

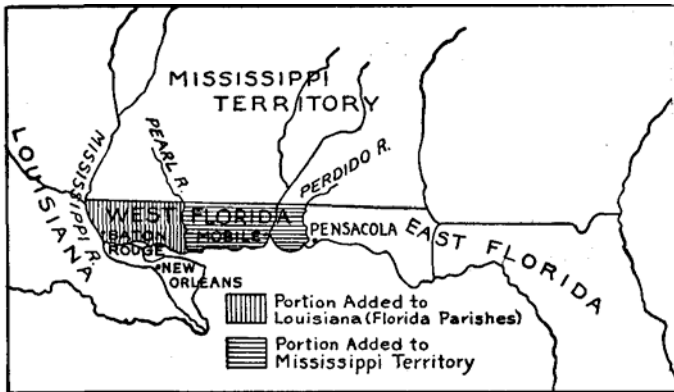
# OUT OF FOUR-ONE TANGIPAHOA PARISH, LOUISIANA 1869 - 1969

The term "parish" which is unique and found in the United States only in Louisiana, involves a fusion of the concepts of local government during the French and Spanish periods of our background.

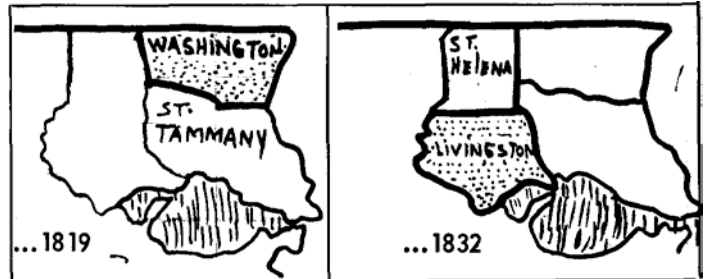
Twenty-one ecclesiastical provinces were created, however the boundaries were not always similarly defined. Some did not have a church and many were without a priest. The entire clergy consisted of no more than nineteen individuals. When Louisiana was transferred to the United States, overlapping was clear and in a sense afforded the background for confusion at different dates.

Our fiercely independent people are a blending of several cultures, including Scotch, Irish, South European, Protestant and Catholic. Settlers came into the parish at different times: from the south by the water route, and from the north, the west and the east.

The British claimed West Florida 1763-1783. The date of the Louisiana Purchase was 1803. Louisiana became a state in 1812, but the status of our west Florida Parishes was not clarified until 1813.

