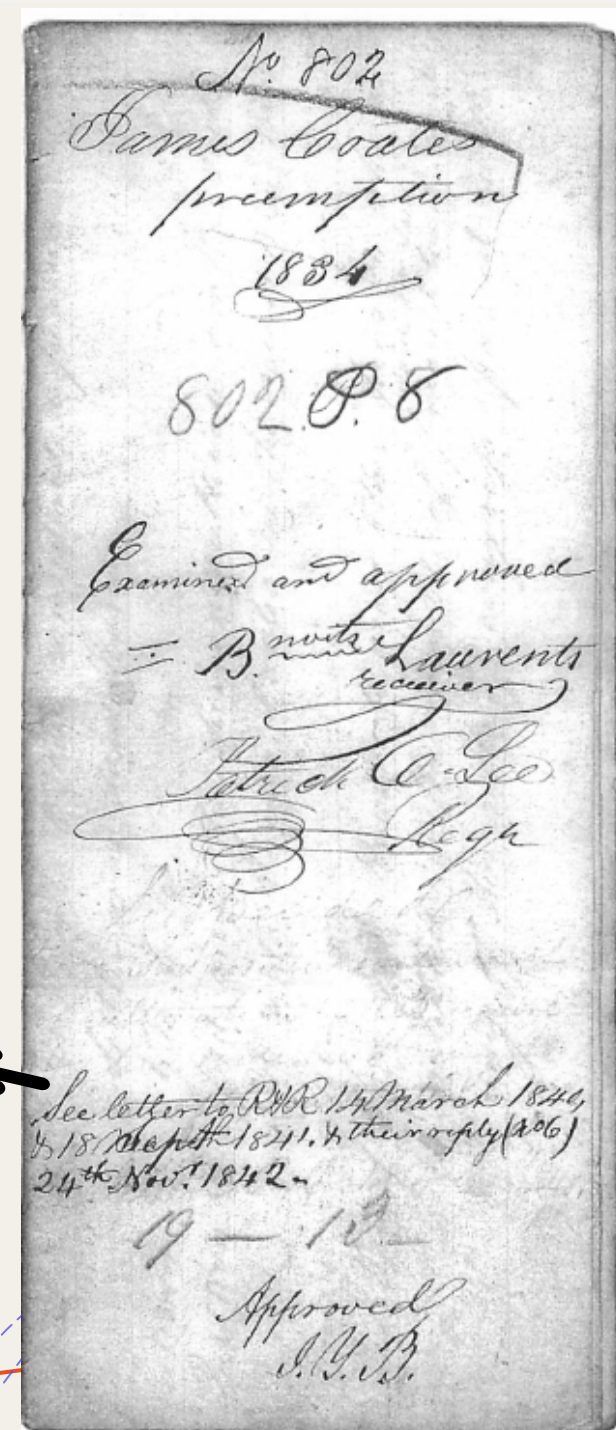


The Preemption Right Claim(s) of Squatter & Trader James Coates

**Remembering Our Late Friend
and Colleague Dale Jennings**

Pre-emption Right Claim: James Coates, **Ouachita, Opelousas & Natchitoches** Land Offices

- + **NARA land entry file**, James Coates, Certificate #802, Claim of Settlement & Improvements under Act of **19 June 1834**, with patent not issued until **1848**.
- + James Coates, petition & oath, Ouachita parish, 1 September **1834**, claiming initial settlement in 1833 in NE4, Section 6, T19N-R13W.
- + Witness affidavit & deposition, Reuben Wingate, 17 Sept. **1837**. [*Unusual time gap*]
- + Character affidavit for Coates by J. Cable, P. A. Morse, **Henry M. Shreve**, & B. B. Breazeale, 14 December **1837**, noting Coates was a resident of Claiborne Parish.
- + Character affidavit for Wingate by Ph. Judge S. P. Jenkins, Caddo Ph., 22 February **1838**.
- + Final Certificate #802, James Coates, 23 May **1839**, Natchitoches Land Office. James states he is of Claiborne Parish.
- + GLO Commissioner's letters to Register & Receiver, suspending claim on 14 March **1840** & noting on 18 September **1841** that claim was held for not specifically proving that cultivation occurred in **1833**, as required by the act. [*These letters are not in the land entry file but are referenced on the claim jacket in the file.*]
- + Continued ...

