

Support Materials for the Colonial Documents

Black Books

The Black Books are the first resource used upon encountering a question with a colonial document. These books are translations of the original documents completed by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) during the 1930s. Everything was organized chronologically, even when it meant separating documents that probably should have been kept together. Most of the documents have a corresponding page in the Black Books, but some WPA pages are missing. Similarly, some documents have been lost, so there are WPA pages with no corresponding colonial document.

The WPA pages also have several different identification numbers. The kind/type of number varies from page to page. Sometimes the number is the French Superior Council "Upper Number" and sometimes it is a Court Number, and sometimes the number is completely arbitrary other than the fact that it was the number assigned to the document by the WPA. The number at the bottom of the page is also seems completely arbitrary. However, there is a similarity in the numbers for the documents that are related or belong to the same 'grouping.'

In addition to the document translation, each WPA page identifies whether or not the document was listed in the "Louisiana Historical Quarterly," and if so provides the necessary citation.

Location: Louisiana Historical Center Library Collection.

Spanish Colonial Index Books

Completed in 1994, the Spanish Colonial Index Books are also English translations of the colonial documents. However, while these books cover the entirety of the Spanish years, they only cover the first few years of French documents, (the beginning until 1724.)

Location: Louisiana Historical Center Library Collection.

Louisiana Historical Quarterly

The "Louisiana Historical Quarterly" (LHQ), has been published by the Louisiana Historical Society (LHS), from 1917 to the present day. Beginning with the first LHQ, the Louisiana Historical Society included brief, summarized translations of Colonial Documents.

Completed and listed first in chronological order and then by French Superior Council "Upper Number," the entries for each document include: the date, the "Upper Number," the number of pages (if more than one), the condition of document (if poor/damaged), a "See No." system to connect related documents, and the translation itself.

It is important to note that not every colonial document was translated by the LHS. This can serve as further supplemental materials to gain insight into the colonial period as a whole as well as some of the people and events specifically mentioned in the colonial documents.

Location - Bound volumes of the LHQ, and a separate index for 1917-1950, are located in the Louisiana Historical Center Reading Room on the 2nd floor of the Mint. A listing of the dates, for both French and Spanish documents, translated, in each volume of the LHQ can be found in the Index under the entry: "Superior Council of Louisiana, Records of."

Location: Louisiana Historical Center Reading Room

New Orleans Genesis

The "New Orleans Genesis" is a journal published by the Genealogical Research Society of New Orleans, from 1962 to the present day. These journals can serve as supplemental material when looking for genealogical information on specific individuals. Additionally, some translation of colonial documents can be located in various volumes of the "Genesis." However, the information provided about each document is limited to the translation and a 'title,' no other identifying information is provided. Not every volume includes colonial documents.

It can be difficult to find useful information in the "Genesis," because there is no overarching topical bound index that encompasses multiple volumes. There is however an index available online, at <http://www.grsno.org/>. Under the heading "New Orleans Genesis," by searching 'original documents,' translations,' or 'council' you can identify volume and issue number.

Location: Louisiana Historical Center Library Collection

Louisiana History: Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association

The "Louisiana History" is a journal published by the Louisiana Historical Association, from 1960 to the present day. These journals can serve as supplemental material for learning about the time period, and individuals and events mentioned in the colonial documents.

Location - Copies of the "Louisiana History" and a bound index, covering 1960-1984, are located in the Louisiana Historical Center Reading Room on the 2nd floor of the Mint.

Additional Books:

General Colonial Louisiana:

Louisiana: Crossroads of the Atlantic World

Editor: Cécile Vidal

Location: Louisiana Historical Center Library

The Accidental City: Improvising New Orleans

Lawrence N. Powell

Location: Louisiana Historical Center Library

Old Families of Louisiana

Stanley Clisby Arthur

Location: Louisiana Historical Center Library

French Colonial Louisiana:

A History of French Louisiana, Volume Five: The Company of the Indies, 1723-1731

Marcel Giraud

Location: Louisiana Historical Center Library

Building the Devil's Empire: French Colonial New Orleans

Shannon Lee Dawdy

Location: Not in the Collection

Spanish Colonial Louisiana:

Alphabetical and Chronological Digest of the Acts and Deliberations of the Cabildo, 1769-1803

A Record of Spanish Government in New Orleans

Location: City Archives, New Orleans Public Library.

Online - <http://nutrias.org/~nopl/inv/digest/digest.htm>