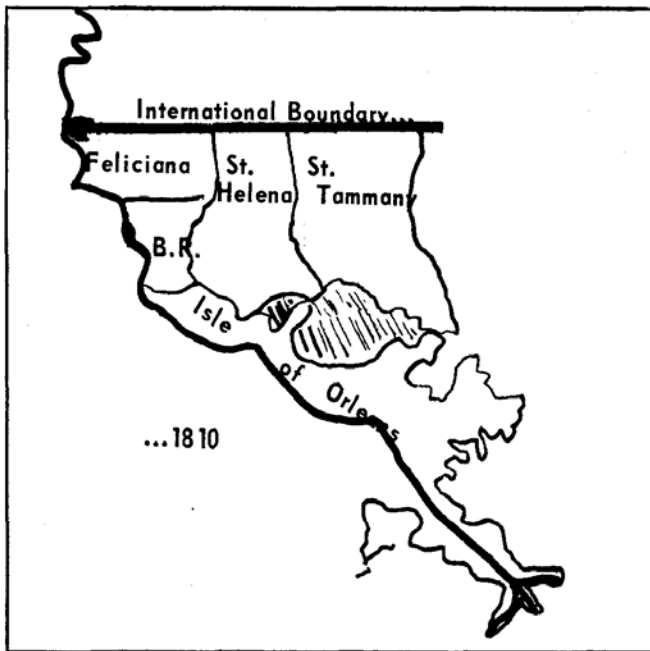


Disputed Territory, 1810-1812

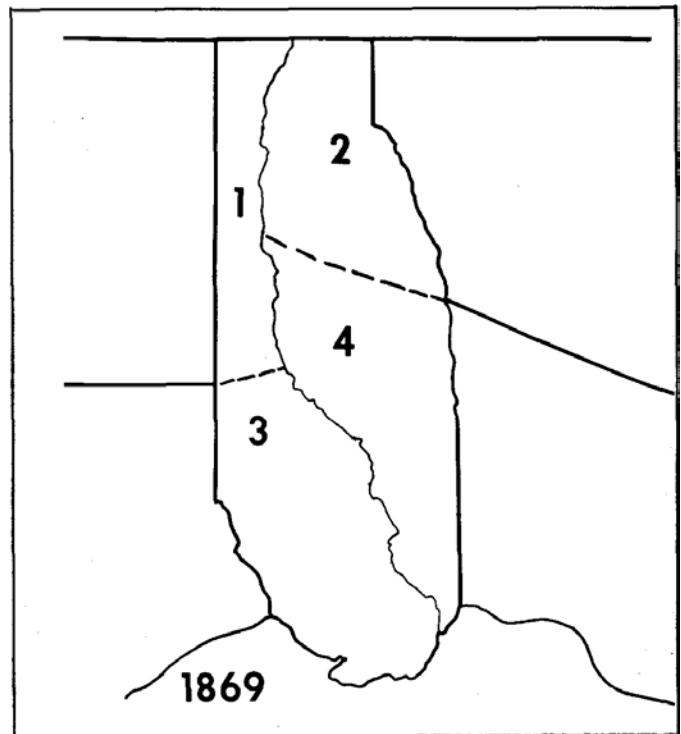


1819. Washington Parish cut off of the top of St. Tammany (which had been named for a Delaware Indian chief regarded as "good".)

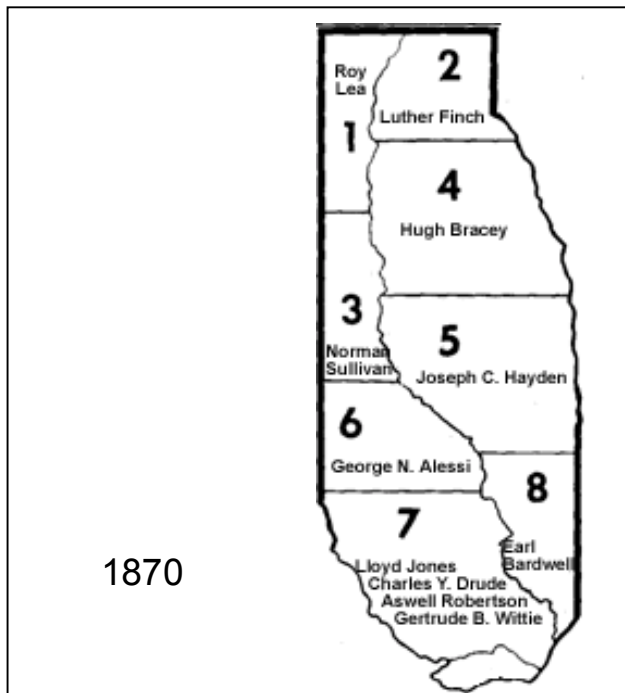
1832. Livingston Parish cut away from St. Helena. The original parish seat (1804) at Montpelier moved to Greensburg for St. Helena, and to Springfield for Livingston



1810. Seventy-four day independent West Florida Republic, 20 September - 7 December, 1810. Divided 22 December 1810 into four parishes by Louisiana Governor W. C. C. Claiborne.



1869. Tangipahoa Parish created. "Out of Four - One"



**1870 Divided into eight wards 15 June, approved 1871. Then-current jurors are listed in wards they served.**

The governing authority of the parish was the police jury. Because of its size and method of selection, it corresponded to the county board of supervisors found in many states. Because its members acted only in parish-wide affairs and had no special individual duties, it was also somewhat similar to the county board of commissioners in other states.

The first meeting of our police jury lasted three days. John Calhoun, a tall gentleman who is said to have worn a tall beaver hat on special occasions, took the chair as President and read the legislative act authorizing Tangipahoa Parish. He had been president of the newly constructed New Orleans Jackson and Great Northern Railroad which resulted in the need for a new parish. He and William H. Wilder represented the first ward of the original four; Burrell S. Carpenter and Franklin I. Lee, the second ward; David T. Robertson and Willis W. Bankston, the third, and Alcie B. Robertson, the fourth ward.