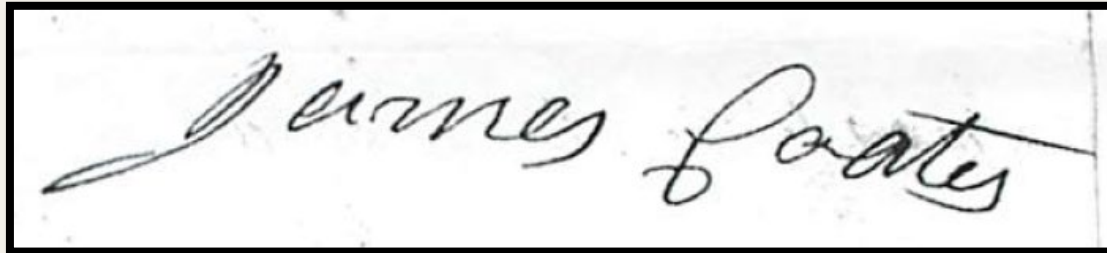


Continued: Pre-emption Right Claim, James Coates, **Ouachita, Opelousas & Natchitoches** Land Offices

+ **NARA land entry file**, James Coates,
Certificate #802, Claim of Settlement &
Improvements under Act of 19 June 1834,
with patent not issued until 1848.

+ James Coates, petition & oath, **Ouachita
Parish**, 1 September 1834, claiming
initial settlement in 1833 in NE4,
Section 6, T19N-R13W.

Attempt #1



Continued...

State of Louisiana
Parish of Ouachita
Before me the undersigned Justice of
the peace in and for said Parish and State personally
appeared James Coates aged about 50 fifty years
and in the presents of the Register and Receiver of the
Said office at this place, who answered under oath the
following Questions propounded to him by the said
Register and Receiver in relation to his right of
preemption which he claims under the act of congress
passed on the 29 day of May 1830 -
Question 1st Did you cultivate on the north East Quarter
of Section 22 6 Sec of Township 22 19 north
of Range 4 13 West in the year
1833
Answer Yes I commenced in December and built a house
Question 2nd How do you know that the above described
Quarter Section is the one on which you cultivate
Answer I know it from having examined the lines
and corners -
Question 3rd What was the nature and extent of your improve-
ment on said 22 on the 7th June 1834
Answer I had five or six acres in cultivation, a house
and kitchen
Question 4th Were you in actual possession of the said 22
Section on the first day of January 1834 and the
19th day of June 1834
Answer Yes -
Question 5th Did any other person cultivate with you on said
22 in the year 1833 and 1834
Answer No
Question 6th Do you know of any other person who is entitled
to the right of preemption under any of the
acts of congress passed in 1834, 1830, 1832, 1834
Answer No there is no one
Sworn to and subscribed before
me this 1st day of September 1834
James Coates
Charles G. Justice of the Peace

Continued: Pre-emption Right Claim Example: James Coates, **Ouachita, Opelousas & Natchitoches** Land Offices

- + **NARA land entry file**, James Coates, Certificate #802, Claim of Settlement & Improvements under Act of 19 June 1834
 - + Letter, **Martin Coates** to GLO Commissioner, 19 December **1842**, noting that **witness** who *could have proved* that Coates did **cultivate** in **1833-Reuben Wingate-had died**.
 - + Two new witnesses' proof affidavits, Benjamin Lay and Thomas Lay, 19 December 1842.
 - + Proof affidavit & oath of **Martin Coates**, 26 December **1842**, stating that **James Coates had died** on **21 March 1842**. Affidavit also stated James' actions relative to the claim and that he had continued to reside on it until his death.
 - + Patent issued **7 May 1848** [*The patent, nor a copy of it, are not found in the land entry file but details of its issue appear on the reverse side of the 1839 Receiver's Receipt*].
- + What can holdings of the Louisiana Office of State Lands add?

