



2015

# A Literature Review on Louisiana Plantation Society

Kristen M. Grisamore

*Illinois Wesleyan University*, [kgrisamo@iwu.edu](mailto:kgrisamo@iwu.edu)

---

### Recommended Citation

Grisamore, Kristen M. (2015) "A Literature Review on Louisiana Plantation Society," *Constructing the Past*: Vol. 16 : Iss. 1 , Article 3.

Available at: <http://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/constructing/vol16/iss1/3>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by The Ames Library, the Andrew W. Mellon Center for Curricular and Faculty Development, the Office of the Provost and the Office of the President. It has been accepted for inclusion in Digital Commons @ IWU by the editorial board of the Undergraduate Economic Review and the Economics Department at Illinois Wesleyan University. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@iwu.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@iwu.edu).

©Copyright is owned by the author of this document.

---

# A Literature Review on Louisiana Plantation Society

**Abstract**

This paper is a review of secondary literature on plantation society in antebellum Louisiana. The paper evaluates the accuracy of previous works written about the subject and works to dispel long-standing rumors about plantations during this time period.

**Keywords**

Louisiana, plantations, antebellum

Louisiana is a fascinating case study in Southern history, home to many unique cultures. The area's original settlers developed a culture modeled on the affluent French society they came from. The descendants of these people called themselves Creoles and had established a strong, tightly-knit plantation society by the time the United States purchased Louisiana in 1803. In the decades that followed, growing profitability in sugar farming led many settlers of Anglo descent to move to Louisiana. Especially among the plantation-owning elites, the Creoles and Anglos had conflicted views on social values, beliefs on education, etc. As a result, the region developed two distinct cultures, one of French influence and the other resembling other regions of the American South. Historians agree that the tension between the two cultures was strong, but they disagree over the reasons why there was such strong animosity between the two groups. Why did the Anglos and Creoles have so many disagreements? Why did the two cultures develop so separately from each other? Historians have attempted to answer these questions, but their conclusions are lacking.

Louisiana historiography suffers from a litany of problems regarding the accuracy of the history being conveyed, including cultural biases and pervasive stereotypes. The written history being published is oftentimes very biased. Because a majority of the primary sources regarding plantations or the planter class are family diaries or similar personal papers in state archives and universities, the primary evidence about the region is limited to personal accounts stored in very few locations. The local universities not only have strong local history programs, but have a vested interest in preserving their state history, which may color the historical works being produced. Louisiana is proud of its roots, as evidenced by the large amount of scholarly work about its people by the local universities. A consequence of this, though, is much of the scholarly

work about Louisiana is from these state universities and can be heavily biased towards the perspective of either the Anglo planters or the Creoles.

Biased histories may also result from a personal connection to either culture. Many historians studying this culture are natives of Louisiana, which creates a bubble in historical interest in the region. As a result, it is relatively rare to find a historian writing about the region outside of Louisiana and even rarer to someone writing outside of the South. Some of these historians are members of a prominent planter ancestry, romanticizing the antebellum period and painting a scene depicting a far less complex time in history than is entirely accurate. These writers create a history based on family stories and their cultural beliefs rather than historical fact. They also have a skewed perception of the two prominent cultures in antebellum Louisiana, falling on the same cultural fault lines as those living in the antebellum period. Some historians recount the opinions of the Creoles, extolling the virtues of the Creoles and faulting the Anglos for their seemingly ruthless pursuit of wealth through the sugar crop. Historians studying those of Anglo descent on the other hand, were sometimes distrustful of the Creoles and in historical accounts, seemed to believe Creoles were culturally backwards and uneducated. The clear tension between these two cultures resulted in a stratified Louisiana society.

Louisiana history also suffers the effect of years of pervasive cultural stereotypes. Historians have attempted for at least the past 50 years to dispel the stereotypical image of plantation culture. No matter which culture they choose to study, they face the same stereotype. J. Carlyle Sitterson describes the problem with the stereotype of the Southern planter as follows:

The false notion that southern planters during the slavery regime did little but enjoy the fruits of the labor of their Negroes has been hard to destroy. Unfortunately it lent itself both to the abolitionists' attacks upon the sloth of the rich planters and to the mint julep

and magnolia romanticism of later southern sentimentalists. Wealthy ante bellum planters, like wealth classes in all societies, had time for leisure. But the story does not end there. The wealth had to be made, and sugar planters took an active part in that undertaking.<sup>1</sup>

This nostalgic “memory” of the southern planter has damaged the truth of Louisiana historiography. The stereotype presents an image of a stagnant and singular culture, creating a simpler and less accurate public perception of the South. In reality, the South was home to many diverse and exciting cultures, including those in Louisiana. While historians continue to make strides contradicting this stereotype, the nostalgic image continues to negatively affect how we perceive the South.