About 1917, Sarah Virginia Ellis (1863 -1941) wrote a short parish history for a women's club in Amite where her family home was located. Her family has an extensive history of judicial service in Louisiana beginning with Thomas Cargill Warner, who was appointed in 1811 the first Territorial Judge of the St. Tammany-Washington area.

In 1868 the land which is presently Tangipahoa Parish was included in the parishes of St. Helena and Livingston on the west side, and Washington and St. Tammany on the east side of the Tangipahoa River. The four parishes cornered at a point not far from Amite City. The Washington Parish court house was at Franklinton; St. Tammany at Covington; St. Helena at Greensburg; and Livingston at Springfield. All of these were distant from the railroad.

The New Orleans, Jackson and Great Northern Railroad was built in 1852 and 1853. It is now the Illinois Central Railroad and transverses the present parish of Tangipahoa

from Manchac to the state line of Mississippi. The only stations on the road at that time were Manchac, Ponchatoula, Tickfaw, and Independence in Livingston Parish; Amite City, Prospect Hill (now Arcola), and Tangipahoa in St. Helena Parish.

Strader, Hammond, Natalbany, Genessee, Roseland, Hyde and Kentwood were then primitive forests. The railroad has brought population and development. In due course of time, the business interests and wealth of Livingston and St. Helena Parishes and, to a great extent, those of the other two parishes, began to be centered along the railroad's line. A cotton batting and gin factory, the Southern Car Works at Independence, and a few old-time sawmills and other industries were established. Lands increased in value. It became inconvenient for persons transacting business in the court or desiring to examine records to travel miles to the courthouses, so far removed from the railroad. To remedy this inconvenience, a meeting of citizens having interest along the railroad was held. From this meeting, the movement started the creation of a new parish which would embrace the railroad from the lake to the Mississippi state line, as a center, with extensions east and west carved from the territory of the four existing parishes.

It was resolved that the name which the Choctaw Indians had given to our beautiful river, Tangipahoa, should be given to the newly formed parish. A committee composed of Dr. B. F. Taylor, Henry H. Bankston, John Calhoun and Thomas C. W. Ellis was appointed to prepare the details for presenting the plan of the new parish to the Legislature. The suggestion for the boundaries of the new parish was assigned to a sub-committee composed of Dr. Kennon and Messrs. Calhoun and Raoul. Mr. Ellis was selected to draw the project of the law proposed. The boundary committee fixed the boundaries, which began at the state line west of Osyka four miles, extended south along the Natalbany Creek and Tickfaw River, along the Lake Shore, Pass Manchac, Ponchatoula, a distance of eight or ten miles, thence north and along the Tchefuncta River to the state line, and then west to the place of beginning.

The law was drafted by Mr. Ellis, including these boundaries, and was passed by the Legislature as drawn, and became a law March, 1869. The courthouse was fixed at Amite City, the necessary records affecting persons or property in the new parish were moved, officers and police were moved, officers and police jury were appointed, and the Parish of Tangipahoa became a reality.

The upper part of the brick building now (ca. 1917) the Masonic Hall (1969 the Amite bus station) was used as a court room and small building adjoining on the north was used as Clerk's and sheriff's office. The first officers were H. H. Bankston, sheriff; A. G. Tucker, recorder; S. J. Bradley,

parish judge; and L. I. Sauer, clerk. The new parish was placed in the same district as the four mother parishes. Ezekiel Parke Ellis was District Judge, Bolivar Edwards, District Attorney, and W. L. Thompson, Senator. Thus was Tangipahoa Parish created and put into operation.

Some accounts of these publicly spirited men who thus became the fathers of this parish, may be of interest. H. H. Bankston was one of the first settlers of Amite, a man of great force of character, a merchant, and the first mayor of Amite City. John Calhoun was a man of high culture and president of the railroad in its early days. Gaston T. Raoul was organizer and prospector of the Southern Car Works at Independence, a factory which turned out freight and passenger cars for this and other railroads. This was a large establishment, and was later burned by the Federal Cavalry during the Civil War. Dr. B. F. Taylor was a physician, and was later Superintendent of the U.S. Mint in New Orleans for a number of years. Dr. C. E. Kennon of Tangipahoa was taking rank as a physician when death claimed him at his post of duty in the yellow fever epidemic of 1878. He was a gallant soldier and a man universally beloved. Mr. Ellis went on to become a Senior Judge of the Civil District Court in New Orleans.