LA OSL Doc. 538.11610: US TRACT BOOK VOLUME 63 PAGE NUMBER 110 (**NATCHITOCHES DISTRICT**); **two** preemption claims for James Coates per Preemption Acts of 1834 and 1838 in T19N-R13W.

LA OSL **Search Results** for James Coat/Coates: this Local U. S. Tract Book finding is the only document that surfaced relative to his claims on public land in the 1830s.

DESCRIPTION OF THE TRACT.				Contents.		Rate per acre.		Purchase money.		NAME OF THE PURCHASER.	DATE OF SALE.	Number of receipt and certificate of purchase.
PART OF SECTION.	Section.	Township.	Range.	Acres.	100ths.	Dollars.	Cents.	Dollars.	Cents.			
Pre 1838. NW 1/4 (NW 1/4)	5	19 N.	13 W.	159	90	1	25	199	88	James Coates & James Belton Pickett	19 th June 1839.	881
Coates												
N 1/4, E 1/4, S 1/2 of NW 1/4 (NW 1/4)	"	"	"	399	75	1	25	499	68	James Belton Pickett	26 th June 1839	919
Pre 1838. NW 1/4 (NW 1/4)	5	19	13	79	95	1	25	99	94	James Coates & Alexander Pickett	22 nd June	802
Preempt 34. NW 1/4	6	19	13	160	00	1	25	200	00	James Coates	May 29 th 1839	802
Coats												

"Pre 1838" : Preemption Act of 1838
 "Preempt 34" : Preemption Act of 1834

Certificate 881

Certificate 802

LA OSL Doc. 512.00243: COMMISSIONER'S LETTERS/ NATCHITOCHE'S LAND DIST.
AUG 29, 1830 - NOV 17, 1841); images 270-272; Jas. Whitcomb (GLO Commissioner) to
Register & Receiver, **Natchitoches** Land Office, letter, 14 March 1840, three pages
unpaginated, suspends James Coates' preemption right claim.



p/o 2nd
page,
image
271

Cert 802 to James Coates for the
N^o 1/4 Sect 6—19—13, under the Act of 1834, is suspended
for the reason that there is no evidence showing cultiva-
tion in 1833. It would appear from the testimony accom-
panying this certificate, that Mr. Coates commenced
building a House on said tract in December 1833, but
no direct answer is made to the question propounded,
as to whether he cultivated in that year; and unless
it can be shown that Mr. Coates, either actually cultiva-
ted, or prepared the lands in 1833, for a crop in 1834, his
entry will have to be vacated, on the grounds of a non-
compliance with that requisition of the law.

“... unless it can
be shown that Mr.
Coates, either
actually cultivated
or prepared the
lands in 1833, for
a crop in 1834, his
entry will have to
be vacated ...”
[emphasis added]



LA OSL Doc. 512.00243:
COMMISSIONER'S LETTERS/
NATCHITOCHES LAND DIST.
AUG 29, 1830 - NOV 17, 1841);
image 430; E. M. Huntington
(GLO Commissioner) to
Register & Receiver,
Natchitoches Land Office,
letter, 18 September 1841, one
page, demanding immediate
attention to suspended
preemption right claims
identified in fourteen previous
letters.

General Land Office
September 18th 1841.

Gentlemen.

Your immediate attention is requested,
to the following letters from this Office, in relation
to numerous preemption claims in your Dist.
under the Acts 29th May 1830, and 19th June 1834,
suspended, to await your action under the
instructions therein contained. Viz: 26th April,
6th, 9th and 14th Sept. 1839; 14th, 17th, 20th, 21th, 24th,
and 27th March; 23rd and 24th June; and 18th
and 16th Sept. 1840.

