

*A House for Guillaume*  
*An Acadian Farm on the E.D. White Site*



**A Curriculum Based Educational Program  
For 6<sup>th</sup> grade Social Studies**

Louisiana State Museum – Thibodaux (E.D. White Historic Site)  
October 19, 2024

# Introduction:

This is entitled *A House for Guillaume: An Acadian Farm on the E.D. White Site*. It has been targeted to fit the curriculum for 6<sup>th</sup> grade Social Studies in accordance to certain GLE's (Grade Level Expectations), which best pertain to the attached lesson plan. It is the mission of the Louisiana State Museum – Thibodaux (E.D. White Historic Site) to satisfy the needs specified by the Louisiana State Board of Education. The lessons and activities contained within this package are designed to meet those requirements as well as introduce both teacher and student alike to specific key aspects of this historic site.

The E.D. White Historic Site is most noted and remembered for the late U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice, Edward Douglass White. Moreover, his father, the late Louisiana Governor E.D. White, established the site's historic house as an antebellum sugar plantation. Certainly, the history of the plantation system is a very integral part of the E.D. White Site history. However, the site was, at one time, an Acadian farmhouse. The historic house was originally built for and lived in by a Mr. Guillaume Arcement. Arcement was a first generation Acadian settler who eventually sold his land to the Whites. Therefore, this lesson plan is entirely focused on the Acadian history and early colonization of the area surrounding Bayou Lafourche.\*

\*It should be noted that E.D. White's history and the evolution of the house as an antebellum plantation would be included as students tour the historic house.

This lesson has been created as an *extended classroom experience*. In other words, both teacher and class will visit the site, participate in certain fun activities, and leave with newly gained and easily retainable knowledge about a particular aspect of this site's unique history. All activities are "hands on" and are meant to establish strong communication skills, critical thinking skills, problem-solving as well as math and scientific method.

The following contain the lesson plans for the 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Included is a list of respective GLE's, key concept, and objectives. Teachers will take with them a post-visit vocabulary and "extended classroom" activities.

# Grade Level Expectancies:

## 6<sup>th</sup> Grade

- Explain ideas, events, and developments in the history of the United States of America from 1590 to 1791 and how they progressed, changed, or remained the same over time.
- Analyze connections between ideas, events, and developments in U.S. history within their global context from 1580 to 1791.
- Use geographic representations and historical data to analyze events and developments in U.S. history from 1580 to 1791, including environmental, cultural, economic, and political characteristics and changes.
- Use maps to identify absolute locations (latitude and longitude) and describe geographic characteristics of places in Louisiana, North America, and the world.
- Use a variety of primary and secondary sources to:
  - Analyze social studies content
  - Evaluate claims, counterclaims, and evidence
  - Compare and contrast multiple sources and accounts
- Analyze European exploration and colonization of North America.
  - Explain the significance of the land claims made in North America by European powers after 1600, including England, France, the Netherlands, Portugal, Russia, Spain, and Sweden and their effects on Native Americans.
  - Compare and contrast the motivations, challenges, and achievements related to exploration and settlement of North America
- Analyze the development of the settlements and colonies in the late sixteenth century through the seventeenth century.
  - Explain the experiences and perspectives of various people groups living in colonial North America, including large landowners, farmers, artisans, women, children, indentured servants, enslaved people, and Native Americans.
- Analyze the growth and development of colonial Louisiana.
  - Explain the significance of events that influenced pre-colonial and colonial Louisiana, including the founding of Natchitoches and New Orleans, the Treaty of Fontainebleau, and the Third Treaty of San Ildefonso.
  - Describe the factors that influenced migration within and to Louisiana by various groups, including French, Spanish, Africans, Acadians, Germans, Canary Islanders/Isleños, and Haitians, and explain how individuals and groups interacted and contributed to the development of Louisiana.
  - Describe the characteristics of colonial Louisiana, including physical geography, climate, economic activities, culture and customs, and government, and analyze their importance to the growth and development of Louisiana.

## **Key Concepts:**

- Historical Migrations
- Influence and contributions to culture
- Family life
- Pictures and illustrations
- Historic sites as learning tools
- Distance scale

## **Goal:**

Bayou Lafourche has, for several centuries, provided an avenue for settlement, trade, and navigation to a variety of ethnic groups. The most notable trait of this region was the settlement and creation of a rich Acadian or “Cajun” culture. This culture is ingrained in the inhabitants today. What is taken for granted, such as the music, stories, food, and even last names came about from a people destined to not give in, who struggled hardships and survived.

As a result, this lesson will provide the student with an understanding of the Acadian culture found around Bayou Lafourche. The E.D. White house site was once the site of an Acadian farm. This site will be used as the tool for a better understanding of the Acadian culture surrounding them.

## **Background History:**

The first Europeans to utilize Bayou Lafourche were French traders and trappers. By the 1750s, permanent settlements began to exist along the upper reaches. In 1763, the region saw an increase in development following the transfer of Louisiana from France to Spain.

By the mid-1700s, the area now known as Nova Scotia, was inhabited by a group of French speaking settlers. The region that they lived in was then known as Acadia. In 1755, several thousand of these “Acadians” were deported from the area by the British. Their plight was unfortunately due to France losing Canada to England. The Acadians were loaded onto ships and shipped to the English colonies, where they were rejected and sent elsewhere. Many families were permanently split and many people died on the journey.