While the Creole and Anglo cultures were unique to Louisiana, it is important to recognize that the rest of the antebellum American South was not the homogenous culture many historians lead readers to believe; the South housed many different cultures, each one distinct based on regional differences and various cultural distinctions. The other states in the South were equally as diverse and complex as the Louisiana cultures were. V. Lynn Kennedy argues, “The South was a vast place, even in the mid-nineteenth century, stretching from long-settled communities to rough frontiers. Settlement patterns, agricultural interests, and living conditions all varied widely, both between localities and between class and ethnic groups within the region.”<sup>2</sup> Kennedy puts Louisiana into perspective; while her argument does not devalue the importance of these cultures, it reminds those studying history that Louisiana is not the only state with unique cultural indicators. Historians who describe the South as a singular cultural entity

---

<sup>1</sup> J. Carlyle Sitterson, *Sugar Country: The Cane Sugar Industry in the South, 1753-1950*. (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 1953), 70.

<sup>2</sup> V. Lynn Kennedy, *Born Southern: Childbirth, Motherhood, and Social Networks in the Old South*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 3.

are destroying the regional distinctions of these Southern cultures. The argument also serves as a reminder that historians can portray their evidence wrongly by continuing to promote a stereotype. In the case of Louisiana, these inaccuracies survive at the expense of an accurate cultural historiography. Historians fall into the trap of grouping the Anglos with the rest of “Southern culture” when there is no unified Southern culture to begin with.

The culture of the Louisiana Anglos is as distinctive as that of the Creoles, and neither conforms to the Southern stereotype. In the case of Louisiana, both the Creoles and the Anglos are subject to negative stereotypes that simplify their culture. Lawrence Estaville describes this problem with the Creole stereotype, writing, “Because of the neglect in studying the nineteenth-century Louisiana French culture, many commentators have demonstrated a strong proclivity to conclude that in blissful, bucolic isolation little happened to the Louisiana French during these decades, that since their culture was dominant in South Louisiana it rapidly assimilated all others with no change...”<sup>3</sup> Estaville describes that much like the inaccurate descriptions of the South, Louisiana suffers from the same problems of “simplified” history. He continues to argue that some historians have perpetuated the mythic ideal in their works, which not only compromises the veracity of that historian’s work, but a whole era of historiography.<sup>4</sup> Current historians are tasked with fixing the mistakes of their predecessors. They must not only create an accurate historiography, but also remedy the faults and inaccuracies of the previous generation of historians.

Personal bias can result in extremely one-sided depictions of history, as historians sometimes play into negative stereotypes of the opposing culture. J. Carlyle Sitterson is one of

---

<sup>3</sup> Lawrence Ernest Estaville, Jr., *The Louisiana French Culture Regime: Geographic Morphologies in the Nineteenth Century*. (Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms International, 1986), 111.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 113.

these historians whose work displays a prominent bias; he describes the Creoles as inexperienced, uneducated, and jealous of the Anglo planters' success.<sup>5</sup> Sitterson asserts, "The Creoles, with their narrow experience and limited education, could not compete with the aggressive Anglo-Americans. Averse to change and complacently content, they built a social barrier of bitter resentment between themselves and the Anglo-American planters."<sup>6</sup> He claims this jealousy is why the Creoles closed themselves off from the incoming Anglos. His claim is unsubstantiated by any evidence, though. A more likely explanation for the isolation of the Creoles is that they followed the pattern many cultures before them did when faced with threats to their culture; these groups would exclude migrants to the region from their society in order to preserve the threatened culture. While Sitterson is clearly biased in favor of the Anglo perspective, he is not the only historian to make the claim about the inferiority of the Creoles. Joseph Tregle makes a similar statement about the Creole culture, stating, "Many of them [Creoles] unquestionably possessed the courtliness of manner which had sprung from the days of the greatness of France and Spain, but the form had long outlived the substance of any aristocratic heritage. Illiteracy among the Latin Creoles was appalling, for example, and was certainly not limited to the less fortunate of their members."<sup>7</sup> Tregle, unlike Sitterson, provides evidence for his argument. He cites travel accounts of Louisiana ranging from the 1820s to 1850, with titles including *The South-west. By a Yankee* and *Travels through North America during the Years 1825 and 1826*. But while Tregle's argument uses evidence, his sources are likely unreliable. He relies heavily on accounts of travelers or visitors from the East Coast discussing not just Louisiana, but the entire American South. These accounts tend to fall prey to many