I am, Very Respectfully
Your Obedt. Servt.
E. M. Huntington
Commissioner

Register and Receiver,
Natchitoches,
Louisiana.

NB: I had Coates' preemption deposition from NARA in hand, but I made an early mistake of not researching ...

LA OSL Doc. 527.00088: PRE-EMPTION DECLARATIONS **NWD** ACT JUNE 19, 1834 NO NUMBERS - ALSO - NOS 62-1565); images 55-56; James Coates to the Register & Receiver, Opelousas Land Office, letter and oath, both dated **13 November 1835**.

Attempt #2

- + Coates claims that he **cultivated** his preemption claim in **1833** and 1834, 160 superficial acres situated on the **west bank of the Red River** “about **80 miles by land above the Town of Natchitoches**, bounded on all sides by vacant lands” and that he was in possession thereof on 19 June 1834.
- + Cites his age as 45 or 50, married with children, and that he had a “dwelling house, kitchen, corn crib, meat house, and negro cabin and made small crop of corn, potatoes, vegetable etc.”

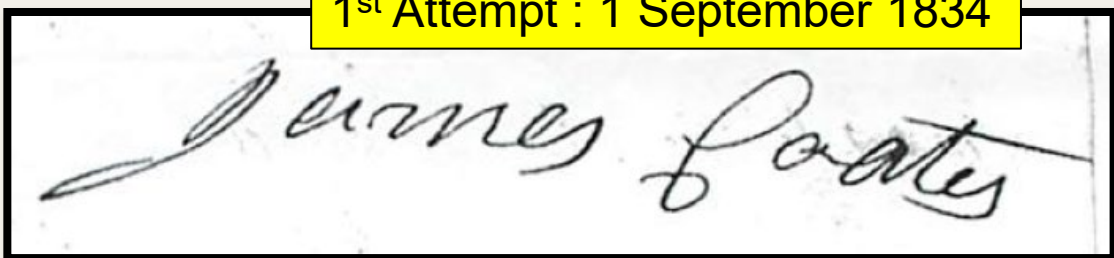
This and the next two documents probably were addressed to the **Opelousas Land Office**, and **they were not in the federal GLO's land entry file**. It is possible that these items had not been transferred to the Natchitoches Land Office when it opened in 1838. Had they been, would the GLO Commissioner **not** have suspended the Coates' preemption claim in March 1840?

LA OSL Doc. 527.00088: PRE-EMPTION DECLARATIONS NWD ACT JUNE 19, 1834 NO NUMBERS - ALSO- NOS 62-1565); images 56-57; John Armstrong, deposition, 13 November 1835.