In addition to the foregoing committee, the following names of men who were active in this movement may be given: Amos Kent, John M. Bach, Bennett M. Watson, James B. Wards, B. L. Mann, C. E. Cate, C. N. Pasturer, James E. Randolph, Col. L. H. Duncan, Benjamin D. Gullett, G. P. McMichael, and others, all men of prominence, and most of them of ample means.

They have all passed to the Great Beyond. Since its creation, Tangipahoa Parish has more than doubled its population and wealth and its beautiful pine forests.

Mammoth sawmills and lumber tramways had not come. Truck fanning was then unknown and much that we now see was not dreamed of. Could these fathers of the parish awake from their last long sleep and revisit us, it would be difficult for them to recognize this work of their hands which is fast taking rank among the foremost parishes of this State.

The name Tangipahoa is a part of our rich Indian heritage. The meaning is associated with "corn" which was, and is, grown here in abundance.

The parish of 500,000 acres or 803 square miles is 51 miles long and 18 miles wide. We have flat areas in the south, and the northern hills are the lower boundary of the "old south" cotton kingdom. In 1870 our population was 7,928. In the 1960 census we were eleventh in the state, with 59,434, and we are still growing!

Minutes of the Tangipahoa Parish Police Jury are complete from its first days. Early official journals included the *Livingston Herald*, *Tangipahoa Advocate* and *Tangipahoa*

*Democrat*. The first budget was for \$15,915, with jurors receiving \$4 a day, and the District Attorney \$15 "per conviction." The "guardian of the poor" was a forerunner of welfare, with a duty to aid charity cases. It is of interest to note that 16 June 1869 a Mr. Davis was granted the right to establish a ferry across Tangipahoa River for 5 years and charge these prices:

wagon and team 75¢; ox cart with two wheels, 30¢; buggy with single horse, 25¢; buggy with two horses, 40¢; horse and cart, 20¢, horse and rider, 15¢; footman, 10¢; cattle, 5¢ head; sheep, 3¢; hogs, 3¢.

At random, other actions appropriated \$300 for a bridge across Tangipahoa River east of Amite at Springs Ferry; \$150 for a bridge across Big Creek at George Bankston's on the Arcola to Franklinton Road; and \$150 for a bridge "across Big Creek on Fourth Notch Road, Tangipahoa to Franklinton."

The police jury had always had the responsibility for the parish roads. It seems appropriate to note the connections of our parish history to transportation from the days of required individual service to maintain the dirt roads, to the modern controlled access highways, with a major national north-south and east-west ninety degree intersection soon to be completed in our parish: 1-55 and 1-12. The railroad originally called the New Orleans, Jackson and Great Northern is today the Illinois Central which calls itself "The Main Line of Mid-America."

The southern boundary of the parish was a shortcut route used by Indians to travel almost unbelievable distances from Mobile and Pensacola, through our Pass Manchac, over to the Mississippi River, up to Arkansas, (quartz found in our area with Indian artifacts confirms this), and on up to Illinois and the Great Lakes region and back. The Indian word "manchac" means "rear entrance."

Acollapissa Indians whose name means that they "kept watch to see when people came into the area" first led Iberville through this shortcut at Pass Manchac to rejoin Bienville at Biloxi after he came down the bends of the Mississippi River.

Amiable Indians accepted gifts from the early white explorers. Because of the friendship they found in this area, "Amite" was the name given to the river in the area at the same time (1699) that the French gave the names Maurepas and Pontchartrain to our nearby lakes, to honor the finance ministers who had aided their journeys.

Today the most modern methods of communication and transportation are matter-of-factly accepted. Two towers, one at Kentwood and one in Hammond, are part of a system which sends microwave patterns up and down the length of

the parish, instantly connecting the railroad's New Orleans to Chicago communication. Modern oil pipelines cross the parish, possibly following, in some cases, the level trails first walked by Indian residents before recorded history. A tourist greeter station at the north border of the parish welcomes a tide of travelers, many of whom, as did early Indian travelers, come down into this area from the Wisconsin, Illinois, Missouri areas.