---

<sup>5</sup> Sitterson, *Sugar Country*, 69.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Joseph G. Tregle, Jr., "Early New Orleans Society: A Reappraisal." *Journal of Southern History* 18 No. 1 (February 1, 1952): 25-26.

problems, including a severe misunderstanding of what they are witnessing. Sitterson, despite his bias, warns about this in *Sugar Country*, cautioning, “Contemporary accounts of the ante bellum sugar planter usually were impressionistic and uncritical, particularly since visitors generally saw him at leisure rather than at work.”<sup>8</sup> Sitterson continues by showing two examples of traveler accounts from the 1820s describing sugar planters. The two accounts portray vague accounts of their visits, mostly commenting on the leisure activities of the planters they visited with. As a result, travel accounts paint only a vague and limited picture of antebellum Louisiana. Tregle’s sources may be contemporary, but they are misrepresentations of Louisiana society because the travel logs are prone to many misunderstandings or misperceptions.

Many historical accounts exist to contradict the assertions of Tregle and Sitterson. Craig A. Bauer’s case study of the Bringier family is one such account. The Bringiers, members of the Creole elite, ensured that their children were well-educated, including their daughters. Sons were given a well-rounded education in order to become good-standing members of an elite society and managers of the family’s business and estate. When they were young, children were taught by tutors hired specifically to teach on the plantation. This gave children their first encounters with a broad education.<sup>9</sup> They were given a liberal arts education, schooled in history, philosophy, mathematics, etc. Sons were sometimes sent abroad to Europe to pursue their studies. Daughters were not given as strict an education, but they were still taught to read, write, understand Scripture, and perform basic mathematics to aid their families in managing the accounts on the family plantation.<sup>10</sup> Daughters also needed a broad education in order to best plan an education for their own children in the future, as mothers would be the ones in charge of

---

<sup>8</sup> Sitterson, *Sugar Country*, 66.

<sup>9</sup> William Kauffman Scarborough, *Masters of the Big House: Elite Slave-holders of the Mid-Nineteenth-Century South*. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press), 77.

<sup>10</sup> Craig A. Bauer, *Creole Genesis: The Bringier Family and Antebellum Plantation Life in Louisiana*. (Lafayette: University of Louisiana at Lafayette Press, 2011), 34.

their children's schooling.<sup>11</sup> Family papers in the Bringier family's archives are Craig A. Bauer's evidence for his belief that the Bringier children were educated. He has records dating from pre-1800 to as late as 1858 documenting the education of these children.<sup>12</sup> The Bringiers are not the only Creole family who emphasized the importance of their children's schooling, though. The Ursuline Convent in New Orleans is evidence of that; it was well-attended by Creole daughters and those who were wealthy enough sent their sons abroad to study in France like the Bringiers did.<sup>13</sup> Laura Locoul Gore, a Creole woman from a prominent planter family in St. James Parish, provides more evidence to support the assertion that the upper-class Creoles were educated. Her father attended a military academy in France during the late 1830s and both her mother and grandmother were educated in convents. Gore's mother was educated at the Sacred Heart Convent in Natchitoches beginning in 1851 and her grandmother was educated either at the Sacred Heart Convent or at the Ursuline Convent.<sup>14</sup> Outside of specific historical texts, evidence of Creole literacy can be found through letters. As the only way to communicate during the antebellum years was through the post, it was imperative to know how to read and write in order to communicate with family or friends as well as record the events at the family plantation. Historians have overwhelming amounts of letters to and from husbands and wives, mothers and daughters, friends, etc. written in Louisiana during the antebellum period, many of them written by Creoles in both English and French. This proves that these people had to be literate in order to

---

<sup>11</sup> Scarborough, *Masters*, 77.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 34-35

<sup>13</sup> Edwin Adams Davis, *Louisiana: A Narrative History*. (Baton Rouge: Claitor's Publishing Division, 1971), 228.

<sup>14</sup> The contention over where Gore's maternal grandmother was educated appears in the commentary at the end of her record. She believes that her grandmother was educated in New Orleans, but Norm and Sand Marmillion, historians currently in charge of the Laura Plantation and editors of the commentary at the end of Gore's account, contend the grandmother was educated in Natchitoches like the mother was.

effectively communicate with their extensive social circle and demonstrates some bilingual capacity.