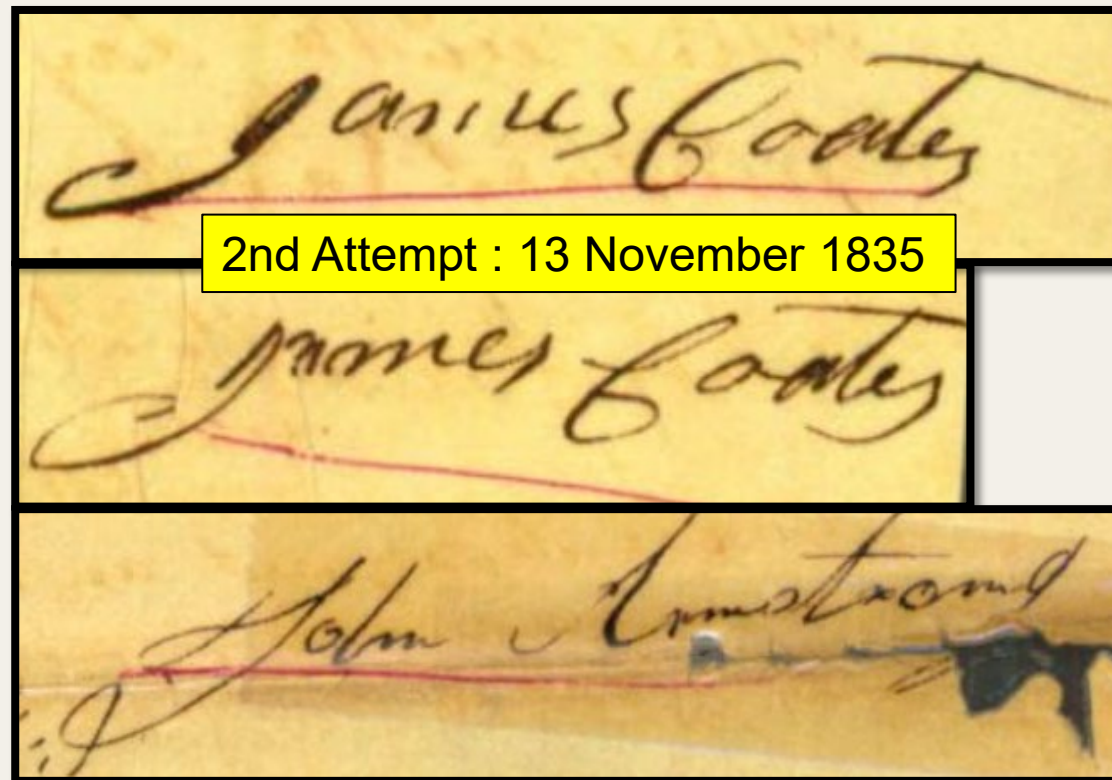
- + Coates was a “long known” **neighbor** of Armstrong’s
- + Armstrong reaffirmed Coates’ claim that he **cultivated** his tract in **1833** and 1834

1st Attempt : 1 September 1834

A handwritten signature of James Coates in cursive script on a white background.

James Coates and John Armstrong, signatures, 13 November 1835, before Natchitoches Justice of Peace J. Holmes

2nd Attempt : 13 November 1835

Two handwritten signatures on aged, yellowed paper. The top signature is 'James Coates' and the bottom signature is 'John Armstrong', both in cursive script.



LA OSL Doc. 527.00088: PRE-EMPTION DECLARATIONS NWD ACT JUNE 19, 1834 NO NUMBERS - ALSO- NOS 62-1565); image 59; Sewell Green Rees [*sic*], deposition, Natchitoches Parish, **26 November 1835**.

- + Rees “of the Parish of Claiborne” is “thirty three years of age”
- + **Neighbor** of James Coates “for **more than seven years**.”
- + “Coates occupied and cultivated a portion of the **public lands** at a place called **Coates’ Bluff** about eighty or ninety miles by land above & north west from the Town of Natchitoches – that the said Coates **cultivated in 1833** about two or three acres of said land in corn and vegetables and in 1834 said Coates occupied and cultivated a portion of the same land in potatoes and vegetables for the use of **his family residing on said land**... That said Coates has a **wife and five or six children** and several slaves and has a stock of cattle and has **made his living chiefly by trading**.”