In 1766 there is record of settlers at the mouth of the Tangipahoa River who came to try to raise wine and silk. Some were possibly from Montpellier in the south of France. Later some red-headed Scotch Fusiliers are known to have settled in the area. Forest products came to be marketed. Settlements pushed up to the "head of navigation" of the streams of the area. Lafon's map of 1806 names John Lanier's crossing in the parish on Tangipahoa River. Spanish land grants were made, and later honored, by the United States government. Their irregular shapes along the bodies of water are still seen on our map. Roads fanned out from the north shore of Lake Ponchartrain. The Kings Highway, used by early post riders, crossed Tangipahoa River and Ponchatoula Creek and allowed the mail from New Orleans to connect more quickly across the lake than up the twisting river to Natchez, and then on to Nashville and Washington.

In 1810, the masonically inspired flag with a five-pointed white star on a blue background flew for 74 days over our Independent Republic of West Florida when local citizens' strong love of freedom resulted in border disputes along the northern boundary of today's Tangipahoa Parish. It was then an international boundary between Spanish Territory and the United States. It is of interest that our West Florida Republic's "Bonnie Blue Flag" was the same pattern which was later used to express freedom in our neighboring lone-star State of Texas to the west. Its same spirit was musically expressed in the "Bonnie Blue Flag" song which was popular during the War Between the States.

Andrew Jackson and American soldiers from Kentucky and Tennessee and other states passed through our area; and many returned to make homes here after the Battle of New Orleans.

The American Bible Society, "with permission of Pere Antoine in New Orleans," did mission work in our area in 1813. The first Baptist church was established that year at Mt. Nebo, east of Amite. While members of Catholic orders accompanied the early explorers, the first mass in the parish was not until 1860 by ex-Dominican Father DuPuy at Husser. Benedictines worked in the area until the Dominicans assumed responsibility for the parish in 1912. The Arcola Presbyterian Church was a place of worship used by many of the families of businessmen who helped to build the railroad.

Nathaniel Amacker (1811-1881), of one of the many

families who lived in the area of the present parish since 1795-1805, is said to have taken his shotgun on the porch of his home to tell the surveyors that they would NOT build a railroad through HIS cornfield! The railroad WAS constructed, however, by 1854. True story or not, the railroad has almost its only bend in the entire length of the parish near his old home.

Iron rails from England were used in the construction which is said to have cost \$22,720 per mile. Bear stew from the swamps was included in the hot meals for construction workers. Cow catchers on the early iron horses served their literal purpose.

Piles of wood to burn for fuel were set along the single track which is the northbound track of the double track of today. Stations were established at ten mile intervals: 38 miles from New Orleans, Manchac; 48 miles, Ponchatoula; 58 miles, Tickfaw (where there was an early turntable for the engines); 68 miles, Amite; 78 miles, Tangipahoa; 88 miles, Osyka, Mississippi, the end of the line for a time. At the present site of Lallie Kemp Hospital below Independence were the sheds, wells, houses and platforms of Gaston Raoul's Southern Car Works which, but for local objection, could have become the McComb, Mississippi railroad yards after the War Between the States.

Our first police jury president, John Calhoun, in his tall hat, was in the group who rode in celebration on the first train, with cannons booming, on a flat car ahead of the engine with an inverted bell-shaped smokestack grandly puffing cinders.

The coming of the railroad opened an outlet to available markets for timber, shoes, and other products from the abundant forests and animal hides, and other natural resources. Other industries, and truck farming, strawberries in particular, developed. Settlers were encouraged. Prominent men in "The City" came out along the track to build summer homes to escape the heat and health problems. Yellow fever reached epidemic proportions in 1878. Transportation was the factor which brought to this area the establishment of Camp Moore, a principal training point during the War. The new parish was established during the difficult Reconstruction Days.

The Louisiana Lottery, established 1870, and which moved to Honduras in 1895, was a factor in the history of the parish. John Morris of New York, who was associated with the Lottery, built Morris Retreat, now known as Zemurray's Gardens. Mr. Morris' wife was a daughter of Alfred Hennen, a widely respected early teacher and judicial figure in Louisiana. Mr. Samuel Zemurray, whose son is among those honored today with a splendid public park in Hammond, was connected with the extensive United Fruit holdings.