Anglo planters also educated their children through tutors, especially since public schools were virtually nonexistent in rural areas. Sitterson asserts that an overwhelming amount of the planter journals he examined while writing his book mentions hiring a tutor to educate their children.<sup>15</sup> He continues to explain his findings, describing that children would eventually be sent to the local private schools and sons would be sent to college afterwards. Sitterson also explains that there were so few public schools in these rural areas because many families preferred their children attend private institutions. He explains, “The establishment of an adequate public school system in sparsely settled rural areas where there was a high degree of concentration of wealth in a small minority of the population was manifestly difficult. Planters who could afford to hire tutors for their own children and send them to private schools, were not... concerned about the educational opportunities for the remainder of the population.”<sup>16</sup> Sitterson’s main evidence to support his conclusions is the McCollam family papers, using similar evidence that Bauer uses to examine the education of the Bringier family. Sitterson’s findings show that both the Anglos and Creoles provided private education for their children whenever possible, preferring to have more control over their children’s education.

A major problem within antebellum Louisiana that plagues historians today is the fight over public education after the Louisiana Purchase. Certain historians favoring the Anglo perspective of this debate fault the Creoles for being either apathetic to or entirely against the idea of government-funded public education while those examining the Creole perspective provide reasoning for these peoples’ reticence in supporting public education. From the Anglo

---

<sup>15</sup> Sitterson, *Sugar Country*, 84.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

perspective, Tregle attacks the Creoles, stating, “Educational facilities had been severely neglected in the colony [Louisiana] before 1803, and it was the rare exception rather than the rule for Louisianians to do much studying anywhere.... Nor had their status as colonials allowed the Louisianians opportunity to develop any of the faculties which might have allowed them to compete on an even footing with those who moved into their country after 1803.”<sup>17</sup> Tregle uses the lack of a formal educational system in the pre-Louisiana Purchase era as evidence for the Creoles’ disinterest in education. Because legal codes tend to indicate what a society values, Tregle sees the nonexistence of a public education system as an indicator that education was not important. Combined with his opinion that Creoles were generally uneducated, Tregle creates a damning view of the Creole society, suppressing evidence of the Creoles’ other forms of education.

Although it is true that Creoles were against public schooling in Louisiana, they were not opposed to public schools because they were uneducated. Creoles, unlike the incoming Anglos, were not used to public education in Louisiana. Under the French rule, Catholic institutions were the few places a child could go in order to receive schooling outside the home. The Anglos moving into the area had public schools in their previous hometowns and therefore believed such a practice should be extended into the new Louisiana territory.<sup>18</sup> Bauer uses the family papers of the DuBourg family to support his claim, explaining that while the Creoles understood Anglo reasoning for wanting public education, they were still against it. Edwin Adams continues to describe the reasoning behind the Creole opposition to public education, two major obstacles being the influence of the Catholic faith and state subsidization of private schooling.<sup>19</sup> Creoles, being faithful Catholics, commonly sent their children to Catholic schools and vocally displayed

---

<sup>17</sup> Tregle, *Early New Orleans*, 26.

<sup>18</sup> Bauer, *Creole Genesis*, 33.

<sup>19</sup> Adams, *Louisiana*, 214-215.

their desire to educate their children in a Catholic institution, as evidenced by the many Creole girls learning in the convents. As a result, they did not want to support a secular education. Also, many of the private religious institutions their children attended were state-subsidized, so they had no desire to invest in a public education system when the private schools were state-funded as well.

Creoles were not the sole obstacles to public education, though. Sitterson admits that there was a statewide apathy towards public education. Although a motion for funding statewide education was passed with fair ease, the arguments about public education continued well into the 1850s. Sitterson explains, “Planters who did not send their own children to the public schools, understandably but regrettably, did not concern themselves over deficiencies in the school system. This apathy, along with the Latin Creole opposition to secular education, left no other leadership available to fight the long battle for a public education in a rural society.”<sup>20</sup> As previously discussed, both Creoles and Anglos preferred sending their children to private schools or hiring tutors to teach them as opposed to the public education provided by the state. They did not have a vested interest in keeping the public schools alive in their areas, so there seemed to be low attendance to the public schools, at least by those of the planter class. Also, as Louisiana was predominately a rural state, it was difficult to establish a good location for public schools. Children were spread out all over the state. Unlike in the cities, where children were centrally located, it proved difficult for rural schools to position themselves in a location that will gain the most attendance. Sitterson documents the public dispute over education through the McCollam papers and the family papers of other Anglo planter families.