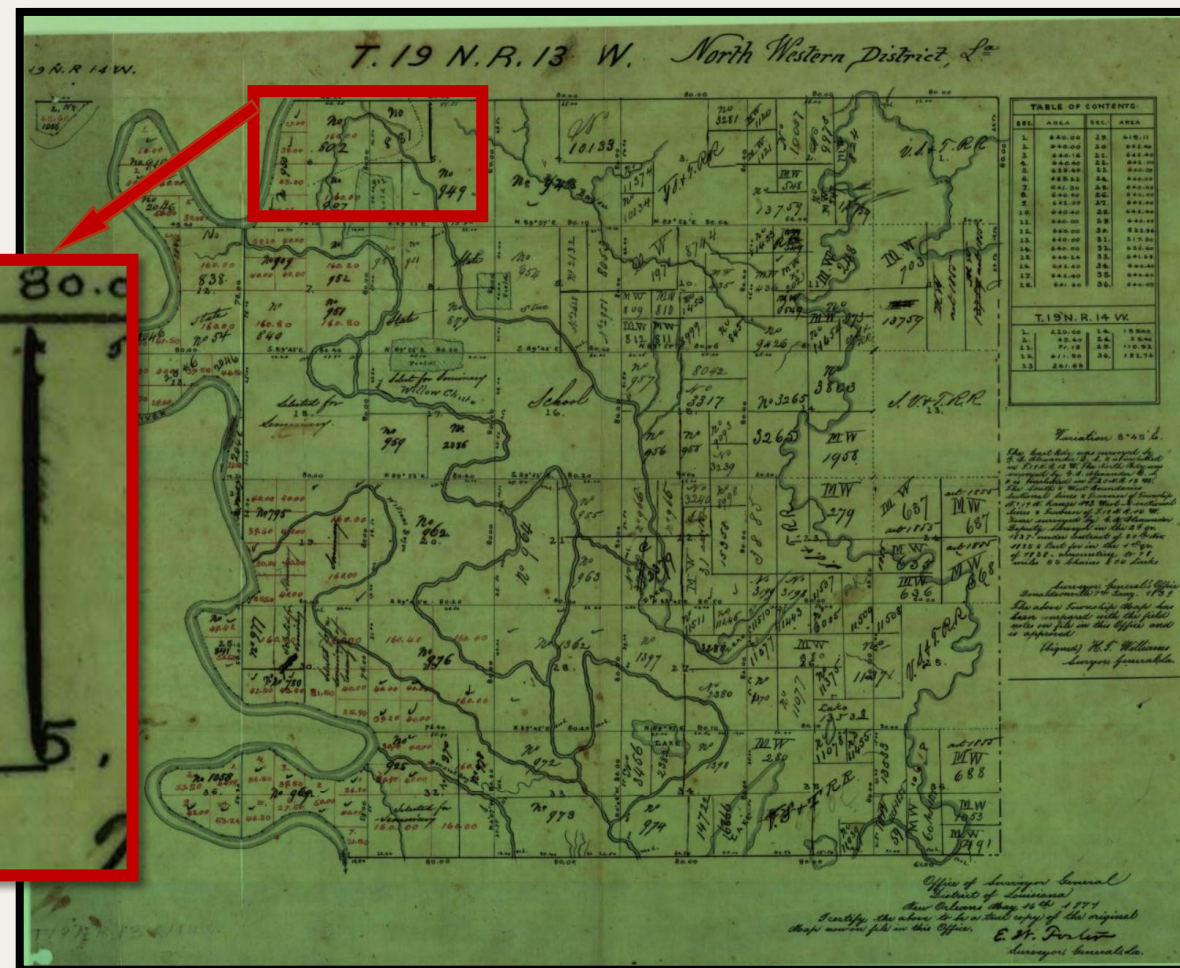
LA OSL Doc. 526.03112: U.S. CHECK PLAT MAP FOR DISTRICT NORTHWESTERN T19N R13W), Office of Surveyor General, New Orleans, 1874; location of James Coates' preemption claim holdings per Certificates 802 (NE⁴ Section 6) and 881 (NW⁴ Section 5).



Coates' Bluff? The site of Coates' trading post?

Certificate 802

Certificate 881



Conclusions

- + Many settlers made homes in present-day Louisiana before and after it became a Territory and then a State.
- + While some records were created before, at, or soon after a first settlement, many others were triggered years or decades later, & many were affected by federal & state land policies and laws.
- + Research of your earliest ancestors in Orleans Territory and State of Louisiana should not be considered reasonably exhaustive without consulting the historical documents housed in Louisiana's **Office of State Lands**.