The Illinois Central Railroad converted the varying

widths of track on the different sections from Chicago to New Orleans to standard gauge on a single day, 29 July 1881. Rip Waller, a section foreman at Tangipahoa, reportedly won the prize for finishing his section first. A veritable network of steam railroads busily chugged in the parish area and kept the steam whistles of sawmills blowing while they worked at cutting the virgin pine forests.

C. W. Witbeck, of the Southeast Louisiana Chapter, National Railway Historical Society, Hammond, supplied a list of railways which have operated within Tangipahoa Parish. The first four are still in operation. All are standard gauge (56 1/2") unless otherwise noted.

New Orleans, Jackson and Great Northern, later Illinois Central  
Baton Rouge, Hammond and Eastern, later Yazoo-Mississippi Valley, then Illinois Central, Hammond Gaylord Container Corporation (Crown-Zeilerbach Co.), Hammond  
Louisiana Eastern Railroad, Shiloh  
Louisiana Cypress Lumber Company and F. B. Williams Co., Ponchatoula  
New Orleans, Natalbany and Natchez R. R. (Natalbany Lumber Co);,  
Kentwood and Eastern Rail road. 36" and standard gauge;  
Kentwood, Greensburg, and Southwestern R. R. 36";  
Day Lumber Co. (1904- 1911);  
Loranger, Louisiana and North Eastern R. R., Genesee;  
Hammond and Houltonville;  
Owl Bayou Cypress Co.;  
Comite Southern, Sharon Junction;  
G.H.A. Thomas & Co., 62" Hammond.

Some of the "big mills" "cut" about 1914 and moved on to Florida and the Pacific and Canadian northwest, but forestry, wood pulp and timber products are still a major factor in our industry.

The first milk was shipped into New Orleans in 1893. Since then, the beef and dairy industries have become important to our economy. The abundant water, gravel, clays and other natural resources have been developed commercially. Chickens and truck fanning, including strawberries, contribute to our prosperity. The parish has splendid and continually improving medical facilities and the State School for Mentally Retarded is near Hammond. Progress in education has aided in our development since the days of early private schools to the advanced level asset of Southeastern Louisiana College in Hammond. Small manufacturing plants and industries have taken their place in our activities. Sports, hunting, fishing, and outdoor life are still enjoyed. Aluminum boats and outboard motors under many carports are to be used in the same waterways that once bore cypress Indian dug-out canoes.

The famous Louisiana historian, Charles E. A. Gayarre, built Roncal in the north end of the parish. He was the grandson of Etienne de Bore, the first mayor of New Orleans and who first successfully granulated sugar in Louisiana. Gayarre is said to have written Phillip The Second of Spain at Roncal. During Reconstruction days Roncal became the property of John M. G. Parker. He was appointed New Orleans Postmaster by General "Spoons" Butler. Parker was said to have opposed Lincoln's reconstruction policies but was personally praised for his honesty and ability.

Louisiana Governor J. Y. Sanders resided for a time in Hammond and once owned El Dorado, the antebellum house near Tangipahoa, which is referred to in "A Confederate Girl's Diary."

The present day literary figure, Hodding Carter, is a native of Tangipahoa Parish.

Dr. W. D. Wilson is named in a railroad history as their first conductor and an early planter of strawberries in the Independence area. Harry D. Wilson was elected Commissioner of Agriculture in 1916. H. W. L. Lewis was among the pioneers of rural improvements through the grange movement. George L. Teibout went to Baton Rouge from this parish in 1914 to become a horticulturist of statewide influence.

It is impossible even to mention all of the many personalities who have made worthwhile contributions to the development of Tangipahoa Parish through these one hundred years. Instead of a detailed history, it has been decided to take this opportunity to present a study of some of the place names in the parish which includes at least some information from each one of our eight wards.

As is the case in the pronunciation of proper names, there will be differences of opinion regarding the accuracy of some of the place name origins. We are pleased, however, to have this study made widely available on this centennial occasion.

From the pictures which were submitted for consideration, the History Committee has selected some representative of these general classifications:

courthouses, education, transportation, sawmilling, place names, hotels, and early dwellings.

—Irene R. Morris, Kentwood, for the History Committee:

Mrs. Martina E. Buck, Amite  
Mrs. Helen Kluchin,  
Independence  
John Coumes, Ponchatoula  
Dr. Sidney J. Romero,  
Chairman, Hammond