By 1764, these Acadians began to arrive in Louisiana and settle along the banks of the Mississippi River, Bayou Lafourche, and other bayous. Around 1785, 600 Acadians received Spanish land grants as an enticement to settle their colonies. The Spanish awarded every first generation Acadian six arpents of bayou frontage and forty arpents back. This meant that the farmer would receive roughly 240 arpents (200 American acres).

Many settled around the regions near Thibodaux and Labadieville. Increasing population and a 1794 hurricane brought more families in to include other cultures such as German, Canary Islanders (Isleños), as well as African slaves.

## **Guillaume Arcement:**

In 1785, the *La Ville D'Archangel* brought Pierre Arcement and his family to the Lafourche area. His son, Guillaume later acquired his claim to a 6 x 40 arpent farm, which, by 1799, was located on the upper end of what would become the White plantation. In 1803, he married Marie Aysen. According to the Arcements' registration with the United States Land Office, he specified that he had farmed the land for more than 10 years.

In 1825, Guillaume Arcement had a house built for him by Joseph and Narcisse Bourg, two of Arcement's neighbors. This was the house that E.D. White and his family would move into.

Soon large sugar plantations began to displace smaller Acadian farms in South Louisiana. Many of the Acadian settlers along the banks of Bayou Lafourche began to move further into the swamps creating regions like Choupic and Chackbay.

# The House:

The E.D. White house began as a traditional Acadian farmhouse. It follows the design most popular when this area of Lafourche saw early colonization.

1. The house is raised sitting on piers
2. The house has a pitched roof – excellent for keeping rain out and cooler in the summer.
3. The house sits two stories high:
  - 1<sup>st</sup> floor (or bottom) traditionally used for storage
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> floor generally used as living space
  - Attic (or loft) traditionally not used (sometimes used for children sleeping area)
4. Gallery front porch with chamfered support columns.
5. *Bousillage* between walls
6. Central chimney (now gone)

The E.D. White house was renovated in the later 1840s. It was updated for that time to fit within the realm of antebellum sugar plantation.

# Key Vocabulary:

Acadian	Cypress
Cajun	Pirogue
Migration	Bousillage
Nova Scotia	Bayou
Arpent	
Culture	

# Objectives:

1. The learner will be able to identify various aspects of Acadian culture and how Acadians came to live in Louisiana.
2. The learner will be able to describe the elements of an early 19<sup>th</sup> century Acadian building.
3. The learner will participate in games traditionally played during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.
4. The learner will learn and identify nine (9) “Cajun” French words and participate in a learning game, which utilizes those words.

## Lesson Activities:

1. Interactive discussion/lesson with Museum Special Projects Coordinator
2. Tour of the historic house, replica kitchen, and grounds
3. Fishing demonstration/activity
4. 19<sup>th</sup> century games (horseshoes, graces, and hoops)
5. Pétanque

## Lesson Procedure:

- Interactive discussion/lesson with Museum Special Projects Coordinator going over background history of site and Acadian influences to region. We will also cover the elective process of governors in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Louisiana as well as how U.S. Supreme Court justices are chosen and what their roles are. (20 min)
- Tour of the house to include brief history and elements of Acadian architecture. Once inside the house, students will also be given a brief history of the E.D. White sugar plantation to include the governor and chief justice. (30 min)
- Students split up into groups where they will rotate stations (45-60 min total):
  - A fishing demonstration and lesson given and students allowed to fish on the dock across the street on Bayou Lafourche.
  - Graces, hoops, and horseshoes taught to children and played.
- The French boules-type game of Pétanque taught to and played by students. (30 min)
- A word find and vocabulary sheet for students to take home.

Teachers may allow students to eat on grounds for lunch (plenty of picnic tables and seating areas around the visitor's center or across on the bayou side). No less than two (2) adult per ten (10) children.

## Extended Activities:

1. Students will be given a handout with a "Word Find" pertaining to what they learned.
2. Students may write a short essay on what they have learned about the Acadian culture.
3. Teachers will be given a master copy of illustrations and a vocabulary list to be used in the classroom
4. Optional Creative Writing or Thinking Map idea: using the illustration provided, have students compare/contrast the illustration of the E.D. White home as it may have looked in 1825 and how it looked after 1847. What do they see different?

# Vocabulary:

**Acadian:** The French settlers who lived in Nova Scotia until they were expelled by the British in 1755 because of economic, religious, and political prejudice.

**Cajun:** A French culture created in South Louisiana developing from the combination of Acadian settlers from Nova Scotia in the later 1700s and immigrants from France, Spain, Ireland, England, and Germany as well as those from Haiti and African slaves.

**Migration:** To move from one place to another.

**Nova Scotia:** A Canadian province. French settlers there called the area “Acadie.” The British exiled them from there in the 1750s. Many would find their way to Louisiana.

**Arpent:** An old French land measurement used in Louisiana in the 1700s and early 1800s. It is usually agreed to measure 192’ x 192’.

**Culture:** Social communication to include art, language, food, and social customs of a particular group of people at a particular time.

**Bayou:** An area of extremely slow moving brackish water moving away from a main river or body of water.

**Swamp:** An area of wetlands usually saturated with water and often covered with wood vegetation.

**Cypress:** A common tree found in South Louisiana. Trees were often cut down and the wood was made in to building materials for many Acadian homes.

**Pirogue:** A type of flat-bottom watercraft traditional to the Acadians.

**Bousillage:** A French word used for the mixture of mud and Spanish moss used in the walls of Acadian homes.