Creoles were famed for their revelries and celebrations; as a result the stereotype of the planter who prefers parties to hard work continues to survive despite much historical evidence to

---

<sup>20</sup> Sitterson, *Sugar Country*, 86.

the contrary. The stereotype is not without any basis, though. Creole elites enjoyed a lavish lifestyle and often showed off their wealth, both on the plantation and in their New Orleans homes.<sup>21</sup> They would import French furniture and display any family heirlooms in their homes, indicating their heightened social position. Bauer has evidence in the Bringier family records documenting the various purchases they made to furnish their home in 1815, including fine wooden furniture and fine paintings gifted by one of the family's relatives.<sup>22</sup> Not only were the Creoles' homes lavishly furnished, they also made full use of the many excitements New Orleans offered. The Bringiers often spent extended periods of time in their New Orleans residences, enjoying the many opportunities for entertainment, business, shopping, and social interaction available to them.<sup>23</sup> Clement Eaton goes into greater detail describing the leisure activities of the Creoles, including dancing, gambling, fishing, playing music, and feasting, among other activities.<sup>24</sup> Lively activities were part of Creole culture, as seen in their Mardi Gras celebrations, and they were not shy about flaunting their enjoyment of leisure time. Creoles also would celebrate during large family gatherings, after Sunday mass, and after religious sacraments (i.e. baptism and marriage).

Creoles enjoyed having free time, but their leisure was paired with hard work. Craig A. Bauer explains, "All activities of those who lived and worked on a sugar estate revolved around the crop's needs."<sup>25</sup> Bauer contradicts Sitterson's attack on the laziness and lack of forward thinking on Creole plantations. In his case study of the Bringier family, a prominent line of Creole planters, he argues that not only were the Creole planters as hard-working as the Anglos,

---

<sup>21</sup> Bauer, *Creole Genesis*, 55.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

<sup>24</sup> Clement Eaton, *The Civilization of the Old South: Writings of Clement Eaton*. Ed. Albert D. Kirwan. (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1968), 83.

<sup>25</sup> Bauer, *Creole Genesis*, 59.

but they were also very successful businessmen. To support his historical account, he provides a potent bibliography, including a comprehensive list of family records tracking the Bringier family throughout history. He also uses articles on prominent planters such as Duncan F. Kenner, contemporary accounts of the profitability of the sugar crop, descriptive articles on the nature of Louisiana society during the antebellum period, and books about antebellum culture as a whole in order to put Louisiana into historical perspective. Based on the plantation records the Bringier family kept, Bauer concludes that "...sugar was the foundation of the Bringiers' wealth from which all else derived.... Because of the many variables in the growing and making of sugar, there was little idle time on the well-managed sugar plantation."<sup>26</sup> Especially since Sitterson's argument about the failings of Creole planters is unsubstantiated by any evidence, Bauer's claim about the work ethic of the Creoles is fairly persuasive. Sugar planting required hard work and was very time sensitive; if all members of the family were not working to keep the plantation running, there was a good chance the crops would fail. Bauer cites not only primary sources describing the intensity of the work on the plantation such as the diary of Pierre Laussat and plantation record books, but other secondary sources on the subject, such as compiled reviews of the sugar crop by Ray F. Lucas and Richard Follett. Despite the stereotype, Creole planters were dedicated managers of their plantations.

Despite a flawed argument about the work ethic of the Creoles, the rest of Sitterson's examination of Anglo planter culture is well-formed. He argues that sugar planters were generally dedicated businessmen who were also able to live a life of leisure. Contrasting the popular stereotype that planters did not attend to their plantations, Sitterson proves that living on a plantation required hard work. The stereotype of the Southern planter claims that planters barely worked and enjoyed a life of leisure while their slaves did all the work. Sitterson's

---

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 59.

counter-argument states, “Sugar planters devoted most of their time to the business of their plantations- going over the plantations from day to day to observing planting, cultivating, and harvesting operations, attending to the making of sugar and molasses and their shipment to market, and planning the operations for the forthcoming year.”<sup>27</sup> To defend his perspective, he uses personal letters of prominent planter families, such as the Minor family of Ascension and Terrebonne parishes and the Weeks family of the famous Shadows on the Teche plantation, both Anglo clans. Sitterson also makes use of plantation diaries from these families and others, contemporary periodicals such as *De Bow’s Review*, and collections of family papers such as those of the Weeks family. He also makes the point that the Anglo planters did enjoy some amount of leisure. He cites the Weeks family’s papers to describe the large parties they held on their plantations throughout the year; these lavish parties may have been the basis for the stereotype of the lazy planter, but these planters were dedicated workers on their plantation. By including the accounts of plantation owners describing the work they performed to sustain the plantation, he effectively argues against the stereotypical accounts attempting to negatively portray the role of the planter in plantation life.

Despite many differences between Creole and Anglo cultures, they do exhibit similarities, possibly as a result of regional circumstances. Sitterson argues that both these cultures enjoyed the luxury of having large families surrounding them and both business and social lives were many times dictated by family.<sup>28</sup> Other historians agree with Sitterson, including Donna Onebane, whose case study on the Burguières family reveals that the J.M. Burguières Company was owned and run by members of the family for over 136 years.<sup>29</sup> In the

---

<sup>27</sup> Sitterson, *Sugar Country* 70.

<sup>28</sup> Sitterson, *Sugar Country*, 76.

<sup>29</sup> Donna McGee Onebane. *The House that Sugarcane Built: The Louisiana Burguières*. (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2014), 29.

case of the Bringiers, the family owned multiple plantations, each one run by a different sect of the family. The family plantations included White Hall, Hermitage, and Brulé, among others.<sup>30</sup> The entire extended family worked together to maintain their reputation and wealth. As for the Anglos, Andrew and John McCollam, a pair of brothers from New York, began a family business surveying territory around the Assumption parish area. Andrew, married to the niece of Edmund Slattery, a well-off Anglo planter from Louisiana, lived on a plantation given to him by his in-laws. These family ties served Andrew McCollam well, as his wife's family provided money for him to build a sugar mill in 1845.<sup>31</sup> These accounts are evidenced by business receipts for the families, financial records, and the family papers. Many of these records are easily traceable, supporting Sitterson's argument in both *Sugar Country* and his article on the McCollams. The historians examining the Creoles corroborate with Sitterson's observations on the Anglos because the Creoles exhibit similar practices with their family.

Sitterson also argues, "The loneliness often associated with southern rural life was not characteristic in the Louisiana, Georgia, and Texas sugar areas. Families generally were large, and home was the center of the social life that usually included other planter families of the neighborhood."<sup>32</sup> Plantation life could be lonely because growing massive numbers of crops required large amounts of land, resulting in spread-out plantations. Plantations were large and therefore, far away from each other. As a result, plantation families were often isolated from others. In the case of the sugar plantations in Louisiana, this was not a problem because even though plantations were sometimes far from each other, they usually were located in a relatively small geographical area. Planters living in the same community would frequently socialize with

---

<sup>30</sup> Bauer, *Creole Genesis*, 62-63.

<sup>31</sup> J. Carlyle Sitterson, "The McCollams: A Planter Family of the Old and New South," *The Journal of Southern History* 6, No. 3 (August 1940): 348.

<sup>32</sup> Sitterson, *Sugar Country*, 76.

each other, such as in the case of Lafourche Parish.<sup>33</sup> On sugar plantations, many families also settled near each other, whether tied by marriage or blood relations. Valcour Aime is one such example with his extended family in St. James Parish. Aime, after marrying the daughter of the prominent Roman family, moved onto the family plantation in St. James Parish. The descendants of the Roman family would eventually own the famous Oak Alley Plantation, also located in St. James Parish.<sup>34</sup> Sitterson's argument about familial ties is backed by land ownership records throughout the state, indicating the extended families settled near each other in various parishes. Family papers from the Weeks family and Aime's family also indicate the close relations neighbors had with each other.

Planter society during the antebellum period in Louisiana was anything but simple. Despite pervasive stereotypes and poor historical works stating the contrary, Louisiana had rich and complex cultures, mainly identified in the French Creole peoples and the Anglo settlers from other parts of the United States. During the antebellum period, extreme differences in cultural values, social practices, etc. led the Creoles and Anglos to develop separate societies within the state and would many times fight over public policy as a result. Historians today sometimes fall prey to these same fault lines, misconstruing historical evidence or making unsubstantiated attacks against the opposing culture. Because of this, the conclusions these historians draw must be scrutinized and examined for bias or fault. Louisiana history is the history of change. Both the Creoles and Anglos living in the state lived busy lives; although stereotypes and historical inaccuracies will state the contrary, these people were hard-working members of a society with complex social values.

---

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 77.

<sup>34</sup> Roulhac B. Toledano, "Louisiana's Golden Age: Valcour Aime in St. James Parish." *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 10 No. 3 (July 1, 1969): 212.